

Handwritten notes: "Hazard signs off", "Peter Blue", "STEVE Miller", "8/7/17", and a signature.

Stamp: RECEIVED JUL 21 2000 OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Master Plan Variance Approval

Property Name: Blue Mound State Park

Date Master Plan was approved: 1984

Variance to Master Plan: The following should be added to page 2 and 21 of the Blue Mound State Park Master Plan under the heading:

1) "Development:

"h. Construct primitive, single-track, natural surfaced, off-road biking trails that are family oriented in skill and length on areas in the park that have already gone through disturbance. Snowshoers may be able to utilize these 18-24" trails as well in winter. Great care will be taken to design this natural-surfaced, primitive trail appropriate to soil types and located along slopes (verses "down") to minimize erosion. Trails will only be located in the portions of the park that have less ecological intactness than others in the park. Only underbrush will be removed from an agreed-upon delineation for a width of 18-24" while the areas overhead canopy will remain intact."

2) "D. Recreation Needs and Justifications

5) Off-road Biking

Blue Mounds offers a unique and particular combination of varied topography, stable soil, previously disturbed areas and proximity to northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin visitors. These factors make it an excellent choice for a primitive, single-track, family, off-road biking trail that is specifically designed to address erosion and user-conflict concerns. This trail may additionally accommodate winter hiking and possibly snowshoeing use that is prohibited on ski trails."

Approved: [Signature]
SCR Environmental Analysis Coordinator

Date: 8/7/2000

[Signature]
Bureau of Endangered Resources

Date: 8/7/00

[Signature]
South Central Region Director

Date: 8/7/2000

[Signature]
Administrator, Division of Lands

Date: 8/7/2000



d) Blue Mounds has areas that have previously been disturbed in many areas that can lend themselves to this type of use.

4. Well-designed off-road biking trails are sustainable. While the National Forests are experiencing our same problems with existing trail re-use for off-road biking, they are also noting:

By being proactive with the development of mountain bike riding trails and routes rather than reactive we have so far avoided resource damage and user conflict issues seen elsewhere. At the same time excellent recreational opportunities have been provided for the largest and fastest growing group of outdoor recreationists in the U.S. mountain bike riders. This proactive approach has also had the added benefit of creating a positive attitude and working relationship between the Forest Service and cyclists rather than one of conflict and confrontation. -Intermountain Region respondent.¹

Mountain bike riding/touring is becoming increasingly popular on National Forest Lands. This is a type of recreational use that we should work to accommodate in a way that will satisfy users, yet protect the resources and other forest users. -Pacific Southwest Region respondent (ibid.).

Anticipated Primary Benefits of the Proposed Variance:

- We anticipate that developing an approximately 5-7 mile, family off-road biking trail at Blue Mound State Park will add recreational opportunities to Blue Mound State Park (family off-road biking and possibly snowshoeing) in a sustainable, low cost, low maintenance manner.
- In addition, we anticipate that this trail will begin to reduce some of the visitor pressure to the Kettles by offering southern Wisconsin visitors a viable alternative.

Additional Anticipated Benefits:

1. This trail can offer hiking and possibly snowshoe use as well in the winter. Whereas existing trails become x-country ski trails and are off limits to both winter hikers and snowshoers.
2. It is anticipated that off-road biking use is steadily increasing here as in other parts of the country:
"...the use patterns indicate that mountain bike use is increasing at a dramatic rate. It is evident that the District needs to commit funding and personnel to manage this ever increasing recreation activity. -Pacific Southwest Region respondent" (Chavez, Deborah J. 1996.)

It would be to our Department advantage to begin to accommodate this increased recreational demand in a positive, resource-protective manner with trails that specifically address resource and safety concerns. Once a trail is up and operational, we may find it advantageous to consider an additional family off-road trail in another south central region park. Yellowstone Lake and Cadiz Springs' property manager have offered their parks for future consideration.

Unavoidable Adverse Impacts:

- 1) The intent of a well designed, single-track trail is to be primitive. The normal width of the natural-surfaced trail is 6-8" (no paving). The understory brush is cleared to a width of 18-24" while the overhead canopy remains intact. The trail is to wind around slopes and landscape features such as rocks and trees, not plow through them

¹ Chavez, Deborah J. 1996. **Mountain biking: issues & actions for USDA Forest Service managers.** Res. Paper PSW-RP-226-Web. Albany, CA: Pacific Southwest Research Station, F. S., U.S. Dept. of Ag.; 33 p.

as is necessary for other, wider trails. Therefore, a minimal amount of disturbance can be expected from clearing with shovels and pulaskis (a multi-purpose, hand-held tool).

