

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

October 19, 2011

Approved February 21, 2012

**Kent County Administration Building
300 Monroe Avenue NW, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503-2288**

PRESENT FOR THE COUNCIL

Frank Wheatlake, Chair
Jim Dickie
Jim Duke
Thomas Dunn
Mike Foote
John Gonway
Carolyn Kane
Bill Manson
Greg Yager

PRESENT FOR STAFF

Lynne M. Boyd, Chief, Forest Management Division (FMD)
Jim Radabaugh, State Trails Coordinator, FMD
Andrea Turner, Administrative Assistant, FMD
John Morey, ORV and Snowmobile Safety Field Coordinator, Law Enforcement Division
Rose Ingram, Huron National Forest, USDA Forest Service
Kristen Thrall, Huron National Forest, USDA Forest Service

PUBLIC ATTENDEES OF RECORD

Lewis Shuler, Cycle Conservation Club
Jim DuFresne, Michigan Trail Maps
David Lorenz, Travel Michigan / MEDC
Bradley Potter, Western Michigan Snowmobile Council (WMSC)
David Low, WMSC
Lee Murray, Chair, Snowmobile Advisory Workgroup
Josh DeBruyn, Michigan Department of Transportation
Dave Bee, West Michigan Regional Planning Committee
Steve Schnell, Community Development Director, Cheboygan County
Denise Cline, Northeast Michigan Council of Governments (NEMCOG)
Harry Burkholder, Land Information Access Association (LIAA)
Matt McCauley, Northwest Michigan Council of Governments
Nancy Krupiarz, Executive Director, Michigan Trails & Greenways Alliance
Howard Meyerson, Grand Rapids Press
Sharon R. Nunnelee, Executive Director, West Michigan Trails & Greenways Coalition

WELCOME

Chair Wheatlake called the Michigan Snowmobile and Trails Advisory Council (Council) meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Chair Wheatlake welcomed everyone and introduced himself, followed by introductions of the Council members and all other attendees.

Chair Wheatlake gave a brief background of the Council and its legislative challenge regarding trails. He also stated that one of the goals is to make trails available in some kind of format, preferably electronically, to promote tourism.

Chair Wheatlake then presented the October 19, 2011 meeting agenda for review/approval.

Motion was made by Mike Foote, seconded by Greg Yager, to approve the October 19, 2011 meeting minutes. Motion for adoption unanimously carried.

MINUTES

The minutes of the July 22, 2011 Council meeting were acknowledged.

Motion was made by Jim Dickie, seconded by Mike Foote, to adopt the meeting minutes. Motion to adopt the July 22, 2011 meeting minutes unanimously carried.

BUSINESS ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Up North Trails Initiative Presentation and Council Discussion

Steve Schnell began a Power Point presentation of *Up North Trails (Working Together to Market "Up North")*. He referenced Cheboygan County, which has over 400 miles of trails. He stated that the goal is to raise at least \$10,000 to develop the initial *Up North Trail Towns* website. Additional information is available at www.nemcog.org/upnorthtrails.asp.

Denise Cline presented the award winning *US 23 Heritage Route*. She explained the different search options available. There is also an interactive mapping component. Additional information is available at www.us23heritageroute.org.

Web-based marketing is the first obvious step to effectively make our region known throughout the country. The LIAA, NEMCOG, and MDOT partnered last year to create the coastal tourism marketing website for the US 23 Heritage Route. Their group intends to use that program structure as a model to create a northern Michigan identity and an interactive mapping website which contains detailed information on all types of trail systems in northern Michigan as well as information about the things to do and see and services available around the trail systems.

Harry Burkholder presented a trail related site, *The Blueways of St. Clair*. Additional information is available at www.bluewaysofstclair.org.

Lynne Boyd asked where the trail information came from. **Denise Cline** responded that it came from Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) trail mapping and the DNR. They are not sure if they have all of the horse trail information.

Chair Wheatlake addressed David Lorenz explaining the limited technology available to the DNR to complete this work.

David Lorenz responded that most of the state is represented by county tourism (Chamber of Commerce). Pure MI is strictly a promotion, gathering of information and a portal. He stated that Pure MI is willing to work together to get this done and make available to the public. More than money, Pure MI has the marketing service.

Chair Wheatlake said that the Council is looking for a cohesive direction.

David Lorenz had not heard of this partnership (Up North Trails, etc.) and thanked the Council for bringing it to his attention.

Jim Dickie commented that he liked what has been presented.

Harry Burkholder continued with his presentation.

Chair Wheatlake asked if the reference to “Up North” was referring only to the northern Lower Peninsula. He also asked Lynne Boyd and Jim Radabaugh if there were department grants available to assist with this project. They responded “no.”

Chair Wheatlake then asked the MDOT representatives the same question. They responded that MDOT had already assisted and cannot pay twice for the same project. **Deb Alfonso** commented that they are very happy with the website, although MDOT is not really able to commit financial assistance. They would like to continue discussions.

Greg Yager said the information was wonderful – one spot, simple – loves the idea.

Carolyn Kane asked how they came up with the “regions?” **Denise Cline** and **Harry Burkholder** responded that those are the Regional Areas.

Carolyn Kane asked how it corresponds to MDOT planning regions. **Matt McCauley** responded that it was #10 on map. If we do not get more money statewide, it will be limited to Northern Michigan.

