

Nonmotorized Recreation and Transportation Trails Council

MINUTES

June 27, 2019 11:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Schmeeckle Reserve

Telephone 888-327-8914, passcode 6829 265#

1. Meeting was called to order by Joel Patenaude.

a. Roll Call for Attendance (11:30—11:35 a.m.)

- i. Anne Murphy
- ii. Ben Popp (phone)
- iii. Joel Patenaude
- iv. Geoff Snudden
- v. Bill Hauda (phone)
- vi. Rod Bartlow
- vii. David Phillips
- viii. Staff: Kathryn Gehrke (DNR)
- ix. DOT: Jill Mortek Glenzinski (phone)
- x. Invited Guests: Diane Milligan & Diane Brusoe (DNR)

2. Approval/Discussion of Meeting Minutes from April 2019 (11:35-11:40)

Rod motions for approval of April minutes, Anne seconds, minutes approved.

3. Committee Chair Reports (11:40-11:50)

a. Funding (Bill, Rod, Dave)

Update on funding, Bill mentions that there are minimal updates due to budget process. David mentions group should keep moving forward in thinking about how to use funding since there may be tax funding being brought back to parks. Group discusses bill that was introduced on July 3 (is now Assembly Bill 332) draft bill which eliminates trail passes.

Rod asks on update of eminent domain and Jill says from her understanding eminent domain was removed from budget.

b. Outreach (Joel, Anne, Geoff)

Anne discusses recreational stakeholder group headed by DNR. Large group of 30 recreation stakeholders were divided into groups and Anne/NRTTC group was put into the implementation and planning group. Three groups recreation stakeholders were divided into: recreation planning & development, recreation implementation & management, recreation outreach & education. Still in beginning stages of deciding the deliverables from the group.

c. Education (Blake, Geoff)

Geoff talks about meeting with groups in Bayfield about Ebikes, outreach was not done on behalf of council. Only group to not be OK with it was CAMBA, mainly due to maintenance concerns. Northern Minnesota is only large group to give a hard yes on Ebikes on trails.

4. Vacancies (12:00-12:18)

Deb Peterson emailed in her retirement, Dana's position was never filled. Joel asks for names and people to possibly approach. Rod discusses positions council has not ever filled and ways to fill those positions, possibly find people who can represent more than one user group.

Group decides to send out application to people they know to apply and post application online with the hope of reviewing applications at the next meeting. David suggests Villas County parks and recreation lead.

Joel reiterates that group should look for water trails, pedestrians, tribal, disabilities and also look to replace representative for northern part of state and small business.

5. Update on e-bike legislation (12:18-1:15)

Assembly Bill 132 and Senate Bill 152

Brigit Brown of DNR joins the call to give an update on bills

Ebike assembly bill 132 is consistent with other legislation that has passed, in other states. It has been introduced before and not passed but it is looking like it will pass now.

Senate Bill 152. Electric scooters would be allowed, as they are defined in this bill, to operate in the same way segways are allowed to operate. Not to operate the same way as electric bikes.

Jill reiterates that escooters and ebikes are two separate bills and on two separate tracks

Scooter bill does mimic the electric mobility Segway bill that has passed, although there are very few devices that meet all the requirements defined in the bill, as far as weight and speed. The bill still does allow the DNR to define where the devices are allowed

David asks if governor has partial veto power by acts of the legislature, Rod confirms partial veto applies only to spending bills

DNR would have to post to the public that the devices are allowed before they are allowed on the trails

Joel mentions that in Madison we have electric bicycles before the law passed and group discusses the implications of this. The bicycle is pedal assist ebikes and 17mph max. Joel talks how the bicycle electric bikes now has an age limit but if/when the new legislation passes there will not be an age limit.

Brigit asks council if they can give feedback on draft recreational use icon for ebikes, council agrees, and Kathryn agrees to send out for review. Joel mentions that the icon could scare away traditional non-motorized users like some other motorized recreation icons.

Group discusses that this may just be the normal historical path of recreation and get more people out of cars and on bikes.

Brigit mentions potential legislation that would affect state trail passes. Eliminating the state trail pass has been introduced before with the hope that it would get people thinking of other ways to provide funding for state trails and parks. There is a FAQ on the DNR website if you type in "State Trail Pass" pass brings in 1-1.3 million per year. There are 3 ways partners bring in money from state trail passes, private businesses keep 10% revenue, friends group keep 20%, cooperative partners keep 70% and have to use all 70% on the trail. Friends of Military Ridge State Trail provides about 30 vendors with trail passes.

