

**OFF-ROAD VEHICLE ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES
September 11, 2002
Holiday Inn West, Lansing, Michigan**

Board Members Present:

Mike Burlingham, Chairman, Cycle Conservation Club of Michigan (CCC)
Richard Rondeau, Michigan All-Terrain Vehicle Riders Association (MATVA), Dearborn
Donald Craig, MMDA

Members Absent:

Sheriff Nelson Jerry Cannon, Kalkaska County
Keith Martell, Natural Resources Conservation Service

Department of Natural Resources Staff Present:

Steve Kubisiak, ORV Program Manager, Parks and Recreation Bureau, Lansing
Ed Hagan, State Trails Coordinator, Parks and Recreation Bureau, Lansing
Wayne Wheeler, Forest, Minerals and Fire Management Division, Newberry
David Fisher, Forest, Minerals and Fire Management Division, Cadillac
Bernard Hubbard, Forest, Minerals and Fire Management Division, Lansing
Pete Lundborg, Parks and Recreation Bureau, Silver Lake State Park, Mears
Merritta C. Hunt-Proctor, Grants Administration Division, Lansing
Tom Laird, Law Enforcement Division, Lansing

Department of Education Staff Present

Greg Lantzy

Public Present:

Bill Chapin, CCC, Rives Junction
Hal Folk CCC, Leslie
Greg Yager, CCC, Lansing
Diana Yager, CCC, Lansing
Tom Gallagher, Michigan Recreation Vehicle Riders Association (MRVRA), St Helen
Paul Mulder, GL4WDA, Harrison
Sharon Rondeau, MATVA, Dearborn
Scott Cadwell, Twin Bay Trail Riders Inc., Cadillac
Robert A. Lindsay, MATVA, Vermontville
Jeff VanCamp, MATVA, Mt. Morris
Mel and Marge Lill, CCC, Portland
Lucas Gottler, Internet Trail Riders GL4WD, Dundee
Bill Gilbert, MATVA, Burton
Pat Kinne, GL4WDA, Midland
Aaron L. Young, GL4WDA, Alpena
Mike Kelly, GL4WDA, Sanford
Eric Gardner, GL4WDA, Grand Blanc
Fred Wallace, GL4WDA, Grand Blanc
Ryan Reynolds, GL4WDA, Davison
Virginia Hunt, Lansing Motorcycle Club, Lansing
James J. Mazzolla, GL4WDA, Dryden

Chairman Burlingham called the meeting of the Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) Advisory Board to order at 6:40 p.m. on Wednesday, September 11, 2002.

Mr. Kubisiak reported that **Mr. Whippen** officially tendered his resignation from the ORV Advisory Board citing scheduling conflicts resulting from new personal obligations. **Mr. Burlingham** stated that **Mr. Whippen** was a great asset to the ORV board and wished him luck.

I. MINUTES

Motion by Mr. Rondeau and second by Mr. Craig to accept the minutes of the July 13, 2002 meeting, as written.

Motion for adoption unanimously carried.

II. PUBLIC APPEARANCE

- A. **Scott Cadwell**, Twin Bay Trail Riders Inc., stated that he had been working with David Fisher and the Traverse City Management Unit on a proposal to systematically relocate sections of the Grand Traverse Motorcycle Trail. He stated that the proposal would be a long term ongoing project involving the relocation of existing ORV trails concurrent with the closure of old trails to address improper trail placement of existing trails, mitigate trail erosion and wildlife habitat concerns. **Mr. Cadwell** presented a written proposal to the board. **Mr. Burlingham** requested the proposal be attached to the meeting minutes and requested the DNR to review the proposal and report back at the November meeting.
- B. **Paul Mulder**, GL4WDA, stated he received numerous questions from trail riders regarding trail signing. He said riders seem to be confused on the difference between ORV trail, ORV route, and snowmobile trail confidence markers. He added the confusion seems to be compounded when ORV trails and routes are combined on snowmobile trails. He believes better signing and education is needed.
- C. **Mr. Burlingham** referenced the events of last September 11th and in remembrance is thankful for all of the committed public servants that came to the aid of those affected by this tragedy.

