



State of Wisconsin
GOVERNOR'S STATE TRAILS COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes

Friday, April 29, 2016

Schlitz Park Bottlehouse
101 W. Pleasant St.
Milwaukee, WI 53212
10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

State Trails Council Members present:

Randy Harden, ATV/UTV representative (member of *Wisconsin ATV-UTV Association (WATVA)*)
Leif Hubbard, *Wisconsin Department of Transportation* [non-voting]
Kricket Jewett [for Ken Carpenter], equestrian representative (member of *Wisconsin Horse Council*)
Doug Johnson, snowmobiling representative (member of *Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs (AWSC)*)
Bryan Much, off-highway motorcycle representative (member of *Wisconsin Off-Highway Motorcycle Association (WOHMA)*) [STC Chair]
Ken Neitzke, hiking representative (member of the *Ice Age Trail Alliance*)
Joel Patenaude [for Mike McFadzen], cross-country skiing representative
Luana Schneider, 4-wheel drive vehicles representative (member of *Wisconsin 4-Wheel Drive Association*) [STC Secretary]
John Siegert, off-road bicycling representative (member of *Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin*) [STC Vice Chair]

State Trails Council Members not in attendance

Ken Carpenter, equestrian representative (member of *Wisconsin Horse Council*)
Phil Johnsrud, non-motorized water trails representative
Skip Maletzke, tourism/business representative [non-voting]
Mike McFadzen, cross-country skiing representative (member of *WI Nordic Network, Northern Kettle Moraine Nordic Ski Club*)
Robbie Webber, bicycling representative (member of *Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin*)
Jim White, boards and small wheels representative

Invited speakers

Dave Schlabowske, *Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin*

Others present

Ada Duffey, Southeastern Kettle Moraine Horse Trail Association / Glacial Drumlin Horse Trail Association
Hank Wozniel, Wisconsin ATV-UTV Association (WATVA)
Roy Laird, South Shore Cycling
Amelia Kegel, Wheel and Sprocket / Milwaukee County Trails Council
Jeff Lohry, Wisconsin Off-Highway Vehicle Association
Jason Wilke, Waukesha County Parks
Angie Tornes, National Park Service, Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program

WI DNR Staff present:

Brigit Brown, Daniel Buckler, Melissa Cook



State of Wisconsin **GOVERNOR'S STATE TRAILS COUNCIL**

10:00 A.M. – Welcome and introductions

- Much called the meeting to order. Council members and guests introduced themselves.

10:04 A.M. – Agenda review/repair and approval of January meeting minutes

- Harden moved to approve the minutes. Schneider seconded. Motion passed.

10:05 A.M. – Council appointments

- Brown stated that the Governor's appointment office is requesting additional names submitted for all council appointments. This is not unique for the State Trails Council, but requests for additional candidates for all 300+ councils and boards in the State are being made. Names of previous applicants for the three unfilled positions (road bicycling, water trails and equestrians) could potentially be sent to Governor's office, though those applicants will have to be approached to explore whether they're still interested in the position.
- Much formed a contingency ad hoc committee which, should the above approach fail to come up with enough candidates, would be tasked with finding additional names to submit to the Governor's office. This committee would be made up of Siegert, Maletzke and Neitzke.

10:11 A.M. – Chair report

- Much said that at the November meeting they will resume the user group orientations with water trails and off-highway motorcycling. There will be no orientations in August because of presentations by local user groups and land managers.
- Much has identified a potential facility for the August meeting in the Town of Rib Mountain. He envisions mini presentations from local groups such as what occurred at the August 2015 Council meeting. Potential topics include: Wausau Water, Nine Mile Park, WATVA's Trail Patrol program, Bicycle Wausau, Green Circle State Trail, Burma Forest ATV Trails, Rib Mountain State Park and the River Bend Trail. Brown said that a back-up location could be Rib Mountain State Park. The meeting date is August 12.

10:20 A.M. – Presentation introducing the "Route of the Badger"

- Siegert introduced himself and explained the project he is managing for the Rails to Trails Conservancy (RTC). He reviewed the history of rail trails and the trail networks of Milwaukee and Racine, the connection of which is one component of the "Route of the Badger" project.
- By filling in gaps between different communities, an improved regional trail network would improve mobility, spur economic growth, reduce health care costs and attract new corporate investment.
- Siegert identified five main components of progressing toward their goal: build a network of partners, gather and analyze mapping data, develop a gap-closing strategy, develop an investment strategy, and branding and marketing.
- Trail networks in other states were also discussed, including the Industrial Heartland Trails, the Circuit Trails, and the Baltimore Greenway Trails Network.
- During the question period, the RTC's role as a facilitator between partners, including government agencies, was elaborated upon. Additionally, the costs of purchasing remaining gaps and maintaining them would probably come down to local or state resources, and that identifying opportunities is part of RTC's project.
- Patenaude asked about the cost and process of abandoning railroad corridors and Brown reviewed the various steps the railroad company and different government authorities can take to go from an active railroad to a trail. The Council also discussed the term "abandoned" as it pertains to the rail to trail process.

