



ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

MINUTES

May 24, 2022

Glassen Shooting Education Center
Rose Lake Shooting Range
East Lansing

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL (AAC)

PRESENT

Scott Norris, Chair
Tom Jones, Co-Chair (*virtually*)
Allen Beauchamp (*virtually*)
Ken Buchholtz (*virtually*)
Cindy Burkhour (*virtually*)
Vendella Collins (*virtually*)
Michael Harris (*virtually*)
Tyra Khan (*virtually*)
Neal McKenzie (*virtually*)
Tina Nowakowksi
Will Purves (*virtually*)
Jessica Stark
Billy Vickers (*virtually*)
Bryan Wilkinson
Robert Winn
Duncan Wyeth

ABSENT

PRESENT FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (DNR)

Stacy Welling Haughey, Upper Peninsula Field Deputy/UP AAC Sponsor (*virtually*)
Daniel Lord, AAC Sponsor
Michael Holsinger, ADA Coordinator
Yolanda Taylor, Assistant to the AAC

PRESENT FROM THE DNR ACCESSIBILITY TEAM (A-TEAM)

Tracy Claramunt, Fisheries (*virtually*)
Andrea Stay and Alexandria McBride, Grants Management (*virtually*)
David Haupt, *A-Team Chair*, Marketing and Outreach
Cindy Krueger, *A-Team Co-Chair*, Marketing and Outreach (*virtually*)
Diana Paiz, Michigan History Center (*virtually*)
Michelle OKelly, Parks and Recreation (*virtually*)
Rob Corbett, Real Estate (*virtually*)
Ryan Soulard, Wildlife

INTERPRETERS

Janet Jurus and Stacy Pierce Dildy (*virtually*)
Leticia Fox, Closed Captioner

PRESENTERS:

Tim Woods, Autonomous Vehicle Alliance General Manager (*virtually*)

John Peracchio, Council on Future Mobility and Electrification Chair (*virtually*)

Keith Cheli, DNR Parks and Recreation (*virtually*)

Robin Bennet, Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America (*virtually*)

Nicholas Dohm, GIS Resource Specialist, DNR Unmanned Aerial Systems Operations Unit

REGULAR MEETING

INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Norris called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the first hybrid meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Council (council). He explained that some members of the council are participating in-person, while others are participating virtually. He gave a brief overview of how the meeting would be conducted, including meeting protocols, and asked for everyone's patience as we work through this hybrid format.

The Chair then took roll call, and introduced three new members to the council:

- Allen Beauchamp, Board Member, Superior Alliance for Independent Living, UP Disability Network, replacing the late Sarah Peurakoski;
- Tyra Khan, State ADA Compliance Director, Department of Civil Rights, replacing Kim Woolridge; and
- Tina Nowakowski, Director of Communication and Strategic Partnerships, mParks; replacing Justin Lippe

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Norris asked the council if they had any additions, corrections, or discussion regarding the February 22, 2022, Minutes. No additional corrections, edits, or discussion was offered.

Chair Norris requested a motion to approve the February 2022 Minutes.

Duncan Wyeth motioned to approve the Minutes; Robert Winn seconded the motion; the motion unanimously carried, and the February 2022 Minutes were approved.

ACCESSIBLE EV CHARGING STATION TEMPLATE UPDATE

John Peracchio, Senior Advisor to the Council on Future Mobility and Electrification (CFME), reported that through the work of this council, Keith Cheli, the department, and his colleague, Tim Woods, they have identified an opportunity to promote a universally accessible EV charging/parking station template. They have yet to identify a national standard or template for universally accessible EV charging stations and parking spaces, and how the ADA applies to the design and installation of these new structures. This puts Michigan in a position to lead in this effort. The CFME is currently developing policy recommendations for their 2022 report. The electrification workgroup is establishing a template for EV charging in Michigan as a policy opportunity; meaning they could include a requirement that charging stations that are funded partially or completely by the State of Michigan for public use must be universally accessible. This would not apply to residential or private charging stations. They are using this template to document their draft recommendations, which will be presented to their council at the end of June. John then entertained and answered questions from the council.

