



Non-Motorized Advisory Workgroup (NAW)

Meeting Minutes

July 18, 2024

10 a.m. – Noon

Delta Township Hall, Lansing MI

Welcome – Roll Call

PRESENT FOR THE NON-MOTORIZED ADVISORY WORKGROUP (NAW)

- Andrea LaFontaine, Chairperson (absent)
- Kenny Wawsczyk, Vice Chair
- John Bollman
- Neal Glazebrook (virtual)
- Jason Aric Jones (absent)
- 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, Scott Slavin, Jill Sell, Heather Durocher, Blake Gingrich, Annalisa Centofanti, Jeff Kakuk, Peter Costa, Ron Yesney, Chris Stark, Scott Pratt

Meeting minutes

ACTION ITEMS

Meeting called to order at 10:01 a.m. by committee Vice Chair, Kenny Wawsczyk.

Motion was made by to approve the April 18, 2024 draft meeting minutes by Bob Hendrickson and as is and seconded by Neal Glazebrook. With all in favor, motion carried.

Motion was made by to approve the July 18 agenda as is by John Bollman and seconded by Neal Glazebrook. With all in favor, motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

BUSINESS ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

RECOMMENDATION ESTABLISHMENT OF WATER TRAILS ADVISORY WORKGROUP

JOHN BOLLMAN

John Bollman prepared and provided a written recommendation to the NAW board members and DNR staff (attached) proposing to create a water trails advisory workgroup, citing water trails are represented in a limited capacity within this group and overall. John mentioned issues with water trails are quite different than nonmotorized land trails and considering the thousands of miles of water in our state, should have their own advisory workgroup representation.

Questions

Kenny Wawsczyk expressed concerns about DNR resources and adding on an additional schedule of meetings. John replied this is a broader concern and the DNR should come up with a better way to efficiently manage advisory workgroups. John would like to discuss this further with DNR staff.

Greg Kinser, DNR, pointed out that the Michigan Trails Advisory Council (MTAC) does have the capability to add subcommittees as they see the need. Kenny's point is valid for DNR resource availability. Current DNR staff structure is to assign one staff person to represent each workgroup. Kenny added as MTAC is getting more organized, there seems to be more of a request to create additional workgroups.

Bob Hendrickson agreed the water trail workgroup idea is valuable as water representation is not highly represented in NAW now. Bob would like to know how many water trails are currently managed by the DNR, he would like to know more facts, but feels this is a valid request.

Neal Glazebrook has attended the Quiet Adventure Symposium and acknowledges there is a unity between cyclers and paddlers. Neil has heard avid paddlers in the mid-Michigan region feel they are underrepresented and do not have a way to voice concerns or no seat at the table. NAW just kicked off a nonmotorized funding and maintenance workgroup that is umbrellaed under NAW where water trail representation was brought up. Neal suggested to start with this additional

workgroup created under NAW for water representation, feeling it is better served to have a collective voice rather than multiple groups.

Tim Novak, DNR, mentioned he is already attending quarterly meetings regarding state designated water trails. It is possible to transition these meetings into an advisory workgroup. Tim noted the Trails Summit scheduled for this September will discuss establishing By-laws for MTAC and this topic can be included in the conversation.

Neal Glazebrook mentioned he had sent an outline to Andrea LaFontaine and Kenny Wawsczyk regarding seats, regions, and makeup of NAW as a whole to be discussed at the trails summit.

John Bollman would like to move this forward for action. Tim Novak recommended adding this to the next agenda for further discussion and motion for support to send to MTAC.

Bob Hendrickson is in support with the recommendation that Tim Novak checks with his water trail group to see if they can be the component water trail advisory workgroup.

Stephanie Swanberg is concerned about limits in creating additional trail advisory workgroups, and the discussion should revert to the overall structure of the current trail advisory workgroups. She is in favor but questions the structures that are already in place and will creating more workgroups be effective.

Brent Bolin is in favor of the concept but believes a larger discussion on committee organization needs to take place prior to creating more trails advisory workgroups. Brent suggested to have this conversation at the fall summit. He would like to see the current MTAC structure resolved before adding new workgroups.

Neal Glazebrook is not opposed but echoes' Brents comments for MTAC structure organization to be resolved before adding another workgroup. This topic should be discussed as a whole group.

Tim Novak recommends adding this topic for discussion to the fall summit meeting agenda and MTAC meeting in September.

MOTION

Motion is made by John Bollman to submit this proposal at MTAC's September meeting for discussion and be placed on the trails summit agenda for continued discussion and evaluate how water trails are represented, Neal Glazebrook seconded. With all in favor, **motion carried**.

