



ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

MINUTES

September 12, 2023

DNR Lansing Customer Service Center
4166 Lagacy Pkwy, Lansing, MI

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL (AAC)

PRESENT	ABSENT
Scott Norris, Chair	Allen Beauchamp
Bryan Wilkinson, Co-Chair	Tina Nowakowski
Ken Buchholtz	Will Purves
Cindy Burkhour	
Jessica Stark	
Billy Vickers	
Robert Winn	
Michael Harris	
Duncan Wyeth	
Tyra Khan	
Kimberly Woolridge, Ex-Officio	

PRESENT FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (DNR)

Daniel Lord, AAC Sponsor
Stacy Welling Haughey, UP AAC Sponsor
Robyn Afrik, DEI Officer
Lindsey Henski, Assistant to the AAC
Robyn Afrik, Equity, and Inclusion Officer

PRESENT FROM THE DNR ACCESSIBILITY TEAM (A-TEAM)

David Haupt, A-Team Chair, Marketing and Outreach
Charamy Cleary, Finance and Operations
Alexandria Galloway, Finance and Operations
Rachel Coale, Forest Resources
Aaron Switzer, Fisheries
Sgt. Mike Mshar, Law Enforcement

OTHERS:

Rebecca Powell, Kristin Phillips.

PRESENTERS:

Emma Kukuk, DNR; Taylor Ridderbusch, DNR; Taylor Ridderbusch, DNR.

REGULAR MEETING

OPENING REMARKS – Scott Norris

Scott Norris called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the September 12, 2023, Accessibility Advisory Council (AAC) meeting.

Scott Norris took roll call.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Scott Norris

Scott Norris asked the Council if they had any additions, corrections, or discussion regarding the June 13, 2023, minutes.

Scott Norris requested a motion to approve the June 13, 2023, minutes as written.

Duncan Wyeth motioned to approve the minutes; Michael Harris seconded the motion; the motion unanimously carried, the June 13, 2023, minutes are approved.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS – Dan Lord and Tyra Khan

Dan Lord shared a new training opportunity surrounding reasonable accommodations. This topic stemmed from land use accommodation requests presented to the different resource divisions. Tyra Khan conducted a presentation for the internal DNR Accessibility Team (A-Team) which was very well received. Each division responded that this information should go to their management team. Therefore, we are considering ways to get this material to staff whether it's in video format, division meetings, required training, etc.

Tyra Khan thanked staff for asking for the training and commented that MDCR is happy to help since the DNR is unique with a wide range of areas and natural resources.

Dan Lord shared that Michelle OKelly conducts a brief ADA training at the DNR New Employee Orientation (NEO) and that touches every new employee, but we are looking into ways to conduct this training on a more regular basis similar to continuing education.

Cindy Burkhour asked if the presentation could be shared with the AAC. Tyra Khan replied that the presentation can be shared with AAC members.

HUNTER SAFETY TRAINING REPORT-OUT – Dave Haupt

Wardens' videographers were present at the hunter safety instructor training to record clips that can be used by instructors. The video clips should be ready over the winter months of 2023/2024.

Jessica Stark discussed the classroom time where presenters could talk to everyone at once, and the field portion. When the group moved to the field portion, they were split into three groups and rotated through some hands-on field exercises utilizing blindfolds, wheelchairs, and other accessible equipment. There were great discussions with the instructors regarding teaching hunter safety to individuals with disabilities.

Scott Norris shared how the field exercises helped illustrate certain needs. Scott Norris used volunteers from the audience and demonstrated how hand movements on an individual's back correlated to target positioning and when to shoot.

Scott Norris and Bryan Wilkinson overheard one audience member commenting 'How will this even work'? After the demonstration by Scott Norris, the same audience member commented

'Wow, that did work'. Bryan Wilkinson commented that the demonstrations do help provide a different perspective. Communicating the message that *everybody can hunt* is so important!

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY – Emma Kukuk

The DNR draft Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Policy was completed and sent to the US Coast Guard at the end of July. Currently, we are waiting to hear if the Federal government has any suggested edits or modifications.

The definition of Limited English Proficiency is: individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English can be Limited English Proficient or LEP. These individuals may be entitled to language assistance with respect to a particular type of service, benefit, or encounter.

Dan Lord commented that the DNR had two federal funding agencies that provide dollars to the DNR that had inquired on our LEP plan. At that time the DNR did not have a plan formalized. The US Coast Guard was the first to inquire, and we have turned our draft LEP plan into the US Coast Guard in July as Emma stated. Before rolling this out as policy, we are waiting on feedback from the Federal government.

