

MINUTES FINAL - as of 1/7/08
Governor's State Trails Council Meeting
Friday, October 12, 2007
Apostle Islands National Lakeshore Office
415 Washington Ave., Bayfield, WI
10:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M.

State Trails Council Members Present: Ken Carpenter, Randy Harden, Tom Huber, Jim Joque, Mike McFadzen, Dave Phillips, Martha Schouweiler, Tom Thornton, Robbie Webber

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Staff Present: Peter Biermeier, Brigit Brown, Terry Jordan, Joseph Warren

Others Present: Nancy Atwater, Ron Bergin, Alex Bub, Tom Chwala, Alan Drum, Sue Drum, Don Erickson, Vicki Gillett, Ann Harden, Mary Motiff, Don Mrotek, Dave Peterson, Judy Peterson, Bill Pfaff, John Schnorr, Bill Schumann, Lloyd Turner

Agenda review/repair and approval of July meeting minutes

- Phillips called the meeting to order. Approval of the July 13, 2007 meeting minutes by McFadzen. Thornton seconded. Minutes approved.

Chair Report

- Phillips introduced Jim Joque, new appointee to the State Trails Council who will be representing users with disabilities. Joque is Coordinator for Disability Services at UW-Stevens Point and is also an Adventure Education Instructor and Leave No Trace Master Educator.
- Phillips stated that he has discussed the concept of a non-motorized trails study committee, similar to the Legislative Committee on State Trails Policy formed by Senator Breske, with legislators, but because of the state budget issues, there will be no progress on the committee until the budget is passed. Phillips will contact legislators again as soon as the budget is passed, and encourages others to do so as well.

State Trails Council Member Reports

- *Hiking/Walking.* Phillips stated that he would like to see more information about the North Country National Scenic and State Trail available to the public. There is little mention of the trail or the Ice Age Trail on the Wisconsin Department of Tourism's new website. Phillips would like to also see more information about access to the trail listed.
- *Equestrian.* Carpenter continues to work on the Glacial Heritage Area, a concept project to link together recreation areas between Madison and Milwaukee. The area was noted in the DNR Land Legacy Report. Carpenter informed the Council of the Nippersink trail project by Burlington and northern Illinois. The trail is a proposed multi-user trail. The

communities and user groups have been working independent from the DNR (but with DNR support). Carpenter will update the Council as the project progresses. Brown stated that the trail is not on the State Trails Network Plan and the DNR did not have funding or authority to work on the project. It is a great grassroots effort by individuals and communities in the area.

- *Off-Road Vehicles.* Harden stated that he has felt there is a need to separate ATVs, motorcycles and trucks on the council to better represent each group. John Schnorr with the Wisconsin Off-Highway Vehicle Association (WOHVA) and Alex Bub with the American Motorcyclist Association District 16 have introduced a proposal to the legislature to increase the number of members of the STC from 9 to 11 with four members devoted to motorized users. Both groups are also working to get a registration program in place. WOHVA has been working with the Mole Lake Tribe in Forest County and got a resolution passed concerning safe and environmentally friendly use of motorized vehicles in the area. This effort was nationally recognized by the Blue Ribbon Coalition. ATV groups are working with the Friends Group at Richard Bong State Recreation Area to improve the trails at the property. The Governor's office was able to set aside some ATV money in the budget to help with the trail improvements.
- *Bicycling.* In the wake of the bridge collapse in Minnesota, Transportation Secretary Mary Peters stated that bicycling was not a form of transportation and that money spent on bike paths and trails was not a good use of federal funds. Her comments prompted a strong reaction nationwide. Huber stated that the state has been under spending some of the federal funding and that many bike and pedestrian trail users are trying to get the legislature to provide a new source of funding by combining existing programs in the proposed state budget. Another issue came up in Madison when someone called 911 from a bike trail and the operator could not find the location to give to emergency personnel. Webber stated that biking professionals are working to make sure the larger trails are in GIS databases for emergency purposes.
- *Snowmobiling.* The 2006-07 snowmobile season was good and bad. The southern part of the state received a lot of snow but northern Wisconsin did not receive much snow until late March. Tourism income generated by snowmobiling was way down, but because supplemental grooming costs were down, most trail projects were able to be funded. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is also working to fund some projects in the state. There is a hearing in Madison to make the 55-m.p.h. night speed limit for snowmobiles a permanent rule. Thornton will update the Council on the results. The lawsuit involving the rail corridor in Bayfield County will be going before a federal court in Chicago on November 8. The resolution the STC passed in support of Bayfield County is likely to be included as evidence.
- *Cross-Country Skiing.* The sport is not seeing an overall increase in the number of new participants. Youth and high school programs, including senior and junior level ski teams, are having success at introducing new members to the sport. Lack of snow continues to be a big issue. Snowmaking equipment in certain areas of the state provides a lot of potential to keep the sport growing. Lighted ski areas, such as those at Lapham Peak, Iola and Madison, have also helped. Downhill skiing is also suffering some of the

