



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

## Meeting Minutes

Final - as of 1/14/13

**Friday, November 2, 2012**

Barkhausen Waterfowl Preserve, 2024 Lakeview Drive, Suamico, WI

10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

**State Trails Council Members present:** Randy Harden, Doug Johnson, Phil Johnsrud, Skip Maletzke, Bryan Much, Dave Phillips, Harold Schmidt, Luana Schneider, Robbie Webber

**State Trails Council Members not in attendance:** Ken Carpenter, Mike McFadzen, James White

**WI DNR Staff present:** Dan Schuller, Tim Parsons (via telephone), Joseph Warren

**Others present:** Ron Bohl, Alex Bub, Leif Hubbard (DOT), Rick Moen, Rebecca Nyberg, Dave Peterson, Judy Peterson, Sam Vandenberg

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### 10:00 A.M. – Agenda review/repair and approval of July meeting minutes

- Harden called the meeting to order. Motion for approval of the July 9, 2012 meeting minutes by Webber. Seconded by Maletzke. Minutes approved.

### 10:10 A.M. – Chair Report

- All states had to opt in for the reauthorized Recreational Trails Program (RTP) before September 2012. Wisconsin was one of the 48 states that did. Only Kansas and Florida did not. RTP funds for Wisconsin will be available for Federal fiscal years 2013 and 2014.
- Harold Schmidt's application to the Governor's Office was not accepted. The council will need to submit another applicant for off-road bicycle representative, a voting position. Schmidt will remain with the council as a non-voting member until the voting position is filled.
- Leif Hubbard, a landscape architect with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, will be taking over duties as liaison for the STC and DOT, formerly the position of Tom Huber.

### 10:15 A.M. – DNR Report

- Dan Schuller, Bureau Director for the Wisconsin State Park System, gave a PowerPoint presentation for Act 168, part of a new law the Wisconsin legislature approved earlier this year that expands hunting and trapping in state parks. Schuller discussed proposals of how the DNR will implement this new law. Any proposals by the DNR must be approved by the Natural Resources Board (NRB). Public listening sessions are being held at five locations across the state and there is a public comment period for written comments open until November 23, 2012. Comments may be submitted by [email](#), or by U.S. mail to:
  - Wisconsin State Parks - Act 168  
PO Box 7921  
Madison, WI 53707-7921
- The DNR will compile all comments, adjust the proposals as needed, and bring a package to the NRB at the December 11-12 meeting. This law is set to take effect beginning January 1, 2013.



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- All proposed hunting maps, proposed hunting timeframes, listening session locations and more information about the law are available on the DNR website: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/parks/>.
- Schmidt asked that the state park maps have closures surrounding off-road bike trails, similar to the proposed closures that surround several of the horse trails in different parks. Schmidt stated there are a lot of bikers in the parks throughout the year, not just during the summer months.
- Phillips asked about gun hunting. Schuller stated that some communities have firearm restrictions that overlap park boundaries, and also the DNR can look at limiting rifle or other firearm use in areas if there is public safety concern. Phillips stated he would like to see parks closed to all hunting until November 1 as the month of October is a popular month for many users viewing fall colors.
- Webber asked about trails used by bicycle commuters. Schuller stated the cooperative linear trails are proposed to follow the current status of hunting on trails. If the linear trails are open to hunting in 2012, the DNR is proposing to keep those trails open in 2013. If trails are currently closed, the DNR is proposing to keep the trails closed.
- Rebecca Nyberg, with the Friends of the Fox River Trail, asked about the 100-yard buffer closure. Schuller stated the Fox River Trail corridor is proposed to be closed to hunting. The proposed 100-yard, no-hunt buffer applies only to state-owned land, it does not apply to private land that might be within 100 yards of the trail.
- Harden stated the STC passed a resolution about Act 168 in December 2011 that council members can take back to their user groups.
- Webber stated that the public can also get on the NRB meeting agenda to speak at the December 11-12 meeting, but must first register ahead of time. <http://dnr.wi.gov/about/nrb/>.
- The High Cliff State Park master plan is underway, as well as the Menominee River Area, Ice Age Complex at Cross Plains and the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area. Many user groups are interested in the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area, just south of Devil's Lake State Park, and the potential the area has for different trail uses and activities. Schneider asked if someone from the DNR could give an update about the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area at the next STC meeting. Michigan, Indiana and Illinois (along with Wisconsin's segment) are beginning to look at creating a Lake Michigan Trail that would circle the entire lake.

### **11:00 A.M. – Review of STC Positions**

- The terms of four STC positions expire in July 2013 (Bicycling, Tourism/Business, Cross-Country Skiing and Hiking/Ice Age Trail). In addition to submitting another applicant for the off-road bicycle representative, the council will need to look at submitting names for the other expiring positions.

