



Non-Motorized Advisory Workgroup (NAW)

Meeting Minutes

January 25, 2024

10 a.m. – Noon

Delta Township Hall

Lansing, Michigan 48917

Welcome – Roll Call

PRESENT FOR THE NON-MOTORIZED ADVISORY WORKGROUP (NAW)

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

PRESENT FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (DNR) STAFF

Tim Novak, Greg Kinser, Nicole Hunt, Sage Hegdal, Jill Sell, Rob Katona, Paige Perry, Blake Gingrich, Annalisa Centofanti, Doug Rich, Christopher Stark, Jeff Kakuk, Heather Durocher, Nicole Hunt, Bobbi Audette, Peter Costa, Scott Pratt, Ron Yesney, Nathan Miller (MDOT)

Meeting minutes

ACTION ITEMS

Meeting called to order at 10:08 a.m. by committee Chair, Andrea LaFontaine.

Motion was made John Bollman by to approve the October 12, 2023 draft meeting minutes as is and seconded by Neal Glazebrook. With all in favor, motion carried.

Motion was made by Stephanie Swanberg to approve the January 25 agenda as is and seconded by John Bollman. With all in favor, motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

BUSINESS ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

TRAILS SUMMIT ACTION ITEMS

BREAKOUT INTO SMALLER GROUPS

Tim Novak, DNR, expressed NAW members have shown a desire to breakdown the committee into smaller user groups for better representation.

Jason Aric Jones mentioned that cycling is a larger group. Natural surface nonmotorized trails are not represented adequately. Jason would like to see a subcommittee solely for cycling. Jason feels that NAW is very much oriented towards the linear trails and focuses on funding for these trails. Jason added they cyclist are struggling to gain more representation and they are frustrated.

John Bollman will advocate for a waterway's subcommittee. John feels that water trails is completely different in nature than trails located on land. John added that water trails are under-utilized as a resource around the state. John did caution that he is apprehensive about NAW having subcommittees, as it may affect the flow for advising the Michigan Trails Advisory Council (MTAC).

Andrea LaFontaine agreed that there is an opportunity for waterways. Seems each user groups are siloed with separate needs.

Kenny Wawsczyk is not sure about creating more subcommittees and more meetings, wondering if this is the right approach.

Stephanie Swanberg understands the different needs for trail users but understands the need for separate subcommittees. Maybe more action items can be discussed at NAW meetings, rather than topics for discussion.

Neal Glazebrook added he can see that NAW does need some separation. How do we have a channel for each user group to succeed and move forward with wants and needs.

Tim Novak would like to see a structure of what these breakout groups would look like. Tim is asking the NAW committee members to submit their ideas to the DNR. Keep in mind, new members will need to be vetted, willing to participate, and provide the representation needed.

Jason Aric Jones likes the idea of carving out backgrounds from the NAW members for these subcommittees and agrees that members should bring content topics to the table.

CREATE MISSIONS AND GOALS FOR NAW

Tim Novak asked the NAW to create missions and goals for this year in order to help streamline processes, focus on where we are going, and to become more effective.

Andrea LaFontaine said the best approach is to be thoughtful and smart and not to address this all-in-one day. There should be a facilitated conversation around these items. Andrea would like to see NAW members volunteer to lead this.

Stephanie Swanberg likes the idea of each member listing their goals and coming together to discuss as a group. Our mission and goals should align with goals of the DNR Trails Strategic Plan. Should we wait until MTAC has foundational grounds.

Jason Aric Jones believes it is not necessary to wait on MTAC for us to develop goals and missions. The process should be NAW members bringing forward our goals and missions within the representation they have on this board.

ACTION

Committee members to provide a list of goals and missions to the NAW and DNR for the trail type they represent.

FORM NAW/ETS MAINTENANCE SUBCOMMITTEE

Tim Novak mentioned that the Equine Trails Subcommittee (ETS) has a list of “wants and needs” and is wondering if NAW would want to piggyback off of what ETS has in place.

Jason Aric Jones was unaware ETS prepared a laundry list to the department. Jason thinks there should be the same opportunity for natural surface nonmotorized trail users to present a similar list of needs. Neal Glazebrook said he can work with the Michigan Mountain Bike Alliance (MMBA) to establish a list.

MOTION

Motion was made to form a NAW/ETS Subcommittee and vote was taken. Motion carried.

VOTE:

Andrea LaFontaine - Yes

Kenny Wawsczyk - Yes
Neal Glazebrook - Yes
Jason Aric Jones - Yes
Brent Bolin - Yes
Bob Hendrickson - Yes
John Bollman - Yes
Stephanie Swanberg - Yes
Lori Hauswirth - absent

Neal Glazebrook recommends 2 people from NAW and 2 people from ETS to form the subcommittee.

FORMING WORKGROUP RECOMMENDATIONS TO MTAC

Tim Novak pointed out there is not a clear path for subcommittee recommendations to move through the rankings. There is a need to establish baseline recommendations generated at the subcommittee level and escalate to MTAC for review and approval.