Chair Wheatlake asked how the Council is viewed by the COG. **Matt McCauley** responded that we share a goal; senses frustration – where do we find the funds. It makes sense, but how do make it a statewide database. It will take more money than is available.

David Lorenz said the upper Michigan Association is funded by a one percent (1%) hotel fee to promote leisure activities.

Chair Wheatlake asked if the COGs approached local foundations. **Matt McCauley** responded yes and will approach local foundations to promote statewide.

Steve Schnell said he appreciates the role of the Council, as they have contacts that represent all user groups.

Chair Wheatlake asked what the Council's statue charge is. **Lynne Boyd** responded that it is for the Council to make a statewide trail system recommendation to the Director, and the Director will make a recommendation to the Governor.

Jim DuFresne presented "*Michigan Trail Maps*." This website came into creation because what was available was lacking in maps, hence the name.

Chair Wheatlake asked Jim DuFresne if they work for profit. **Jim DuFresne** responded no, the website does not make money. The staff is made up of approximately eight individuals. They would like to see a clearing house of pathways – no matter who the administrator is. They have provided these maps, etc. without any public money. The goal is to encourage trail use. They want public support of the forest pathways. Gaylord convention bureau pays fee for ads.

Jim DuFresne has published a book which was released in April 2011. He is looking for help - not money but links. He really would like to link with the DNR and other groups present.

Nancy Krupiarz stated that this is a big enough project that needs to go to the Governors office – need bigger approach for funding.

Howard Meyerson sited the "*Michigan Trail Maps*" are the level/standard trail users are looking for.

Sharon Nunnelee said it appears a lot of groups are doing similar work; not aware of each others work. Pure MI is well known, may be the central location for information.

Jim DuFresne was brought in to represent backpackers/hikers.

Chair Wheatlake expanded on the money side (DNR); no defined source for the Council, Equine Trailways Subcommittee, or Workgroups other than the Snowmobile and ORV Advisory Workgroups which have program money.

Steve Schnell referenced Dr. Chuck Nelsons study/survey regarding growth of ORV trail license sales.

Chair Wheatlake asked Rose Ingram to tell about the Huron-Manistee National Forest. **Rose Ingram** said it was important to note that after listening to this group, it is about erasing boundaries for all of these different groups/areas. Pure MI has some wonderful information, but has a lot missing. We have a lot to do; a lot of opportunities before us.

Lynne Boyd stated that she was not sure if the DNR is the best resource for this, more so we (the DNR) should be getting the trails on the ground and used as a resource for information, etc. standard development.

Jim Radabaugh responded that the DNR is responsible for the acquisition and development of trails.

Bill Manson said that he feels that this needs to go to the Governor and Legislature. A proposal should be put together to present for funding – tie into Pure MI campaign.

David Lorenz said there is an opportunity for a trail site at Michigan.org; content derived from community/industry. Special emphasis on trails would not cost money. Although it may be not as nice/pretty as other sites presented today.

Lynne Boyd agreed with Bill Manson; we already have the Governors ear – the Council should put a plan together and present to the Governor for funding.

STAFF REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Nancy Krupiarz stated that there are more local trails than what DNR shows on its maps. Michigan is number one in the nation regarding trails.

Chair Wheatlake would rather have the Governor tell us what he wants instead of creating a plan. It was suggested that FMD's new promotional agent, Abby Rubley, assist in preparing a Plan for the Council to present to the Governor

John Morey, LED, reported that the Snowmobile on-line safety classes went live on Monday; Off-Road Vehicle to follow in the spring of 2012.

Chair Wheatlake asked Greg Yager for his thoughts regarding the report given by John Morey. **Greg Yager** responded that he was not big fan of this, he like hands-on instruction.

Jim Radabaugh spoke of the recent Mid American Trails Conference and award for the North Central State Trail.

Carolyn Kane spoke of her trip to Washington for the Rails to Trails Conservancy "Trail Champions Awards" in October; it was fabulous. She also picked up Fred Meijer's award on his behalf. It was a wonderful experience and she was happy to announce that she received more votes than any of the other 25 award recipients.

Chair Wheatlake suggested that the Council meet in January, July, and October of 2012. He also mentioned that he would like to speak with Director Stokes.

Overall, the subcommittee and workgroup chairs responded that they were excited and pleased by the direction the Council was heading.

Equine Trailways Subcommittee

Mike Foote presented an update on behalf of Sandra Batie (Chair) who was absent; next meeting is November 4.

Nonmotorized Advisory Workgroup

John Gonway, Chair, reported that the *ETS Recommendations Report* was reviewed at the last meeting and that Rob Golda had resigned; next meeting is December 1.

Off-road Vehicle Advisory Workgroup

Tom Dunn, Chair, reported that their last meeting was held in August. They identified priorities to draft bills for fee increase and liability reform. They created a subcommittee to review law for safe riding for all ages and organized a legislative ride. Dick Ranney and Tom Dunn have been working with Stabenow's office on national issues.

Snowmobile Advisory Workgroup

Lee Murray, Chair, reported that they had met the previous day and received good/timely responses from the DNR – things working quite well. Al Green and Bruce Woods were recommended for reappointment pending the MSA vote for their representation to the SAW.

NEXT MEETING

TBD

Meeting adjourned.