Bill asks if the various friends groups know about this potential bill, Brigit says that once or if the bill continues then it will likely be known among all friends groups through Friends of Wisconsin State Parks

This bill was circulated for sponsorship at the beginning of June, but Brigit cannot find any names on the bill

David asks the groups opinion of the bill, Joel says he is opposed due to the income it brings to Friends and external partners and the funding it brings to the parks and recreation program. David says maybe we could encourage our legislatures to come up with comprehensive funding plan to go along with the proposal of eliminating state trail passes

Brigit briefly goes over other bills

Senate Bill 212: state park admission waiver bill for 4th graders

Potential legislation: change effective to date of state trail passes and state admission stickers from 1 year from purchase rather than calendar year

Lymes disease is on rise so potential laws on providing more education on the disease

Assembly Bill 219: license plate to support state parks and have sticker on plate to serve as admission

Bill near passing that would allow parks 1 million additional in spending authority

Stewardship was extended for a few years by funding it with previous monies that have not been spent

Anne says it is Representative Hebl from Sun Prairie that introduced the bill eliminating trail passes

6. Discuss/recap NRTTC comments Sauk Prairie Master Plan (1:15-1:24)

Here is a link to the plan: <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Lands/propertyPlanning/SaukPrairie/>

Here is a link to the council's resolution on the topic: https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/parks/trails/pdfs/Badger_Prairie_Resolution_91813.pdf

Joel confirms that the group stands by its prior Resolution supporting "Alternative 4" and confirms that the minutes from April 2019 represent everyone's concerns

Diane Milligan explains that the plan is scheduled to be coming back before the Board, so we want to make sure that we have fully consulted with the Council. She explains that the Departments wants to make sure that the Council has communicated all of its concerns so that we can incorporate them in our report to the Board, and asks if the Council has any additional advice, concerns or recommendations

Anne talks about how ATV and snowmobile use allowed by the plan are noisy, and that they cause pollution and trail damage. She says these uses are antithetical to the purpose of the area, as a place for people to be outside and be a part of nature. Anne also asks : if equestrian/bike/pedestrian trails are damaged by 'events'; what kind of time frame is required of the event holders to repair trail damage?

Joel says that we don't have a trail plan yet but thought that 70% of the trails may be committed to motorcycles. He doesn't agree with that commitment

Diane says up to 50% of the bike and horse trails could be repurposed for dual sport motorcycles on up to 6 days per year

David shares his opinion as to why he believes motorized uses were added to the plan by the previous administration

David says that the group created its Resolution based on the Friends Group's position and stated that the DNR did not consult with the Council

He stated that the Council had made its statement (the Resolution), and they stand by it. Their position is in line with the Friends Group's: motorized use of the trails is just a bad concept

David says they don't have to justify their statement; just know they are behind their statement (their Resolution) and Alternative 4

7. DNR Report (1:24-2:20)

Kathryn give DNR report

Land acquisition: DNR closing on parcel for the Ice Age Trail on the E Twin River segment in Manitowoc County. Large parcel in Sheboygan County went to NRB yesterday and was approved, now it goes to Joint Finance Committee.

Maintenance update: Sections of Elroy-Sparta Trail will be closed for several more months until they can be repaired. No further maintenance updates since April.

Construction/development update: Lunda construction was the low-bidder for the Winona connector portion of the Great River State Trail. Project schedule has not been submitted but expected to begin in July and be completed by summer of 2020

Construction/development update: FY20 list for RTP grants were submitted on Friday, includes many minor bridge, signage and culvert repair and replacement

Construction/development update: McKee Rd reconstruction project was filed by WisDOT for “final concurrence” with hopes to start Spring/Summer 2020. This will affect the Badger State Trail in Fitchburg, DOT/Fitchburg are constructing an overpass for the trail. Public informational meeting at City Hall in Fitchburg on Nov 19, 7pm Fitchburg City Hall Council Chambers.

Trail planning update: DNR is still reviewing best way to update statewide trail plans and coop trail plans and we continue to work with our coop partners on development, maintenance and planning and are constantly reprioritizing maintenance

Maintenance update: Working with partners on designated use inspections

Partner update: North County Trail meeting being coordinated by Cameron Bump

Partner update: IAT Triad met and discussed: Trail management challenges including recreation uses and logging, Rusk County possible reroute, 2020 being 40th anniversary of IAT becoming National Scenic Trail

Outreach update: Parks continues to expand marketing and outreach through OutWiGo initiative. We held a very successful event at S Kettles Mother’s Day weekend featuring 19 partners, IATA, Women Hiking Wisconsin, Wisconsin Master Naturalists, Dream a Horse, to name a few. Event attracted 1600 people and was used as a way to showcase the different types of outdoor recreation available at our state properties. We are looking to hosting more OutWiGo events highlight recreation through our partners. Hoping to host two winter events, possibly at Lapham and Willow River. If your user groups would be interested in these events or are hosting events where OutWiGo would be of use in promotion or resources, please let me know. DNR will be at State Fair.

