

All issue statements should start with a title that identifies the intended audience, the date, and the author of the issue statement.

Issue Statement for Accessibility Advisory Council Meeting

Meeting Date: June 20, 2011

Prepared by:

Type of Action: Information Sharing and Input

Suggested Time Frame: 45 minutes

Sideboards Needed: The DNR 2009 Strategic Plan for Accessibility was revised to align with new DNR mission and priorities and to meet Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) needs.

Issue: The DNR/DEQ/DARD want the AAC to review and give feedback on our new Quality of Life Strategic Plan for Accessibility

Background: Transformation of DNR/DEQ/DARD into individual departments under the Quality of Life Umbrella lead by Director Dan Wyant of DEQ has resulted in key shared competencies evolving. The Accessibility Team now includes DARD representation. We already had DEQ representation from the DNRE evolution in 2010.

Describe how your issue relates to accessibility in DNR outdoor recreation:

Strategic Plan provides a base for improving access to outdoor recreation

Information Sharing Options:

Review AAC By Laws and come prepared to discuss.



MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES STRATEGIC PLAN FOR ACCESSIBILITY JUNE 20, 2011

Executive Summary

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) Strategic Plan for Accessibility (Plan) was envisioned in 2002. The intent of the Plan -- a living document -- was to provide the DNR Management Team with an overview of the work required to keep Department programs, facilities and services in full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The DNR Accessibility Team (A-Team),* comprised of representatives from each DNR Division, crafted the Plan, which was later revised in 2009 and, due to two major components, again in 2011:

1) In 2011, the DNR refocused its mission statement and embraced four priorities, of which accessibility can play a key role.

- **A Renewed Emphasis on Customer Service.** *Removing barriers to customer service is a key component to providing accessible outdoor recreation to persons of all abilities.*
- **Strong Support of the Recreation Passport.** *The passport provides the DNR with a new source of funding for improved, expanded and accessible outdoor recreation opportunities for persons of all abilities.*
- **Increase Participation in Outdoor Recreation and Reverse the Decline in Hunting and Fishing Participation.** *Recruiting and retaining outdoor recreation users of all abilities and diversities is an integral part of the DNR's mission and priorities; by removing barriers for persons with disabilities the DNR will remove them for people of all abilities.*
- **Fostering the Growth of Michigan's Natural Resource-Based Economy.** *Accessibility is clearly a partnering tool, even in times of economic restraint. Key components to accessible outdoor recreation (new technology, a more diverse outdoor recreation audience, others?) are present and organizations are willing to collaborate like never before.*

2) In 2011, the DNR A-Team was expanded under Governor Rick Snyder's Quality of Life umbrella to include its sister agencies -- the Michigan Departments of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD). Plans for DEQ and MDARD to develop like plans for accessibility are ongoing with the support of this new Quality of Life Tri-Agency A-Team.

Major components of the most recent version (2011) of the DNR's Strategic Plan for Accessibility follow:

- create a timeline for the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Accessibility;
- provide accessibility training for DNR staff;
- conduct an accessibility assessment of all existing DNR programs, services and facilities;
- involve public disability advocacy groups in the DNR planning processes;
- develop an action plan to correct existing DNR accessibility deficiencies;
- develop new, inclusive DNR programs, services and facilities;
- evaluate and document the DNR's efforts and progress toward accessibility.

The Strategic Plan for Accessibility will be an evolving process. Information gathered in the initial phases of the Plan will direct the activities to be accomplished in the later phases.

The final goal is for the DNR to offer a comprehensive and consistent approach to inclusiveness in the Department's recreational programs, services and facilities.

Available funding, human and capital resources, and support of this Plan by the DNR Management Team are all critical to its success.

** Today, the DNR Accessibility Team is known as the Quality of Life A-Team, comprised of representatives of each DNR Division, several representatives of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (member since 2010) and a representative of the Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (member since 2011).*

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The Department's Mission Statement:

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources is committed to the conservation, protection, management, use and enjoyment of the state's natural and cultural resources for current and future generations.

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ACCESSIBILITY MISSION - The Department commits its human and financial resources to ensure that: 1) all programs, facilities and services comply with the State and Federal accessibility guidelines and standards and 2) Department employees and the public are aware that the Department's programs, facilities and services comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines.

GOAL # 1: DECISIONS AFFECTING DEPARTMENTAL PROGRAMS, FACILITIES AND SERVICES ARE INCLUSIVE, INCORPORATING ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES AND STANDARDS.

Objective A: Educate and increase the awareness of Department employees and public advisory groups about the rights, needs and desires of persons with disabilities.

