

NONMORTORIZED ADVISORY WORKGROUP (NAW) MEETING
MEETING MINUTES
November 19, 2020
MS Teams / Audio Conference

ATTENDEES

NAW

Andrea LaFontaine
John Morrison
Mary Bohling
Jim DuFresne
Kenny Wawsczyk
Kristen Wiltfang
Jason Jones
Lori Hauswirth
Others
Emily Shinevar (MSP)
Shaun Prince
Jenny Cook
Steve DeBranbender

DNR

Dakota Hewlett
Ron Yesney
Annalisa Centofanti
Greg Kinser
Debbie Jensen
Paige Perry
Jill Sell
Scott Slavin
Michael Morrison

Meeting called to order by Andrea LaFontaine, Chairperson, at 10:03 a.m.

WELCOME

Committee members present.

Andrea LaFontaine, Chairperson
John Morrison (nonmotorized)
Mary Bohling (water trails)
Jim DuFresne (hiking)
Kenny Wawsczyk (hiking)
Kristen Wiltfang (nonmotorized)
Lori Hauswirth (cross country ski)

BUSINESS ITEMS

Motion was made to approve the meeting minutes from August 6, 2020. Kenny Wawsczyk and John Morrison were first and second to approve, with all in favor.

Motion to approve the November 19, 2020 meeting agenda. Kristen Wiltfang and John Morrison were first and second to approve, with all in favor.

UPDATES

Committee Updates

John Morrison, committee member, reported the MATAG conference moved to next year in Grand Rapids, August 15 through 18, 2021.

Mary Bohling, committee member, reported the Quiet Symposium will be virtual on the first weekend in March.

NONMORTORIZED ADVISORY WORKGROUP (NAW) MEETING
MEETING MINUTES
November 19, 2020
MS Teams / Audio Conference

Kenny Wawsczyk, committee member, mentioned the North Country Trails Association (NCTA) is following several projects in the UP.

Kristen Wiltfang, committee member, said announcements were made this week related to COVID grants, which will benefit nonprofit groups. Nonprofits are encouraged to apply for grants. Designs for Phase 2 of the Michigan Airline Line Trail is in progress and will connect with Phase 1 construction. Pontiac is resurfacing a portion of the Clinton River Trail. The Shiawassee Water Trail was designed as a National Water Trail this month. Clarkston Road connection with Iron Belle Trail (IBT) has been completed and a ribbon cutting was held last week showcasing this connector between Paint Creek and Poly Ann Trail.

Jason Jones, committee member, said the second phase of the Hardy Dam Dragon project was just completed. This completion offers 12 miles out of a projected 40-mile trail available to users. Rejuvenation work has started at Pottawatomie Trail.

Andrea LaFontaine, committee Chairperson, stated she is working with project teams in Southeast Michigan. The teams are shooting microfilms featuring diverse trail users, which will accompany trail mapping. Great Lakes Way Advisory Committee has been tasked with mapping trails in SE Michigan. Andrea has been involved with strategic planning processes, providing direction of what to focus on in the next few years.

DNR Updates

Dakota Hewlett (DNR) is working out-of-class filling in as the Nonmotorized Grant Coordinator. Dakota is working to target funding for projects over the next few years. Some nonmotorized grantees have now been able to resume projects and some IBT projects have been closed out. Dakota said the DNR has recently released a new interactive nonmotorized trail GIS map on the DNR public web pages. The Marketing and Outreach department is focused on winter related sports and communications.

Ron Yesney (DNR) reported on the Upper Peninsula. The State has acquired all property around Wetmore Pond, and is in the process of extending designated pathways. Improvements have been made to the trail head, parking area, and road entrance. The Days River Pathway and ski trails has added several miles of mountain bike trails. Piers Gorge trails has been approved. The proposal for Peek-a-Boo Trail, a mountain bike trail, should be approved soon.

Greg Kinser (DNR) reported for the norther Lower Peninsula. Alpena to Hillman rail grade surface project has begun, projected completion is for next year. IBT and Cradle of Forestry, North Higgins Lake Stake Park, projects are moving forward. The Gaylord trailhead is moving forward.

