

MINUTES FINAL - as of 4/28/09
Governor's State Trails Council Meeting
Monday, January 12, 2009
Teleconference
10:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

State Trails Council Members Present: Ken Carpenter, David Phillips, Robbie Webber.
Via telephone: Randy Harden, Tom Huber, Jim Joque, Mike McFadzen, Tom Thornton

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Staff Present: Dan Schuller, Peter Biermeier, Brigit Brown, Joseph Warren. Via telephone: Diane Conklin, Pat Zatopa

Others Present: Ken Linzmeyer, Rob McConnell, Barb Riva, Luana Schneider, Sally Ward.
Via telephone: Guy Hanson, Terry Larson, Ruth Sproull

Agenda review/repair and approval of October meeting minutes

- Harden called the meeting to order. Approval of the October 17, 2008 meeting minutes by Webber. Seconded by Thornton. Minutes approved.

Chair Report

- Harden updated the Council on the Ad Hoc Committee meeting on Thursday, January 8, 2009. The committee, to recommend improvements to the structure of the STC, will have a list of recommendations to present to the Council in April. Two members resigned from the committee due to time constraints.

State Trails Council Member Reports

- *Snowmobiling.* There are good conditions in both the northern and southern part of the state. As of January 3, 2009 there have been 13 fatalities (four non-residents) in Wisconsin with six that could be related to alcohol and speed. This week is snowmobile safety week including a proclamation for not operating a snowmobile while drinking. The Snowmobile Council is having a meeting in Madison and will also be meeting with boating and ATV groups. The Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs is also looking into linking an OWI citation on a recreational vehicle with the operator's driver license. Phillips asked if the STC may want to consider a resolution regarding alcohol and the operation of any vehicle or device while recreating. *The STC passed a Resolution in support of legislation to make snowmobile trails safer in Wisconsin in April 2005.*
- *Cross-country skiing.* The season is off to a good start, and for the second year in a row to begin the season, the southern part of the state has received more snow than northern Wisconsin. Team sports in high school and grade school have been very popular and hundreds of skiers turned out at the Greenbush trails in the Kettle Moraine Forest. There has been a resurgence of classic style skiing, in part due to races such as the American Birkebeiner. The Birkebeiner will be held on February 21, and this year, classic and skate skiers will have a wider trail with separate tracks for about half the race.

- *Users with Disabilities.* The Wisconsin DNR website is a good source of information to see what accessible features are available to users, such as trails and cabins, and also for information about the "Open the Outdoors" nation-wide effort. Terry Larson will be speaking about wider/safer machines for the physically challenged later in the meeting.
- *Equestrian.* The National Trails Symposium was held in Little Rock, Arkansas in November. The conference provides a great opportunity for user groups to meet and network. Equestrian users represented about 10% of all user groups at the conference. Equestrian users discussed forming a national coalition to have a clearinghouse of information and ideas. Other trail uses have national coalitions, but there is currently not one for equestrians.
- *Bicycling.* The city of Madison prepared a list of projects for the Rails to Trails Conservancy (RTC) 2010 Campaign for Active Transportation. This list came in handy when the National stimulus package was looking for projects that could be implemented quickly. The list was submitted to national bike organizations and the Madison Mayor's Office. The Wisconsin Partnership for Activity and Nutrition is also supporting a Complete Streets resolution similar to what the STC passed. The National Bike Summit will be held in March in Washington D.C. and bike advocates will have the opportunity to talk to Legislators about trail issues.
- *Department of Transportation.* The DOT has completed a draft of a comprehensive transportation plan, Connections 2030. A couple of chapters deal with Complete Streets, bike/pedestrian best practices, trails and trail facilities, and accessibility. The draft plan is available on the DOT website. The DOT is holding a series of public meetings and the public can review and comment on the draft until February 27. Wisconsin recently ranked #2 in the nation as a bike friendly state.

Citizen Advisory Committee for Stewardship Program Access Update

- McFadzen updated the Council on the Citizen Advisory Committee for Stewardship Program Access. The Legislature approved the Stewardship Program for 2010-2019 for \$86 million per year. The committee is taking a look at the five nature-based activities: hiking, cross-country skiing, hunting, fishing and trapping, to determine if these uses will be the same or change, for allowable activities on land purchased with Stewardship Program money beginning in 2010. The committee will be having one more meeting with a goal of taking recommendations to the NRB in March and having public hearings in summer and fall. Hunting is one of the big issues the committee is discussing. The public can also submit their comments to the committee.

DNR Report

- Brown updated the Council on the State Trail Pass survey summary. There were over 3000 responses to the survey in 2008. The DNR will be offering the survey again in 2009. Brown will send out a summary of survey results to the Council.
- Brown attended the initial organizational meeting for the Wisconsin Off-Highway Motorcycle Association (WOHMA). Off-highway and dual-sport motorcycle groups brought in a national organization and worked on bylaws to form a formal Wisconsin organization to address issues such as lack of riding areas.

