

**Minutes of the  
Nonmotorized Advisory Workgroup  
May 11, 2016**

NAW Members Present: Nancy Krupiarz, Andrea Ketchmark, John Morrison, Kristin Wiltfang

DNR staff: Nikki VanBloem, Southern Lower Trails Coordinator; Barbara Graves, Administrative Assistant, Trails Section

Guests: Jason Jones, Michigan Mountain Biking Assoc. Board and Potawatomi Mountain Biking Assoc.; Margie Ray, Indian River Friends of Wildwood Hills; Steve Vigneau, Clinton River Area Mountain Bike Assoc.; Jim Lawrence, Western U.P. Citizen's Advisory Council; Norm Cox, The Greenway Collaborative; Claire Stephens, MDOT; Melissa Werkman, International Mountain Bicycling Association.

### **PUBLIC APPEARANCE**

Norm Cox from The Greenway Collaborative updated the committee on a new resource site that was developed called *WalkBike.info*. Click the Grand Rapids link, then "Maps and Guides", then "Trails", you will find all the trails in the Grand region in *Google Maps*. There is also a page for each particular trail. These maps can be imbedded on different groups' websites and are meant to be shared and used.

### **ACTION ITEMS**

Andrea Ketchmark moved to approve the meeting agenda. John Morrison seconded and it carried unanimously.

Andrea Ketchmark moved to approve the February 17, 2016 meeting minutes. John Morrison seconded and it was supported unanimously.

### **UPDATES**

#### Iron Belle Trail

Nikki VanBloem, Southern Lower Trails Coordinator for Parks and Recreation (PRD) said that Kriss Bennett is working on the gap for funding in the spreadsheet. Nikki also stated that EMCOG is now on board. Nancy said they are following up on grants and trouble-shooting some issues. Andrea Ketchmark said she is working with Kriss on the update process. They have also been working with MDOT on highway signage that is similar to what is used on the North Country Trail. Kristin Wiltfang reported that they did a 2<sup>nd</sup> survey and 500 residents responded. A route was selected and now they will take that to the next township board meeting.

## Pure Michigan Trails Administrative Rules

Nancy informed the group that the first round of public comment was sent to DNR Legal and from there went to the Office of Regulatory Reinvention in LARA. That department will then open it up to the public again and all changes will then be presented to the Joint Committee on Legislative Rules. Nancy hopes this will be complete by the end of the year.

## Framework for Trail Funding

Nancy reported they are in the process of collecting information on what other states and countries are doing for funding. The State Park Advisory Committee is interested in this also.

Andrea said there may be some good opportunity for coordination with the Michigan State Parks Advisory Committee (MSPAC) because they are already looking into this issue. A starting point would be to see where the current funding is coming from and where it is going. It will help compare to other states to see if we are on par with how others are funding their non-motorized trails. She is more than happy to take the lead on compiling all of the organizations' volunteer hours. Nikki Van Bloem said she would be happy to help Andrea with the collection of volunteer hours.

## Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)

Nancy is applying for an AmeriCorps crew. It requires finding places that need work, putting the scope together, and finding no- or low-cost accommodations for a crew in 7-week stretches. They have identified some trails in the northern Lower Peninsula, Alpena, Chippewa Hills, Norway Ridge, Presque Isle, Rockport State Park, and the Jordan River Pathway. They will be submitting a concept form to AmeriCorps; hopefully getting selected to do a formal application. The crew would start in September and run through the beginning of November.

## Recreational Use Act Amendments for Liability Protection of Volunteers and Contractors

Nancy briefed the members on the bill that is being opened up for revision because of a lawsuit against a trail maintenance contractor in the U.P. (*Duffy vs. Irons Area Tourist Assoc.*). The DNR has been working on language to insert into the amended bill.

## Ebikes

Nancy updated the members on the few discussions the Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance (MTGA) had regarding Ebikes. MTGA tried to convene multiple groups to start talk on the subject because Ebikes are becoming increasingly popular. The DNR does not allow Ebikes right now on their state lands because they have a motor and the trails on state lands are meant for nonmotorized use only. California recently passed a law that puts them in three classes: Type 1 is a pedal-assist only and it goes up to 20 MPH; Type 2 does not require pedal assistance, has a throttle, and a

top speed of 20 MPH; Type 3 does require the active pedaling and has a top speed of 28 MPH. California has also divided their bike infrastructure into different classes, so their bike lanes and their bike paths have Class 1, 2, and 3 bike infrastructures. They do not address natural surface pads or single track in their legislation. These trails are left up to the individual trail owner or manager to determine. In Michigan law there is no differentiation between the different types of non-motorized trails. Nancy would like everybody to come to a general consensus, preferably before the Lucinda Means Bicycle Advocacy Day, which is coming up May 25.

Nancy continued that the League of Michigan Bicyclists (LMB) has an evolving position. Based on their advocacy committee, they feel that at least Class 1 and Class 2 should be included on all road infrastructures for bikes; for example, bike lanes, main travel ways, designated bike routes, etc. They are not sure about Class 3, but they are open for discussion on it. They are saying it is really up to the rest of us to determine what we would like to see on the trails. They support at least Class 1 on the multi-use trails, or at least the rail-trail type of trail because they are used a lot for transportation.