Scott Slavin (DNR) mentioned some highlights in northwest Michigan. White Pine Trail has a large culvert replacement going on, with engineering design on a couple other culverts along the trail. There are some volunteer groups pulling together information for development and mapping of trails that go through State Forest lands.

NONMORTORIZED ADVISORY WORKGROUP (NAW) MEETING
MEETING MINUTES
November 19, 2020
MS Teams / Audio Conference

Paige Perry (DNR) is continuing to work on improving mapping systems. Norway ridge in Alpena county, is looking at improvements on mapping. There have been wash outs reported on rail trails, and she is addressing these issues.

Mike Morrison (DNR) said the Trail Town applications, through Pure Michigan campaigns, is extended to December 1, 2020. Announcements will take place in Spring for the nominations.

Debbie Jensen (DNR) reported that land strategy public comment has officially ended. She is collecting comments from all the meetings. Debbie said a team is going through a lot of ideas and data. The project boundary review for state lands, public review is open until November 30, 2020.

Lori Hauswirth, committee member, mentioned that across the state, volunteer groups are prepping trail areas for the Nordic ski season.

Nonmotorized Funding Workgroup Updates

Jason Jones, committee member, provided a written document to the NAW committee members for review (included in meeting notes). The document reflects an idea the Nonmotorized Funding Workgroup, developed by Michigan Trails Advisory Council (MTAC), outlines a concept for a Voluntary Trail Pass (VTP) for nonmotorized trails in Michigan. Jason also wanted to mention that now is not the time to approach legislation to request fees or taxes.

QUESTIONS

Jim DuFresne asked what is basis for the fee amount? Second, is asking for a VTP donation in direct competition with nonprofits to join organizations.

Jason Jones replied and said the fee was not based on a lot of analytical process, more based on what others are doing. Also, there did not seem like there was a concern that the fee will compete with nonprofits. The concept is looking at this in a very broad view for the whole state.

Andrea LaFontaine asked how is this different than the Recreation Passport? Andrea said the DNR offering seed money, feels uncomfortable. A creation of a 501(c)(3), for the basis of being independent, although mitigated by a board, can be costly. Costs can include administrative expense, potential audits, startup costs, yearly filings, accountant fees, website, and others. Would it make sense to use an existing donor organization?

Jason Jones replied and said using a community foundation bears looking at. Common themes with this concept are independence, transparency, and equitable distribution. The Recreation Passport is perceived as a Government black hole, some are skeptical where all the money goes. Transparency is the key element here.

Do other states have this concept implemented? Dakota Hewlett said Wisconsin has a trail pass program for certain state trails, not all nonmotorized trails. Wisconsin claims the program pays for about 43% of maintenance costs for the specific trails. Dakota is not aware of any other states that has this voluntary program in place.

John Morrison asked how hard will it be to get to the final product?

NONMORTORIZED ADVISORY WORKGROUP (NAW) MEETING
MEETING MINUTES
November 19, 2020
MS Teams / Audio Conference

Jason Jones replied and said there is enough potential out there for the concept to have merit. Jason is not aware of any projection analysis or studies out there. This is more of a qualitative concept, with the number of trail users out there. Influence from social media can take nothing and turn it into something, creating a buzz. Using the proper channels can help this concept take off.

Assuming we can get mass buy in, what is next step?

Jason Jones replied and said this concept is a recommendation made to MTAC for them to flush out specifics. There has been a broad base representation within the funding workgroup. This is just a framework proposal.

Kenny Wawsczyk said he feels this concept/process was already presented with IBT. Donations are a struggle to receive from corporations and larger firms, and spreading the dollars regionally is difficult.

Jason Jones replied and said the focus will be on all Michigan nonmotorized trails as opposed to targeting specific trails. Dakota Hewlett said he discovered large corporations do not want to donate to a statewide bucket, they prefer to be specific. Jason said the key sales approach is transparency.

