



ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

MINUTES

August 23, 2022

Lakeshore Resource Network
Chemical Bank Conference Room
Ludington

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL (AAC)

PRESENT

Scott Norris, Chair
Tom Jones, Co-Chair
Allen Beauchamp
Ken Buchholtz
Cindy Burkhour
Vendella Collins
Michael Harris
Tyra Khan
Tina Nowakowski
Will Purves
Jessica Stark
Billy Vickers
Robert Winn
Duncan Wyeth

ABSENT

Neal McKenzie
Bryan Wilkinson

PRESENT FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (DNR)

Daniel Lord, AAC Sponsor
Michael Holsinger, ADA Coordinator
Yolanda Taylor, Assistant to the AAC

PRESENT FROM THE DNR ACCESSIBILITY TEAM (A-TEAM)

David Haupt, *A-Team Chair*, Marketing and Outreach
Michelle OKelly, Parks and Recreation
Alexandria McBride, Grants

INTERPRETERS

Janet Jurus and Stacy Pierce Dildy
Leticia Fox, Closed Captioner

PRESENTERS:

Shana Ramsey, Marketing and Outreach, DNR

REGULAR MEETING

OPENING REMARKS

Chair Norris called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

The Chair then took roll call.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Norris asked the council if they had any additions, corrections, or discussion regarding the May 24, 2022, minutes. No additional corrections, edits, or discussion was offered.

Chair Norris requested a motion to approve the May 24, 2022, minutes.

Duncan Wyeth motioned to approve the minutes; Tom Jones seconded the motion; the motion unanimously carried, and the May 24, 2022, minutes were approved.

ENDORSEMENT OF DNR RECREATION GRANT APPLICATION/PROJECT AAC Infrastructure and Natural Resources Programs Subcommittee

- Opening Comments/Process
Cindy Burkhour discussed one of the Infrastructure Subcommittees responsibilities is to help review DNR grant applications to the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund. When this process was first developed a framework to put together to guide their application. Grant applications have become more organized and clearer in their description of accessibility efforts due to that framework. If you incorporate universal design and consult with people with disabilities and get your project reviewed, you are eligible for additional points in grant scoring.
- Marketing and Outreach Grant; TF22-0013, Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery Visitor Center Animal Exhibit Renovation (VanBuren County)
Shana Ramsey shared some background on Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery Visitor Center. Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery is one of six fish hatcheries in Michigan; however, they operate very similar to a day use park. Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery raises fish specifically for the purpose of rehabilitating populations, for balanced and healthy ecosystems, and for fishing opportunities. Wolf Lake raises four species of fish including Muskellunge, Chinook salmon, Steelhead and Walleye.

The Visitor Center was constructed in 1983, includes 7,000 square feet of indoor facility space, but expand out onto the property for birding, trails, and more. The outdoor features are vast. Programing is designed for public engagement and school groups (20,000-30,000 visitors per year) including hatchery tours, kids fishing, archery, nature walks, school programs, and more. Wolf Lake Visitor Center has made upgrades to make features more accessible including the fishing pier, trail features, exhibits, and bathrooms. The current grant proposal is to improve features and exhibits indoors.

Specifics of the grant proposal include:

- Lake Sturgeon Touch Tank – To make the touch tank more accessible heights would be lowered with a variety of floor depths (reach depths) within the tank itself; a narrow edge on the top of the tank; a 34" height to the top of the rail is the maximum height; within the tank a maximum depth of 24"; and a 40" minimum clear space on the side of the tank to allow for side approach.
- Interpretive Kiosk – Including a variety of features, lower height, large font, QR codes, and elements to allow for side approach.

- Interpretive Signs – Including large font, lower heights, QR codes for auditory tracks, and larger pictures.
 - Wall Aquariums – Large wall aquariums that you can walk right up to and extend all the way to the floor.
 - New Flooring – Tile or other impervious surface with a transition no more than 1/4". Council members suggested a change in color or texture of flooring for different exhibit types/zones.
 - Automatic Door Openers – For the bathrooms.
 - Critter Corner – Update the existing critter corner.
- Motion to Endorse
Cindy Burkhour commented that the grant proposal has the recommendation from the AAC Infrastructure and Natural Resources Programs Subcommittee.

Chair Norris requested a motion to endorse the MNRTF application, TF22-0013, Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery Visitor Center Animal Exhibit Renovation (VanBuren County).