same problems as cross-country skiing; however, snowboarding is gaining popularity. Phillips stated that he would like McFadzen to add snowshoeing, skijoring and dog sledding to his report as those trail uses would most likely fit into his constituency. Brown stated that snowshoeing may also fall within the walking and hiking category. Schouweiler stated that skijoring, a cross between cross-country skiing and dog sledding, is rising in popularity and that she has received inquiries from many people looking for places to skijor. Brown noted that a skijoring webpage has been added to the DNR website.

- *Water Trails.* Several people have expressed an interest in working with the water trails subcommittee. *Schouweiler passed out information about water trails in Lake Superior and around the Apostle Islands.* Maps of the trails are the most sought after, but people are also looking for stories and information about the areas the trails pass through. The Minnesota water trail program is a very good model to follow with maps and online information readily available. The water trail in the Lac du Flambeau area is also a good model to follow. Funding for a water trails program is an issue Schouweiler continues to look at. Schouweiler would also like to consult with the Department of Tourism. The Wisconsin DNR has no paid staff assigned to work on a water trails program. It would be difficult to rely solely on grassroots efforts to create a statewide program. A non-motorized boat registration fee could be an option to look into for funding.
- *Department of Transportation.* The DOT has been working with communities to stress the importance of making trails and paths suitable for users of all abilities, including complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and setting up detectable warnings at crossings. The DOT continues to work with communities to make sure they are following the DOT Best Practices Guide. Brown stated that the Access Board should get to final rule making for the Trail Guidelines next year.
- *Users with Disabilities.* Joque stated that he researched some of the statistics regarding accessible trails in the state. About 24% of the trails could be considered accessible and Joque stated that this was a good percentage. Joque will be working with the DNR Disabled Advisory Council on “Open the Outdoors,” a nation-wide effort to provide disabled individuals with a means of accessing recreation opportunities, and on other issues, including the surface of trails and promoting awareness of ADA. Joque will also be looking into what other states are doing to accommodate persons with disabilities.

DNR Report

- The DNR is working to compile all of the comments from the NHAL public comment sessions held in September. The turnout was very good at each of the hearings. The Council discussed the NHAL ATV issue later in the meeting
- The DNR was going to have a planning meeting with the ATV Stakeholder group at the end of October to discuss the Motorized State Recreation Area concept, however, with some of the transitions in DNR staffing, the meeting needed to be postponed. The DNR will be looking to reschedule the planning meeting with the Stakeholder Committee and new DNR staff.

- The start of the master plan process for the Badger Army Ammunition Plant, next to Devil's Lake State Park, will be coming up. The U.S. Army is in the process of cleaning up the property.
- The Wisconsin State Park System (WSPS) Strategic Plan is nearly complete. Graphically it is very similar to the WSPS 2007 annual report. The Strategic Plan will provide solid direction for park and trail users.
- The Amery to Dresser State Trail continues to be involved in a lawsuit. The Department of Justice is continuing to work on this issue.
- Nature is Our Business is a strategic direction for the DNR to work with businesses to provide new user-based recreation opportunities to the public and promote existing facilities better. The DNR is working with the Department of Tourism on this program. The DNR will be hiring a Nature is Our Business Coordinator. Biermeier stated that Council Members are invited to upcoming strategy sessions.
- Matt Frank is the new Secretary for the Wisconsin DNR. Brown stated that Frank has already been very engaging with different user groups throughout the state and is hoping to attend one of the upcoming STC meetings.
- The WSPS Trail Crew finished the first two loops of single track mountain bike trails at the Northern Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest. The trail crew is now at Governor Dodge State Park to reroute a horse/snowmobile trail. Brown will be hiring two additional people for the crew. Carpenter asked about funding for the crew for 2008. Brown stated there should be funding available for trail projects at Wyalusing State Park, which had extensive damage to their trails from the storms in August, and Potawatomi State Park.
- There will be a note on the side of the 2008 State Trail Pass that lists an online link to a survey. The survey will be available off of the DNR website and can be filled out by anyone that purchased a Trail Pass. Brown asked Council Members to let her know of any relevant questions they would like asked on the survey. Huber asked about trail pass revenues. Brown stated that sales of trail passes have been decreasing over the past few years.