Andrea LaFontaine asked Jason Aric Jones to be the NAW messenger to provide communication between NAW and MTAC. Jason agreed to be the liaison.

UPDATES

PURE MI APPLICATION STATUS

Tim Novak has received Pure Michigan (PURE MI) Trail and Trail Town applications. Some applicants have requested an extension. Tim said the State is not receiving the number of applications it used to. Tim is asking the NAW members if they know of a community that would like to receive this type of recognition, please reach out to them.

Jason Aric Jones mentioned he has heard there is a lot of front-end administration in applying and what are the benefits of being dedicated. Jason said promoting more communication around the tangible benefits and improving the application process may encourage more interest.

John Bollman said looking at the PURE MI trails program, he feels it is being under-utilized. John said maybe this is an opportunity to go to a website and identify the best of the best trails in Michigan and break it down by trail user type (PURE MI X-Country Snow Trails; PURE MI Hike Trails; etc....) More direction is needed for the program. Being that the State of Michigan is designated the trails state, how do we get the word out for someone who is looking to find spotlight trails. Can we make this a stronger program.

Andrea LaFontaine added how can we make this a positive program without having the funding for it.

Kenny Wawczyk said there are provisions in place in order to be a designated PURE MI trail or trail town, which discounts some of the trails out there. For example, you need facilities, which the North Country Trail (NCAT) does not have in some areas.

MOTION

John Bollman made a motion to recommend NAW creates a workgroup to explore partnerships and developing the PURE MI program further and seconded by Andrea LaFontain. A vote was taken. Motion carried.

VOTE:

Andrea LaFontaine - Yes

Kenny Wawczyk - Yes

Neal Glazebrook - Yes

Jason Aric Jones - Yes

Brent Bolin - Yes

Bob Hendrickson - Yes

John Bollman - Yes

Stephanie Swanberg - Yes

Lori Hauswirth - absent

ACTION

NAW members forward your ideas thoughts to John Bollman and Andrea LaFontaine for improving the PURE MI Program.

Tim Novak added he is working on filling a nonmotorized trail specialist position and the PURE MI Program will be in the scope of that role.

WATER WAY TRAIL FUNDING UPDATE

Legislation passed \$500K for water trails, designating \$50K each for each waterway awarded the funds. Tim Novak has received applications, and he is in the process of reviewing them. The funds will be distributed in a grant. Funds are to be used for planning, development, and maintenance. The funds cannot be used for staff salary.

EBIKE SUBCOMMITTEE

A Land Use Order of the Director (LUOD) has been drafted which will allow Class I ebikes on trails where any traditional bike can be used. Class II will still need a permit. The Ebike Subcommittee is working on developing a public survey for additional input and public feedback. Public feedback has already been received from the most recent Michigan State Parks Advisory Council (MSPAC) meeting. The LUOD will not apply across trails owned or managed outside of the State.

Nicole Hunt, DNR, mentioned that the MSPAC committee requested a resolution from NAW to approve taking the LUOD to the Natural Resource Council (NRC).

MOTION

Motion was made by Neal Glazebrook for NAW to recommend taking the Ebike LUOD to the NRC with the provision the Ebike Subcommittee stays intact for at least one-year for evaluation after the LUOD is in place. Jason Aric Jones seconded. A vote was taken.

VOTE Approve/yes – No/deny – pass/neutral

Andrea LaFontaine - Yes

Kenny Wawsczyk - No

Neal Glazebrook - Yes

Jason Aric Jones - Yes

Brent Bolin - No

Bob Hendrickson - Pass

John Bollman - Pass

Stephanie Swanberg – Yes

Laurie Hauswirth - absent

PROJECT UPDATES

Genes Pond

Rob Katona, DNR

Days River U.P.

Rob Katona, DNR

Little Presque Isle U.P.

Rob Katona, DNR

White Pine Trail

Greg Kinser, DNR

Kalhaven Trail

Greg Kinser, DNR

TRAIL IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

Tim Novak said that trails staff is starting to schedule regular meetings to get back on track and to monitor the implementation progress. We have a long way to go, however some of the items have been completed along the way.

NAW/ETS MEETING JANUARY 30 / 6-8 P.M. (TEAMS)

Informational

2024 MEETINGS

- April 18 – Grayling Twp. Hall
- July 18 – Delta Township Hall
- October 17 – Ralph. A. MacMullan Conference Center

ROUND ROBIN/CLOSING COMMENTS

Andrea LaFontaine announced that the Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance (MTGA) is launching a small-town series to hear and learn more about community needs. She will share the dates when they become available.

John Bollman added if NAW should ask MTAC to create a standalone water trails subcommittee or create a subcommittee under the umbrella of NAW for water trails.

Jason Aric Jones is encouraged by this meeting and feels that NAW is moving in the right direction on several of these topics.

Bob Hendrickson mentioned the Travel Marquette Program is spotlighting proper etiquette and stewardship, along with respecting the county.

Kenny Wawsczyk said the DNR Forest Management is working on improving signage for upcoming and future timber harvests and will expand further north once evolved.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 12:16 p.m.