Form 1100-001
(R 2/07)

NATURAL RESOURCES BOARD AGENDA ITEM

Item No. 8.B.2

SUBJECT: Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest - ATV Stakeholder Group

FOR: JUNE 2007 **BOARD MEETING**

TO BE PRESENTED BY: Tim Mulhern and Denny Leith, Division of Forestry

SUMMARY:

The purpose of this agenda item is to; 1.) provide the Natural Resource Board with an update on the progress of the Northern Highland - American Legion State Forest (NHALSF) All Terrain Vehicle citizen Stakeholder group; and 2.) Share the Department's process once the recommendations are received from the Stakeholder group.

The NHAL ATV citizen stakeholder group was initially identified as an action item in the NHAL Master Plan approved in October of 2005. The master plan action item was included in the final plan to provide stakeholders with an open and timely process to address the most widely commented planning issue. Plan implementation charged the Department to establish and coordinate a diverse citizen stakeholder group to evaluate the appropriate use of All Terrain Vehicles on the Forest and make recommendations to designate specific trails or locations that support the use of sustainable trail riding opportunities. The team was guided by Department ATV siting criteria that considers ecological, economic and social considerations. The working group consists of 17 members. The group first met on May 10, 2006 and to date, has met 18 times over the last year and is nearing its one year sun-set date to provide a recommendation to the Department. The stakeholder group is functioning well, making significant progress and confident that they will meet the team's charge and do so in a participatory and well functioning team environment. The stakeholder group is meeting for potentially the last time on June 28, 2007 to finalize its recommendations. Information about the Stakeholder group including members, meeting meetings and draft products can be found at http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/master_planning/nhal/
The Department will share its proposed next steps, including the plan to share recommendations and alternatives with the public and seek comments, summarize and evaluate comments, provide a recommendation and complete an Environmental Impact Statement, seek additional public input and share the results with the Natural Resource Board.

RECOMMENDATION: No recommendation, information item only

LIST OF ATTACHED MATERIALS:

No	☑	Fiscal Estimate Required	Yes ☐	Attached
No	☑	Environmental Assessment or Impact Statement Required	Yes ☐	Attached
No	☐	Background Memo	Yes ☑	Attached

APPROVED:

Robert J Mather — Bureau Director, — Date 06/15/07

Paul DeLong/kpm — Administrator, — Date 06/15/07

Scott Hassett — Secretary, Scott Hassett — Date 6/21/07

cc: Laurie J. Ross - AD/5

CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

State of Wisconsin

DATE: June 7, 2007 FILE REF: NRBNHALJUNE2007

TO: Natural Resource Board

FROM: Scott Hassett, Secretary

SUBJECT: Northern Highland American Legion State Forest – ATV Citizen Stakeholder Group

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The Department's next steps are outlined in the timeline below. The process includes a commitment to citizen involvement and a commitment to providing the resources necessary to address the issue in a timely manner.

2007, Summer	Receive and review Stakeholders recommendation
2007, Late Summer	Share stakeholders recommendation and alternatives with public and ***seek public input***
2007, Fall/Winter	Summarize comments and develop recommendation (would include EIS if needed)
2008, Winter	Share recommendation and EIS with Public and ***seek input***
2008, Spring	Final Recommendation and EIS
2008, Summer	Present to NRB for Approval

Attachments: http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/master_planning/nhal/
What the Master Plan says
Stakeholder Groups Concept
Stakeholder Groups Charter
Participating organizations and individuals

Printed on Recycled Paper

CONCEPT PAPER – NORTHERN HIGHLAND-AMERICAN LEGION STATE FOREST

Establishment of the Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest Sustainable ATV Trails Stakeholder Group

WHY IS THE DEPARTMENT ASSEMBLING THIS GROUP?
The Department of Natural Resources is establishing a stakeholders group to implement one of the master plan objectives recently approved by the Natural Resources Board.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS GROUP?
This group's purpose is to evaluate the appropriate use of All Terrain Vehicles on the Northern Highland–American Legion State Forest and make recommendations to designate specific trails or locations that support the use of sustainable ATV trail riding opportunities.

SOME CONSIDERATIONS:
The stakeholder group will consider both regional and local environmental, economic and social implications and be guided by the Department's ATV trail siting criteria.

TIMELINE:
The stakeholder group is to be formed within 6 months of the approved master plan. It will have 12 months to provide recommendations to the Division of Forestry regarding ATV use on the NHAL. (See Master Plan text below.)

MEMBERSHIP:
Our goal is to assemble a group that represents a balance of opinions and outdoor interests. Groups and organizations from each category below will be asked to submit the name of a person willing to participate in the stakeholders advisory group by March 1, 2006. Groups should choose candidates who are able to represent their interest group and meet qualifications. (See "Participant Qualifications".)

