

**MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
OFF-ROAD VEHICLE ADVISORY WORKGROUP (ORVAW)**

**MEETING MINUTES (approved on March 11, 2015)
November 5, 2014**

**Michigan United Conservation Clubs
2101 Wood Street, Lansing, Michigan 48912**

PRESENT FOR THE WORKGROUP

Thomas Dunn, Chair
Amy Trotter
Lewis Shuler
Pat Brower
Don Hesel
Skip Schulz

ABSENT FOR THE WORKGROUP

Tim Kobasic

PRESENT FOR STAFF

Jason Fleming, Parks and Recreation Division (PRD)
Steve Kubisiak, PRD
Jackie Blodgett, PRD
Corporal John Morey, LED

PRESENT FOR FOREST SERVICE

Kristen Thrall, Huron-Manistee National Forest

PUBLIC ATTENDEES

Jon Noyes, Oakland County Parks and Recreation
Dr. Dan McCole, Michigan State University

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Dunn called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. He reviewed workgroup reappointments.

The November 5, 2014 Agenda was presented and reviewed.

Mr. Schulz moved; seconded by Mr. Brower to approve the agenda as presented. Motion unanimously carried.

MINUTES

The May 7, 2014 Minutes were presented and reviewed.

Mr. Schulz noted a correction on page 3 under workgroup reports, second line reads: "Skip Schulz reported he and members of the Upper Peninsula Trail Development Authority met state association from Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa."

"Authority should be changed to "Association."

Mr. Brower moved; seconded by Mr. Helsel to approve the minutes as corrected. Motion unanimously carried.

BUSINESS ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Dixie Gully Run Event Update – Jon Noyes, Oakland County Parks and Recreation presented a video about the proposed ORV Adventure Park in Oakland County and the two demonstration events held at the site this past summer. The two events drew over 370 participants and 100 spectators and was a resounding success. He noted there was a lot of support from local businesses and virtually no resident complaints. The Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund board will be making their final decision regarding the Groveland-Holly mine acquisition grant application submitted by the DNR's Park and Recreation Division at their December meeting.

Mr. Noyes thanked the ORVAW for their support and looks forward to continuing the successful collaboration with them if the grant is approved.

Chair Dunn thanked Mr. Noyes.

ORV User Preference Survey – Dr. Dan McCole, Michigan State University gave a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the findings of a survey of licensed ORV riders. A random sample of four thousand licensed ORV riders from southeast Michigan, Northern Ohio, and Northern Indiana were surveyed. Two thousand three hundred and seventy (2,370) responses were received yielding a 59% response rate. The purpose of the survey was to explore rider preference with respect to the types of features and amenities that should be included into the park's design. The survey identified preferred features, motivations, satisfiers and dissatisfiers, and confirmed a high demand for diverse ORV riding opportunities in Southeast Michigan.

Dr. McCole and Mr. Noyes answered questions from the workgroup.

WUPCAC Resolution – Jason Fleming distributed the below resolution from the Western Upper Peninsula Citizen Advisory Council and the DNR's response:

The WUPCAC recommends the DNR support/initiate legislation that would revise the ATV/ORV registration and permit fees in a manner that is more understandable by all parties and easier to administer, perhaps an all-inclusive one-fee permit.

DNR Response: We understand the fee changes this year have raised several questions. We will continue to work with our trail partners, license vendors, and all of you to enhance communication and alleviate any confusion this change may have created.

Mr. Fleming said he will be reviewing the statute with DNR Legislative Liaison Trever VanDyke and License Manager Denise Gruben.

Mr. Schulz invited Mr. Fleming to attend a future WUPCAC meeting.

Free Riding Weekend – Chair Dunn said that although having the second free riding weekend in late September during trails week seemed like a good idea, perhaps it would be better to move the date earlier in the year when the kids are still out of school and there is time for new riders to purchase ORV licenses for the remainder of the riding season. He proposed moving the date of the second free ORV riding weekend from September 27-28 to August 22-23 next year.

Mr. Fleming said he would like to gather use information on future free riding weekend events in order to determine how many people attend the free riding weekend and subsequently purchase an ORV sticker.

Mr. Schulz said the purpose of the second free riding weekend was not to raise revenues for that year, but rather to bring folks back to Michigan the following year. He noted the success of this year's "Run for the Colors" Veterans ride having 78 participants.

Mr. Helsel said that moving the second free riding weekend back to August could promote a free camping and riding weekend and maybe clubs could assist with surveying event participants.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Helsel moved; seconded by Mr. Shuler to move the date of the second free riding weekend to August 22-23 next year. Motion passed.