Steve DeBrabander (IBT), executive director of IBT trail funds, provided a brief introduction. Steve was previously with the DNR for over 30 years, in various trail positions. Initially IBT was primarily sponsored by raising funds. Over time the group approached large funders and found interest to fund trails other than the IBT. Steve suggests a robust fund-raising team for the nonmotorized funding concept. An impressive list of people for the Board of Directors will be beneficial to nurture relationships with corporations and foundations. Big funders do not like multiple requests from various sources, creates a feeling of disorganization. Steve addressed Jason Jones, saying since the groundwork is in place, (501c3; corporation relationships) let's talk about not duplicating efforts and talk about how this organization can help the other trails. Jason replied yes, let's talk about the mechanism that is already in place.

Kristen Wiltfang is very interested in taking a deeper dive into this concept. A lot of her laundry list of questions have been hit on from this discussion. Ultimately, we want to do the best with the funds available and leveraging these funds. New concepts can take years, makes sense to look at what is already in place. Most trail users do not have a clue who owns the properties they are recreating on.

Ron Yesney (DNR) thought when this idea was introduced it was going to be simpler. Ron said \$40 dollars sounds like a lot of money to start with.

Dakota Hewlett said a different type of mechanism could utilize an optional donation when a state license or permit is purchased. The nonmotorized funding workgroup is open to any other ideas. Send comments to Dakota and Jason, also include Ken Hopper.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jenny Cook talked about the attached documents related to horses and trail safety etiquette.

Jason Jones provided some feedback on the documents provide by Jenny Cook. Jason said mountain bikers are well versed on the etiquette with horses. Jim DuFresne said as a hiker, he does already adhere

NONMORTORIZED ADVISORY WORKGROUP (NAW) MEETING
MEETING MINUTES
November 19, 2020
MS Teams / Audio Conference

to the etiquette. Although Jim would prefer to see the trails separated. Kristen Wiltang said horse etiquette information is valuable and she is looking forward to sharing the content. Jason Jones also said there is not a lot of instances where single track trails cross horse trails in Southern Lower Michigan.

ROUND ROBIN/CLOSING

Meeting was adjourned at 12:09 p.m. by Andrea LaFontaine, Chairperson. Jason Jones and Kristen Wiltfang were first and second to approve, with all in favor.

NONMORTORIZED ADVISORY WORKGROUP (NAW) MEETING
MEETING MINUTES
November 19, 2020
MS Teams / Audio Conference

Horses Facts

- Horses are prey animals. They are herbivores. They are at the bottom of the food chain.
- Humans are the ultimate predators. Horses are more afraid of you than you are them. Because of this natural pecking order of predator and prey, horses expect you to be the leader of them. They appreciate when they are treated with respect. Once trust is built, horses will perform for you more than you ever imagined.
- Horses prefer to be in a herd because there is safety in numbers. Horseback riders often camp and travel in groups along the trails to help keep their horses calm and comfortable.
- Horses are our first autonomous vehicle. They have excellent self-preservation skills.
- Horses are domesticated wildlife. Because of horses' four beat hoof pattern and prey scent, horseback riders disturb other wildlife less than any other user group, including hikers.
- Horses can hear better than humans. They can swivel each ear independently in nearly all directions.
- Horses have a better sense of smell better than humans, so they will notice people, wildlife, and other objects before humans.
- Horses have eyes on the sides of their heads so they can look for predators and danger at all times in a 350 degrees radius.
- Horses can see movement (like a bike approaching), better than humans. Horses have only one-dimensional vision (like a magazine), so they have difficulty with depth perception (like how far away a bike is or how deep the water is at water crossings).
- Horses have blind spots up close, near the center of their heads and directly behind them. Always ask the horse owner before approaching. Please approach horses at their sides, not directly at their face or behind them.
- Horses react 1/4 of a second faster than humans, putting horseback riders at a disadvantage when quiet, fast moving, bikes are approaching.
- Horses body structures are designed to carry us perfectly. Their walk, trot and running gates simulate our walking, jogging, and running gates, providing us excellent therapy partners.
- When near horses, please wear closed toed shoes or boots. In the unlikely event a horse steps on you, gently push them off as they move away from pressure.
- Horses have flight instincts, they prefer to move their feet when they are nervous or scared, so that is why horseback riders prefer other trails users to stop, while the horseback riders pass by at a walk.
- Speaking to horseback riders in your normal voice, helps horses understand you are a human and will help calm the horses.