Action items:

- 1) **Develop and provide consistent training.**
 - a) **Identify training needs within each Department.**
 - b) **Assess current training opportunities.**
 - c) **Develop training programs, pertinent to staff job responsibilities**
 - d) **Arrange training sessions.**
 - e) **Track the training accomplishments within each Department**

- 2) **Routinely and consistently disseminate applicable information to employees and public user groups regarding current standards, proposed changes to the standards, statutes, case law and Department procedures.**
 - a) **Assess available information and resources.**
 - b) **Determine the applicability of the information to the employees within each D/O.**
 - c) **Develop information resources for staff.**
 - d) **Continue to update Department accessibility procedures.**

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- e) Share information with staff and the public.
 - f) Prepare Department response to proposed changes of standards, coordinating the response through the State of Michigan's ADA Coordinator.
- 3) Address and incorporate accessibility issues early on in the planning/visioning aspects of all new construction projects and program development.

Objective B: Maintain an internal department accessibility team to liaison with divisions and offices to liaison with citizen advisory group and other public entities.

Action items:

- 1) Hold regular meetings and establish processes to provide ongoing administrative support to the Accessibility Advisory Council (AAC).
 - a) Review AAC agenda, submit action items for AAC input, respond to action items from AAC.
 - b) Assist in providing administrative support for meeting operations and planning.
 - c) Provide AAC with expertise on the department areas they represent.
- 2) Provide support to AAC subcommittees and partnering activities.
 - a) Sit on AAC subcommittee and provide support .
 - b) Ensure subcommittee is with in their purview and meeting department regulations and requirements.
- 3) Recruit and vet nominations for AAC membership,
 - a) Ensure AAC members represent a broad spectrum of stakeholders in accessible outdoor recreation.

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- b) Ensure AAC members represent the full spectrum of types of disabilities and are active in outdoor recreation pursuits.
- c) Vet nominees according to regulations.

Objective C. Maintain AAC to provide a forum for collaboration and public input for department.

Action items:

- 1) Provide public forum for input.
 - a) Provide accessible meeting location.
 - b) Provide public notice of meetings and agendas.
 - c) Report on results of meetings and maintain public record.

Action items:

- 1) Support AAC subcommittees.
 - a) Provide expertise in support of AAC projects.
 - b) Provide departmental liaison to ensure compliance with regulations and requirements.
 - c) Provide administrative support where possible.

Objective D. Ensure a connection to the State ADA Coordinator.

Action items:

- 1) Provide guidance and consultation regarding:
 - a) Accessibility reference materials and resources.
 - b) Department policies and procedures.
 - c) Interpretation of the guidelines.
 - d) Intranet Q&A.
- 2) Assist Department's outreach efforts.
 - a) Maintain and establish points of contact with disability resources, including the State of Michigan ADA Coordinator; the Great Lakes Disability and Technical Assistance Center, (GLDBTAC), the National Center on Accessibility (NCA), the U. S. Access Board, The U. S. Department of Justice, (DOJ).

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- b) Establish a point of contact and maintain a current list of public user-groups, including Disabilities Today, Paralyzed Vets, and Centers for Independent Living, etc.

GOAL # 2: ENSURE THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE OF DEFICIENCIES RELATED TO ACCESSIBILITY IN ITS FACILITIES, PROGRAMS AND SERVICES AND FORMULATE A PLAN TO ALLEVIATE THOSE DEFICIENCIES.

Objective A: Inventory the Department's facilities, programs and services.

Action items:

- 1) Identify all existing and proposed facilities, programs and services.
- 2) Define Department programs and services.
 - a) What are the elements?
 - b) What is needed by individuals with disabilities to participate?

Objective B: Evaluate all facilities, programs and services for compliance with State and Federal accessibility guidelines.

Action items:

- 1) Develop a comprehensive accessibility compliance check list for all Departmental facilities, programs and services.
- 2) Train internal audit teams to evaluate facilities, programs and services OR hire the services of an outside agency to conduct the evaluations.
- 3) Identify facilities, programs and services that comply and those that have deficiencies. Enter and maintain the information into a database.
- 4) Analyze and summarize the compliance status of each facility, program and service.
- 5) Every five years, review and update the compliance status of all facilities, programs and services.

Objective C: Prioritize Department deficient facilities, programs and services that require action to become compliant.