11:04 A.M. – State Trails Council member reports



State of Wisconsin GOVERNOR'S STATE TRAILS COUNCIL

- *4-Wheel Drive Vehicles.* Schneider congratulated the motorcyclists in the success of the passage of their sticker legislation and hopes for the same for the 4WD community in the near future. She said that both the 2016 [Jeep Jamboree](#) and the [Great Northern Trail Ride](#) will be held in the Mole Lake area this summer. The [Wisconsin Off-Road Vehicle Park](#) is still looking for a new site. She noted that many Wisconsinites interested in 4WD have to go out of state to ride and there is no draw in Wisconsin for out-of-staters interested in 4WD. Thus, the economic impact is elsewhere than in the State of Wisconsin. Also, noteworthy this April was the combined convention of the [Wisconsin Four Wheel Drive Association](#) and the [Wisconsin Off Highway Vehicle Association](#) which was held at the same location and designed in such a way that attendees could attend both annual meetings and share ideas and speakers.
- *Tourism.* Hubbard had no report.
- *All-terrain vehicles.* Harden noted that the U.S. Forest Service has a regional economic advisory committee. Its role is to work with the Forest Service and the wider Department of Agriculture when fees increase or other issues arise. Committee work declined during the economic downturn, but now is being revitalized. Harden said that the Wisconsin ATV/UTV Association statewide meeting occurred in April. ATV growth has stabilized, but UTV growth is at 300%. There are about 35,000 UTVs now registered versus approximately 250,000 ATVs. Some Forest Service trails might have to be adjusted to accommodate UTVs, such as slight adjustments with sight lines. Harden reviewed the Trail Ambassador program which is entering a new iteration in which a lot of training and education is transitioning to an online platform. Three clubs within WATVA are piloting the new trail patrol system. There will be a communications center added so that somebody could man incoming phone calls from people on trails. Trail patrols have been going well and the number of reports have gone up substantially as more people are incorporated into the program. Brown said that it would be good to hear how the pilot goes and to see if there is potential to replicate the program with other user groups.
- *Hiking.* Neitzke said that the Ice Age Trail Alliance held their annual meeting in April. Over 200 people were there and the meeting raised about \$12,000. The IATA had over 75,000 volunteer hours recorded in 2015, which puts them in the upper echelon of National Scenic Trail volunteer hours. IATA has a new smart phone application. When you download it, you get a free map, but then have to purchase other maps for other locations. Since the November STC meeting when Hartland discussed its process becoming the first Ice Age Trail community, Delafield looks like it will be the next one. There is a possibility that, in more rural areas of the state, instead of partnering with cities and towns, the IATA could partner with counties. June 4 is National Trails Day and the IATA has been a regular participant for that day. There are currently seven events on the day in Wisconsin listed on the national website, most of which are on the IAT. The North Country Trail Association held a lot of hikes over the winter and is sponsoring a 100-mile challenge over 2016. On September 24, the NCT is celebrating five new miles of trail at Copper Falls State park with a ribbon cutting ceremony.
- *Snowmobiling.* Johnson said that in spite of the bad weather, the new snowmobile pass program has been going well. Law Enforcement officials took the opportunity to educate a lot of people over the season on the changes. The trail pass is valid from July 1 to June 31. There has been an increase in the number of clubs associated with the Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs. AWSC now represents around 625 clubs across the state. The Association held their annual Celebrate Wisconsin events which went very well, and in March AWSC raised about \$4,000 for programs benefiting younger snowmobile riders.
- *Mountain-biking.* Siegert said that mountain bikers are coming out of hibernation. Crews in the Southern kettles have been working hard getting trails ready. The Fat Bike Birkie was successful in



State of Wisconsin **GOVERNOR'S STATE TRAILS COUNCIL**

February, despite the very warm weather. High school mountain bike programs are expanding in the state, and the [Wisconsin Off Road Series](#) is always looking to attract young riders.

- *Cross-country skiing.* Patenaude said that the American Birkebeiner was successful despite the warm weather.
- *Off-highway motorcycling.* Much said that the new off-highway motorcycle program received overwhelming support from the legislature and that the law goes into effect on October 1. Much approached the DNR to encourage support for an agency staff person to be a point of contact for the program. Much recently became the president of the Wisconsin Off-Highway Motorcycle Association. He noted that Oconto County is incorporating the United State National Grid into some of their maps, signage and emergency services.