NH-AL ATV Resolutions

- McFadzen and Harden each introduced the proposed resolutions they had drafted concerning ATV use in the Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest. *Copies of each proposed resolution were passed out to Council Members.* The resolution drafted by McFadzen was in favor of opposing the introduction of ATV trails in the NHAL State Forest. The resolution drafted by Harden was in favor of supporting the introduction of ATV trails in the Forest as suggested by the NHAL ATV Stakeholder group.

- Thornton asked if both McFadzen and Harden would be willing to withdraw their resolutions on an issue that would be divisive among Council Members. Harden stated that his resolution was in reaction to McFadzen's resolution, and he would withdraw his resolution from consideration if McFadzen would also. McFadzen stated that his constituents have asked him to bring this issue before the State Trails Council, and that as an advisory council to the Natural Resources Board, the STC should not hide from a controversial issue.
- Webber stated that it would be difficult to vote on both resolutions at the same time and would not be in accordance with Roberts Rules of Order. Webber stated that tabling the resolutions would avoid the anticipated breakdown of communication between Council Members. McFadzen stated that the NHAL ATV issue is timely because the NRB will be discussing the same issue at their January meeting.
- Huber stated that this issue would seem to be setting a precedent for the STC by deciding on the trails for one property and stated that past resolutions have been drafted for issues that have had implications statewide.
- Biermeier stated that the DNR will be supportive of whatever action the STC decides to take concerning the resolutions. Biermeier also stated past resolutions by the STC have been carefully worded to consider the full picture of an issue. Biermeier suggested that the STC could consider scheduling their January meeting before the NRB's January meeting to discuss the issue further.
- Phillips suggested a third, alternative resolution regarding ATV and other long distance trails on state property. *Phillips passed out the proposed resolution to Council Members.*
- Motion to table the first two resolutions by Webber. Seconded by Huber. Motion to table both resolutions passed, opposed by McFadzen.
- Thornton stated that because Council Members did not have a chance to review the third resolution prior to the meeting, it would be inappropriate to vote on it. Phillips stated that the proposed resolution is not a final draft, but a working paper for Council Members to discuss. Motion to accept the resolution for discussion by Webber. Seconded by Huber for discussion only. Motion passed.
- Phillips stated that the issues brought up by both McFadzen's and Harden's resolutions were important for the STC to address which is why he drafted a third resolution to combine the pertinent ideas of the first two. Phillips stated he would like to have a resolution drafted that all members can agree to support.
- Phillips motioned to form a subcommittee of the STC to work on a substitute resolution for the NHAL State Forest. Seconded by Huber. Motion passed. Phillips, McFadzen and Harden will comprise the subcommittee and will work together to draft a resolution to bring before the council at the January 2008 meeting.

- Huber stated that according to the Bylaws, Council Members must receive resolutions for review prior to the meeting.