### **11:15 A.M. – Discussion of Trail Trends and Uses**

- Cyclocross is a growing sport nationally and is seeing a lot of activity in Wisconsin. The sport keeps off-road bikers on the trails throughout the year. Bikers are using trails in winter and even when they are snow-covered. Off-road bikers are also beginning to utilize some of the ski hills in Wisconsin during the skiing off-season. UTV users are becoming a new demographic of users. People may be older and would prefer a UTV over an ATV, may want a vehicle that allows two passengers to sit side-by-side, or may want the extra space for hauling. Harden stated he would like to keep this topic on the January STC meeting agenda.



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### **11:30 A.M. – Off-Highway Motorcycle Presentation**

- Bryan Much gave a PowerPoint presentation to the council for an orientation to off-highway motorcycles (OHMs), highlighting types of motorcycles, off-highway motorcycle events, video of riders on low-impact trails, potential trail opportunities, and upcoming legislation. Proposed legislation to be introduced in January in Wisconsin would establish an OHM sticker and registration program to generate revenue. Much stated the goal is for the development of more singletrack motorcycle trails and riding opportunities within Wisconsin. Much stated the number of registrations would depend on the amount of riding opportunities in the state. Most trails open to OHMs are on private land only. Clubs and volunteers build and maintain most OHM trails.
- Schuller asked what riders were looking in a day-use experience. Much stated a system of 10 to 30 miles is typical in many recreation areas. Varied terrain and looped trail routes are popular, as the design and sustainability of the trails can make for a more desirable riding experience.

### **12:15 P.M. – Trail Town Presentation**

- Skip Maletzke gave a PowerPoint presentation to the council for an overview of the concept of a Trail Town, which aims to maximize the economic potential of trail-based tourism for communities. Maletzke and Carpenter attended the Southeastern Equestrian Trails Conference in Lexington, Kentucky in July where the concept of a Trail Town was presented. Maletzke passed out a packet of information about the Kentucky Trail Town Program which included the application process, a how-to guide for communities, and town assessments. A Trail Town refers to a community through which a recreational trail comes near to or passes through, where the community supports trail users with services, promotes the trail, and maximizes the economic and business potential of the trail.
- Maletzke asked the council if this idea could be considered in Wisconsin and who would need to take the lead. Communities would need to play an integral role. Standard signage, possibly from the DOT, could be utilized. Johnson stated many communities are friendly to snowmobilers, but providing access from the trail to the town is important if the trail does not go through the town. Schuller stated the communities of Sparta and Elroy fit the definition of a Trail Town as they have promoted their communities in conjunction with the trail.

### **1:00 P.M. – Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Update**

- Tim Parsons, DNR Financial Assistance Specialist and RTP Grant Manager, handed out a list of projects selected for grant awards. This year, the award amount was capped at the larger \$200,000 level. Next year, the grant award amounts will be capped at \$45,000. The Recreational Trails Program was reauthorized for 2013, and the total amount of funds available should be similar to 2012. Parsons is working on next year's application, and materials should be available in January 2013. Materials will be available in print or for download from the DNR website: <http://dnr.wi.gov/Aid/RTA.html>.

### **1:15 P.M. – Future of RTP Discussion**

- Covered in chair report.

### **1:30 P.M. – State Trails Council Member Reports**

- *Snowmobiling.* The International Snowmobiling Hall of Fame moved from Minnesota to Eagle River, Wisconsin. The Snowmobiling Hall of Fame is in St. Germain, Wisconsin. The Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs (AWSC) recently named a new Miss Snowflake. Alexis Butler will represent AWSC and snowmobiling at various events throughout the state. AWSC also selected many other annual awards. *Discover Wisconsin* will be airing a program highlighting snowmobiling in Wisconsin at the end of November. In January, Eagle River, Wisconsin, will be holding the 50<sup>th</sup>



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Anniversary of the World Snowmobile championships. Volunteers and clubs are starting to prepare trails for the upcoming season.