Melissa Werkman added that the Michigan Mountain Biking Association (MMBA) board reached the conclusion that they feel more information and information on impact is needed before they take an official position one way or another.

Jason Jones said they do not want to hastily jump into legislation or support something without looking at all of the ramifications first.

Nancy said MTGA is meeting tomorrow and one of their main items on the agenda is going to be this issue. They will see what the linear trail people think about it and then check back in again with the MDOT and the DNR to see what they can come up with.

Jason said this issue has recently blown up a little with some trails areas where they steward; some are confused about whether Ebikes are allowed or not allowed on trails. It is something he talked to Ron Olson about. He thinks the word needs to get out to DNR land managers that they need to post signage that says, per land use orders, Ebikes are considered motorized and they are not currently allowed on non-motorized trails. They need to all consider each other's situations.

Nikki asked if there is an average speed that mountain bikers typically go. Jason responded that for an experienced, fairly seasoned biker, his average speeds on the Potawatomi would be around 9 or 10 MPH. Most folks are going to be 5 – 10 MPH. A high end rider would be around 15 MPH.

Nikki asked the group if they are waiting on specific information or have specific questions, or are they waiting to hear how conversations go. Melissa responded both. They are waiting to see an impact study from a university in Utah as well as seeing where it goes not only with users, but also land managers. There has not been enough usage, they do not know enough about the impact and about the safety. They want to make sure that they are looking at the mountain biking community for input and direction, as well as being concerned with those relationships with other users and land managers. They do not want to slide backwards in all of the work they have done

because they may find themselves perceived as, once again, ruining the trails for putting people at risk. They are treading very carefully with this.

The question was asked if anyone has had conversations with Law Enforcement about the enforcement of Ebikes. Nancy said some has taken place at the various meetings. A DNR enforcement officer said it would not be easy to enforce if you had different classes of Ebikes.

The general idea is to know where everyone stands on the issue before the Lucinda Means Day.

### Roundtable Updates

John reported that their trail maintenance workshop was very successful and they received a lot of comments from it. They had 30+ people from around the state participate. They covered the maintenance and the operations manual. It was nice to share successes and failures so they are all not learning the same lessons at their own expense. He recommends if you do it, to do it on a Friday/Saturday so more people can participate. Nikki said the networking was beneficial.

Nancy asked if Mark Mandenburg was putting together a trail maintenance standard. Nikki responded that yes, he is, and Mark is having an intern work with him this summer to help pull that together and format it and put it in a usable document.

Jason said for single track trails in park and rec areas they have a guide that was compiled and approved by the DNR that is widely used for their section adopters, specifically for single track trail maintenance. He can provide it.

Claire Stephens asked that whatever is out there and is being developed, especially if it is on the linear rail trails that potentially they have interest in owning as well, they would like to see those before they were released to a trail manager or somebody who is potentially going to adopt that as a pilot. Please make sure they have an opportunity to weigh in and provide comment to make sure they can provide guidance on the standards as well. Nikki can help facilitate that.

Nikki Van Bloem introduced herself as the new Southern Michigan Trail Specialist who covers all 30 southern lower counties of Michigan. She will be doing a number of things that Kriss Bennett used to do; working with nonmotorized groups, linear rail trails, helping communities with trails and connecting them, and also working with the motorized program and the equestrians as well. She has worked with the DNR for about 20 years working in various state parks. She also informed the group that Doug Donnelly is the new Communication Specialist in PRD working specifically on the Iron Belle.

Andrea said they should revisit the connection with the Michigan Trails Advisory Committee (MTAC). Maybe something to talk about on a future call to make sure they are taking advantage of that group. Nancy said she thinks the mere existence of this workgroup plus having the DNR involved it creates more engagement with the user

groups throughout the state. Andrea recommended they plan presentations to MTAC for each meeting that each user group can present. They did it last year with Paul Yauk for the Iron Belle Trail to educate the committee on what they had done. The funding issue would be good to present after they have more information. Nancy agreed.

Nikki suggested they get together on the volunteer hours and present how many hours the nonmotorized groups are contributing towards the cause. Andrea said they will continue to work on refining those points and then they will focus on communication to MTAC. Nancy said they will aim for that as a goal in the future.

Nancy reported on the Mt. Pleasant Bike Safety Summit that she attended in April that was put on by the State Police Office of Highway Safety Planning. It was about safety, crash statistics, and different safety methods that can be undertaken. Cycle Savvy was there to teach safe bicycling skills. There were three classroom workshops that would give you credit for their certification. She presented on the Iron Belle Trail and the Lake to Lake Trail. Law Enforcement was there to talk about the bike law, how they enforce it, what kinds of accidents they see, what is the most frequent cause of these accidents, and different research studies that are happening in the state about it.

Nancy thanked everyone for joining the conversation and adjourned the meeting at 3:12 p.m.