

**MICHIGAN SNOWMOBILE AND TRAILS ADVISORY COUNCIL (Council)  
MEETING MINUTES**

**December 1, 2010**

Approved April 20, 2011

**Ralph A. MacMullan Conference Center  
104 Conservation Drive, Roscommon, MI 48653**

**PRESENT FOR THE COUNCIL**

Frank Wheatlake, Chair  
Sandra Batie  
Jim Dickie  
Jim Duke  
Tom Dunn  
Mike Foote  
John Gonway  
Carolyn Kane  
Bill Manson  
Erin McDonough  
Greg Yager

**PRESENT FOR STAFF**

Frank Ruswick, Deputy Director, Stewardship  
Lynne Boyd, Chief, Forest Management Division (FMD)  
Jim Radabaugh, State Trails Coordinator, FMD  
Annamarie Bauer, Trail Planning Specialist, FMD  
Andrea Turner, Administrative Assistant, FMD  
Jason Urbach, Student Intern, FMD  
John Morey, ORV and Snowmobile Safety Field Coordinator, Law Enforcement Division  
Paul Curtis, Park Management Plan Administrator, Recreation Division  
Dan Eichinger, Assistant to the Chief, Wildlife Division (WD)  
Steve Beyer, Federal Aid Program Leader, WD  
Rose Ingram, USDA Forest Service

**PUBLIC ATTENDEES**

John Matonich, Natural Resources Commission  
Al Green, Snowmobile Advisory Workgroup (SAW) and  
Michigan Snowmobile Association (MSA)  
Bruce Wood, SAW and MSA  
Lee Murray, SAW  
Rich Filley, SAW  
Pat Brower, Off-Road Vehicle Workgroup (ORVAW) and  
Great Lakes Four Wheel Drive Association  
John Chad, ORVAW and Happi-Trails ATV Club  
Jim Faiella, ORVAW and ORV Dealer-Users  
Amy Trotter, ORVAW and Michigan United Conservation Clubs  
Scott TenBrink, Nonmotorized Advisory Workgroup (NAW) and Fitness Council of Jackson

Robert Golda, NAW and Hiking Michigan  
Sue Thrushman, ATV Off-Road Club  
Lewis Shuler, Cycle Conservation Club  
Thomas Gallagher, St. Helen  
LaVerne Longroy, Ogemaw Hills Snowmobile Club  
Bill Lucas, MSA

## **WELCOME**

**Chair Wheatlake** called the Michigan Snowmobile and Trails Advisory Council meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. Chair Wheatlake welcomed everyone and introduced himself, followed by introductions of the Council members, and members of the Equine Trailways Subcommittee, the Nonmotorized, Off-Road Vehicle and Snowmobile Advisory Workgroups, and all other attendees.

**Chair Wheatlake** presented the December 1, 2010 meeting agenda for review/approval. He asked Rose Ingram to give a litigation update during the staff reports; agenda approved as presented.

## **MINUTES**

The minutes of the September 13, 2010 Council meeting were acknowledged.

**Motion was made by Jim Duke, seconded by Tom Dunn, to adopt the September 13, 2010 meeting minutes. Motion for adoption unanimously carried.**

## **BUSINESS ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

**Deputy Ruswick** shared Governor-elect Rick Snyder's announcement to split the recently merged Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE) into two separate agencies. Governor-elect Snyder named former agriculture Director Dan Wyant as Department of Environmental Quality director, while Science and Policy Office Chief Rodney Stokes will become director of the Department of Natural Resources. Current DNRE Director Rebecca Humphries is leaving to work for Ducks Unlimited. Former Agriculture Deputy Director Keith Creagh will become head of the renamed Department of Agriculture & Rural Development.

The three departments will work together in the Quality of Life group. Governor-elect Snyder plans to divide all the state departments into six separate groups, with each group represented on the super-cabinet. Dan Wyant will represent the Quality of Life group.

**Chair Wheatlake** spoke of the unknown effect retirements may have on the budget. He also commented that he believed that Rodney Stokes would do a fine job as director; he has a long history with the Department of Natural Resources.

## **Appointment of Vice Chair**

**Chair Wheatlake** announced that Carolyn Kane would serve as Vice Chair of the Council.

**Federal and State Fish and Game Funds / Program Impacts**

**Steve Beyer** gave a power-point presentation entitled *Funding Fish and Wildlife Conservation – Implications for Recreational Uses of DNRE Lands* (attachment). He explained the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act of 1934 (duck stamp), Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act of 1937 (PR), and the Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act of 1950 (DJ). He discussed the “User Pay – User Benefit” system of each, and gave an overview of the Department’s 2010 PR and DJ Funds, and the Wildlife Division’s proposed expenditures for 2011. He also explained the eligibility rules and implications for DNRE land uses.

**Steve Beyer** recommended the Dave Dempsey book *Ruin and Recovery: Michigan's Rise as a Conservation Leader*, a history of Michigan's conservation efforts.

Discussion followed regarding land use and modifications of use.

**Steve Beyer** explained that sometimes a use is ok at first but grows and later becomes a problem and jeopardizes federal funds eligibility.

Pigeon River Country – when it started, equestrian use was not a problem until it became a destination for trail riding and overused.