VISOR CARD – Sgt. Mike Mshar

Law Enforcement Division modified the original visor card created by the Michigan Department of Civil Rights, Division on Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing to make it more specific to the needs of the DNR. Kristin Phillips, Chief Administrative Officer raised a few questions before the modified visor card when to print. To that end, Sgt. Mike Mshar is bring the visor card to the AAC for input and feedback.

The council discussed the different sections of the visor card. Comments and suggestions included:

- I do not speak English: The languages listed should be printed in that specific language and not English.
 - Robert Winn suggested having four secondary cards printed in the most common languages available if a person identified a language other than English.
 - Sgt. Mike Mshar stated that some officers use Google Translate in the field.
 - Tyra Khan stated that the State of Michigan does have preapproved vendors who do document translation services. It is a good idea to have translations done by a professional document translator.
 - Emma Kukuk stated that the top three languages spoken in Michigan are Spanish, Arabic and Chinese (2019 US Census).
- Bryan Wilkinson commented that the emergency card on airplanes have no language on it, just pictures. Perhaps we could move the visor card that direction?
 - Duncan Wyeth mentioned that Project Jade in the Upper Peninsula creates pictograph sign boards. Perhaps we could borrow imagery from them.
- Icons: Consider making the icons actual pictures versus symbols for clarity.
 - Duncan Wyeth suggested altering the Drivers License symbol.

Kristin Phillips commented that the discussion here is exactly what Executive was hoping for. Executive was concerned with the languages, icons, and having the visor card reviewed by audiences this it was intended for.

MENTORED HUNT UPDATE – Taylor Ridderbusch

Draft legislation was previously shared with AAC members. Currently, the legislation is still in draft form and has not been introduced yet. Taylor Ridderbusch stated that he would expect with signoff from the AAC and Executive that we could get this introduced this month.

Sgt. Mike Mshar stated that this legislation is very close to his heart. This is not a way to circumvent hunter safety but geared towards individuals with disabilities that would never be able to pass a written exam; individuals who have used up their two years of apprentice hunting can no longer hunt without passing hunter safety. Telling an interested individual, they are not allowed to participate due to a limitation is unfortunate.

Taylor Ridderbusch summarized how he has been communicating with legislators that these are individuals that have likely been taking advantage of the Mentored Hunt and Apprentice licensing and are now into their adult years but have a roadblock to continue participating.

Tyra Khan asked for a summary of the current law and the proposed amendments.

Taylor Ridderbusch replied that the current law states you can be a mentored youth hunter until the age of 10 years old, then you must take a hunters safety test which allows you to go out and hunt. The DNR also provides the opportunity for individuals who have not completed hunter safety to hunt under an apprentice license (adult hunters) for two years before you would have to complete hunter safety. The proposed amendment allows for individuals who have mental or intellectual disabilities who wouldn't be able to pass the written test to be able to hunt with immediate supervision.

Jessica Stark commented that she works with individuals with traumatic brain injuries which can happen at any age. Jessica looked up the definition of intellectual disability, which states the disability manifests before age 18, and developmental disabilities manifest by age 22. However, individuals can experience traumatic brain injury at any age. What about individuals over the age of 23? Can we close that loophole? Taylor Ridderbusch thanked Jessica Stark for pointing that out. We will work to clean up that language.

Jessica Stark also commented that on page 2, 1-5 on the top of the page of the proposed legislation, it states 'youth'. Should this section state youth/adult with a licensed hunter? Taylor Ridderbusch will review the language for consistency throughout the entire bill.

Scott Norris asked Taylor Ridderbusch if he would come back to the AAC with any changes or updates? Taylor replied that he absolutely will once the above suggestions are implemented and will also share when the bill formally gets introduced.

ASK THE DNR SEGMENT – Stacy Welling Haughey

Stacy Welling Haughey spoke with John Pepin who met with NMU Public TV13 who has scheduled the dates for Ask the DNR. An accessibility focused segment will be produced working with Allen Beauchamp to highlight the different opportunities the DNR has regarding accessibility.

Duncan Wyeth commented that NMU Public TV13 hosts Ask a Lawyer, Ask a Doctor, and Ask the DNR. This is a great opportunity to use this platform to highlight accessibility. Duncan asked that when the date is established if it could be shared before the broadcast so different organizations in the Upper Peninsula could help spread the word.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

DNR Executive Updates – Kristin Phillips

Kristin Phillips shared that Scott Bowen has been appointed as Director of the DNR. Director Bowen comes from Grand Rapids with a lot of state experience. He was the Lottery Commissioner, Office of the State Employer Director, Grand Rapids City Commissioner, District Court Judge, Business Owner, and Attorney. Kristin Phillips also shared that Sara Thompson accepted the Wildlife Division Chief position. Sara has over 20 years' experience with the DNR and has held various positions within Wildlife Division. Kristin Phillips also discussed that this is a busy time of year where the DNR is wrapping up our budget fiscal year and preparing for our next fiscal year. Part of next fiscal year's budget includes some new positions, including a stand-alone ADA Coordinator position.