<u>The "NHAL State Forest ATV Trails Advisory Group" will consist of up to 16 members:</u>

1. One member who represents the interests of Vilas County as determined by the Vilas County Board.
2. One member who represents the interests of Iron County determined by the Iron County Board.
3. One member who represents the interests of Oneida County determined by the Oneida County Board.
4. One member who represents the interests of the towns as determined by the Wisconsin Towns Association.
5. One member who represents the interests of the County Forests as determined by the County Forest Association.
6. One member who represents the interests of the Lac du Flambeau Tribe.
7. One member who represents the interests of persons who are members of the Wisconsin ATV Association.
8. One member who represents a nonprofit organization whose purpose includes the conservation of natural resources.
9. One member who represents the interests of regional trail networks as determined by the Wisconsin State Trails Council.
10. One member who represents the interests of non-motorized recreational user groups.
11. One member who represents the interests of the Wisconsin Snowmobile Association.
12. One member who represents a local civic group whose purpose includes sustainable use of natural resources.
13. One member who represents the interests of local county ATV clubs.

14. One member who represents the interests of local and regional recreational business owners in Vilas Co. as determined by the local Chambers of Commerce.
15. One member who represents the interests of local and regional recreational business owners in Iron Co. as determined by the local Chambers of Commerce
16. One member who represents the interests of local and regional recreational business owners in Oneida Co. as determined by the local Chambers of Commerce.
17. One member who represents the interests of the hunting and fishing community as determined by the Wis. Conservation Congress, Forestry & Parks Committee.

- Each member specified above shall be appointed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Chief State Forester. The Chief State Forester will appoint the stakeholder group by April 20th, 2006.

PARTICIPANT QUALIFICATIONS:
Candidates submitted for the stakeholders group should meet the following criteria:

- ✓ Have an interest in researching reasonable and sustainable ATV use on the NHAL
- ✓ Must be able to represent their interest with objectivity.
- ✓ Have some working knowledge about the NHAL forest and its resources.
- ✓ Be willing to participate in a team setting and collaborate toward a common goal.
- ✓ Have some technical sense of trail development and related issues.
- ✓ Be able to consider the ecological, economic and social implications of a regional ATV trail.
- ✓ Be willing to recommend specific location(s) for an ATV trail with a focus on sustainable use and regional connections.

PLANNING AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT:
The Department of Natural Resources will designate two smaller teams to assist with planning and oversight. As needs are determined, the Stakeholder Group may need to draw upon the skills and knowledge of various resource management experts. The DNR will provide a pool of professional contacts to provide this technical support.

COMMUNICATION and EXPECTATIONS:
The stakeholder group will provide quarterly updates to members of the public and the Department of Natural Resources. The group will work with the Department to establish a list of interested parties, including, but not limited to, town and county governments, businesses and tribes to communicate the process and outcomes of the stakeholder group.

The stakeholder group shall meet at such locations within the state as determined by a majority of its members.

The stakeholder group will strive for consensus, but differing opinions will both be presented to the Natural Resources Board at the outcome of their work. The group will provide a final report and recommendation to the Department by April 30, 2007. The stakeholders will also make a recommendation on the group's future.

RESOURCES: "Guidance for All Terrain Vehicle Use on Department Lands"– Department of Natural Resources ATV trail criteria, The Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest Master Plan and related reference material, forest maps and GIS data, technical staff assistance.

YOUR NOTES

- Initial thoughts and ideas...

- Possible participants who come to mind...

NH-AL SUSTAINABLE ATV TRAIL ADVISORY GROUP PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS
ASSOCIATION OF WISCONSIN SNOWMOBILE CLUBS
ENVIRONMENTALLY CONCERNED CITIZENS OF THE LAKELAND AREA
IRON COUNTY BOARD
IRON COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
LAC DU FLAMBEAU TRIBE
NORTHWOODS CITIZENS FOR RESPONSIBLE STEWARDSHIP
ONEIDA COUNTY BIKING AND WALKING TRAILS COUNCIL
ONEIDA COUNTY BOARD
RHINELANDER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
VILAS COUNTY BOARD
VILAS COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
VILAS COUNTY ALLIANCE OF ATV CLUBS INCORPORATED
WISCONSIN TOWNS ASSOCIATION
WIS COUNTY FORESTS ASSOCIATION
WISCONSIN ALL TERRAIN VEHICLE ASSOCIATION
WISCONSIN STATE TRAILS COUNCIL
WISCONSIN CONSERVATION CONGRESS

SUSTAINABLE ATV TRAIL STAKEHOLDERS GROUP
NORTHERN HIGHLAND-AMERICAN LEGION STATE FOREST
WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

ADVISORY GROUP CHARTER

MISSION and PURPOSE

- Evaluate potential locations for sustainable all terrain vehicle (ATV) use on the Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest (NHAL).
- Following Department guidelines and requirements, develop a recommendation for sustainable use of ATVs on the NHAL to present to the Department of Natural Resources that is generally acceptable to all stakeholders.
- To implement objectives of the approved master plan by April 30, 2007.