Keith Cheli, Regional Field Planner, DNR Parks and Recreation, reminded the council that they began developing this universally accessible EV charging station template in 2017 based on an electric/utility cooperative expressing their interest in installing EV charging stations at various state park locations in northeast Michigan as a pilot at no cost to the state. They quickly realized there were no defined ADA guidelines or standards that applied to EV charging stations or parking spaces. Working with the department's accessibility team and this council's subcommittee on infrastructure, with Cindy Burkhour as the chair, a universally accessible EV charging/parking station template was designed and ultimately endorsed by this council in 2018. The council also recommended establishing a standard for all EV parking/charging stations on all state-owned lands, and elevating this requirement and the template to a statewide level, with the goal of influencing this new and rapidly evolving industry on a national level. From reaching out to various organizations and industry over the past year, the interest and momentum has exploded. Many companies, like Ford Motor Company, understand the value that these kinds of designs and the universal concept bring to their customers. They want their customers to have a positive and functional experience. If we solve the problems for people with mobility impairments to use this infrastructure, we solve the problems and make EV charging functional and accessible for everyone. Internally, the Parks and Recreation Division will be using this universally accessible design to install EV charging stations in various state parks along Lake Michigan this summer, in partnership with an electric vehicle manufacturer. They will also be installing fast charging stations on Belle Isle, also using this template, and will continue to lead by example.

Tim Woods, the Autonomous Vehicle Alliance (AVA) General Manager, further reported that their organization has been in existence for the last six years, with a large membership. Their Board is made up of Ford Motor Company, the Shyft Group, General Motors, Mackey International, Dow Chemical, and Stantec, to name a few. They have been focusing on identifying use cases and value propositions for L4 and L5 autonomous vehicles. Last December at their Fall/Winter meeting, he ran into John Peracchio and shared with him a project that was just approved on the future of infrastructure, with a focus on accessible EV charging. John immediately introduced Tim to Keith Cheli and Cindy Burkhour, and several meetings were scheduled to discuss this accessible EV charging/parking station template. These meetings have set the stage for multiple conversations.

Tim also shared that the AVA did extensive research in 2020 on accessibility and barrier free, which lit a fire with General Motors and Ford. Both companies are now in the process of building accessibility teams inside their organizations. After hearing about this universally accessible design template, Tim took the opportunity to present it to both organizations. General Motors was not quite ready, but Ford was enthusiastic. Cindy Burkhour, other council members, Keith Cheli, other department staff and Tim shared a presentation with Ford regarding this design template. He believes there is an opportunity that has never existed; to look at this developing ecosystem around EV charging and look at it from the ground up. In other words, build it right the first time versus taking a band aid approach down the line. Tim continues to work with Ford Motor Company's diverse ability and accessibility strategy team and their charging and energy services leaders. Right now, they are asking their innovative strategy team to develop a concept pilot design of what a potential universally accessible station would look like. Tim continues to follow up with Ford and is extremely excited to see what they come back with.

Tim also talked to the Access Board and they are in the process of writing recommendations around EV charging standards that will be circulated to the U.S. Department of Transportation and other organizations as they too have been receiving calls from every state looking for a standard or design.

Tim commended department staff and the council because this all started with the design template that was endorsed by this group. If we can work with Ford and an electric company to demonstrate what a universally accessible design would look like, this will set the stage for a national standard to make EV charging accessible for all. Tim further entertained questions and discussion with the council, and thanked them for lifting this up and bringing it forward. He hopes to bring additional good news to the council in the future.

John added that accessible routes, shelter, lighting, drainage, and location also need to be considered in the design and placement of EV charging/parking infrastructure. The key message is that making charging points accessible will benefit the entire EV industry ecosystem and its users, which is why Ford is interested in this work. He also commented that the CFME is collaborating with the Michigan Department of Civil Rights in developing policy that could ultimately lead to legislation.

Tyra Khan reported that the Michigan Department of Civil Rights is involved in this endeavor and also offered their continued assistance, i.e. trainings or information sharing.

Chair Norris thanked John, Tim and Keith for this encouraging information and asked them to come back to the council with an update as things progress. He also offered them to reach out if there is anything that this council can do to assist them in their efforts.