ADA Coordinator Update – Dan Lord

Dan Lord introduced Jeff Sears, Facilities, Operations, and Support Section Manager replacing Mike Holsinger. As part of that position, Jeff Sears is the DNR's ADA Coordinator. But as Kristin Phillips mentioned that will be short lived, as a stand-alone ADA Coordinator position will be established in fiscal year 2024. A draft position description has been created which is very robust. The position will be the DNR's technical lead, primary liaison to the public and advocacy groups, and internal coordinator around assessments, trainings, and publications. Dan Lord stated that Cindy Burkhour asked if the AAC could review or provide content in relation to the interview questions. Robyn Afrik and Dan Lord will work with the council as interview questions are established.

Robyn Afrik stated that she is working with Dan Lord, Kristin Phillips, and other internal staff to solidify the position description and to make sure that this work is infused in everything that occurs with DEI.

USFWS Title VI Audit Update – Dan Lord

We are still waiting to receive our official report from the USFWS. We should be seeing something soon.

DEI Coordinator Update – Robyn Afrik

Robyn Afrik spoke to the work surrounding the creation of the new stand-alone ADA Coordinator position (above).

A-Team Updates – Dave Haupt

Dave Haupt introduced Aaron Switzer, the newest member of the A-Team representing Fisheries Division. Aaron has been with Fisheries Division for 23 years starting at the ground level and now managing Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery, Harrietta State Fish Hatchery, and Platte River State Fish Hatchery. Aaron is also the statewide weir coordinator where we collect eggs for the next generation of fish that we rear in our facilities. Aaron discussed that Fisheries recently received funds from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund for accessibility updates to Platte River State Fish Hatchery. In addition, a lot of Fisheries buildings were constructed in the 60's and accessibility just isn't there. Fisheries Division is working on infrastructure updates beyond the hatcheries and Aaron is part of those discussions keeping accessibility in the forefront of planning and design.

Track Chair Update – Dave Haupt on behalf of Michelle OKelly

Dave Haupt shared that Michelle OKelly could not be here today, as she is in Atlanta, Georgia presenting at the National Association of State Parks Foundation. Michelle shared that she was surprised about a month ago at a Kali's Cure event with a second check for \$150,000 to

purchase additional track chairs. Michelle is currently working on establishing locations to receive those additional chairs.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

Spectrum Health Limb Loss Support Group – Scott Norris

Charamy Cleary with the A-Team has volunteered to attend and present at the Spectrum Health Limb Loss Support Group in Grand Rapids. Scott Norris was going to co-present on behalf of the AAC but can no longer attend. Scott, therefore, asked for a volunteer to co-present with Charamy. No AAC member volunteered.

ADA EVENTS – Dan Lord on behalf of Michelle OKelly

Dan Lord shared that Michelle OKelly was invited to participate in DiverseAbility Day by member Billy Vickers. Michelle attended DiverseAbility Day in Oakland County at Lake St. Clair Metropark. Noting the support role Oakland County provides, Michelle OKelly is in support to host future ADA events at DNR venues. Michelle has conducted outreach with Mayberry State Park, Island Lake Recreation Area, and Port Crescent State Park as pilot locations for the spring of 2024.

Billy Vickers commented that there were approximately 300 people that participated in the Lake St. Clair Metropark DiverseAbility Day. With event logistics handled by sponsors, the DNR would only be asked to waive the entry fee to the park.

COUNCIL UPDATES

Legislative Update – Tyra Khan

Tyra Khan shared that the Michigan Persons with Disabilities Civil Rights (MDCR) Act was amended to require that our commission post on our website a variation of the standardized international symbol of accessibility. And then one year after that amendment, we are supposed to use the new symbol when posting new signs or replacement signs. The 2010 ADA Design Standards require use of the new dynamic international symbol of accessibility. The change to the state law conflicts with the federal law. MDCR's Legislative Liaison and General Council are currently engaged to address this conflict.