OPPORTUNITY

- For an individual there are unique benefits to participating in this group – to serve the needs and direction of Wisconsin's State Forests, and its many users, while addressing a particularly challenging ecological, economic and social issue. In doing so, you are able to come to the table to share your particular knowledge, skills and expertise.
- As a representative of a particular group that is interested or affected, participants have the opportunity to contribute their voice while working collaboratively with other interests toward a common outcome.
- Collectively, the stakeholders group will contribute toward a common goal – to ensure sustainable ecological, social and economic benefits of the forest.

DECISION - MAKING AUTHORITY

- This is a citizens' advisory group.
- The Stakeholders Group may make "day-to-day" working decisions about how to proceed with study and research, and how to reach consensus about recommendations.
- The Sponsor Team on behalf of the Department of Natural Resources – Division of Forestry will be the recipient of the recommendation to present to the Natural Resources Board.
- Any final decisions will be made by the Natural Resources Board.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Origin of the NHAL Sustainable ATV Trails Stakeholders Group

- The Natural Resources Board (NRB) approved a directive as part of the NHAL master plan in October, 2005.
- The Department of Natural Resources developed a basic concept for a stakeholders group.
- Representative stakeholder groups were asked to recommend participants.
- The Department strove for "balanced representation" of interests, focused mostly on local groups.
- The number of participants was limited to an optimum sized working group.
- The group is advisory to the DNR/ NRB.
- The DNR will review recommendations for any final decisions
- Information is available on the DNR NHAL Master Plan Web site at: http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/master_planning/nhal/NHAL-atvstakeholder.htm

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Stakeholders

a) Attend meetings regularly.
b) Read and research information carefully.
c) Articulate your interest group's, concerns and perspectives on issues being addressed.
d) Maintain an open mind regarding other views.
e) Focus on "the big picture".
f) Work with a team attitude.
g) Share knowledge and information.
h) Participate collaboratively in group decisions.
i) Keep the public, support teams, and stakeholder parent organizations informed of progress through the acting team leader.
j) Report back at start of meetings on how you represented and updated your organization about the stakeholder group's progress.
k) Determine how to communicate the group's progress via the team leader – or whether a group spokesperson or chairperson is needed.

Department of Natural Resources

a) Identify a group facilitator.
b) Appoint stakeholder group participants from a list of organization nominations.
c) Provide leadership and a Team Leader.
d) Lend oversight by way of an initiative Sponsor Team.
e) Establish sideboards and provide Department standards.
f) Supply forest assessment data and analysis.
g) Lend administrative support.
h) Coordinate and assist team & public communications – media, web site, mail.
i) Be available as an expert resource.
j) Supply assessment data, tools and analysis for alternatives.

Facilitator

a) Orient the group and establish ground rules.
b) Facilitate a meaningful and open dialogue.
c) Help people see that they each have part of the answer.
d) Use appropriate group techniques to assist:
   1) Study and research 2) Developing a recommendation
e) Remain neutral.
f) Encourage creativity.
g) Draw on participants' interests instead of positions.
h) Encourage collaboration.
i) Maintain focus and direction.
j) Build trust and mutual respect.
k) Manage group dynamics.
l) Interpret and help facilitate consensus.
m) Assist the group in organizing study groups if needed for addressing some tasks.

Technical Support

State Forest staff and other resources are available should the group need specialized expertise.

OPERATIONS

Ground Rules & Communications

a) Attend meetings regularly, arrive on time.
b) Listen carefully and speak honestly.
c) Respect the views of others.
d) Keep an open mind.
e) Critique issues, not people.
f) Speak up and address the whole group if you have a view to express.
g) Ask questions if something is unclear to you.
h) Allow everyone to speak without dominating the conversation.
i) Come to all meetings prepared for discussion.
j) As a courtesy to team members make every effort to attend all meetings. If circumstance prevents your attendance, alert the team leader
k) Take responsibility for the success of the meeting.

The "Sideboards"

- The Department's ATV criteria will guide the stakeholder group's work.
- A trail recommendation must be completed by April of 2007.
- Trail recommendations must fit with elements of the approved master plan.