- The DNR, National Park Service, and Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation have a triad partnership for the Ice Age Trail. DNR Secretary Matt Frank would like the DNR to focus more attention to the trail, to develop more sections of the trail and connect Ice Age Trail parcels. The DNR and partners will be working on this. One of the issues the State Park System is working on with the Bureau of Wildlife, is hunting on State Ice Age Trail Area properties.
- Upcoming or ongoing master plans include High Cliff State Park, Straight Lake, Pike Lake Unit of the Kettle Moraine Forest, the Ice Age Reserve at Cross Plains, Capital Springs State Recreation Area and Point Beach State Forest. The Glacial Heritage Area near Jefferson may also be going through a management or coordinative regional plan. It is a different type of project from a state park and the DNR is working with the region.
- The DNR submitted a list of infrastructure and trail projects as requested for the Federal Job Stimulus Bill. The DNR will have to wait to see if any proposals are selected.
- The State Park System is not sure how the new state budget will have an effect on the Trails Program. The DNR is a state agency and not insulated from the economic downturn. If legislation is approved for the Special Committee on Enhancing Recreational Trails for Non-Motorized Use, Wisconsin State Parks could see some positive benefits.
- The DNR will be taking a compilation of information and data for the Motorized State Recreation Area (MSRA) concept to the Natural Resources Board on January 22, 2009 as an information item. The green sheet will be available on the NRB website. The STC has passed a resolution of support for a Motorized State Recreation Area.
- Thornton stated there has been a problem with some money from the snowmobile program not being used for snowmobile projects in state parks. Brown and Conklin have been in contact with managers about these issues and are working to remedy the situation. Information was put on the internal DNR website for property managers. Thornton asked if the DNR would give an update at the April STC meeting.

Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Criteria Update

- Conklin distributed proposed changes to the RTP rating questions for the Council to review. The changes are intended, in part, to help spread the money out between larger and smaller projects and by region and county. Conklin stated that if these changes do not help address the issue, the STC and DNR can look at this issue again later to refine the ranking criteria. McFadzen stated that the STC has a responsibility to all trail constituents, both large organizations and small clubs, and these changes are a good first step. The RTP booklets will be printed in February. Carpenter asked to receive a listing of each of the projects that receive RTP funding.

Resolution in support of Proposals from the Special Committee on Non-Motorized Trails

- Phillips thanked the STC for previously passing a resolution of support of a study committee for non-motorized trails. The committee is finished meeting. Two of the proposals that came out of the committee's work include the possible creation of a non-

motorized trails recreation council and a segregated fund for non-motorized trails. The Governor's Bicycle Council has already supported the proposals from the committee.

- Resolution moved by McFadzen, seconded by Webber for discussion. Thornton stated it is important that the funding mechanism for the proposals be identified or they may have a difficult time making it through the Legislature. Phillips stated the committee was looking at a variety of different possibilities including a percentage of the gas tax and user fees.
- Roll-call vote on the motion to support the resolution. Huber abstained from vote. Resolution passed.

Wider/Safer Machines for the Physically Challenged

- Terry Larson spoke to the Council regarding wider and safer machines for the physically challenged. Larson has a grandson with cerebral palsy who uses a machine similar to a modified dune buggy. Larson's grandson has been through a safety riding course and has a handicapped sticker. Larson stated they have taken the machine to Florida and Oklahoma, but have found a lack of riding opportunities in Wisconsin. Larson was informed about the current Light Utility Vehicle (LUV) county pilot program in select counties in northern Wisconsin. Harden stated that the LUV pilot program is going well and some counties may be looking at putting a permanent program in place.
- Harden stated that some trails built for ATVs can be a problem for machines that do not meet the definition or dimensions of an ATV. There have not been any engineering standards for side-by-side vehicles. Brown stated that the DNR is looking at the concept of a Motorized Recreation Area. The area could provide for different motorized uses and types of vehicles. The DNR allows an electric-powered motorized wheelchair on trails and also has a policy that allows persons with disabilities to use motorized vehicles for hunting. The DNR wants to consider all issues and viewpoints when reviewing these policies and Joque will give Larson the contact information for Andy Janicki, the DNR's Accessibility Coordinator. Brown, Harden and Joque will stay in touch with Larson.

Other Business

- The STC position, formerly held by a Water Trails representative has not been filled. Some members of the public have inquired about the position. Applications go through the Governor's Office.

Public Comment

- Ruth Sproull asked that the Oneida County Walking and Biking Council be informed of State Trails Council meetings. The DNR has an e-mail distribution list and Brown stated that anyone can be added to this list to receive STC updates.
- Barb Riva with the Southern Kettle Moraine Horse Trail Association asked why equestrian use is not included in the five nature-based activities of the Stewardship Program. McFadzen stated that five activities were defined in the legislative language when the Stewardship Program was first implemented. Defining the activities will be a big issue that the citizen advisory committee continues to work on.

- Luana Schneider asked about the possibility of joining the STC teleconference by telephone. Brown stated that for the January meeting, the DNR has at least one phone line for the public in the northern part of Wisconsin (Rhinelander in the case of today's meeting), in addition to the meeting room in Madison. Schneider asked to be notified when the MSRA green sheet is available to the public

- Motion to adjourn by Webber. Seconded by Thornton. Meeting adjourned.