



State of Wisconsin
GOVERNOR'S STATE TRAILS COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes

Final as of 10/29/2013

Thursday, April 25, 2013

Room 330 SW, State Capitol Building, Madison, WI

10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

State Trails Council Members present:

Ken Carpenter; *Wisconsin State Horse Council (equestrians)*

Randy Harden; *Wisconsin ATV Association (ATVs/UTVs)*

Doug Johnson; *Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs (snowmobiling)*

Phil Johnsrud; *(non-motorized water trails)*

Skip Maletzke; *(Tourism/business)* [Secretary]

Mike McFadzen; *WI Nordic Network, Northern Kettle Moraine Nordic Ski Club (cross-country skiing)*

Bryan Much; *Wisconsin Off-Highway Motorcycle Association (off-highway motorcycles)* [Vice Chair]

Dave Phillips; *(hiking/walking)*

Harold Schmidt; *Wisconsin Off-Road Bicycling Association (off-road bicycling)*

Luana Schneider; *Wisconsin 4-Wheel Drive Association (4-wheel drive vehicles)*

Robbie Webber; *Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin (bicycling)* [Chair]

Jim White; *(boards/small wheels)*

Others Present:

Barb Eisenberg; *(WI Conservation Congress)*

Leif Hubbard; *(WI DOT)*

Rob McConnell; *(WATVA)*

Curt Meine; *(Sauk Prairie Conservation Alliance)*

Ken Neitzke; *(Ice Age Trail Alliance)*

Dave Peterson; *(snowmobiling/biking)*

Judy Peterson; *(snowmobiling/biking)*

Dave Schlabowske; *(Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin)*

Dave Tremble; *(Sauk Prairie Conservation Alliance)*

Mike Wollmer; *(Ice Age Trail Alliance)*

Hank Wozniel; *(WATVA)*

Legislators Present:

Rep. Janet Bewley, Rep. Chris Danou, Rep. Steve Kestell, Rep. Jeff Mursau, Rep. Janis Ringhand, Rep. Rob Swearingen

WI DNR Staff present:

Dan Schuller, Peter Biermeier, Diane Brusoe, Jason Fritz, Jeff Prey, Joseph Warren

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

- Webber called the meeting to order. Motion for approval of the January 14, 2013 meeting minutes with spelling correction by Phillips. Seconded by Maletzke. Minutes approved.



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10:10 A.M. – Chair Report

- The Recreation Immunity topic will be moved to the July agenda. The Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin is advocating for support in the legislature for a vulnerable user law which would make it a felony to commit specific traffic violations that kill or injure vulnerable users of roadways such as bicyclists, walkers, motorcyclists, farm equipment operators, equestrians and others. Funding for the Recreational Trails Program for the next fiscal year (FY14) is yet to be determined. States can opt out of the program.

10:15 A.M. – DNR Report

- The State Park System is in the process of filling vacant ranger positions and supervisory positions before summer. There is a high vacancy rate in the program due to recent retirements.
- Monday, April 1 started the first major implementation of Act 168 which expanded hunting and trapping in state parks. Turkey hunting is the main activity during this time period. Hunting/trapping maps will be posted at the park properties and will be available online. The spring time period will end on April 30. The park program will be working to update all property boundary signs so they are compliant with the new law.
- The State Park System will be taking some hunting and trapping housekeeping items to the June Natural Resources Board (NRB) meeting, such as proposing to reaffirm some long-standing hunts in certain parks that had been impacted by the NRB's 2012 decision on the implementation of Act 168.
- A public meeting for the High Cliff State Park master plan will be held May 7 in Sherwood, and the new draft master plan will be presented to the NRB in June. A public meeting for the beginning planning process for the Mukwonago River Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest and Lulu Lake State Natural Area will be held in June. The planning process for Menominee River State Recreation Area, a joint project with the state of Michigan is also getting started. The State Park System is working with UW-Madison on an economic impact of state parks in Wisconsin.
- The Lake Michigan Water Trail is now a designated state trail in Wisconsin. The state of Michigan is working on developing a trail along their entire border with the lake. Indiana and Illinois also working on a trail for their lakefront as well, which when complete, would have one connected trail that circumnavigates Lake Michigan for all four states.
- The DNR is continuing to work on the wetland permitting issue. The concept is to create design parameters and simplify the permitting process. The DNR is looking to have the review standards in place by July 2013.
- Stewardship funding for land acquisition and property development and repair has been proposed to be cut back. The State Park System will be concentrating on development and repair of infrastructure as the facilities as many parks are aging. The park system has to compete for available funds with other major repair projects such as dams and fisheries. The State Park System is working on completing a major electrification project at several campgrounds. Volunteers have been integral to assisting with resources for the parks.
- Emerald ash borer is starting to spread in Wisconsin. Richard Bong State Recreation Area and Big Foot Beach State Park have infestations. The state has about 170 million ash trees which could be threatened. Beech bark disease is also hitting areas, especially in Door County. The DNR has a hazard tree policy for designated use areas. The DNR will be looking at forest management techniques to