Some Starting Points

- Recommendations should follow these guiding principles:
  - *Engineering standards – Any future trail would have to meet design criteria.
  - *Enforcement principles – Trail enforcement would be needed from the beginning of any new ATV trail management.
  - *Education – Trail users, local businesses and the public must be kept informed.
- The directive approved by the Natural Resources Board states, "To aid in the trail siting process the Department will establish a stakeholder group to make recommendations to the Department on potential, suitable ATV trail sites and routes." (See NHAL Master Plan pp. 165 & 166.)
- State statutes must be considered.
- A referendum held in Vilas Co. opposed ATV use on county forest lands.
- Loop trails were rejected by the public during the master plan process.
- A connector corridor between counties or existing trails is the most acceptable.
- Developing "play" areas or intensive use areas is not desirable.
- Partnerships between stakeholder groups and the Dept. would be necessary to accomplish any future trail development.
- Monitoring impacts and use on a regular basis would have to be part of any future trail management. Stakeholders may be able to determine acceptable limits of trail impacts or abuse.
- Trial period – The Department of Natural Resources holds trail closure authority and the trail would, essentially, be an on-going trial subject to closure if sustainability isn't met.
- An Environmental Impact Assessment may be required at each phase of any proposed trail development.
- The Dept. of Natural Resources will provide resources and assist as needed.
- NHAL staff know the forest well and are a valuable resource to the group.

Meetings

a) Seek a convenient and neutral location to meet the member's needs
b) Agree to a convenient time, day and location, frequency and duration.
   - The group should meet regularly – conclusion date is Apr. 30, 2007
c) Working decisions within the group – agree to some form of consensus / method of decision-making.
d) If subcommittees are formed they must be generally accepted by the group and work within the same sideboards. All members will have the opportunity to participate in sub groups.

Tasks and Expectations

- **Gather resources –**
  Gather or request resource materials as needed including:
  - A List of participants and team members.
  - A list of contacts for research support.
  - Maps.
  - Trail criteria and design standards.
  - State statutes.
  - Master Plan language.
  - Initial recruitment package – Letter, master plan language, concept paper.

- **Study and Collaborate –**
  - Study potential locations for appropriate and sustainable use of ATVs on the NHAL State Forest.
  - Discuss options and alternatives.
  - Collaborate with other team members to accomplish tasks.
  - Work toward consensus to arrive at a final mutually agreed upon recommendation for the Department by April 30, 2007.

- **Document and participate –**
  - Keep meeting minutes, to include complete records – attendance, agenda, handouts, actions or decisions.
  - Track correspondence.
  - Update members and the web site following each meeting to include: meeting minutes & progress report, next meeting date.

- **Keep others informed –**
  Follow a Public Information Plan to include:
  - A Web site – Meeting minutes?, Progress reports? Meeting schedule.
  - Media Contacts – News releases; Public Information Office, DNR; Wis. Newspaper Assoc. has a new free web site for "public notices".
  - Internal team correspondence / external mailings or email distribution lists
  - Participants keep their representative organization updated and report back to stakeholders.

ATV Directive from Master Plan

NEW ATV TRAIL OBJECTIVE
Provide sustainable ATV riding opportunities and a quality riding experience with an emphasis on trails that link or are connected to a regional network of ATV trails.

ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLES
The Department supports the development and maintenance of ATV riding opportunities on appropriate trails, particularly trails that contribute to regional trail networks. To support the statewide and regional goal the use of ATVs is authorized on trails designated for ATV use on the NH-AL. However, because a suitable route or routes for ATV trails on the NH-AL have not been identified, this plan does not designate any trail for the use of ATVs at this time. The Department may designate ATV trails in the future when suitable trail routes are found. Trails would be sited and developed according to the Department's established ATV trail policies and standards. The trails would be fully-developed trails as defined by NR44.07(3)(h) except that native soils may be used as the tread surface where suitable soils are present.

Additional analysis of potential trail routes will be conducted within 18 months of the approval of this plan. This analysis will evaluate and consider potential environmental, social, economic, and safety issues. The review process will also examine alternative trail locations and recommend any mitigation measures that might lessen environmental and social impacts. Public involvement opportunities will be part of the ATV trail siting process.

To aid in the trail siting process the Department will establish a stakeholder group to make recommendations to the Department on potential, suitable ATV trail sites and routes. The stakeholder group will be established within six months of the date of the approved plan. The Department will consider the stakeholder group's recommendations when making a determination of the appropriate designation of an ATV trail or trails on the NH-AL. If no suitable sites are found to be feasible, no trail will be designated.

Note: By permit ATVs may also be used by persons with disabilities for personal conveyance on non-designated trails or off-trail, and by Department staff for management and law enforcement purposes.

NHAL Master Plan, pp. 165-166