



MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

INTEROFFICE COMMUNICATION

TO: Natural Resources Commission

DATE: June 20, 2013

SUBJECT: Michigan Snowmobile and Trails Advisory Council's Comprehensive Trails Plan

Purpose of the Memo:

To provide an overview of the Michigan Snowmobile and Trails Advisory Council's Comprehensive Trail Plan, the next steps in regards to that plan and the role of the Natural Resources Commission pertaining to trails and the Comprehensive Trail Plan. A copy of the Comprehensive Trail Plan can be found at: http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-153-10365_16839---,00.html

Background:

The Michigan Snowmobile and Trails Advisory Council (MSTAC) and the Equine Trailways Subcommittee (ETS) were established with the enactment of Public Acts 45 and 46 of 2010. Public Act 45 charged the ETS, MSTAC, and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) with the responsibility of developing recommendations for a state trail system. The act calls for a three-step planning process to develop the state trail system initiated by the ETS preparing an equine trail plan and submitting it to the MSTAC.

Once the MSTAC received the ETS equine trail plan, it had one year to prepare a plan for a state trail system that considered all trail users. The MSTAC then provides its plan to the DNR which has one year to prepare and adopt a comprehensive trail plan.

The MSTAC was created by PA 46 of 2010. The 11-member council was appointed by the governor and includes five representatives of the snowmobile and ORV community (three or more must be the owner of a snowmobile) and two members from the ETS. One of the members of the council must be from the Upper Peninsula.

The MSTAC is charged with advising the DNR director and the governor on the creation, development, operation and maintenance of motorized and non-motorized trails in this state. In providing this guidance, the advisory council shall "seek to create a linked trail system."

The Comprehensive Trail Plan was adopted by MSTAC in April, 2013. It provides a comprehensive overview of the state's trail system, eight overarching recommendations with suggested actions to develop, manage and improve the trail system and chapters on the motorized (snowmobile and ORV), non-motorized (looped, linear and equestrian trails) and water

trail systems. Recommendations are included for each type of trail and also suggestions for business opportunities related to each trail type.

The public had an opportunity to provide comments on the draft Comprehensive Trail Plan during the month of January. Approximately 650 people provided comments on the plan.

Next Steps:

To complete the Comprehensive Trail Plan and fulfill the DNR obligations under the law, the DNR is preparing an implementation plan that will be combined with the MSTAC plan. The implementation plan is expected to be completed by October of 2013.

Role of the Natural Resources Commission:

The Natural Resources Commission, under PA 45 of 2010, is required to hold a public meeting prior to the department establishing the plan for a statewide trail network.

After the plan is established, the Commission, upon the request of the DNR, shall hold a public meeting to restrict access by pack and saddle animals on trails established under the Comprehensive Plan.