Dunn -- Yea
Trotter – Yea
Helsel – Yea
Brower – Yea
Shuler – Yea
Schulz – Nay

The following people were identified to participate on a subcommittee to study ways to collect metrics on participants of free riding weekend events: Jason Fleming, Don Helsel, and Tim Kobasic.

Chair Dunn requested a progress report from this subcommittee at the next meeting.

Mr. Fleming said he would like to add the topic of Trail Counters to the next meeting agenda.

Budget Report – Jackie Blodgett distributed a handout and reviewed ORV fund balances for the last three fiscal years along with proposed FY15 appropriation and estimated balance. The FY14 ORV license revenues met projections totaling \$6.2 million, ending with a balance of \$4.0 million. Projected FY15 revenues are \$6.2 million with a \$4.2 million balance respectively. She answered questions from the workgroup.

The workgroup discussed the need to begin planning for program enhancements including a review of trail maintenance reimbursement rates and signage program.

The following people were identified to participate on a subcommittee to review and make recommendations regarding reimbursement rates and implementation of signage enhancements: Don Helsel, Pat Brower, Skip Schulz, and Lewis Shuler.

Chair Dunn requested a progress report from this subcommittee at the next meeting.

2015 Meeting Schedule – **Thomas Dunn** suggested quarterly meetings and offered the following dates: March 11, May 13, August 12 and November 4. One meeting will be in the Upper Peninsula. A recommendation on the preferred meeting date and location for the meeting in the Upper Peninsula will be addressed at the next meeting.

Mr. Schulz moved; seconded by Mr. Shuler to approve the following 2015 meeting dates: March 11, May 13, August 12 and November 4. Mr. Schulz amended the motion to August 5; seconded by Mr. Helsel. Motion unanimously passed.

The approved 2015 meeting dates are March 11, May 13, August 5 and November 4. Meeting times and locations to be determined.

WORKGROUP REPORTS

Don Helsel reported the Ottawa National Forest recently approved the “Interior Project,” which included a multi-use trail. He thanked the DNR for acquiring the abandoned railroad grade between Ontonagon and Rockland for trail purposes.

Thomas Dunn announced the American Motorcyclist Association, District 14, in cooperation with the DNR, Cycle Conservation Club of Michigan, and the Lansing Motorcycle Club is planning their 11th annual tree planting event in Kalkaska on April 26, 2015. Over 70,000 seedlings have been planted since 2004.

Skip Schulz announced the Upper Peninsula Trail Development Association will be hosting a meeting with other state associations next year in the Upper Peninsula.

Lewis Shuler said he was contacted by Cam Arnold from ATV Safety Institute (ASI) regarding the opportunity to partner with the DNR during the 2015 ATV Safety Week campaign. Mr. Shuler will provide the DNR Cam’s contact information.

STAFF REPORTS

USDA Forest Service – Kristen Thrall, **Huron-Manistee National Forest**, reported the “Connecting Communities” ATV trail proposal was officially approved by the DNR as a state designated trail. It’s 34 miles long and will connect 6 communities in the northeast Lower Peninsula. ORV use was high this last season and the Lumbermen’s Monument brought in over \$400,000 in recreation fees. Ms. Thrall reported Leslie Auriemmo is the new Forest Supervisor for the Huron-Manistee National Forest. Ms. Thrall provided and update and answered questions about the travel management planning process.

Law Enforcement Division – **Corporal John Morey** mentioned that in response to the workgroup's request for information regarding compliance with the two-tier license system, the Law Enforcement Division queried the districts. He distributed a summary report of major findings. As for compliance with the two-tier system, it appears to be relatively good. Although in areas with and without designated trails, COs are seeing an increase in operators without decals. Operators are complaining about having to put two decals on a machine and there is very little area in which to place them legally. Cycle users have voiced the most frustration. There appears to be major confusion as to when and where both decals are needed not only with the users but with the license agents too. Marketing the changes has been poor.

Corporal Morey said he met with Jon Noyes to discuss the possibility of holding a training academy at the Holly-Groveland site next year. Three training academies were held last year.

Parks and Recreation Division – **Steve Kubisiak** reported the ORV trail system was expanded by 147 miles last fiscal year bringing the total to 3,845 miles. Six new community connectors were established. Seven more trail proposals are currently under review totaling approximately 125 miles. The state trail plan expansion target is 4000 miles.

Mr. Helsel moved to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Brower.

Meeting adjourned 9:15 pm.

NEXT MEETING

March 11, 2015. Time and location to be determined.