



State of Wisconsin
GOVERNOR'S STATE TRAILS COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes

Final - as of 4/25/13

Monday, January 14, 2013

Room 613, GEF 2 Building, 101 S. Webster Street, Madison

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

State Trails Council Members Present: Ken Carpenter, Randy Harden, Doug Johnson, Phil Johnsrud, Skip Maletzke, Mike McFadzen, Bryan Much, Dave Phillips, Harold Schmidt, Luana Schneider, Robbie Webber, James White

WI DNR Staff Present: Dan Schuller, Peter Biermeier, Brigit Brown, Tim Parsons, Joseph Warren

10:00 A.M. – Agenda review/repair and approval of November meeting minutes

- Webber called the meeting to order. Motion for approval of the November 2, 2012 meeting minutes by Maletzke. Seconded by Phillips. Minutes approved.

10:10 A.M. – Chair Report

- The state budget is coming up. States will again be allowed to opt out of Recreational Trails Program money. Last year, only Florida and Kansas opted out. The DNR will present an overview of the planning process for the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area at the April STC meeting. A group interested in the Sauk Prairie master plan requested to Webber to speak to the Council in April. Fat Bikes are a growing winter trail use.

10:15 A.M. – DNR Update

- For the second year in a row, First Day Hikes (January 1) were held at several state parks. Volunteers helped put on the hikes. All events were well attended despite cold temperatures. This is a national program the Wisconsin State Park System participates in.
- An agreement the DNR had with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) on a section of the Wild Rivers State Trail near Rice Lake expired. The DNR and DOT are working on renewing the agreement for another 15 years to keep the trail in its current location.
- There has been recent interest in putting short line railroads back on rail-trail corridors for a variety of purposes. There have been no formal proposals for reversion. Federal policy determines the process to put a railroad back on rail-banked corridors, and each instance would have to be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- As energy needs are increasing, power companies have inquired about putting power line poles on trail corridors. The DNR recently reached an agreement with the DOT for the Hank Aaron State Trail near the Highway 45/94 zoo interchange. The DOT will help connect the trail to the Milwaukee County Zoo. The DNR does not feel the power pole locations will compromise the trail experience. Xcel Energy has also recently inquired about the Old Abe State Trail corridor.
- The Natural Resources Board (NRB) approved the department's proposal for hunting and trapping in state parks with several amendments. The NRB changed the time frame for hunting and trapping to be allowed in state parks for two separate periods; early spring and late fall/winter. The rules took effect



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January 1. Details of the time frame and more information for hunting and trapping in state parks is available on the DNR website: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/parks/hunt/>.

- Linear trails that were open to hunting previously will remain open during the new time frame. Some portions of trail properties beyond the right-of-way of the corridor will also be open during the time frame. Some small properties or properties within urban and residential areas were closed completely. All trapping needs to be 100 yards away from any designated use area including trails. The NRB ruled that traps would need to be restricted to those that are not capable of catching pets, as a safety concern for small children or people trying to release a pet caught in a trap.
 - The DNR received more than 2000 written and verbal comments and NRB members received another 655 comments. The number of public speakers at the December NRB meeting was the largest the NRB has ever had for any topic. Schuller stated the State Park System learned a lot about its visitors during this process and will need to do some work educating and communicating the new hunting and trapping rules to state park visitors.
 - The NRB also required the DNR develop an emergency rule that would prohibit hunting on, across or over a trail. Minnesota has a similar law. Phillips asked how the DNR will enforce a no-hunt buffer on a trail such as the Ice Age Trail which winds around a property. The DNR will work to have signage and information at properties, have information online, and will work with hunters and non-hunters to understand the rules. As the law is implemented this year, the DNR may need to come back to the NRB with adjustments to the rules for any issues or wildlife management needs.
- The DNR has been working to streamline wetland regulation compliance for trail projects. Brown will send some proposals for the STC to review in the coming months. The regulations will address wetland areas and the type of structures for both motorized and non-motorized trails. The DNR is looking to have the review standards in place by July 1, 2013.
 - There will be a master plan variance for the Tuscobia and Buffalo River state trails to allow UTVs on the trails. The master plan for the Ice Age Complex at Cross Plains goes to the NRB in January. The master plan for the Menominee River Recreation Area in the far northeast part of the state is underway in cooperation with Michigan. The master plan is a cooperative effort between the states, as there is public land on both sides of about 14 miles of river. The area is pristine and is not intended to be overdeveloped.
 - The master plan for the Mukwonago River Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest has started. This is the site of the former Rainbow Springs property in Waukesha and Walworth counties. Visitors can hike in to hunt or walk the property.
 - The Sauk Prairie Recreation Area master plan is underway. There will be public listening sessions in the next several months for the public to comment on alternatives for the property. The DNR has heard from many different user groups. The terrain of most of the property is fairly flat and there is still much reclamation work needed. Much stated that if a group is addressing the STC about the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area, they should still also be sending comments through the proper communication channel within the DNR to have those comments documented.