- *Bicycling.* There were two bicycling fatalities within 10 days of each other. One involved a biker leaving a trail, and Webber stated this is a common type of crash when a user leaves a trail and has to transition to a roadway. The U.S. bike route through Wisconsin (bike route 30 from the Twin Cities to Chicago), may see a modification if a connection can be made from Baraboo to Sauk City through the Sauk Prairie State Recreation Area. The 2010 census showed an increase of individuals commuting to work by bike. The Transportation Research Board is also looking at newer counters for trails. Webber attended the Pro Walk/Pro Bike conference in California in September.
- *Tourism/Business.* The Department of Tourism is doing a lot to promote the state within their budget. Most lodging operators in northern Wisconsin are reporting a good summer season. Without a lot of heat or rain, northern Wisconsin saw an increase in all outdoor recreation users from last year.
- *Equestrian.* No report.
- *Water Trails.* Much of the state experienced drought-like conditions throughout the summer. The water level on many rivers and lakes was down. Water trail users were still out where they could be. Johnsrud stated that having camping available for water trail users is important and would like to see those opportunities expanded where possible in Wisconsin.
- *Cross-Country Skiing.* No report.
- *Off-Highway Motorcycles.* Work is being done to upgrade the motorcycle trails in Clark County. Many volunteers came in to help the local club with the project. Much led a ride through the Northern-Highland, a popular 100-mile route for off-highway motorcycle users. Riders are looking to establish more singletrack trails for off-highway motorcycles, and the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area may be a possible location. Backcountry adventure routes, which are intended for dual-sport riders and offer a more rugged experience, are becoming popular. There are some routes in Wisconsin, and some that travel between Wisconsin and Michigan's Upper Peninsula.
- *4-Wheel Drive Vehicles.* Forest County is working on a motorized recreation area. The county is looking at an area of at least 3,000 acres. The March of Dimes Rally was held in October with more than 65 riders taking part in the event. The Jeep Jamboree was held in Crandon in July. Schneider Stated the Wisconsin 4-Wheel Drive Association (W4WDA) is interested in the master plan process for the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area. Schneider also asked about an update for a motorized state recreation area. Schuller stated the DNR is looking for potential sites.
- *Hiking.* The Nonmotorized Recreation and Transportation Trails Council (NRTTC) held its first meeting in August. Phillips stated he will work as a liaison between the STC and NRTTC for issues.
- *Off-Road Bicycling.* The Wisconsin Off-Road Bicycling Association (WORBA) no longer exists. The Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin (BFW) now handles all off-road bicycling topics. Schmidt attended the International Mountain Biking Association's (IMBA) 2012 World Summit in Santa Fe, New Mexico. IMBA chapters, mountain bikers and other human-powered user groups are working on trail access to public lands. Off-road bike trail access is growing in Wisconsin, and groups are working to build and maintain trail systems in urban communities such as Milwaukee.



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- *Wheels/Small Boards.* The Glacial Drumlin State Trail was recently recognized as Trail of the Month by the Rails to Trails Conservancy. Michigan's Pere Marquette Trail is a good example of a top-quality trail; well-maintained, many amenities with trail-side tire pumps and signs welcoming visitors to the communities the trail passes through (report submitted in writing before meeting).
- *All-Terrain Vehicles.* For a three-month period, ATVs outsold UTVs in Wisconsin. For July through September over 15,000 ATVs and UTVs combined were newly registered. WATVA held Trail Con in Langlade County. Harden passed out an information booklet. The conference is for recreation users, vendors and anyone interested in trail technology and development. The next Trail Con will be held at the Langlade County Fairgrounds, August 9-10, 2013.

### **2:30 P.M. – STC Officer Elections**

- Phillips presented a slate of officers for 2013: Robbie Webber – Chair, Bryan Much – Vice chair, and Skip Maletzke – Secretary. Motion to accept the nominations by Phillips. Seconded by Johnson. Motion passed. Phillips and the council thanked Harden for serving as STC Chair the past four years.

### **2:35 P.M. – 2013 STC Meeting Dates**

- Monday, January 14, 2013 (Teleconference), 10 a.m. – Noon
- Thursday, April 25, 2013 (Madison), 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.
- Monday, July 15, 2013 (Teleconference), 10 a.m. – Noon
- Friday, November 8, 2013 (Sparta), 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

### **2:45 P.M. – Public Comment**

- Dave Peterson stated the Wolf River Trail issue has been going on for more than five years. Peterson stated that some of the funding acquired for developing the trail has limitations on motorized vehicles. Currently the trail is open to snowmobiling and hiking. Harden stated the DNR and ATV clubs are looking at alternative routes to connect to the Nicolet State Trail. Peterson also stated he has seen a compatibility and safety issue with fat tire bikers and snowmobiles encountering dog sled teams on trails. Dog sled teams have a training area but some trails intertwine with other users. Phillips stated this issue is one the NRTTC could also discuss at their next meeting.
- Rebecca Nyberg, with the Friends of the Fox River Trail, stated she was concerned about the safety issue of hunting on state trails. Nyberg also stated she would also like to see increased access for non-motorized recreation and water trails, such as handicap accessible canoe/kayak launches.

### **3:00 P.M. – Adjourn**

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