



# Non-Motorized Advisory Workgroup (NAW)

Meeting Minutes

April 18, 2024

10 a.m. – Noon

Grayling Township Hall

## **Welcome – Roll Call**

### PRESENT FOR THE NON-MOTORIZED ADVISORY WORKGROUP (NAW)

- Andrea LaFontaine, Chairperson
- Kenny Wawsczyk, Vice Chair
- John Bollman (absent)
- Neal Glazebrook
- Jason Aric Jones (virtual)
- Stephanie Swanberg (virtual)
- Brent Bolin
- Bob Hendrickson
- Lori Hauswirth (absent)

### PRESENT FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (DNR) STAFF

Tim Novak, Greg Kinser, Nicole Hunt, Sage Hegdal, Scott Slavin, Jill Sell, Rob Katona, Paige Perry, Blake Gingrich, Annalisa Centofanti, Jeff Kakuk, Nicole Hunt, Peter Costa, Matt Torreano, Ron Yesney

## **Meeting minutes**

### ACTION ITEMS

Meeting called to order at 10:15 a.m. by committee Chair, Andrea LaFontaine.

Motion was made by to approve the January 25, 2024 draft meeting minutes by Neal Glazebrook and as is and seconded by Brent Bolin. With all in favor, motion carried.

Motion was made by to approve the April 18 agenda as is by Kenny Wawsczyk and seconded by Neal Glazebrook. With all in favor, motion carried.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

## BUSINESS ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

### **NAW COMMITTEE MISSIONS AND GOALS**

Tim Novak, DNR

All trails advisory subcommittees will start planning for mission and goals. The Equine Trail Subcommittee (ETS) already has some in place and has been working with trails staff documenting them. Trails staff will work with trails advisory subcommittees to align the missions and goals with the trails 10-year strategic plan. The next Michigan Trails Advisory Council (MTAC) meeting will work on establishing and capturing some high-level missions and goals to bring back to the subcommittees.

### **GREAT LAKES WATERFRONT TRAIL**

Sage Hegdal, DNR

A group of people are meeting from the states outlined on the map (see attached) to discuss creating a Great Lakes waterfront trail. Canada already has a waterfront trail (yellow on map) with the proposed trail to continue following the Great Lakes waterfront. This group has asked Sage Hegdal to present this idea to NAW for feedback, interest, and support. Tim Novak mentioned this is a good opportunity for a collaborative effort and piece this together. Andrea LaFontaine knows [John Hartig](#) has a lot of credibility in this space and this is a unique idea, imaging what the future can bring. Neal Glazebrook asked if the intent is to create a new trail system or build off the existing framework. Tim Novak replied saying the project will use existing trails and filling in gaps where there is not a designated water trail. Jason Aric Jones stated he is opposed to this idea logistically with the hurdles and resources, he believes the State does not have the capacity. Stephanie Swanberg does like the idea and concept of the trail and agrees with Jason that this is a huge task for the State to undertake. The NAW would like a better understanding if this were completely a water trail or land and water. Tim will clarify and get back. Kenny Wawsczyk added if this is not just a water trail and to make this a multi-use trail will be challenging. Greg Kinser, DNR mentioned if this is to be a land-based trail, although this is a grand idea, there will be many challenges. Greg added the State has similar trails such as the Iron Belle Trail (IBT) and the North Country Trail (NCT) which crosses over several states. Bob Hendrickson questioned who ultimately will be in authority.

### **STAKEHOLDER GROUPS – DNR INSURANCE INCREASES**

Neal Glazebrook

Trail user groups and affiliates have received feedback from other trail user groups that the DNR has increased insurance coverages from \$2M to \$3M. Jason Aric Jones added this doesn't seem possible and will stand as a barrier for volunteer groups around the state. Neal said only a few insurance companies will write these policies to begin with. Most trail user groups that have talked to Neal claim the extra coverage is costing a minimum of \$750 annually. Annual budgets are already approved and in place, not leaving any room for overages. Tim Novak has not heard about any increases. Tim has heard about adding an umbrella of liability for volunteers through State insurances. Tim will inquire with staff to see if there are any changes. Jason Aric Jones asked if there has been incidents or claims which prompted this. Neal can share the request he received with Tim that has been sent to him. Brent Bolin suggest that it will be administratively easier if the State could cover the liability for these workers. Kenny Wawczyk said it will be interesting to see how this will tie in with federal land volunteers on the NCT, noting every volunteer on the NCT has to fill out a form related to liable activities and work prior to volunteering.

Tim Novak found out there has been an increase from \$2M to \$3M for competitive race events only. The State is still working on obtaining an umbrella policy to cover certain activities.

#### **HORSE TRAIL ETIQUETTE SIGN (MTAC DISCUSSION)**

Jason Aric Jones

Bringing forward the summary from a discussion to develop a standardized trail etiquette sign at the recent MTAC meeting regarding the verbiage on the sign. Jason believes that a consensus has been reached with the equestrian group. Tim Novak agreed that a consensus has been reached and the sign shop is working on it. The new version will be brought to the next MTAC meeting after being reviewed by equestrians. Tim said the equestrians are adamant to see the word "speak" on the sign as opposed to coordinate. Jason would like to see alignment with what is seen nationally (see example attached).

#### **UPDATES**

##### **ETS/NAW MAINTENANCE APPOINTMENTS**

Andrea LaFontaine

Andrea appointed Neal Glazebrook and Jason Aric Jones to serve on the ETS/NAW Maintenance Subcommittee. Both Neal and Jason accepted the appointments. As informational, Jenny Cook and Amy Scharmen-Burgdolf from ETS will serve on the same subcommittee.