The Allegan State Game Area was offered as an example; it was a state forest with multiple uses. The previous use may not all be allowed now under restricted management funds. Some areas managed exclusively for wildlife, other areas where restricted funds did not apply were leased to Allegan County Parks.

Discussion followed regarding various uses and user fees.

**Sandra Batie** stated that the ETS identified difficulty knowing where you can ride therefore overuse occurs.

**Erin McDonough** suggested other groups create fee structures for expanding opportunity on other lands (not covered by current management lands).

**Bill Manson** referenced the snowmobile program; user fees began in 1994 (2-year process) and were initially challenged by the tourism industry.

**Chief Boyd** referenced Forest Certification; need enough funds to maintain Forest Certification Standards – ORV/Snowmobile the only two trail programs with dedicated funds.

**Chair Wheatlake** stated that if we are not in compliance of assent legislation, we may become ineligible for \$28 million in PR/DJ funds.

**Recreation and Trails Program Funding and Budgets**

**Chief Boyd** referenced travel reimbursement and need for members to be entered in the vendor system in order to receive payment; see Andrea Turner for updated reimbursement forms and additional information.

**Chief Boyd** gave an overview of FMD-RTS Budget and Expenses. There are 13 different funds: General; DOT; Private; Gifts and Bequests; Waterways; Michigan Trailways Sub; Forest Recreation; Recreation Improvement; Off-Road Vehicle Trail Improvement; Safety Education;

Snowmobile Registration Fee; Snowmobile Trail Improvement; and Permanent Snowmobile Trail Easement (handout). Each fund has a specific legally defined purpose.

### **Respected Access**

**Erin McDonough** presented the Respected Access information (handout). She asked the user groups to consider the concept.

### **Demonstration of Web Links / Maps**

**Lisa Dygert** and **Lindsey Dagnall**, Resource Assessment Unit, FMD, gave a demonstration of the state designated snowmobile and ORV trail maps; the state forest and national forest trails have been GPS and are available in PDF format on the DNRE website. **Lindsey Dagnall** is the primary contact.

Questions and discussion followed regarding equine trails, which have not been GPS. Volunteers may do the work, provided they submit information according to DNRE criteria/standards.

**Sandra Batie** asked if grant money was available to help pay. **Jim Radabaugh** responded yes, they may apply.

**Chief Boyd** reiterated that there is no General Fund available in the Resource Section of FMD.

**Sandra Batie** asked if a budget number for preparing equestrian maps (staff time, etc.) could be provided. **Chief Boyd** said yes.

Discussion followed regarding recommendations for a budget to cover these costs; tourism, Mi-Hike (modeled after Mi-Hunt) were suggested. **Carolyn Kane** also mentioned MTGA Trails Finder.

Was the purpose of the Council to drive tourism – yes.

**Frank Wheatlake** discussed the process for review and approval of meeting minutes. Draft minutes to be sent electronically to members for review and corrections, and posted prior to next meeting.

### **Workgroup / Subcommittee Reports**

**Sandra Batie**, Chair, ETS – distributed handout; announced Jan Herrick as Vice Chair. Discussion followed regarding the development/process of objectives and criteria; divide state among subcommittee members - what trails, issues, connectivity opportunities; what objectives may look like; work on promotional aspects; committed to be done by June 2011. Other items to be prioritized and developed later. **Chair Wheatlake** offered congratulations (on the right track) and encouraged the development of a map.

**Tom Dunn**, Chair, ORVAW – meeting will be held immediately following the MSTAC meeting.

**Lee Murray**, Chair, SAW – announced Bill Manson as Vice-Chair. The first meeting was held October 19 and Lee Murray stated that he is confident that the SAW will function as well or

better than the last committee. Next meeting will be December 9 at Sydney's. **Lee Murray** also referenced the program loss of Steve DeBrabander; Jim Radabaugh and Steve Kubisiak will fill in until a replacement is named.

**John Gonway**, Chair, NAW – meeting will be held immediately following the MSTAC meeting.

### **Meeting Schedule for 2011**

A list of meetings for the MSTAC, ETS, and Nonmotorized, ORV, and Snowmobile Workgroups was distributed (handout).

### **STAFF REPORTS**

**Jim Radabaugh** gave a brief overview of Attorney General Opinion #7251, regarding state and county roads in northern Michigan (handout); the Recreation and Trails Program – Federal Highway Administration; and the Fred Meijer letter of intent regarding the \$3 million endowment to support Mid-West Michigan Trail Authority.

**Rose Ingram** mentioned the news release regarding the Huron-Manistee National Forest plan review and new amendment supplement proposed ban of firearms. Questions/comments may be directed to Mr. Ken Arbogast. The DNRE has been a cooperating agency throughout this process.

USFS representatives will be as follows: Randy Charles, SAW; Ted Schultz, NAW; Rose Ingram, MSTAC; and Les Russell, ORVAW.

### **PUBLIC APPEARANCE**

**Bruce Wood** stated the theme seems to be “no money,” why not have a user fee for other user groups, equestrians, etc.?

**Chair Wheatlake** recommendation of Council to Director/Governor – legislature has to support.

**Group comments as follows.**

**Deputy Ruswick** Agenda to have subcommittee/workgroups updates.

Meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.