- 2) As with all trails, invasive plant species such as Garlic Mustard will be distributed by visitors. Observed evidence indicates that bike use may spread these species more than other users due to longer distances that they cover. Proposed trails will be located in areas of less ecological sensitivity within the park. The yearly renewed MOA with the friends' group, Wisconsin Off-Road Bicycling Association, shall reflect their agreement to work with the property manager to monitor and manage the potential spread of these species into additional areas of the park by bike use. See Exhibit 7.
- 3) As the trail goes along slopes (verses down them) a slight cut back will allow for uninterrupted, distributed drainage down the remainder of the grade. While this cut-back will initially be disturbed soil, the area will quickly re-grow with the surrounding understory growth and no heavy machinery will be used. In addition, all soil will be re-used on site.
- 4) An initial appearance of bare soil on sloped edges is to be expected. These areas will be re-vegetated by surrounding vegetation re-growth within a period of approximately one-month. The surface of the single-track trail will always be compacted, bare soil.
- 5) Please see attached Exhibit 6 for comments and recommendations by Endangered Resources staff which are now reflected by this variance request.
- 6) The 18-24" of clearance will be vegetated with customary forest grasses, spring forbs and perennials.

How the Master Plan Supports the Proposed Variance:

The Blue Mound State Park's master plan supports this variance in several ways:

1. #3 of the plan's objectives state "Provide trail facilities for 35,000 nature, hiking and cross-country skiing facilities."
2. And Section 1-B states "The recommended development and management program for Blue Mound State Park follows the "moderate development" alternative selected as the most suitable for the park." This supports the primitive nature of the proposed additional trail and the lack of additional support amenities needed, e.g. parking or latrines.

Description of the Support and/or Opposition to the Proposed Variance:

- We have received many requests in the region for additional family, off-road bike trails that are less crowded and less dangerous than the Kettles. This trail is our first response due to the unique partnering opportunity that the Wisconsin Off-Road Biking Association is offering.
- We expect a few safety questions based on visitor's experience with other re-use Department trails with their characteristics of speed, very wide widths and severe slope problems. We will be able to answer these questions with confidence in that a trail specifically designed for this type of family off-road use will not experience these problems –as evidenced to date by the trails at Dane County's Cam-Rock park and a private trail on Madison's west side and suggested by national forest research (Ibid.).

- We also expect concerns regarding additional disturbance to natural resources. We have responded to these concerns by not creating north trails as initially suggested and creating trails only in previously disturbed areas of the park.

The Public Review Process Used:

Please see attached Public Meeting Proceedings with comments

References:

Chavez, Deborah J. 1996. **Mountain biking: issues and actions for USDA Forest Service managers**. Res. Paper PSW-RP-226-Web. Albany, CA: Pacific Southwest Research Station, Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture; 33 p.

Attachments:

- Exhibit 1: WORBA Proposal for Addition to Blue Mound State Park Off-Road Bike Trails
- Exhibit 2: WORBA Website communicating proposal to its members and the general public
- Exhibit 3: Proposed New Blue Mound State Park Multi-Use Trail - Public Meeting Proceedings with comments and additional emailed comment
- Exhibit 4: Proposed Project Information Sheet Handout for Public Meeting
- Exhibit 5: Public Meeting Photos
- Exhibit 6: Endangered Resource Assessment and Recommendations

EXHIBIT 7

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Between Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources & Wisconsin Off-Road Bicycling Association

This document is made and entered into between the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (hereafter known as WDNR) and the Wisconsin Off-Road Bicycling Association (hereafter known as WORBA).

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this MOU is to establish a framework of cooperation upon which mutually beneficial programs, work projects and bicycling activities can be planned and accomplished by the WDNR and WORBA working cooperatively at the statewide, county and local level. Such programs, projects and activities complement the WDNR mission and are in the best interests of the public.

II. INTRODUCTION

The WDNR is a land management organization dedicated to the management of Wisconsin's natural resources and lands while providing outdoor recreational opportunities per the mission statement below:

To protect and enhance our natural resources: our air, land and water; our wildlife, fish and forests and the ecosystems that sustain all life. To provide a healthy, sustainable environment and a full range of outdoor opportunities. To ensure the right of all people to use and enjoy these resources in their work and leisure. To work with people to understand each other's views and to carry out the public will. And in this partnership consider the future and generations to follow.