MVPA ROLLIN' TRAVELER GRANT PROGRAM

Robin Bennett, Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America (MVPA) Development Coordinator, gave the council a presentation on their Rollin' Traveler Grant Program (RTGP) and an overview of the MPVA. The mission of the MPVA is to enhance the quality of life of veterans with spinal cord injury or disease, as well as all citizens with disabilities regardless of race, creed, or color by advocating for civil rights, assuring quality healthcare, and supporting continued recreation, research, education, and healthy living. The Michigan Chapter operates as a separate 501(c)(3) according to the standards and practices established by the national Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA). The MPVA provides programs and services in advocacy, communications, educational scholarships, a loan closet, sports and recreation, veterans benefit services, and peer support services. They also hold several wheelchair baseball clinics every year, and advocate for important legislation.

During the pandemic, the MPVA worked to figure out what they could do to get involved with accessibility, travel, and the various recreation and leisure opportunities in Michigan, and enhance those experiences that are so important to their members and the people that they serve. The RTGP was the brainchild that was developed during that time. This grant program seeks to fund projects that introduce or enhance equitable opportunity and access to recreation/leisure activities for people with physical disabilities, with special consideration given to programs that reduce or waive fees for entrance, parking, etc. for paralyzed veterans. Funding priorities include, but are not limited to:

- Projects to introduce/improve barrier free access to Michigan's parks, lakes, etc.

- Projects to introduce/improve access to inclusive enjoyment of Michigan's recreation opportunities.
- Projects that enhance the quality of life for those that the MVPA serves.
- Projects that introduce innovative accessibility options to access Michigan's travel, events, and/or related amenities.

Eligible applicants would include:

- City, county, or community parks and recreation agencies;
- Municipalities; and
- 501(c)(3) nonprofits with a focus on inclusion in recreation.

The MPVA begins accepting submissions beginning October 1 of each year. There is no deadline, but each grant cycle begins on October 1. Grant funds may be awarded at any time during the MPVA's fiscal year, and the grant cycle may close at any time during the fiscal year. Michael Harris suggested getting applications in sooner than later because there is only so much funding that is available each year. There is no matching fund requirement, but they would like to work with foundations to have them provide the match so they can give the money back to the communities.

The RTGP is offering up to \$10,000 in single award amounts in a grant cycle. The MVPA will only grant one grant to an organization per grant cycle, and the awarded amounts will be up to the discretion of the MPVA Board of Directors. Award recipients must place signage recognizing the MPVA's support near the awarded project.

Robin also gave an overview of the application process and what they must include.

Information about this grant program and the application can be found at:

<https://www.michiganpva.org/about/programs/#rollintraveler>.

Council members are also welcome to contact the MVPA at Chapterhq@michiganpva.org, or Robin at Rbennett@michiganpva.org.

Robin then entertained questions and discussion with the council.

Dan Lord commented that he sees an opportunity for the MPVA and the department's grant section to support each other. Their grant programs are more brick and mortar, but the RTGP offers up more flexibility for adaptive equipment. Their grant section holds webinars each year on their grant programs. He sees an opportunity for their staff to incorporate the RTGP program into their webinars to help spread the word and co-promote other grant opportunities that are available. He offered up Alexandria McBride and Andrea Stay in the grants section, who are also members of the department's accessibility team, if MPVA would like to reach out to them and talk about opportunities to spread the word or coordinate efforts on potential grant projects that focus on accessibility. He also mentioned there are a lot of state park friend's groups that hold fundraisers to purchase and donate adaptive equipment to the state parks. This would be another opportunity to work with Michelle OKelly in Parks and Recreation to discuss opportunities for these friend's groups to apply for RTGP grants for adaptive equipment, such as mobi-mats, track chairs, accessible playgrounds, etc. Robin welcomed discussions with department staff and offered them to reach out to her. Dan also mentioned he will bring this up with the department's accessibility team.

Chair Norris thanked Robin and Michael Harris for this presentation and for sharing information about this grant opportunity.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Executive Updates

Dan Lord wanted to recognize the efforts of this council and Keith Cheli, with the inclusion of John Peracchio and Tim Woods, for taking universally accessible EV charging to a different level. It started at the department level with Keith Cheli and Cindy Burkhour's subcommittee, who saw an opportunity to address these issues right out of the gate in 2017 when EV, at that time, was in its early stages. After hearing about John and Tim's efforts to further engage the CFME and major industries is more than amazing and is a great example of the synergy around the council, the department, and now a few other organizations that can really take this to a national standard, which is pretty exciting. He looks forward to seeing how far this goes.