III. OLD BUSINESS

- A. **Safety Training Subcommittee Report** – **Mr. Rondeau** clarified he is not providing this report on behalf of the Department of Education. He provided a brief history on the subcommittee and stated that it was charged with exploring the possibility of advertising ORV safety education classes through the Intermediate School Districts. **Mr. Rondeau** explained that based on further discussions with officials from the Department of Education, grant sponsors can individually advertise classes through the Intermediate School Districts. Consequently, there is no longer a need for this subcommittee. **Mr. Rondeau** recommended that the subcommittee be dissolved. He added that other sources of class advertisement will be pursued.
- B. **Recognition Subcommittee Report** – **Mr. Rondeau** provided a brief history on the subcommittee and recommended the appointment of **Pete Lundborg** to replace **Mr. Whippen**. Discussion ensued regarding potential methods to

advertise nominations of individuals and organizations through a DNR press release and/or web site. **Mr. Rondeau** volunteered to chair the subcommittee and said he would contact **Mr. Lundborg** and **Mr. Chapin**.

- C. **Report on Umbrella Liability Insurance** – **Mr. Burlingham** explained background and introduced **Mr. Hal Folk**. **Mr. Folk** reported he has been successful in locating several insurance companies that are interested in providing quotations for an umbrella general commercial liability insurance policy that meet state requirements under the grants program. **Mr. Folk** said he is optimistic and hopeful that these companies can provide an umbrella policy. He expects to receive quotations soon. **Mr. Hagan** stated that liability insurance is also an issue in the snowmobile program. He added the DNR is considering establishing a work group made up of both ORV and snowmobile interests to further review this issue and the board agreed that would be beneficial.
- D. **ORV Fund Work Group** – **Mr. Burlingham** explained issue background and feels that it is important for the ORV board to continue its role in overseeing the ORV fund appropriation and grants process. He opened the floor for discussion. Discussion ensued about the current grant distribution formula and the need for legislative modification. **Mr. Burlingham** suggested modifying the percentages and develop a mechanism to provide DNR more flexibility to access the fund balance to fund special projects or initiatives. **Mr. Craig** supports more flexibility but is concerned with taking this matter back to the legislature. **Mr. Hagan** said that it is important for the DNR and user groups to have a unified position regarding potential funding modifications to avoid amendments to statute that are not desired. **Mr. Hagan** said staff will prepare recommendations for potential funding modifications for consideration and discussion at the November meeting.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

- A. **Denton Trail Presentation** – **Mr. Burlingham** introduced **Mr. Bill Chapin** who provided a power-point presentation highlighting recent trail improvements at the Denton ORV trail. He explained the project included several test sites each using a different trail stabilizing technique. Trail stabilizing techniques include: boardwalks, gravel fill, geo-textile, and a variety of other trail hardening and drainage techniques. He said the DNR obtained permits and purchased the materials and volunteers from the various user groups completed the construction. He added the test sites will be monitored and photographed to evaluate success. **Mr. Burlingham** thanked **Mr. Chapin**.
- B. **Trail Maintenance Reimbursement Rates** – **Steve Kubisiak** provided a brief history. He explained the rates were based on a user group input and study completed by Michigan State University (MSU) in 1997. The DNR adopted the rates in 1998 and has used them in the grants program ever since. He noted that no cost-of-living or inflation rate adjustments have been made and may be warranted. He asked the board if they felt the DNR should consider an adjustment during the interim period until a full review of the reimbursement rates is complete. **Mr. Kubisiak** cautioned that by increasing the reimbursement rate that other projects may not be able to be funded. He added that the DNR is finalizing a contract to hire a consultant to re-evaluate the reimbursement rates and update the statewide ORV plan. The rate study and plan update is expected to be completed in late 2003. Discussion ensued.

Motion by Mr. Craig and second by Mr. Rondeau to support an inflation rate adjustment to the ORV trail, route and grading reimbursement rates for the 2003 maintenance season.

Motion for adoption unanimously carried.

Mr. Burlingham thanked the DNR for bringing this issue forward.