WORBA represents the organized mountain bicycling public in Wisconsin, with interests in bicycling ethics, safety standards, volunteerism, and foster appropriate land-use management on public and non-public lands.

WORBA is dedicated to promoting and preserving environmentally responsible mountain biking opportunities.

Both the WDNR and WORBA share the common interest and responsibility of disseminating information to the public regarding conservation, recreation and natural resource activities. In consideration of the above premises, the parties agree as follows:

III. THE WDNR SHALL:

1. Provide WORBA information regarding the development and presentation of training materials related to mountain bicycling safety and ethics, and the availability of off-road bicycling opportunities on State properties in accordance with the Wisconsin Open Records Law (ss 19.32 to 19.37, stats). On-going negotiations for the purpose of acquiring land is exempt from this requirement.
2. Encourage local WDNR officials to participate with WORBA members in the development of mutually beneficial work projects and educational activities.
3. Make State Park System lands available for the furtherance of this MOU, subject to applicable State laws, regulations, state property master plans, broad public involvement and other management direction.

IV. WORBA SHALL:

1. Provide technical assistance to the land managers and communities involved in work projects, educational activities and off-road bicycling opportunities.
2. Encourage its members to work with local WDNR officials to discuss and identify opportunities for cooperative work on mutually beneficial projects or activities.
3. Promote ethics programs by providing training and instructions to its members.
4. Obtain prior WDNR approval on all proposed printed materials (such as brochures and maps) intended for public distribution regarding off-road bicycling on State Park System lands.
5. Work with the property manager to implement an annual exotic and invasive species plan as developed by WDNR Bureau of Endangered Resources and the Bureau of Parks. This may include for WORBA volunteer workdays for exotics species control either educational, or operational.
6. See attached for project scopes and timelines for KMS and Blue Mounds

EXHIBIT 7

- V. IT IS MUTALLY AGREED AND UNDERSTOOD BY AND BETWEEN THE SAID PARTIES THAT:
1. This MOU is neither a fiscal nor a funds obligation document. Any endeavor involving reimbursement or contribution of funds between the parties of this MOU will be handled in accordance with applicable laws, regulations and procedures including those for Government procurement and printing. Such endeavors will be outlined in separate agreements that shall be made in writing by representatives of the parties and shall be independently authorized by appropriate statutory authority. This MOU does not provide such authority. Specifically, this MOU does not establish authority for noncompetitive award to WORBA of any contract or other agreement. Any contract or agreement for training of other service must fully comply with all applicable requirements for competition.
 2. The local contact persons for WDNR are park superintendents or property managers, who have sufficient authority to develop agreements and special-use permits of the type envisioned by this MOU.
 3. This MOU in no way restricts the WDNR from participating in similar activities or arrangements with other public or private agencies, organizations, or individuals.
 4. Nothing in this memorandum shall obligate the WDNR to WORBA to expend appropriations or to enter in any contract or other obligations.
 5. The cooperator shall comply with all statutes relating to non-discrimination and all applicable requirements of all other State laws, executive orders, regulations, and policies. This include but are not limited to (a) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (40 U.S.C. 2000), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, handicap or national origin; (b) Title IX of the Education amendments of 1972, as amended (20 U.S.C. 1681-1683, and 1685-1686), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex.
 6. This MOU may be modified or amended upon written consent of both parties or may be terminated with 30-day written notice of either party. Unless terminated, this MOU will remain in full force and effect until March 30, 2001, at which time it will be subject to review and renewal.
 7. The principal contacts for this agreement are:

Danielle Valvassori	D. Scott Frey
Wisconsin DNR	Wisconsin Off-Road Bicycling Association
101 S. Webster	PO Box 5184
Madison, WI 53703	Elm Grove, WI 53122-5184

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have executed this MOU as of the last written date below.

SUSAN BLACK
Director of State Parks
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Date

D. Scott Frey
President
Wisconsin Off-Road Bicycling Association

Date

Map approved with Blue Mounds Master Plan Variance Request for Family Off-road Biking Trails, signed July 17, 2000 by Peter Biermeyer, WNDR-Parks, Sue Black, WDNR Director of Parks & August 7th, 2000 by Ron Grasshoff, WDNR-SCR Environmental Analysis Coordinator, Sigme Holtz, WDNR Director, Bureau of Endangered Resources, Ruth Badger, WDNR South Central Region Director, Steven Miller, WDNR Administrator, Division of Lands.