At an executive level, the former Law Enforcement Chief, Gary Hagler, has moved into the Executive Office to support goals of the Director in other areas. He is now the Emergency Planning Director, addressing emergency issues posed by more extreme weather events, increased awareness of animal/human health threats, greater fire threat, aging infrastructure, active shooter awareness training, and other challenges. Dave Shaw is the new Law Enforcement Chief.

Dan also mentioned that PA 53 of 2022 was signed by the Governor. It is a \$4.7 billion infrastructure package. Within this package, \$450 million of American Rescue Plan Act funds were allocated to the department. \$250 million was allocated to the backlog of state park infrastructure improvements, to include sewer, water, and other failing infrastructure, with an accessibility layer to those improvements. The remaining \$200 million was allocated for local parks and trails. However, of the \$200 million, \$135 million was dedicated to three specific projects:

- \$60 million to the Detroit Joe Louis Greenway:
- \$55 million to the Grand Rapids Greenway project; and
- \$20 million to Copper Peak to build the world's largest Olympic ski jump.

This leaves \$65 million for the statewide American Rescue Plan funding to local parks and trails via a competitive grant program that will be administered by the department's Grants Management Section. This new grant program is called the [Spark grant](#) program. It is still in its development stage, but universal accessibility will be included in the criteria.

Yolanda introduced Tina Nowakowski, a newer member from mParks, and asked if their organization will be involved in this new Spark grant program. Dan responded that they are most definitely involved and are at the table as the representative or umbrella organization for all local parks. They have had discussions on how mParks can support this program.

Cindy Burkhour asked if these grants will tie into the council's accessibility review process. Dan responded there may be the potential for accessibility reviews but, right now, they are still building out this program. This program is also on a tight timeline. All funds must be allocated and all projects completed by 2026.

Dan also addressed Tom's interest in lands that are acquired by the department. There is a [Report of Land Transactions](#) that is posted on the department's website that provides a summary of every land transaction, to include purchases, sales, exchanges, easements, etc.

Dan asked the council to let him know what types of updates they would like to receive in the future, and to submit those requests to Yolanda or to him directly

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Updates

Alexis Hermiz, the department's DEI officer, was unable to attend the meeting.

Duncan Wyeth, however, reported that the Michigan Department of Civil Rights, is having an all-day webinar/seminar in Lansing on June 15. Tyra Khan added that they will be hosting their [2022 Civil Rights Summit: Racism and Other 'Isms'- Shaping Systemic Change Through An Equity Lens](#) on June 15 at the Lansing Center, but it will be a hybrid session so those that cannot attend in-person will be able to participate virtually.

ADA Coordinator Updates

Mike Holsinger reported that he attended the Law Enforcement's Hunter Education Coordinators meeting on April 23 at Houghton Lake to give them an overview of the ADA laws and regulations based on the ADA user's manual. The information was well-received. They asked Mike to come back next year to make this presentation again. Law Enforcement is also holding a Hunter Education Instructor training on July 7 at the Ralph A. MacMullan Conference Center on North Higgins Lake in Roscommon. They are looking for someone to give an ADA presentation to this group as well, and Yolanda is in talks with their training coordinator and members of the council to assist them with this event. More particularly, having members of the council attend to demonstrate their capabilities and how hunters with disabilities use adaptive equipment. The goal is to make the hunter education instructors more comfortable working with people with disabilities, as well as sharing information about the many resources and programs that are available to hunters with disabilities.

Mike is also in the process of designing the new Customer Service Center in Newberry out of mass timber. He has brought in Keith Cheli to talk to the engineering firm about the design for universally accessible EV charging/parking stations and other universally accessible design concepts. Mike has also had discussions with Annie Urasky, director of the Division on Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing, about the installation of hearing loops for the big conference room and video relay to make the facility more accessible. Duncan commented that a fully accessible customer serve center in the eastern UP will be very well received by the community.