Roundtable – All Members

- Jessica Stark – Had a successful Liberty Hunt this past weekend; two successful hunters. Held a couple kayak clinics at Interlochen State Park where the news was able to come out and feature that.
- Duncan Wyeth – Would like to see the DNR host an ADA event in the Upper Peninsula.
- Ken Buchholtz – Started hunting with the Liberty Hunt and bear hunts. Escanaba works a lot with the Delta County Regional Inclusive Community Coalition (RICC). They hosted an event in June with a couple hundred people in attendance at the Pocket Park in Escanaba. We finished a summer youth shooting program (June-August 7-week program), and the Turkey Federation is doing a lot of good things including putting in some food plots this year.
- Rob Winn – Conducted a couple kayak clinics, attended DiverseAbility Day, and will be conducting cooking classes for students with disabilities; it's been a busy summer!
- Bryan Wilkinson – Been busy with track chairs going all over the state getting ready for the Liberty Hunt. A lot of photos of successful hunters have been shared, but the work makes it hard to get out. My nephew Andrew got an 8-point buck from my blind! It's all about the kids! Recently delivered a track chair to the RAM Center. The chair will be used year-round even in the winter months. A delivery of a chair today is expected today for Warren Dunes State Park.
- Cindy Burkhour – Conducted a ribbon cutting event for a kayak launch in Missouri. Questions: How can we increase visibility of track chairs? Where are we with that?

Use data - Are we collecting data on how many times track chairs are used? Do we have repeat customers?

Cindy is working on a project with the National Environmental Education Foundation funded by Toyota that has given out thirty grants, 4 of which are in Michigan. One grantee in a different state has a sign on their accessible parking post that states track chair available with a QR code that provides information on how to gain access to the track chairs.

- Dan Lord replied that Michelle OKelly has reached out to Hartwick Pines (our Sign Shop) to see about their ability to create something similar.
- Billy Vickers – It has been a quick summer with a lot of events. We just wrapped up the last DiverseAbility Day. We have two more Disability Dirt Days planned at Holley Oak Rec Park on September 24 and October 22 from 12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. Last night was our last hand cycle event.
- Michael Harris – For about 10 years we have hosted an annual picnic at the Miracle League in Plymouth. The Miracle League is a baseball diamond specifically designed to host individuals with disabilities. We host the picnic there and invite the kids who participate in the league to come and play baseball. This year we made a \$5,000 contribution to resurface the field which will cost \$250,000.
- Duncan Wyeth – Met yesterday with an individual from a Houghton based volunteer program called Equipment Loan Keweenaw (ELK). They are in the process of developing an inventory of adaptive equipment so citizens can try the equipment out or be loaned a piece of equipment before purchasing. The Eagle Harbor Marina has been undergoing major renovations for the past year and Duncan visits the marina to see how the update is going. Duncan raised concerns on accessible parking locations with Baraga staff, and staff have taken Duncan's concerns and changed the plans! We can effect change! When doing a marina renovation Duncan suggested that an accessible canoe/kayak launch should be included.
- Dan Lord – Regarding the Grant process, typically this is the meeting where we bring the specific Department application that the AAC has weighed in on from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) back to the AAC which usually culminates a letter of support that plays into the grant determination process. This year, Grants staff brought to Dan's attention that the project was not ready to accommodate timing for three points of engagement, making sure the feedback had been incorporated into the plan. Talking with the applicant project team they want to incorporate the suggestions they received but that has not happened yet. Therefore, rather than bringing the application in for review, when the recommendations have not been incorporated, this application will not receive AAC endorsement points. If this project is not funded at the MNRTF December meeting, the project will be brought back to the AAC when the application is ready.
 - Cindy Burkhour stated that with staff changes the review process has gotten lost. We need a review of the process to communicate deadlines and needed documentation.

Accommodation Changes – Scott Norris

Scott Norris stated that with Neal McKenzie, representing the deaf community, stepping down from the AAC we will no longer have ASL and CART at every meeting. If a reasonable accommodation is needed, please request an accommodation seven days in advance of the meeting.

New Members – Scott Norris

Scott Norris discussed the three vacancies on the AAC. If you know of interested individuals, please ask them to submit an application, cover letter, and resume.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Randy Gordon addressed the AAC concerning his e-bike. From what he has read, his e-bike is too powerful for state trails. State trails allow class one e-bikes. However, class one does not provide enough power for Randy Gordon's particular needs. Scott Norris thanked Randy Gordon for his comment.

Cindy Burkhour asked if Randy Gordon's particular need of an e-bike could be classified as an Other Personal Mobility Device (OPMD) through an ADA reasonable accommodation request? Tyra Khan replied that an individual could request an accommodation for the DNR to review and assess. Dan Lord stated that we will provide Randy Gordon with Jason Fleming's contact information.

CLOSING BUSINESS

The next Council meeting is December 5, 2023, at the Rose Lake Shooting Range/Glassen Shooting Education Center, 14500 Peacock Road, East Lansing.

ADJOURN

Chair Norris requested a motion to adjourn.

Cindy Burkhour motioned for adjournment; Ken Buchholtz seconded the motion; the motion unanimously carried; meeting adjourned at 12:13 p.m.