Diane Brusoe reports on master planning and walks through DNR master planning website:

<https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/propertyplanning/>

Northeast Sands is next going to public review and comment, story map for the properties are located if you click on the Northeast Sands region. This allows you see all the state properties and trails in the ecological region.

Regional boundaries were determined by an ecological landscapes report that was done by the department, boundaries were previously defined by department before planning decided to use them.

Trail highlights or changes include the department not bringing forward the ATV trail adjacent to the Pine-Popple Wild River and department proposing to close a segment of the multi-use trail system on the Potato Rapids Flowage Unit of the Peshtigo River State Forest due to impacts to archeological sites.

Plan will be posted mid-July with public meetings end of July.

Plans look at resource management, recreation management, and facilities used to support the management.

Western Prairie – draft plan to share and comment on available in August/September.

Blue Mounds State Park – comment period to review alternatives will be available in August; we are doing an extra public involvement stage to get feedback on suggested alternatives prior to drafting the master plan.

alternatives include: resource management alternatives, camping alternatives, mountain bike alternatives, snowmobile alternatives from military ridge

Public meeting was held in March and several hundred people attended. Planners would like feedback as to why people or groups are opposed or in favor of an alternative

Southwest Savanna – had kickoff meeting June 5 and 6 and region includes Military Ridge Trail and Badger State Trail, nothing to review or comment on at this point.

Central Sands Plain – management of prairie chicken and how to incorporate into the regional plan needed more discussion so the public kickoff meetings are on hold.

Group discussed DNR/NRTTC relationship and Kathryn mentions the below highlighted portions of the bylaws and says that prior to each meeting she gets an update, from employees throughout the state, on each topic for the group.

*The **department of natural resources and department of transportation shall seek the advice of, and consult with, the council regarding the planning, acquisition, development, maintenance, and management of nonmotorized recreation and transportation trails.** (b) The department shall establish and **maintain a Web site** where a person may locate information about the council, including all meeting notices and agendas. (c) The department shall **prepare written minutes** of each meeting of the council and shall make them available on the Web site established under par. (b).*

*The **nonmotorized recreation and transportation trails council shall carry out studies and make recommendations** to the legislature, governor, department of natural resources, and department of transportation **on all matters related to nonmotorized recreation and transportation trails**, including matters relating to nonmotorized trail activities or interests*

Diane Milligan asks the Council to confirm that it would be giving input on the acquisition, development, maintenance and management issues addressed in master planning, not more routine maintenance, small acquisitions, etc., and the group voiced general agreement

She then asked how the group wants to collectively comment on plans that might need to be finalized between meetings and asks if the group want to form a subcommittee on planning

Ben says that he'd like an opportunity to comment on the plan before it's in draft

Diane Brusoe mentions that an opportunity to do that would be during the initial scoping meeting

Joel asks that the DNR still anticipates and brings some issues to the group's attention

David suggests every quarterly meeting we come prepared by reviewing the proposed master plans

Kathryn offers to be more active in the agenda process, so it can get out earlier

David asks that we have two in-person meetings per year and during the call-in meetings to have a room reserved

Kathryn agrees to reserve room at DNR office during call-in meetings

8. DOT Report (2:20-2:30)

Jill updates the council on DOT matters

Governor bicycle council met and is still drafting economic bicycling impact report with hope to have something in next month or so

Working to update the Wisconsin state bike map, update normally done every 5 years, focuses on conditions of rural roads including county and state highways

Tourism is working on reprinting and circulating their bike guide

League of American Bicyclists is requesting submissions for bike friendly communities

Air quality funds applications are being taken in right now, focusing in on programs and facilities that improve air quality. Bike and pedestrian facilities are eligible, and info is available on DOT website

Transportation alternatives program will be soliciting more projects this fall, projects need to have a transportation focus and information is on DOT website

DOT taught several bike safety trainings throughout the state and last week had training in Green Bay and Wausau on designing for pedestrian safety

David asks how Wisconsin compares to other state in pedestrian deaths, Jill is not sure but knows that we aren't eligible for some funding because deaths are not as high as they are in other states

9. New Business and Future Agenda Items (2:30-2:34)

No new business. Action items includes encouraging people to apply for positions, Kathryn will post application on website. Next meeting date is September 26, 11:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

10. Set Next Meeting (2:34)

Next meeting date is September 26 by teleconference.

11. Adjournment (2:35)

Motion to adjourn by Joel, David seconds, motion approved.