A-Team Updates

Dave Haupt, A-Team chair, reported he worked with Yolanda and Kristi Dahlstrom on setting up this first hybrid meeting and, so far, it seems to be going well. However, any feedback from the group would be appreciated.

He also reported that the department's accessibility team has been working on various initiatives. Diana Paiz has been working with CMU Radio and the accessibility team's marketing subcommittee to develop radio spots that promote accessible recreation on a seasonal basis. As previously mentioned, Law Enforcement has approached the team to request ADA training/presentations to their hunter education and other instructional training groups, to include their off-road vehicle safety instructor program. Most of these groups simply focus on the instructional side. By providing this additional training, the hope is to have them understand and feel more comfortable working with recreationists with disabilities. The team is also in the process of reviewing their internal accessibility site to update the information/resources that are posted out there for department staff, and give the site a more user-friendly design.

Dave also mentioned that Tom Jones and Billy Vickers, council members, recently attended an event at the Gladwin State Game Area on March 5. MUCC (Michigan United Conservation Club), through their On the Ground program, had six volunteers come out to clear shooting lanes for the placement of the newly accessible hunting blind that was donated by Tom's organization, MiOFO. Wardens TV also came out and filmed this event, which will air next year.

Yolanda also mentioned that the accessibility team has two new members. Alexandria McBride, representing the grants section, and Rob Corbett representing the real estate section.

Track Chair Fundraising Campaign Update

Michelle OKelly had technical difficulties, but submitted a written report after the meeting as follows.

They have 14 track chairs at the following state parks, making Michigan the leader in state parks with track chairs:

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

Bryan Wilkinson also reported that the Grand Haven and Ionia State Park chairs will be delivered on Wednesday, and he is waiting to hear from Island Lake about acquiring another chair.

Track Chair Reservations Update

In her written report, Michelle mentioned that they had talks with CAMIS, the company that manages the central reservation system, and track chairs cannot be reserved in advance on the central reservation system. People 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). State park staffing continues to make reservations seven days a week an issue, with limited staff to manage the calls/reservations and getting the track chairs ready for use. Hopefully, the recent raise for seasonal workers will attract more people to apply. In the meantime, Michelle continues to look at other opportunities, such as working with state park friend's groups to volunteer, and she is looking at bookings.com as a possible reservation system.

AAC INITIATIVES

Adaptive Sports Card Proposal

Co-chair Tom Jones reminded the council that 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.

However, as a brief overview, the proposed adaptive sports card would allow hunters with disabilities to have all of their qualifying information housed in one location versus being required to carry around all of the qualifying paperwork and permits that show law enforcement they are qualified to hunt from a standing vehicle, hunt with a laser sighting device, are eligible for the Liberty or Independence hunts, is blind or 100% disabled, and so on. If the long-term mentored hunting program is enacted, this would also be one of the qualifying indicators on the card. It would also alleviate conflicts, problems, or communication barriers between Law

Enforcement and the hunter because all the information would be encoded on the card. Also, after discussing this proposed program/card with the department's Licensing Control unit, introducing and implementing such a card/ program is feasible. It may also be possible to upload this card/information to the hunter's cell phone.

Members of the council received the Adaptive Sports Card proposal in advance of this meeting for their review. Chair Norris asked for a motion to endorse this proposal and recommend the department move forward with implementing this program.

Duncan Wyeth motioned to endorse the Adaptive Sports Card proposal and recommend the department move forward with implementing this program; Robert Winn seconded the motion; there were no objections and the motion unanimously carried.

Mentored Hunting Program

Yolanda reminded the council that 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 also identified other areas that they wanted to address and incorporate into the statute. As it stands right now, the expansion to the mentored hunting statute has been shared with the Legislature. It is still waiting for a bill sponsor and for a bill to be introduced. Once introduced, their hope is that the Legislature will act on it quickly. However, even with quick legislative action, these changes may not take effect until the 2023 hunting season at the earliest. We will not have any more details until a bill is introduced.