Action items:

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- 1) Have each D/O review their compliance status and provide a priority list for action, including a suggested schedule of implementation to improve each facility, program and service identified to be deficient.
- 2) Compile the D/O's prioritized lists into a Department prioritized list, considering:
 - a) Target dates for completion.
 - b) Percentage of each type of facility or program/service to be updated.
 - c) The geographic distribution of types of facilities that are to be updated.
- 3) Seek input from Department's Accessibility Advisory Council (AAC) on the proposed list.
- 4) Present a Department compliance plan with priorities to Department Management Team for approval.

Objective D. Maintain the Accessibility Team to represent divisions and offices to set priorities, provide department wide consistency, provide specialized expertise, ensure compliance and enhance communication.

Action items:

- 1) Provide staff to include 1 primary and 1 alternate unless division or office requires more to meet needs like PRD.
- 2) Provide support to work through short term projects when required by department leadership.

Objective E. Maintain AAC to provide input on priorities for transition planning.

Action items:

- 1) Ensure AAC reviews and advises on accessibility strategic plan when revised.
- 2) Ensure AAC provides advisory review of plans, policy and procedures when appropriate.

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Objective F. Implement the Department compliance plan.

Action items:

- 1) Provide the Department compliance plan to the respective division/offices for implementation;
- 2) Communicate the compliance plan through the Department's internet site.

Objective E: Monitor and report progress of the Department compliance plan.

Action items:

- 1) Develop annual progress report of accessibility activity within the Department.
- 2) Present Department progress report to Department Management Team annually.

GOAL # 3: STAFF SHALL BE AVAILABLE TO IMPLEMENT THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR ACCESSIBILITY.

Objective A. Provide human and capital resources to support A-Team operations.

- 1) A-Team will provide administrative support for AAC.
- 2) To conduct A-Team meetings, work groups and complete assignments and projects.
- 3) Ensure members are tied into division/office and departmental leadership teams and operations.

Objective B: Identify operational costs and staff needs for:

- 1) Inventory and training.
- 2) Database development and management.
- 3) Materials and outreach.
- 4) Maintaining the A-Team and AAC.

Objective C: Department identifies additional funding needs for facility, program and service upgrades.

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Action items:

Each D/O identifies the costs associated with updating the facilities and programs for which they have management responsibility.

Objective D: Pursue grants and other outside funding and resources.

Action items:

- 1) Each D/O identifies potential funding to upgrade facilities, programs and services.
- 2) Pursue partnerships with municipalities federal, state, local units of government, and private organizations.
- 3) Establish a lump sum of annual Department or D/O funds to improve and upgrade existing identified facilities, programs, and/or services.

GOAL # 4: EFFECTIVELY CONVEY INFORMATION REGARDING ACCESSIBLE PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES TO THE PUBLIC AND DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES.

Objective A: Maximize effectiveness of current communication methods.

Action items:

- 1) Review, evaluate and improve written materials, Department web-based information, video, press releases.
- 2) Collaborate with the Department Public Information Officer (PIO) and /or administrative unit responsible for communication, marketing and outreach.
- 3) Solicit and respond to public suggestions, comments and recommendations to improve our facilities, programs, and services.
- 4) Ensure that the legal requirements and complaint process are posted at Department operated and maintained facilities, and that public complaints shall be responded to appropriately.

Objective B: Develop additional means to communicate news of Department's accessible facilities, programs, and services.

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Action items:

- 1) Utilize a variety of media resources to expand public outreach.
- 2) Showcase Department accessible facilities, programs and services through special events.
- 3) Maintain Department intranet and internet to:
 - a) Communicate accessibility successes and initiatives to employees and the public.
 - b) Continue to provide the search engine feature to highlight accessible elements.
- 4) Submit Department completed projects, programs or services to media, organizations, and/or publications for recognition and exposure.

GOAL # 5: EVALUATE THE DEPARTMENT'S PERFORMANCE IN ACHIEVING THE ACCESSIBILITY MISSION TO MODIFY THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES ACCORDINGLY.

Objective A: Identify the best means to monitor the Department's compliance with accessibility requirements, which are dynamic.

Action items:

- 1) Consult with other federal, state, and local units of government for guidance and examples of effective compliance monitoring.
- 2) Determine the most efficient, cost effective compliance monitoring methods.

Objective B: Implement compliance monitoring.

Action items:

- 1) Locate the program areas and establish geographic boundaries for monitoring.
- 2) Conduct monitoring of the geographic areas on a rotating basis.
- 3) Establish specific review periods for internal assessment annually
- 4) Compile the results of the compliance monitoring and include results in the annual report given to the management team and provide a courtesy copy to the State ADA Coordinator.

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Objective C: Evaluate the effectiveness of compliance monitoring

Action items:

- 1) Develop an evaluating tool to assess the compliance monitoring process.

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