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address these issues. State nurseries can help with providing new and different tree species for planting.

- Trail building trainings will be offered again this summer. User groups and individuals are encouraged to sign up for trainings. The trainings cover topics from building trail to being a group leader. Sign up for the trainings is available at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/2013TrailTrainings>

10:45 A.M. – Sauk Prairie Conservation Alliance Presentation

- Curt Meine and Dave Tremble with the Sauk Prairie Conservation Alliance presented some background information on the history of the former Badger Army Ammunition Plant. Meine was a member of the Badger Reuse Committee which was involved with developing a report for the reuse of the property. The committee developed the report in 2001 after the army determined they no longer needed the property. The committee was composed of members from local, state, federal and tribal government entities, local businesses and landowners, and other interested parties. Meine stated the Reuse Plan included ecological restoration, agriculture, research and education, and low-impact recreation opportunities. Meine and Tremble stated they would like to see the DNR adhere to the recommendations provided in the Badger Reuse Plan.

11:00 A.M. – Sauk Prairie State Recreation Area Presentation

- Diane Brusoe, DNR Program and Policy Analyst, presented the DNR's master plan process for the Sauk Prairie State Recreation Area. Brusoe passed out a summary of the Draft July 2012 Regional and Property Analysis. The DNR is required by Administrative Code to have a master plan of department-owned lands. Not all acres of the former army ammunition plant are owned by the DNR. The master plan is being done for the approximate 3,800 acres owned by the DNR. During Spring/Summer 2013 the DNR will be putting conceptual and preferred alternatives together. Fall 2013 the DNR will be completing the draft master plan and environmental assessment, and is planning to take the draft plan to the Natural Resources Board in winter 2014. There will be opportunities for public comment and review throughout the planning process. The website for the master plan and public comment is available at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Lands/MasterPlanning/SaukPrairie/>.

11:20 A.M. – Sauk Prairie State Recreation Area Discussion

- Phillips stated that there appears to be some major differences between what various user groups want to see happen to the Sauk Prairie property. Phillips stated he hoped that groups could come to some kind of consensus for the use of the property. Schuller stated the DNR will be evaluating the merit of all uses for the property, and will be putting the proposed alternatives together for public review this year. Much stated that the master planning process appears to be going well and the project has a lot of interest from the public.
- Meine stated that council members can contact him for language of the Badger Reuse Plan and to also participate in one of the volunteer restoration work days at the Recreation Area.
- Biermeier stated that members of the public can request to be on the mailing list (via the master plan website) to receive updates about the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area planning process. The DNR held a public open house at the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area in October 2012 and is looking at possibly holding another open house and property tour.

11:40 A.M. – State Trails Council Purview Discussion

- McFadzen presented some opinions from two state attorneys regarding the council's authority in providing advice and consultation. ~~McFadzen stated he was asked by some legislators why the STC did not contact them relating to the issue of hunting in state parks. McFadzen stated some legislators~~



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asked him why the council did not take a stronger position on the topic of hunting in state parks. (Correction made at July 2013 meeting, minutes passed as corrected.) Much passed out a handout of purview notes and stated that the current state statute for the State Trails Council states that the STC shall advise DNR. Carpenter asked if the STC should request a statute change to include language that is similar to other councils that would allow the STC to make recommendations to the legislature and governor. No consensus reached.