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10:45 A.M. – State Trails Council Member Reports

- *Bicycling.* The Cyclocross Nationals were held in Verona at Badger Prairie County Park in early January. Bike groups are watching the state and federal budgets for impacts to trail funding.
- *Hiking.* Phillips stated he was snowshoeing at Blue Mound State Park and was surprised that a state trail pass is not required for snowshoeing. Phillips asked if snowshoeing should be a trail use that requires a state trail pass as the trails require some maintenance.
- *Off-Highway Motorcycles.* Dirt riding has concluded for the year. There will be a three-hour endurance riding event at Campbellsport on the lake. Groups are continuing to work on legislation for an off-highway motorcycle registration program to provide a source of funding. The winter season provides a good time for riders to brush up on riding skills, first aid training and wilderness first responder certification. The training is important for any trail user group.
- *Tourism/Business.* The Governor's Conference on Tourism will be held March 17-19, 2013 at the Monona Terrace Convention Center in Madison.
- *Equestrian.* Equestrian groups are holding their annual meetings. The topic of Trail Towns was discussed at the November STC meeting. Palmyra and trail users in the area are doing a good job of promoting the town as a destination for equestrians. There are efforts to open up property to allow horses to come into the town which would connect horse riders to the town and the state forest.
- *All-Terrain Vehicles.* The Wisconsin All-Terrain Vehicle Association's (WATVA) popular trail patrol ambassador program will now have a two-tier category. Ambassadors will no longer be required to be a DNR instructor, but will have had to go through the training course. WATVAs annual meeting will be held April 19-21, 2013 in Wausau. TrailCon will be held August 9-10, 2013. Harden invited all trail groups to contact him if they are interested at being at TrailCon. Coinciding with National Trails Day, Free Fishing Weekend and State Parks Open House Day, the inaugural Free ATV Registration weekend will be held June 1-2, 2013.
- *Snowmobiling.* Work on trail bridges on the Glacial Drumlin State Trail will be postponed until after the snowmobiling season. Snowmobile groups are working to keep riders on trails. All areas of the state need more snow. Many county trail systems are not open at this time. Eagle River will be hosting the 50th anniversary of the World Snowmobile Championships. *Discover Wisconsin* will be airing a feature about snowmobiling in Wisconsin on February 18-19, 2013. Fat bikes have inquired about using snowmobile trails.
- *Water Trails.* Waupaca County is working on river access points in the county, including mapping all points. Interested stakeholders are looking to establish river keeper groups, an adopt-a-river program, and provide other usable information for the county's water resources. Portage County is interested in developing a water trail, which would be called the Blue Circle Trail, similar to the Green Circle Trail that encompasses the city of Stevens Point. Johnsrud asked if the DNR could provide information at a future meeting for the recreational immunity law and how it relates to water trails. Johnsrud stated that liability and insurance is a concern of trail organizations and land owners.
- *Cross-Country Skiing.* Snow conditions in December were good across much of the state, but most areas need more snow. Youth ski programs and most ski races have been able to be held. Winterfest at the Greenbush Trails in the Kettle Moraine State Forest will be held January 20, 2013. McFadzen stated that some legislators he talked to wondered why the STC did not take a stronger position in the



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resolution for Act 168. McFadzen asked that a discussion for STC purview be added to the April meeting agenda.

- *4-Wheel Drive Vehicles.* The Wisconsin 4-Wheel Drive Association (W4WDA) will be involved in trying to get off-highway vehicle trails incorporated into the Sauk Prairie State Recreation Area. Off-highway vehicle users are working on a registration program. The Wisconsin Off-Highway Vehicle Association's (WOHVA) annual workshops will be April 12-13, 2013 in Mole Lake. The W4WDA's annual convention will be April 19-21, 2013 in La Crosse. Both groups will be at TrailCon in August. Forest County is working on a feasibility study for an off-highway vehicle park in the county. Schneider stated would also like to have the discussion of recreation immunity/liability on the next STC agenda as liability insurance is a big issue for private park operators.
- *Off-Road Bicycling.* Schmidt stated two candidates will be submitting their applications to the STC for consideration to be forwarded to the governor's office for appointment as the STC off-road bicycling representative. Downhill biking on ski hills during the summer is becoming more popular. The Rock ski hill in Milwaukee County is one hill that has opened for biking. Fat bikes are also becoming popular.
- *Wheels/Small Boards.* No report.

11:30 A.M. – Review of STC Member Appointments and Terms

- The terms of four STC positions expire in July 2013 (bicycling, tourism/business, cross-country skiing and hiking/Ice Age Trail). The off-road bicycling position is currently not appointed. The STC will need to submit five names for consideration of appointment by the governor's office. Brown asked members to let her know if they are interested in being reappointed. Phillips (hiking/Ice Age Trail) will not be looking to be reappointed. According to the STC's representation model, the tourism/business position would cycle into an advisory position. Harden and Phillips volunteered to work on the application review subcommittee.

11:35 A.M. – Trail Trends/Uses and STC Representation

- The use of Fat Bikes on trails is growing. Snowshoeing is also seeing an increase in use. The cross-country skiing position or the hiking position could also represent snowshoers. Phillips asked about having a nature walking/birding position. Much stated the council should also look at keeping positions within the STC representation model. Discussion will be continued on April agenda and will help the subcommittee determine the names/positions to recommend to the governor's office.

11:40 A.M. – Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Update

- Forty-four grants were funded in the last cycle. Parsons passed out a list of award winners in November. Grant award amounts will be capped at \$45,000 this year. Application materials will be available in print or for download from the DNR website: <http://dnr.wi.gov/Aid/RTA.html>. Applications are due by May 1, 2013. This year, the applications will be fillable. The money available will be dependent on the passage of the second half of the federal budget. The Governor will have until October to decide to opt in or to opt out of receiving RTP money. Parsons will give an update at the July STC meeting.

11:50 A.M. – Public Comment

- No comments.

12:00 P.M. – Adjourn

- Motion to adjourn by Phillips. Seconded by McFadzen. Meeting adjourned.