

NONMORTORIZED ADVISORY WORKGROUP (NAW) MEETING
MEETING MINUTES
August 6, 2020
MS Teams / Audio Conference

ATTENDEES

NAW

Andrea LaFontaine
John Morrison
Mary Bohling
Jim DuFresne
Kenny Wawsczyk
Kristen Wiltfang
Lori Hauswirth

Absent

Jason Jones

Others

Bob Wilson
Mike Smith (MDOT)

DNR

Dakota Hewlett
Nikki Van Bloem
Annalisa Centofanti
Greg Kinser
Paul Yauk

Meeting called to order by Andrea LaFontaine, Chairperson, at 10:02 a.m.

WELCOME

Committee members present and introduced themselves.

John Morrison (nonmotorized)
Mary Bohling (water trails)
Jim DuFresne (hiking)
Kenny Wawsczyk (hiking)
Kristin Wiltfang (nonmotorized)
Lori Hauswirth (cross country ski)

BUSINESS ITEMS

Chairperson, Andrea LaFontaine motioned to approve the May 7, 2020 meeting minutes. Mary Bohling and Jim DuFresne were first and second to approve, with all in favor.

Chairperson, Andrea LaFontaine motioned to approve the August 6, 2020 meeting agenda. John Morrison and Kenny Wawsczyk were first and second to approve, with all in favor.

Natural Surface Trails Update

Dakota Hewlett (DNR) has been working with Jason Jones working towards a solution on improving the single-track surfaces. Dakota reported that they have had several meetings and will report more on this at the next meeting.

Trails Week 2020

Dakota Hewlett reported that September 20-27 is designated trails week and will be a virtual event. Proclamations have been submitted to Governor and are waiting for a response. The goal is to have participants sign up and log their miles. The theme will focus on trail safety and etiquette. Dakota said this will be interesting and fun, possibly something that could become annual. Andrea LaFontaine

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commented that implementing a fundraising component will cover all various nonmotorized uses through local partners. Jim DuFresne asked if incorporating a guidebook for users is possible. Dakota said it may be possible to take the content and extend it into a guidebook. Andrea mentioned including user to user feedback. Dakota is expecting the beginning of September for a LIVE release and he will share with NAW members to extend out to their friends groups.

Trail Proposal Process Update

Dakota Hewlett provided a quick update on the trail project data base process for trail proposals and approvals. He said the department is working on thoughts of a new way to manage these approvals.

Mary Bohling, committee member, asked if this process has a connection with the trail towns application process. Mary mentioned the City of Trenton has been declined and has not received any feedback as to why. The city wants to reapply but will need further information before resubmittal. Paul Yauk (DNR) will get in touch with Michael Morrison (DNR) and have him contact the City of Trenton.

Mid-America Trails and Greenways (MATAG) Virtual Session

John Morrison, committee member, provided information surrounding the MATAG virtual conference, being this year conference that was to take place in Grand Rapids and was cancelled due to COVID constraints. John said that on Tuesday August 18, there will be a virtual session with several legislators speaking. Several of the sessions are focused around today's crisis we are experiencing. Register online at MATAG.ORG.

Increased Trail Use

Andrea LaFontaine discussed gathering counter data with the high usage of people using trails. Some trails already have counters in place. Andrea asked to please share any information that you know of, or where to find this counter data. Jim DuFresne, committee member, saw counters on the Palmer trails, and will pass along the information to DNR. Lori Hauswirth, committee member, has counters on MTM trails. Mike Smith (MDOT) said this is his first time working on long a range plan with nonmotorized surfaces and he would like to be included in the data result.

Nonmotorized Funding Workgroup Update

Dakota Hewlett provided information from the nonmotorized funding workgroup meetings. He said they have had two meetings, and they are working on goals, zoning in a focus, and assigning tasks. Many ideas have been talked about for potential funding. Dakota said the group has talked about a mix of funding mechanisms and the need for them to be sustainable. Dakota asked if there are any ideas for funding ideas, please send them to him. The possibility of incorporating language into mileages was discussed.

New Trail Plan

Dakota Hewlett briefly touched on the progress for the New Trail Plan. Development is underway after a slight pause from COVID. Some of you will be involved with development of achievable action items. In the next month or so the workgroup will be scheduling virtual stakeholder and virtual public meetings for feedback, by region. The workgroup is predicting to stay on original timelines.

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Committee Member Updates

Mary Bohling reported that the water trails has seen an increase in users. There still remains high water level concerns with some challenges at the launches. Sales on water equipment are high, and a shortage of supply for equipment. The invasive species grant has been paused, but now those grants have been reinstated, and the coordinators are out managing invasive species. MSU extension is offering a self-paced online course for paddlers. The course opened the first week of July, with over 70 people signing up.

Kristen Wiltfang reported for Oakland County mentioned the Clarkston road connector is moving along. The County is working with MI rail trail to close out a contract with MDOT. Additionally, work is being done with Wixom/Milford on phase 2 design engineer of crossing a railroad track. The City of Pontiac/Sylvan Lake is resurfacing a portion of Clinton River Trail to improve safety. Ebikes on the Paint Creek trails are looking for etiquette, as high speeds have been reported.

DNR Staff Updates

Paul Yauk reported that a staff member, Megan, who handles the nonmotorized grants, will be leaving the trails section. Dakota Hewlett will fill in until the position is filled. Paul said recently the Rails to Trails Conservancy honored the Fred Meijer White Pine trail as one of the top trails in the US. Mary Bohling raised concerns about the current grant funds on hold. Dakota Hewlett said they are learning how to manage with the current budget restrictions. Almost all Iron Belle Trail (IBT) grants are on hold, and he is working on extending the grants.

Meeting Dates

November 19, 2020 is the next scheduled NAW meeting and will most likely be virtual.

Public Comment

None

Round Robin/Closing

Jim DuFresne mentioned that MI Trail Maps recently worked with Huron County Nature Center, in the thumb area, on a mountain biking and walking trail providing the mapping. He said it is good to see single track and hiking trails available. The location is close to Port Crescent State Park.

Andrea LaFontaine, chairperson, motioned to adjourn the meeting at 11:17 a.m. with all committee member unanimously in favor.