12:00 P.M. – Trails Town Presentation

- Carpenter and Maletzke gave a PowerPoint presentation to the council for an overview of the concept of a Trail Town, which aims to maximize the economic potential of trail-based tourism for communities. Maletzke and Carpenter attended the Southeastern Equestrian Trails Conference in Lexington, Kentucky in July 2012 where the concept of a Trail Town was presented. Kentucky Trail Town Program handout. A Trail Town refers to a community through which a recreational trail comes near to or passes through, where the community supports trail users with services, promotes the trail, and maximizes the economic and business potential of the trail.
- Mike Wollmer, Executive Director for the Ice Age Trail Alliance, stated that the Alliance has been working on a similar concept with the 1000-mile Ice Age Trail. The trail is entirely in Wisconsin and connects several communities. The Alliance also just completed an Economic Impact Study of the Ice Age Trail's benefit to statewide and local economies. The Ice Age Trail has some thru-hikers, but the majority of users hike the trail in day trips, and many make the start of their hike near communities.
- Representative Janet Bewley stated that the concept of Trail Towns would be a good thing to pursue in Wisconsin and suggested a mobile app could be a feature of such a program.
- Carpenter stated that standard signage would be important. Council members asked about organizing a summit to discuss the concept in further detail. User groups, state agencies such as the DNR, DOT and Tourism and other partners would need to work together to get a program started. Schuller stated the DNR will work with council members to organize a one-day summit.

1:00 P.M. – State Trails Council Member Reports

- *All-Terrain Vehicles.* The Wisconsin All-Terrain Vehicle Association (WATVA) held its annual meeting in April. WATVA trail patrol ambassadors logged over 63,000 miles of patrol time on the trails. The Wisconsin Outdoor Education Youth Expo will be held mid-May in Beaver Dam. June 1-2 will be free ATV registration weekend in Wisconsin. Trail Con will be held August 9-10 in Antigo.
- *4-Wheel Drive Vehicles.* Minnesota continues to do a good job providing opportunities for off-highway vehicles. User groups are continuing to work to get a registration program for Wisconsin.
- *Wheels/Small Boards.* White asked if the STC could get an update from the Non-motorized Recreation and Transportation Trails Council included in packet to STC members. (Note: the NRTTC website contains meeting minutes and other information: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/parks/trails/nrttc.html>) The Rails-to-Trails Conservancy has been promoting trailside gardens for local landscaping.
- *Tourism/Business.* The Governor's Conference on Tourism was held in March. The Department of Tourism has been doing a good job marketing the state with their budget.
- *Equestrian.* The Midwest Horse Fair was held April 19-21, 2013 in Madison. More than 53,000 people came through the gates during the three days. Carpenter attended the International Trails Symposium in Arizona.