**NONMORTORIZED ADVISORY WORKGROUP (NAW) MEETING
MEETING MINUTES
November 19, 2020
MS Teams / Audio Conference**

**SAFETY IS FOR EVERYONE
Trail Safety and Etiquette with Horses and Trail Users**

Michigan has various types of non-motorized trails so every trail user group can recreate safely. Please follow the specific trail designations for the safety of everyone:

- **Shared horse and hike trails** - Horse riders and their horses have the most risks, so please keep horse trails for horses and hikers only. **No bikes**
- **Shared bike and hike trails** - **No horses**
- **Multi-Use trails** - Open to everyone, provided safety and etiquette are followed.

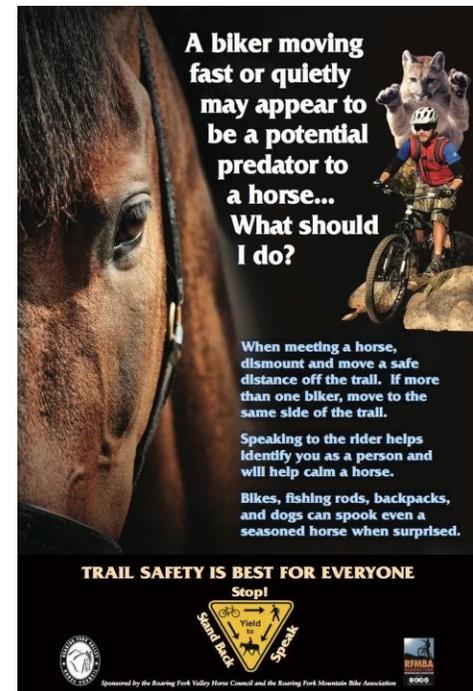


Horses are prey animals. They have eyes on the sides of their heads so they can watch for predators. All meat eaters, including humans, are potential predators of horses. Horses have better hearing and quicker response time than humans. "A biker or hiker moving fast or quietly may appear to be a potential predator to a horse", therefore causing natural "flight or fight" survival instincts.

When encounters on the trails happen:

1. **Stop** Please stop.
 - Stopping communicates to horse riders that you see them, are aware of trail etiquette and respect fellow trail users.
2. **Speak** Say "hello" in your normal voice.
 - Speaking helps identify you as a person and will calm the horses.
 - Ask the horse riders how they would like to pass. The horse riders have been assessing the situation (horses' body language, other riders, terrain, etc.) and will have knowledge of how and when we should pass.
 - Typically, the horse riders will want to move past at a walk (which helps the horses as they have "flight" instincts and naturally prefer to move their feet), while the other trail users remain stopped.
3. **Stand Back** 10 feet or more.
 - Stand back with your whole group on the same side of the trail.
 - Please contain children and dogs.
 - If biking, please dismount and move to a safe distance away from the trail with your bike between you and the horses.

These actions will reassure the horses that you are not a threatening predator and help keep everyone safe. Thank you and happy trails.



NONMORTORIZED ADVISORY WORKGROUP (NAW) MEETING
MEETING MINUTES
November 19, 2020
MS Teams / Audio Conference

PROPOSAL TO THE MICHIGAN TRAILS ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Michigan Voluntary Trails Pass (MVTP) and The Michigan Trails Trust Fund Non-Profit.