COUNCIL UPDATES

Ken Buchholtz, Wheelin' Sportsmen, announced they have been doing a lot of turkey hunting. They have been taking out youth and adults with disabilities. They are also working on a youth event at the Pocket Park in Escanaba. There will be 350 to 500 kids there on June 11. They are also coordinating an event with Pathways Mental Health for another event at the Pocket Park. They expect around 200 people. They will have their adaptive equipment there, along with pellet gun shooting and a band. Also, Nanette Hanson from Escanaba Area Public Schools received the 2022-2023 Michigan Teacher of the Year Award. Ken has been working with her on her Little Skeeter program where they teach kids archery, fishing, and pellet gun shooting. They will be holding three events this year. Ken also received some grant dollars and will be installing heating systems in his accessible hunting trailers. And, last but not least, Bob Garner, friend and former NRC commissioner, will be donating his bear tag to a gentleman that is 74 years old and has had over 59 surgeries. He lives at St. Jude's Assisted Living. They will be taking him out on a bear hunt on Sept. 7.

Dave Haupt announced Wardens TV will be at the June 11 event. He will reach out to Ken to schedule some interviews at this event. Ken mentioned they also have a group that films their events called the Kill Zone.

Duncan also stated that this may be a good time to explore connecting with Pure Michigan and the “Ask the DNR” segments to further promote accessible recreation and the events that are being held around the state.

Billy Vickers, [Rehab and Mobility Systems](#), announced they held their first Disability Dirt Days last year at the Holly Oaks ORV Park in Holly. Billy and a few of his friends went to an event at Special Tree Rehab where they brought off-road vehicles and other adaptive equipment to showcase options that are available to people with disabilities. That sparked the idea of having Disability Dirt Days where they take people with disabilities on rides at an off-road park. Their first event was held in October 2020. It was such a huge success they decided to hold four events this year. The first event was held on May 15 and was another huge success. They invited a lot of therapy clinics and brought track chairs, chair lifts, X8s, V6s, (off-road powered wheelchairs), and other adaptive equipment. The next Disability Dirt Days outings will occur on June 12, September 25, and October 23 at the Holly Oak ORV Park. They take a break in the summer months because the equipment and ORVs tend to overheat. Billy is also on the board for United Spinal Association. Their first event at Belle Isle had to be cancelled due to rain and thunderstorms. It will be rescheduled for June 29 if anybody is interested in attending. They will have track chairs, X-9s, handcycles and a barbeque. The second event will probably be held at Kensington Metro Park; date to be determined. Billy is also doing monthly handcycle events in coordination with the Rehabilitation Institute of Michigan at Willow MetroPark in New Boston; and with the University of Michigan at Island Lake State Recreation Area in Brighton. Billy will send out flyers for these events.

Yolanda asked Dave if Wardens TV would be willing to film one of Billy’s Disability Dirt Days outings. After Billy meets with MetroParks, he will connect with Dave Haupt to try and schedule a filming at one of his remaining events.

Jessica Stark, [Lighthouse Neurological Rehab Center](#), announced their adaptive kayak clinics are returning to Interlochen State Park this summer on July 19 and August 9. Their handcycling clinics are transitioning to partner with Norte, a huge cycling group in Traverse City. They are still working on event dates.

Jessica also mentioned Yolanda’s shout out for participants/volunteers for the Hunter Education Instructor training at the Ralph A. MacMullan Conference Center on July 7. Jessica, and several other council members, offered to attend and assist however they can, which is much appreciated. They will have a classroom session from 2:15 to 3:15 pm, with the hands-on demo portion of this training occurring at their shooting range from 3:30 to 5:30 pm. Council members that have volunteered their time include Jessica Stark, Billy Vickers, Bryan Wilkinson, Robert Winn, Scott Norris, Ken Buchholtz, and Will Purves, as well as Dave Haupt. Yolanda will be on vacation that week but plans to stop by if she is in the area. Yolanda will work with Erica Moore, the training coordinator, and circle back with the group with more details and possibly schedule a final planning meeting. Initially, they were planning to have the hunter education instructors create their own scenarios of a person with a disability. When Yolanda reached out to this group, it was unanimous that they chose to ‘just show up’ and give them live demonstrations. Yolanda expressed her utmost appreciation for all of the members that have stepped up to help out with this event.