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- *Off-Highway Motorcycles.* Motorized Recreation Areas are popular in other states, as well as forest logging roads. Many off-highway motorcycle users enjoy rugged trails and varied terrain. The Zumbro Bottoms Area in Minnesota, near the city of Winona, will open up their trails for two events for off-highway motorcycle users; one in May and one in September. Much stated this could be a possibility at a location in Wisconsin. It was a good winter for ice rides in the state. The off-highway motorcycle registration program is moving forward.
- *Hiking/Walking.* Phillips will be stepping down from the STC and introduced Ken Neitzke, a long-time volunteer with the Ice Age Trail Alliance as his recommended replacement. Neitzke applied to the STC for the position of hiking/Ice Age Trail representative. Harden, on behalf of the STC, thanked Dave Phillips for more than 13 years of service on the State Trails Council.
- *Snowmobiling.* Johnson passed a handout of the Annual Report for the Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs (AWSC). Snow conditions fluctuated across the state with good conditions for late-winter in northern Wisconsin. Youth programs are getting more riders involved in the sport. AWSC has many events planned through summer and fall. An issue for the snowmobile community is the devastating effects of the use of E-15 motor fuel in recreational engines.
- *Bicycling.* The Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin (BFW) just released its guide of all 2013 road and off-road biking events in Wisconsin. Cyclocross and fat bikes are increasing in use. BFW hosted a lobby day to meet with state legislators, and will be advocating for the Recreational Trails Program.
- *Water Trails.* Johnsrud stated that river groups and individuals have inquired about the cutting of trees in streams and rivers on private land to clear the passage of waterways. Johnsrud asked if the DNR could provide guidance on this issue.
- *Cross-Country Skiing.* The north and central parts of the state received a lot of snow in late winter. Snowshoeing is seeing a big growth in number of users. It is a sport that can be done anywhere, and some older skiers are switching to snowshoeing for winter recreation. There has been steady growth of youth skiing in Wisconsin over the last decade. Areas that are offering lights for night skiing are seeing economic benefits.
- *Off-Road Bicycles.* The governor-appointed off-road bicycling position on the STC is open. Off-road bikers are looking to use downhill ski areas in the summer months. A good example of this is the Rock Complex in Franklin. The Wisconsin Off-Road Series for bike races will be picking up for the season. The International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) Trail Care Crew will be coming to Wausau in August.

2:00 P.M. – Fat Bikes Presentation

- Dave Schlabowske with the Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin gave an overview of fat bikes. Fat bikes are seeing a growth in use. The bikes have wide tires that allow for use on snow, mud and sand. The bikes are making off-road biking a more year-round sport in Wisconsin. Some riders are using trails where they have not typically ridden before. Fat bikes are currently more expensive than a standard off-road bike. Groups are working to have more places to ride. The bikes are not typically allowed on groomed ski or snowmobile trails or designated beaches.

2:15 P.M. – Discussion of Trail Trends/Uses and STC Representation

- Four positions are expiring July 1, 2013; bicycling, business/tourism, cross-country skiing, hiking/Ice Age Trail. The business/tourism position will become boards/small wheels. Jim White's application



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has been sent to the governor's office for approval. The business/tourism position will become a non-voting (advisory) position. Mike McFadzen (cross-country skiing) and Robbie Webber (bicycling) have reapplied with the governor's office. The off-road bicycling position also remains vacant at this time. Dave Phillips will not be reapplying for the hiking/Ice Age Trail position.

- Ken Neitzke has been chairman of the Waukesha County chapter of the Ice Age Trail Alliance. Neitzke submitted an application to the council. Phillips motioned to have the council support Neitzke's application for appointment by the governor's office. Seconded by Webber. Motion passed.
- As part of the STC's biennial review, Much recapped the three major trail use categories and the STC positions assigned to each category. New trail uses that are becoming more popular include UTVs, fat bikes, cyclocross bikes and electric bikes. Electric bikes or other electric vehicles could fit into more than one category. The rules for electric bikes vary by municipality, but they are currently not allowed on State Trails. STC will discuss further at a future STC meeting.
- McFadzen moved to add fat bikes/cyclocross bikes in the Non-motorized/Mechanized category. Seconded by Maletzke. Motion passed. Webber moved to combine UTVs with ATVs in the Motorized category. Seconded by Maletzke. Motion passed.
- Motion by Much to have a presentation on a trail use at each in-person meeting. Seconded by Phillips. Motion passed. The next in-person meeting is in November. Potential trail use presentations include 4-wheel drive vehicles, nature trails, carriage driving, cyclocross bikes, and/or electric bikes. The presentation does not have to be done by a council member.

2:45 P.M. – Public Comment

- Judy Peterson stated the DNR needs to come up with a policy that addresses electric bikes on trails for individuals that still want to use trails but need an assist.
- Dave Peterson stated the DNR should have consistent signage on trails. It would also be beneficial to have information posted as to the nearest locations for gas for snowmobiles and ATVs.
- Barb Eisenberg stated that council members should inform their users groups about participating in the Wisconsin Conservation Congress spring hearings and elections.

3:00 P.M. – Adjourn

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