C. **ORV Events** – **Mr. Kubisiak** reported that some event sponsors are continuously having difficulties meeting the 90-day application review requirements and that is creating some problems in the field. He reviewed the event permit application process and noted the 90-day review period is important because it allows the DNR and other jurisdictions adequate time to fully review the application and proposed route prior to the event. He added that the DNR has been reluctant to deny late event applications because many of the events are advertised well in advance. By denying the permit application at the last minute the DNR believes that it would penalize the event participants more than the sponsor. Because of this the DNR was considering implementing graduated late fees in an effort to encourage sponsors to be more responsive to the 90-day filing deadline. General consensus of the board was to hold to the existing requirements and to deny late applications, if warranted. **Mr. Burlingham** suggested the DNR consider the following items when reviewing and/or revising the event permit application process and event policy.

- **Written receipt notice should be immediately issued by DNR receiving unit to applicant upon receipt of application.**
- **Retain 90-day application advance notice, with DNR discretion to waive same.**
- **If permit is denied, DNR should strive to provide written notice to applicant no later than 30 days before the scheduled event.**

V. INFORMATION

A. **Staff Reports** –

Ms. Merritta Hunt-Proctor – Announced her retirement and said it was a pleasure working with the ORV Advisory Board. **Mr. Burlingham** thanked **Ms. Hunt-Proctor** and commended her for her outstanding work on the ORV, snowmobile and marine safety programs throughout her career.

Mr. Burlingham requested **Pete Lundborg** provide an update on Silver Lake State Park at the November meeting.

Mr. Burlingham reaffirmed his support for continuing the pre-printed ORV license sticker program and felt that the Michigan Motorcycle Dealers Association (MMDA) would be a natural distributor. **Mr. Craig** expressed support of the concept and said MMDA would be happy to meet with the DNR to further discuss the possibility. **Mr. Hagan** said the DNR would report back to the board in November.

Mr. Burlingham said he would like to make the annual report to the Natural Resources Commission in December. **Mr. Kubisiak** said he will work with the Director's office to place this item on the December NRC agenda.

VI. PUBLIC APPEARANCE

Mr. Paul Mulder, GL4WDA, inquired about the status of filling the current vacancies on the ORV Advisory Board. **Mr. Hagan** responded that given the fact that majority of the existing terms expire in December staff will make recommendations as a complete package to the Director by November 1.

Mr. Mulder expressed concerns with current trail signing practices and inquired if the DNR has made any decisions regarding new trail signing standards. **Mr. Hagan** replied that the DNR is continuing to review this issue internally.

Mr. Mulder reported that he placed traffic counters on Jonesville Road and the Leota ORV trail. He added that he will provide statistics and update at the November meeting.

VII. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday November 6, 2002, at the Holiday Inn Lansing West, Lansing Michigan.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

ORV TRAIL RELOCATION PROPOSAL

The following is a proposal for a pilot project for the Grand Traverse Loops of the Michigan ORV trail system. This project would be a long term, ongoing project for a plan of systematic relocation of ORV trails concurrent with the closure of the old ORV trails to address the problems of wearing out existing trails, improper placement of existing trails, wildlife habitat concerns and any developing erosion problems.

Tentative timeline for such a plan is as follows:

1. Late summer/early fall survey existing trails to see which are the best candidates for relocation – criteria for evaluation are as follows: physical condition (whoops), poor placement (wet areas, type lines) and erosion problems.
2. In consultation with ORV technicians and area unit manager, determine which segment(s) would be most feasible to relocate.
3. Fall – GPS existing segment to be closed and GPS proposed new segments. New segments will utilize existing road crossings, location signs, any bridges or decking that is in place. Trails will be relocated either to type boundary lines (thereby minimizing logging impacts) or to the side by 10-50 feet depending on the individual situation.
4. Winter – review by DNR personnel for Wildlife, Forest, Mineral and Fire Management, Area Unit Manager and any other departments that need to review it.
5. Spring/summer – upon completion of review, build new trail segments. This would consist of brushing of new trail, install new markers, removal of markers from old segment(s).
6. Rehabilitate old trail segment(s). This would consist of grooming old segment(s), seed entrances/exits of old segment(s), and cover with brush/debris.
7. Start all over again. The idea is to do 6-15 miles a year with eventually rotating around the entire system. By the time we have covered the entire system, we can start all over again! This will provide a long term solution to the problem of the trails becoming worn out, and will also allow organizations the opportunity to have 'new' trail(s) every year for events.

Proposed by –
R. Scott Cadwell
Legislative Officer
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