Robert Winn, [Disability Network Eastern Michigan](#), is starting up some kayaking events in the thumb area in Oakland and Macomb counties. They are doing some training and taking people with disabilities out kayaking.

Will Purves, [Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living](#), has been working with Michigan Rehabilitation Services and the DNR on the summer work program and employment training.

They are going to continue this program again this year at Sterling State Park. They are also holding their annual ADA Anniversary picnic at Sterling State Park on July 21. He will send out the flyer.

Duncan Wyeth expressed his appreciation that the department was willing to increase the pay for short-term/seasonal workers to attract more summer staff.

Cindy Burkhour, [Access Recreation Group LLC](#), announced she is involved with the Toyota Driving Mobility and Accessibility grant program. The Metroparks received one of those grants and will be putting five wheeled beach chairs at five different Metroparks this summer. The locations will be posted on their website. They are also looking for grant money to buy beach to water transfer systems for each of those parks. They hope Toyota will continue this grant program next year.

Michael Harris, [Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America](#), announced they took over the Athletes with Disabilities Hall of Fame about five years ago. They had hoped to hold an event sooner, but the pandemic stalled their efforts. In partnership with the Rehab Institute of Michigan, they will have an event on June 24 at the Motor City Casino to induct disabled athletes into the Hall of Fame. He will send out a flyer to everyone.

Bryan Wilkinson, [Michigan Trackchair](#), announced he is still running Adaptability Sports out of Brighton. They will have some wheelchair tennis opportunities coming up. They will also continue their nighttime wheelchair hiking events this summer at the Island Lake State Recreation area. This year they have people that are certified in mushroom hunting, so that will be an added event to the wheelchair hikes, along with various other nature identification hikes using track chairs and other all-terrain equipment. They will finish their wheelchair tennis on August 27 at MSU's wheelchair tennis event. On the Michigan Trackchair side of things, they too are having difficulties getting parts to build the track chairs.

Tina Nowakowski, [mParks](#), announced they will be hosting a free adaptive kayaking webinar on June 16. This is for parks and recreation departments and program coordinators to encourage them to implement adaptive kayaking programs in their communities. They will also be hosting their annual Come Out and Play at the Capitol day on the Capitol lawn on June 29. This event attracts about 1,200 kids from day camps from around the state to participate in various outdoor activities and events. The department has participated in this event in the past, with a focus on accessible recreation by bringing out information/flyers and varying adaptive equipment. However, at the last event, the kids had so much fun riding in the elevated hunting blind that it blew up both their batteries. It is a public event, and Tina invited members of this council to contact her if they have any programs or activities for kids that they would like to showcase at this event. Tina also noted that the mParks Foundation also offers adaptive equipment grants around the state, so maybe there is an opportunity to work with Robin and Mike to leverage funds for their RTGP program.

Allen Beauchamp, [Superior Alliance for Independent Living](#) (SAIL), one of the newest members of the council, joined the meeting late. He gave an overview/background about himself. He is on the Board of Directors of SAIL, which covers the entire Upper Peninsula. He is also involved with various groups/organizations that provide opportunities/events for people with disabilities, and is working on getting his ADA Coordinator certification. He also started a sled hockey program in 2016 which is stationed in Marquette, but they hope to expand to the Houghton-Hancock area. He too is involved in adaptive kayaking programs and is an avid outdoorsman who owns his own track chair. He looks forward to being a member of this council.

Duncan Wyeth and Stacy Welling Haughey, fellow Yoopers, welcomed Allen to the council. Duncan also mentioned that SAIL recently acquired a track chair for their organization and programs.

Tom Jones, [MiOFO](#), had a wild game fundraising dinner that was sponsored by the Warren Firefighters Association. He used the fundraising dollars as leverage and, through Home Depot Foundation and Team Depot, they received a grant for \$18,600 that he is going to put 100% towards materials that will be sent to Ford Motor Company to build more accessible hunting blinds. These funds will build nine more accessible hunting blinds that Tom intends to donate to various state parks. They are also having an accessible hunting blind dedication ceremony at Island Lake Recreation Area on August 5, and shortly thereafter they will have a dedication ceremony at Lake Hudson. MiOFO is back in the game.