THUNDER VALLEY PUBLIC MEETING SUMMARY (JULY 15)

RON YESNEY, DNR

Ron Yesney, DNR, reported that the majority of people attending the July 15 meeting in Marquette Michigan (35-40 in attendance/12 people virtual) were in favor of prohibiting bicycles on the Thunder Valley trails and a couple were opposed. Thunder Valley Trail system was originally built

for equestrian use. Trails will still be open to hikers, cross country, and other non-motorized use. Overall public meeting consensus was in support for prohibiting bicycle use. A lot of the conversation from the public audience focused on safety and the opportunity to train horses on this trail system.

Bob Hendrickson mentioned that when Blueberry Ridge closed to equestrians, the trail system was not as robust as it is now. Bob understands the need for separated trail use and recognizes this may be a missed opportunity to integrate trail users.

Neal Glazebrook will not support until minutes are released from the Thunder Valley public meeting. Neal also sees this as a missed opportunity as well.

John Bollman asked if an evaluation for the various land use conflicts exists. Has the DNR reached out to various user groups to receive feedback and possible scenarios, followed a process to evaluate.

THUNDER VALLEY LAND USE ORDER (LUOD) – VOTE

NAW Committee Vote – Yes - In Support / No – Not in support

Andrea LaFontaine - (absent)

Kenny Wawsczyk – **yes**, in support

Neal Glazebrook – no, not in support

Brent Bolin – **yes**, in support

Bob Hendrickson – **yes**, in support

John Bollman – **yes**, in support

Stephanie Swanberg – **yes**, in support

Jason Aric Jones (absent)

Lori Hauswirth (absent)

Majority vote is **in support** for the Thunder Valley Trail Land Use Order.

UPDATES

MTAC Q2 MEETING SUMMARY

TIM NOVAK, DNR

Tim Novak provided highlights from the recent July MTAC meeting. There was a presentation from the Forest Resource Division (FRD) summarizing the [State Forest Management Plan](#). Patty Janes, from Grand Valley State University provided survey results on trail use in state parks, camping, and day use areas. MTAC supported and approved the FY25 Recreational Trail Program appropriations.

John Bollman added as an example, the recent trails survey created and shared from the DNR is missing water trails as a trail use option. If the trails advisory board members were involved in the planning for this survey, then these suggestions could have been introduced.

EBIKE LUOD UPDATE

TIM NOVAK, DNR

Tim Novak reported the Ebike LUOD was introduced to the Natural Resource Council (NRC) at the June meeting and would have been sent back to the July meeting for approval. However, the North Country Trail (NCT) contacted the DNR and requested to add specific language in the LUOD which reinstates ebikes are prohibited on national congressional lands, which the NCT is a national congressional land designation. With the requested modification, the LUOD will have an internal review and is expected to be on the August NRC agenda. If approved at the NRC meeting in August, the LUOD will be effective the next day after the NRC meeting.

NONMOTORIZED MAINTENANCE/FUNDING WORKGROUP

NEAL GLAZEBROOK

A nonmotorized maintenance and funding workgroup was created under NAW. Neal Glazebrook provided a summary for the July 15 kick-off meeting. The workgroup members are Amy Scharmen-Burgdorf (ETS), Anna Lee (ETS), Neal Glazebrook (NAW), Jason Aric Jones (NAW), and Greg Kinser (DNR). The members discussed formulating an approach and expectations moving forward. Discussions included water trails and other nonmotorized trail use and maintenance. Conversations about what is standard for maintenance and potentially looping in other DNR sections at some point, such as stewardship. The meeting was very productive. The workgroup will be meeting one time every month for the first six months and will reevaluate meeting needs.

TRAIL IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

TIM NOVAK, DNR

Tim Novak reported trails staff continue to hold monthly meetings reviewing and identifying strategic goals and actions. Some items are being checked off of our list. However, the trails section is still experiencing capacity issues, the trail implementation requires a lot of staff time and effort. Some items originally identified as 1-3 years may be extended. The 10-year plan is 2022-2032. The plan can be found on the DNR Trails web page. All the goals and objectives are assigned to staff and stakeholders.

2024 MEETINGS

- Trails week Sept 22-28
- Sept. 25-26 - Advisory Board Trail Summit (Lansing)
- October 17 – Ralph. A. MacMullan Conference Center

September Trails Summit – What to Expect

TIM NOVAK, DNR

The Trail Summit will be all day September 25 and extend to the morning of September 26. A meeting agenda will be formulated with DNR staff and the chair from each trails workgroup. The MTAC meeting is scheduled for Sept 24 in the afternoon, the day prior to the Trail Summit, and will be in the same location for the Trail Summit meetings (Delta Township Offices in Lansing).

Neal Glazebrook offered to host a bike ride, provided by the League of Michigan Bicyclists.

Jenny Cook has offered to coordinate a horse ride for any trail workgroup members that are interested.

John Bollman asked to consider adding these topics to the summit agenda, water trail advisory workgroup proposal, trails funding, and Pure Michigan trail waterways and trail towns; how this program can be improved.

ROUND ROBIN/CLOSING COMMENTS

Bob Hendrickson said the Iron Ore Heritage Trail has a few projects in motion this summer. Also, there are 3 townships along the trail that are not participating in any mileages, so a group is getting together to campaign.