11:50 A.M. - Lunch

12:20 P.M. – Equestrian user group orientation

- Jewett introduced the Wisconsin Horse Council and some of their undertakings, such as organizing the Midwest Horse Fair, assigning grants and lobbying the state government.
- She then discussed the wider equestrian community, saying that the user group covers a wide multitude of people and activities.
- One of the important things Jewett is involved with for the Horse Council is its Trails Committee which works to promote trail use and development in Wisconsin. The committee has given out grants totaling \$294,521 for improvements on public horse trails in Wisconsin. With matching grants, there has been at least \$441,700 in improvements to the horse trail infrastructure invested because of the committee.
- Jewett then reviewed a few other programs through the Council, including Ride Wisconsin and Trail Quest, as well as the Trail Meister online directory (which is replacing the Trail Guide previously published by the Horse Council).

12:50 P.M. – Road/touring bicycle user group orientation

- Dave Schlawbowski of the Wisconsin Bicycle Federation introduced himself and the Bike Fed. It is a 26 year old organization which didn't initially host their own rides, but they've started to do that. Their first ride was the Polish Moon Ride, and last year they had over 700 people on it. The Bike Fed has two-week classes that they lead teaching about all aspects of bicycling and those classes might ultimately go onto the Oak Leaf Trail or the Hank Aaron State Trail. However, they don't know until a few days or a week beforehand what route they'll be taking. Schlawbowski asked about the need for a special permit for this type of activity. Brown said that those probably do not need permit, but they should let the property manager know.
- There was then a short discussion on having a trail or bike pass on the Hank Aaron, or on trails in Milwaukee in general. Schlawbowski said that with over 400,000 people living near the trail, it would be impossible to police a trail pass on the Hank Aaron.
- The Bike Fed is expanding bike rides. They have a lot of member clubs who put on member rides. However, they are not too involved with those.
- The [Wisconsin Bike Summit](#) is in La Crosse on May 21.
- Bike Week is the week of June 4 to June 12. The Bike Fed replaced their bike to work week event with Bike Week. National Trails Day is also June 4.
- Schlawbowski said that the Wisconsin DOT gives a grant to the Bike Fed for their bicycle safety program. That funds their statewide part-time employees for safety. They also have a safe rides to school program. Those are funded through the schools.



State of Wisconsin GOVERNOR'S STATE TRAILS COUNCIL

- As a 501(c)3 the Bike Fed is limited in their lobbying strictly to bicycling. They do it locally, statewide and federally. They are mostly active during periods of budget negotiations.
- Schlabowske said that the Bike Fed looks at the Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs as an ideal model for working with local clubs. Much asked about funding bike trails. Schlabowske said that there has been a discussion of an extra fee for using bikes or purchasing bikes or a bike license, though the industry has been completely against it. Milwaukee had a program of bike registration but it wasn't effective.

1:23 P.M. – Update on Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

- Johnson reviewed the membership the SCORP user group / stakeholder team. He also reviewed the public participation plan. In the past there was a national survey and then Wisconsin DNR staff extracted pieces of it which were relevant for Wisconsin. This year, however, Wisconsin is doing all of their own research. The theme of this SCORP will be recreation funding.
- Brown said that she underscored the importance of separating out uses in the recreation survey that will be sent out randomly to select Wisconsin residents. In the survey they are breaking out different trail uses, as well as going over the normal SCORP things. Other questions being addressed by the SCORP include what uses do you go out of state to pursue? And why? It would be a good opportunity to capture some of those concerns. Johnson said that the snowmobile trail system (which is mostly on private land) should be taken into consideration in the SCORP. It should not just be things on public lands. Brown replied that it will capture anything that's available to the public, so those snowmobile trails/routes will be taken into consideration.

1:52 P.M. – DNR Report

- Brown reviewed current master plans including the [Sauk Prairie Recreation Area](#), the [Lower Wisconsin State Riverway](#) and the [Menominee River State Recreation Area](#).
- The topic of cooperative trails and master plans was brought up. Brown said that counties complete and update their own versions of master plans for the state trails they operate and maintain. These trail plans have to be substantially similar to the DNR's master planning process, but do not go through the same approval process at the DNR as a department-led master plan. Instead, the cooperative trail partner (county) is the decision-making authority.
- There was then a short discussion on the [road inventory project](#), including the [definition of a road](#).
- Brown said that the [Go Wild!](#) system is live. Vehicle registrations are a part of it, but state trail passes are not.
- There is a new department policy on pesticide use on state lands. If a volunteer group wants to use pesticides on DNR lands, they need to let the property know about by the fall of the previous year.
- There was a short brainstorming session on funding sources for the creation and maintenance of trails.

2:47 P.M. – Public comment

- Ada Duffey of the Southeastern Kettle Moraine Horse Trail Association noted that a lot of equestrians ride into towns, and that it is an example of trail use not just for recreation, but transportation.

2:50 P.M. – Identify future agenda items

- Much repeated the idea for the August meeting to be held in the Wausau area and for a lot of the meeting to be made up of short presentations from local user groups.

2:53 P.M. – Adjourn

- Motion to adjourn by Johnson. Seconded by Schneider. Meeting adjourned.