Cindy Burkhour motioned to endorse the grant application; motion seconded; the motion unanimously carried, and the grant application endorsement was approved.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

DNR Executive Updates

Dan Lord, AAC Sponsor, informed the council that Alexis Hermiz, DNR Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) officer is moving on and has accepted a job with Carhart. This is an unclassified position and is a high priority for the department to back fill. Council members suggested that when this is posted it be adjusted to a DEIA position. Including accessibility in the function and title. This will remain as an agenda item for December.

Dan also shared that Deputy Director Mark Hoffman is retiring at the end of year. The department has two Chief Deputies. One position is classified, and one is unclassified. Mark Hoffman's position was classified. This position is critical and was posted nationally. The department is anticipating some overlap with the new incumbent and Mark Hoffman.

The departments FY23 budget is set. The budget was set early this year and affords the department a once in a lifetime budget! One example is that fish hatcheries will receive close to 30M to make mechanical and energy efficiency upgrades.

On the horizon and touching a lot of different divisions is the departments mandatory deer harvest reporting. Hunters must report their deer harvest within 72 hours in 2022, reporting that harvest at: [Deer Harvest Reporting \(michigan.gov\)](https://www.michigan.gov/deer-harvest-reporting), or through the new DNR Hunt Fish app. Council members asked if someone could come to the December meeting to discuss mandatory deer harvest reporting and the app?

Cindy Burkhour asked for an update on Water Trails. That was initiative Mark Hoffman was spearheading. Dan Lord stated there is a position within Parks & Recreation Division. Maybe Tim Nowak could come and update the council in December.

The Director and department were recognized by the Disability Network of Southwest Michigan as an 'Inclusive Partner' at their annual ADA celebration that took place in Kalamazoo. They specifically cited the department MNRTF grant programs and putting accessibility into those programs.

ADA Coordinator Updates

Mike Holsinger, ADA Coordinator and Section Manager stated that department Customer Service Centers and some Field Offices are preparing for mandatory deer harvest reporting. Staff are currently capturing calls regarding concerns over mandatory harvest. Customer Service Centers will be open for the first two weeks of firearm deer season this year to assist customers.

One the ADA front, most reasonable accommodation requests have been centered around Parks and Recreation Division. The department has also received a few official complaints, that have been addressed.

The council asked for an update on the design and construction of the mass timber Customer Service Center in Newberry. Mike Holsinger replied that estimates came back double what the department anticipated. The department believes we can still complete this project after value engineering and requesting additional funding from the legislature.

A-Team Updates

Dave Haupt, A-Team Chair, worked with Yolanda Taylor, Diana Paiz, and Cindy Krueger to clean up and reorganize the departments SharePoint page on accessibility. We removed vague samples, so staff wouldn't misunderstand the information as all inclusive.

Track Chair Fundraising Campaign Update

Michelle OKelly stated the department has 16 track chairs in the program. The track chairs are available at 11 different locations listed below:

Ludington (2)
Holland (2)
Grand Haven (2)
Muskegon
Bald Mountain
Ionia
Waterloo
Bay City
Tahquamenon Falls
Maybury
Island Lake

Track Chair Reservations Update

Michelle OKelly stated that individuals can only reserve the track chairs based on the arrangements that are set up for each state park; namely, calling in advance or reserving them on-site (similar to kayaks, boats, or safety vest rentals).

The council discussed ways of making the availability of track chairs more known, such as placing track chairs in a visible location. The program has grown, and perhaps a policy or best practices document needs to be developed.

- Council members volunteered to work with Cindy Burkhour to draft a use policy for track chairs in State Parks. Volunteers include Cindy Burkhour, Scott Norris, Tom Jones, Vendella Collins, Michelle OKelly, Brian Wilkinson and Billy Vickers. Michelle OKelly will invite Park Supervisors who have track chairs to participate.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

July 7 Hunter Education Workshop/Demo Overview

The workshop/demo was very well received. Hunter safety instructors were able to get outside and see/use adaptive equipment in archery and firearm demonstrations. The demonstrations and conversations were very insightful, with hunter safety instructors stating seeing someone use the equipment was extremely beneficial.