Complete Streets Initiative

- The Complete Streets Initiative is a national movement aimed to make city streets safe for all users whether they are disabled, walking, biking, riding the bus, driving a car, etc. *Webber passed out a Complete Streets brochure.* The idea is to look at streets and roadways, not necessarily trails, but it brings up the issue of access to trails.
- One of the first steps in the Complete Streets process is to strengthen the state's policies to require all new construction or reconstruction projects to incorporate bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The next step is to develop guidance for what those facilities should consist of and standards for a complete street.
- The Governor's Bicycle Council, the Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Health Coalition, and the Wisconsin Partnership for Activity and Nutrition are all very interested in pursuing this initiative.
- The final step and goal of the initiative would be to progress the ideas and guidelines towards state law. Huber stated that these steps could take a few years. Webber stated that as more groups recognize the issue, it will help the process move forward.
- Carpenter stated that equestrian users face the same problems of using roads as right of ways to ride their horses. Webber stated that the Complete Streets Initiative is typically intended for streets in a more urban setting. Thornton stated that for snowmobiles, the biggest problem with roadways is having access to cross a bridge. Brown stated that incorporating the ideas of Complete Streets for other uses such as equestrian and snowmobiles may be something to take into consideration even though it is not part of the national movement. Huber stated that the DOT had not been planning on recommending changes for rural and town roads, but could look into the possibility.
- Brown stated that as funding becomes available, the DNR is attempting to fix or replace roads in state parks, and that having some basic guidance for making streets complete would help educate staff and would assist the DNR when it looks to upgrade the roadways in state parks.
- Phillips asked if there was any opposition from Council Members for the STC to work with the Governor's Bicycle Council on this issue. Council Members were not opposed and McFadzen stated that the initiative was something the STC should continue to watch. Webber and Huber will draft a resolution for Council Members to discuss at the January meeting.

Meeting Dates for 2008

- Monday, January 7, 2008 10-12 p.m. (teleconference)
- Tuesday, April 15, 2008 10-3 p.m. (Madison, State Capitol Building)
- Friday, July 11, 2008, 10-2 p.m. (Wyalusing State Park)
- Friday, October 17, 2008, 10-2 p.m. (Kettle Moraine State Forest – Northern Unit)

Officer Elections

- Officer Elections for 2008 were moved to the January 7 meeting.
- *Brown passed out some proposed changes to the STC Bylaws that would allow officer elections to be held in other meetings besides the January meeting.* The Council will vote on these proposed changes at the next meeting.
- The Council discussed the duties of the officers. Phillips would like the Council to look at defining the responsibility of officers and make any changes to the bylaws if necessary. Phillips would like to discuss at one of the upcoming STC meetings, possibly January. Warren will send a draft of the minutes to Carpenter, STC Secretary, to review before the minutes are sent out to all Council Members. Brown will send out Roberts Rules of Order to Council Members to review.

Other Business of the State Trails Council

- *Brown also passed out some proposed changes to the STC Bylaws concerning Council Member representation.* The Council will vote on these proposed changes at the next meeting.
- The Mid America Trails and Greenways Conference will be December 9-12 in Chicago, IL. *Brown passed out a brochure for the conference.* Brown asked Council Members to contact her if they were interested in attending.
- Bill Sloey, Professor Emeritus of Ecology at UW-Oshkosh has requested that the STC pass a resolution in favor of putting a hold on all new trail construction until the invasive plant, garlic mustard, is controlled. *Brown passed out a letter from Sloey to Council Members and also a response email to the letter by Kelly Kearns.* Sloey and Kearns, DNR Plant Conservation Program Manager, have been invited to discuss the invasive species issue and the best management practices initiative with the Council at the January 2008 meeting.
- *Phillips passed out an excerpt of a Master Thesis Paper to Council Members concerning All-Terrain Vehicles in Wisconsin.* The Thesis was conducted by Robert Smail, a graduate Student at UW-Stevens Point.

Public comment

- Don Erickson, a volunteer who looks after 50 miles of the Ice Age Trail (IAT) in Washburn and Barron counties, informed the Council of the issue of access on the Tuscobia segment of the IAT. Agreements are in place to reroute the IAT off of the Tuscobia State Trail, but funds are not available. Senator Breske looked at the issue with the Legislative Council, but funding remains a problem. Erickson asked for any assistance the Council could provide to help with the issue. Erickson also stated that he thought council members did the right thing in working together on one resolution for the NHAL State Forest.
- Mary Motiff, Director of Bayfield County Tourism and Recreation, stated that the Department of Tourism website tends to rely on communities and individuals for some information which may help with the North Country Trail, and the new NIB Coordinator would help bring different entities together.
- Al Drum stated that he was glad that the council would be working together to combine the two resolutions regarding the NHAL State Forest into one resolution suitable for all user groups.
- Bill Pfaff, President of the Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs (AWSC) and former Council Member, passed out a 2007-2008 snowmobiling fact booklet. The booklet lists financial facts, numbers and research data concerning snowmobiling.
- Motion to adjourn by Phillips. Seconded by McFadzen. Meeting adjourned.