##### **PURE MI/GOVERNORS CONFERENCE**

##### **PURE MI TRAIL & TRAIL TOWN PROGRAM**

Tim Novak, DNR

The PURE MI Governor’s Conference on tourism was held last week in Kalamazoo Michigan. Four recipients received PURE MI Trail and Trail Town awards. Tim had an opportunity to talk with Kelly Wolgamot, Director of Marketing, PURE MI about ways to improve the program or provide more incentive for communities to participate. They discussed setting aside a small budget amount for each award recipient to improve their communities’ recreational areas. They also discussed streamlining the application process. Andrea LaFontaine mentioned that Stephanie Swanberg compiled a list of other programs that have similar processes to use for comparison. Bob Hendrickson added incorporating incentives and promoting trails, along with marketing community campaigns should create awareness and interest.

**WATER TRAIL FUNDING UPDATE**

Lee Maynard, DNR

Four communities have been identified to receive grant funds after submitting applications. Each community has been awarded \$50K to be allocated towards a water trail in their area.

Projects
Shiawassee River Trail
Chain of Lakes Water Trail
Huron River Watershed Council
Island Loop Water Trail
Middle Grand River Organization of Watersheds
Upper Grand Water Trail
Clinton River Water Trail
Flint River Watershed Coalition
Central River Raisin Water Trail
Cass River Water Trail

**EBIKE SUBCOMMITTEE / SURVEY RESULTS**

Tim Novak

Jason Aric Jones

Tim Novak said the subcommittee is continuing to meet to discuss the details of the Ebike LUOD. The Ebike LUOD is postponed being presented at the Natural Resource Commission (NRC) until the May or June meeting. Jason Aric Jones has read a recent Bridge MI news article regarding the State Senate enforcing a speed limit for eBikes on Mackinaw Island and believes some of these issues may resonate with the Ebike LUOD consideration. Jason added once the Ebike LUOD rolls out, any issues will be captured and addressed within the first year. Kenny Wawsczyk asked if the signage is ready to go once this is implemented. Tim Novak replied yes, the signs will be ready and in place.

**SURVEY RESULTS**

This is still a divided topic, but majority are in support to allow ebikes on state managed lands. The survey has been closed. There will be an ongoing survey during the first year the Ebike LUOD is implemented for people to provide feedback. Andrea LaFontaine added that

regional stakeholder groups are encouraged to provide feedback and coordinating these feedback efforts together will be beneficial.

## **TRAIL IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE**

Tim Novak

Internally, trails staff continue to check-in monthly to review the progress on the Trails 10-year Strategic Plan. Some of the 1-3 year goals have been completed. We are not completely on track but closer. Staff will continue to monitor and update the progress.

## **2024 MEETINGS**

Trails week Sept 22-28

- July 18 – Delta Township Hall
- Sept. 25-26 - Advisory Board Trail Summit (Lansing)
- October 17 – Ralph. A. MacMullan Conference Center

## **ROUND ROBIN/CLOSING COMMENTS**

Jason Aric Jones reported that last week a meeting was facilitated with trail users, DNR staff, and professional trail builders at Waterloo/Pinckney Mountain Bike Trail. A crew of people discussed solutions for nonmotorized natural surface trail maintenance and trail building. Feedback received from this collaboration was it was a fantastic event and would like to see more statewide functions connecting users and DNR staff with professionals.

Neal Glazebrook announced the League of Michigan Bicyclists is holding their annual advocacy day on May 14 in Lansing. The event will take place on the Capital lawn. Awards will be given, and users will set-up meetings with legislatures to talk about everything bike related. Registration is open.

Andrea LaFontaine will share information about the new rails to trails contact person. Trail user stakeholder gatherings have initiated conversations about an increase in sales tax or income tax to help fund trails, groups are looking at models of what is working in other states. The NRC trust fund meeting yesterday is asking DNR to look at what issues are given priority or certain weight, such as the Iron Belle Trail (IBT) gap areas.

Kenny Wawsczyk said a major reroute on the NCT on M94 is adding 4 miles of new trail and getting rid of 2 miles of roadblock. NCT staff is working with the Gaylord DNR Management Unit in communicating any upcoming timber harvest and how it effects the trail system. The NCT has been responding by temporarily moving trails off state forest road in areas to avoid effects from future timber harvests. The NCT celebration is scheduled for Aug. 21-24 in St. Ignace.

Bob Hendrickson has been involved with a trail sustainability coalition through the Environment Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) and expects to see a report published in May, the focus is on hiking and biking. The follow-up will coordinate an economic impact study into this model as well.

## ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 11:37 a.m.

# WELCOME

## RESPECT GETS RESPECT:

Treat other users how you want to be treated. Be *safe*, be *friendly*, have *fun*!

### HIKERS

- Be aware of your surroundings and expect other users.
- Help other users know how to pass when you see them.
- Control your pets.
- Minimize resource damage by stepping out of trail for others to pass.

### EQUESTRIANS

- Be aware of your surroundings and expect other users.
- Talk to other users, help them know how to pass your horse.
- Make sure your animal has the temperament for encountering other users.

### MOUNTAIN BIKERS

- Expect users around every corner—Slow down and enjoy!
- Yield to other users—slow or stop and ask how you should pass.
- Stay on the trail—don't go around drifts or downfall.
- Speak to horses and riders when you see them—mountain bikes can scare livestock.

### MOTORCYCLE RIDERS

- Expect users around every corner—Slow down and enjoy!
- Yield to other users—slow or stop and ask how you should pass.
- Stay on the trail—don't go around drifts or downfall.
- Speak to horses and riders when you see them—motorcycles can scare livestock.



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