Jessica Stark commented that hunter safety instructors have also been discussing having a forum where they could ask questions and receive guidance. Jessica asked if Event Manager (the program used to schedule hunter safety) could accommodate a forum? David Haupt mentioned making interview/video demonstrations at the December 6, 2022, meeting with a questions/answer narrative as a reference.

Tom Jones asked Dan Lord if the department would accept a gift of a liberator machine at a shooting range? Having one at a state shooting range would be great for the public. Dan Lord mentioned contacting Dennis Fox, to make sure the right location is chosen, and that staff could accommodate such a resource. Tom would like to donate one along with a shooting bench.

On behalf of the council, Chair Norris, thanked Ron Monroe for his presentation yesterday at Idlewild and Jim Gallie, Park Supervisor at Ludington State Park for making himself and the facilities available to the council.

AAC INITIATIVES

Adaptive Sports Card Proposal

This initiative was first discussed in the council's ad hoc subcommittee on deer regulations back in 2019-2020. This proposal and the idea of an adaptive sports card were discussed in detail at the council's December 2021 meeting. In-depth information can be found in those minutes.

Dave Haupt discussed the new DNR Hunt Fish app as an option to house individuals' disability paperwork and department approvals/permits. There is a section within the app that displays safety certificates, so it seems like a possibility for this app to also house other department permits/approvals. Tom Jones agreed that the app would be a good idea.

The council previously endorsed the adaptive sports card. If Tom Weston comes to the December meeting, we can discuss the app further.

Mentored Hunting Program

The mentored hunting and apprenticeship programs, as they currently exist, cause hunters to age out of the system. The department established language to address revisions to the mentored hunting program, with the intent of creating more access to individuals that have difficulties obtaining their hunter safety certification, including people with cognitive or intellectual disabilities, to align with a long-term mentored hunting program. The bill would provide guidance on who would qualify for a long-term mentored hunting program, including those hunters that age out of the apprentice or currently established mentored hunting program and may need continued assistance. This long-term program would allow them the opportunity to experience hunting, or continue to hunt, with their family members, friends, groups, or another licensed hunter, regardless of age.

The department has sent language over to the legislature and is waiting for a bill sponsor.

COUNCIL UPDATES

Legislative Update

Tyra Khan, Statewide ADA Coordinator, stated that the Michigan Department of Civil Rights has a legislative liaison that tracks potential legislation.

- HB4256 would amend the penal code, not our state civil right statute to allow service animals and service animals in training that are accompanied by an animal raiser or trainer to be allowed as an accommodation. This will go into effect 91 days after the proposal to the legislature.
- HB4075 is legislation that states that the Department of Civil Rights (MDCR) has to adopt and post the new dynamic character on accessible parking signs and other means of communication. It must be substantially equivalent to the international symbol of accessibility. The law states that one year after the effective date, October 23, 2022, any sign erected or replaced must have the new character; and that MCCR has to encourage the removal of the work handicapped from signs or other means of communication.
- HB4076 would remove the word handicapped from signage and replace it with reserved.

Only the Department of Justice can advise a state how to move through the process of changing a sign that is an international symbol. MDCR has reached out to the attorney general assigned to civil rights and the US Department of Justice for guidance on how to incorporate the character change in a way that is not in violation with federal law.

Round Table

Dan Lord announced Yolanda Taylor's pending retirement after 34 years of service with the department. This will be Yolanda's last council meeting. Dan thanked Yolanda for the passion and dedication she exhibited to the council and for accessibility in general.

Chair Norris requested a motion to name Yolanda Taylor as Friend of the DNR Accessibility Advisory Council.

The full council motioned to endorse Yolanda Taylor as Friend of the DNR Accessibility Advisory Council; motion seconded; the motion unanimously carried.

Cindy Burkhour provided an EV charging update. The US Access Board has issued their minimum standards for EV charging stations. Our design currently exceeds the minimum ADA requirements for charging stations.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was offered.

CLOSING BUSINESS

Chair Norris announced the next meeting of the council is scheduled for December 6, 2022, at the Lansing Customer Service Center, beginning at 9:00 a.m.

ADJOURN

Chair Norris asked if there were any further comments. No additional comments were offered. He then asked for a motion to adjourn.

Duncan Wyeth motioned for adjournment; Ken Buchholtz seconded the motion.

The Chair thanked all members of the council, the accessibility team, the interpreters and CART service provider, and the presenters for their participation in today's meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 12:15 pm.