Neal McKenzie also reported that he had a conversation with Annie Urasky and she would like to offer up the opportunity to partner with the council and possibly have a joint meeting to address issues related to the deaf and deafblind communities. Chair Norris asked that Annie contact Yolanda to secure a date.

Duncan Wyeth announced that the Keweenaw community is putting together funding and will partner with SAIL to develop the first comprehensive assessment survey of all recreation and tourist destinations in Keweenaw county. This will allow them to develop a good database of information addressing access issues in the county. It is called the Accessible Keweenaw Initiative.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was offered.

The Chair called for a recess at 11:23 a.m. so Nicholas Dohm could set up for his drone presentation. The council reconvened at 11:43 a.m.

DRONE DEMONSTRATION

Duncan Wyeth set the stage for this demonstration. He attended a Wildlife conference in Grand Traverse three years ago and participated in the drone demonstration. He was fascinated by all the things that the department is doing with drones. He was even more excited about the possibilities that the drone unit has in terms of enhancing accessibility by providing footage of areas that may be inaccessible for people with limited mobility.

Nicholas Dohn, GIS Resource Specialist with the department's Unmanned Aerial Systems Operations Unit ("Drone Unit"), gave the council a presentation on how the department is using the drones. The drone unit has been in operation since 2017, which has an aviation side and a technology side, including their GIS mapping unit. They currently have nine drones and nine drone pilots throughout the state, from Escanaba to Lansing. They have smaller drones that you can purchase off Amazon for \$200 to \$300. They do a lot of marketing with the smaller drones because they only have one fixed camera. The larger drones, that can cost up to \$30+ thousand dollars, are capable of attaching extra cameras, including thermal cameras, and point shoot cameras. They recently used one of the larger drones to monitor the fire by the Pigeon River using a laser/range finding camera to monitor distance, and heat sensing cameras to monitor hot spots. The drones could also zoom in and take recordings and pictures. This information is vital to the firefighters on the ground. They can send the exact latitude and longitude to the firefighters on the ground so they know exactly where the hot spots are located. They also do a lot of mapping, and can map from 20 to 1,000 acres in a day with incredibly detailed imagery. They also acquired new technology called IGNIS that allows them to drop ping pong sized balls called dragon eggs. The dragon eggs are filled with a chemical that

ignites, they drop into a hopper where it injects antifreeze into each ball and then drops it. They can cover up to 400 acres in 1 hour, which saves a lot of time on the ground for prescribed burns or starting backfires. They also use the smaller drones to get video imagery of harbors so boaters will know exactly how to navigate into the harbor, as well as overhead imagery of the shooting ranges and other state facilities and what they have to offer.

The drones are used to assist the department with forest fire monitoring and prescribed burns, thermal imaging, marketing (i.e. shooting ranges and harbors for promotional videos on the website), habitat evaluation (i.e. monitoring the deer population through heat signature), emergency response, land management support, coastal erosion monitoring, forest pest monitoring/mapping (to monitor pre-treatment and post-treatment), and aerial imagery.

The department is not yet involved in search and rescue efforts. That still falls with the Michigan State Police (MSP) department, but their unit is on call if they need to use their drones or the MSP needs assistance. They have used drones to locate people or hunters that are lost in the woods or on a river or have wandered off due to mental or cognitive issues, tornado damage, locating survivors, etc.

Nick entertained questions from the council and provided additional detail about the drones themselves, how they work with satellite systems, FAA rules, how long it takes to become drone pilot certified, and recreational drone use, etc.

The group then engaged with Nick and shared various ideas of how these drones could be used to provide visual access to places where people with mobility issues may not be able to travel, or for any locations that are inaccessible by anyone (i.e. hidden waterfalls in the Upper Peninsula, etc.), including environmentally sensitive areas.

Cindy Burkhour recommended this council continue discussions on how the drones could be used for accessibility-related projects, and submit their recommendations to the drone unit and the department for consideration.

Nick thanked the council for all their ideas and input, and will take their comments and suggestions back to his unit for future consideration.

CLOSING BUSINESS

Chair Norris announced the next meeting of the council is scheduled for August 23, 2022. The department is considering a road trip to the Ludington area. Information and updates will be posted to the council's [webpage](#).

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; Robert Winn 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 12:30 pm.