Neal Glazebrook mentioned the League of Michigan Bicyclists is modifying their strategic plan. The League is always looking for collaborative event opportunities. Event attendance has been declining, and this is across the board with other states.

Brent Bolin said this Sunday morning the annual Indian River Bike Kayak Biathlon will take place and is always a fun event which most of the time sells out. Brent believes the summers are getting busier than the prior summers.

Kenny Wawsczyk shared he recently had an opportunity to sit with the FRD Forest Management Advisory Committee. Discussions were about signage and customer service needs and resulted in the possible creation of a Q&A list accessible by QR codes placed on signs. The NCT celebration will be held in St. Ignace, 3rd week in August.

Tim Noake asked everyone to please share the trails survey or take it if you have not already. The survey is open for another couple of weeks. Marketing and Outreach will add water trails as a trail use option. We're hoping to share these results at the Sept. MTAC meeting.

Greg Kinser was excited to share the northern lower Trail Planner position has been filled and this role will be a great asset to the trails team, planning and implementing some of the larger

projects. Greg also pointed out that recently the U.P. Trail Planning position was filled and is the counterpart of the northern lower Trail Planner.

Sage Hegdal wanted to bring to everyone's attention that a portion of the Clinton River Trail, part of Iron Belle Trail (IBT), along with a portion of the Great Lake to Lake Trail had a big washout, over half a mile of trail is closed, and detours are in place. Trails will most likely be closed until next year.

Blake Gingrich added he is working on updating pathway signage (you are here, mapping, confidence markers, arrows) in his region.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 11:42 a.m.

Nonmotorized Advisory Workgroup Recommendation for the Establishment of a Water Trails Advisory Workgroup

Introduction

Situated amidst the largest collection of freshwater on the planet, Michigan is defined by water. With 3,288 linear miles of Great Lakes Shoreline, over 11,000 inland lakes, and 51,438 river miles, Michigan is a water wonderland. From this extensive water resource base, the opportunities for Michigan citizens and visitors to participate in water-based recreation are almost limitless. However, despite this vast potential, the number of water trails in the state are relatively few and information on statewide paddling opportunities is not as widespread as the resource base requires. While the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has an excellent set of trail advisory groups, the one type of trail that is underrepresented is the water trail. Water trails are distinct from land based trails and the issues related to water trails are very different. The establishment, operation, and maintenance of water trails require a different orientation and a unique set of tools. In order to address this need and to assist the DNR in establishing, operating, and maintaining a statewide water trail network, and to bridge the information gap on paddling opportunities within the state, the DNR, in conjunction with the Michigan Trails Advisory Council, should establish a Water Trails Advisory Workgroup.

Proposal

The Nonmotorized Advisory Workgroup recommends the following:

1. The Department of Natural Resources, in conjunction with the Michigan Trails Advisory Council shall establish a Water Trails Advisory Workgroup. The Water Trails Advisory Workgroup shall consist of 7 to 11 members who broadly represent all aspects of canoeing and kayaking Michigan waters, including experienced paddlers with knowledge and expertise in canoeing or kayaking Great Lakes waters, inland lakes, and rivers; canoe/kayak livery operators; water trail managers; representatives of Pure Michigan Trail Towns or other local units of government adjacent to water trails; paddling clubs; parks and recreation professionals; and others with unique knowledge or expertise with water-based recreation. At least one member of the advisory workgroup should represent Michigan Sea Grant.
2. The Water Trails Advisory Workgroup shall advise the Department of Natural Resources and the Michigan Trails Advisory Council on all of the following:

- a. The establishment, operation, and maintenance of a statewide water trail network.
- b. The promotion of the statewide water trail network.
- c. The development and distribution of easily accessible information on paddle sports and water trails.
- d. The development and distribution of education materials and programs related to safe paddling.
- e. The coordination of the DNR's water trail program with public and private trail organizations, tourism agencies and resource based economic development agencies.
- f. The Pure Michigan Water Trails program.
- g. The DNR's designated water trails program.
- h. The Pure Michigan Water Trail Town program.
- i. Funding needs and sources of funding for sustaining the DNR's water trail program.

3. The Water Trails Advisory Workgroup may, as appropriate, make inquiries, conduct studies and investigations, hold hearings, and receive comments from the public. The Water Trails Advisory Workgroup may also consult with outside experts in order to perform its duties, including, but not limited to, experts in the private sector, government agencies, and institutions of higher education. The Water Trails Advisory Workgroup shall consult with organizations involved with expanding water trail access for persons with disabilities.

4. The Water Trails Advisory Workgroup shall annually prepare a report of its recommendations and shall provide that report to the DNR and to the Michigan Trails Advisory Council.

5. Upon approval by the Nonmotorized Advisory Workgroup, this recommendation shall be forwarded to the Michigan Trails Advisory Council and to the Department of Natural Resources.