Key Guiding Principles

1. The funding structure and source created must be self-sustaining through the mechanisms provided within the structure. There should be evident and transparent and impactful use of the fund to enable public confidence in the fund.
2. The fund must be protected from legislative intervention and raiding.
3. The use of the fund should broadly benefit all non-motorized trail user groups and there should be as much as possible an equitable geographic distribution of the funds.
4. All local units of government and nonprofit organizations that manage or operate trails should qualify for access to the fund according to a set of rules.
5. The fund should be available to be used for a wide variety of trail projects including development, maintenance, promotion, marketing and design of all non-motorized trails. As needs, change the fund should be able to pivot in the direction of the current needs.
6. All existing state and federal funds, gifts from the philanthropic community and corporate sponsorships should augment this plan but not necessarily be part of it as those sources already exist.
7. The fund administration should effectively engage the users in supporting trails through some sort of financial or labor or skill commitment. There is an incredible untapped resource for supporting trails throughout both our corporate and in our individual communities. People as evidenced by a number of different trails vents want to support Michigan's trails. In Wisconsin you pay a trail user fee but other states also allow for users to be able to donate labor and skill to a trail in exchange for a trail user permit.

NONMORTORIZED ADVISORY WORKGROUP (NAW) MEETING
MEETING MINUTES
November 19, 2020
MS Teams / Audio Conference

The PROPOSAL

We envision creating a new nonprofit organization called The Michigan Trails Trust Fund that would act as a fiduciary for this fund. Uses of the fund should be administered by a board that is representative of all the non-motorized trail user groups in the state. The board can establish priorities on an annual basis and can therefore be much more flexible based on actual need.

This proposal would create a new Michigan Voluntary Trails Pass (MVTP) of \$40 per year. In lieu of paying the \$40 a trail user wishing to contribute could make a commitment for a volunteer labor on a trail of his or her choice.

In exchange for payment or labor commitment each trail user would receive a Michigan Voluntary Trails Pass zipper tab that would feature the logo for Michigan Voluntary Trail Pass and would be evidence of a user providing financial or labor support. Each year this trail zipper tab would be of a different color.

Creating the trust fund board is an important element in that all user groups such as hiking, cycling, mountain biking, walking, equestrian, paddling, etc. need to have equal voices on the trust fund board. Some type of administrative director who would oversee the mechanics of the trust fund board will likely need to be appointed or be hired.

Members of the trust fund board need to have solid reputations within the user group community. The actions of the trust fund board need to be transparent and well explained and accessible to the user group. Acting as a fiduciary will require regular audits that will be publicly available.

NONMORTORIZED ADVISORY WORKGROUP (NAW) MEETING
MEETING MINUTES
November 19, 2020
MS Teams / Audio Conference

The trust fund board should initially adopt operating procedures and develop a scoring system that will represent guidance for making appropriations from the fund. These will likely be authorized either within the articles of incorporation or the operating bylaws. The scoring system should be reviewed on regular basis and reflect current and future needs of the trail system. One of the benefits of this proposal is that it allows the trust fund board to pivot in the direction of the greatest need and impact and to address emerging issues and opportunities. Some have expressed the concern for being able to focus the fund on state owned or operated trails. This proposal would not rule that out but simply allow for greater flexibility to be able to accommodate all types of trails.

The organization should be authorized to receive donations from either individuals or from corporate or business sponsors. An individual donating should be able to designate the type of trail that they would like to donate to or to simply make a general donation to the fund.

Creating a public-facing image for the fund is essential and there should be consideration given for allowing users to be able to suggest an image or logo for the fund. This would be a step similar to Governor Snyder's move to allow the public to suggest a name for the eventual Iron Belle Trail. Taking such a step will allow for the public to become invested in the shaping and develop support for the fund.

Each year a different color or perhaps shape of the zipper tab should be produced in order to highlight various annual donations. Thought could be given to providing different types of material reinforcements for higher donations.

NONMORTORIZED ADVISORY WORKGROUP (NAW) MEETING
MEETING MINUTES
November 19, 2020
MS Teams / Audio Conference

It is essential that this Michigan Voluntary trail pass be clearly seen as a voluntary trail pass with no obligation to purchase a trail pass in order to use Michigan's trail system. A person wishing to acquire a voluntary trail pass could commit to some level of volunteer activity that would equate to a donation.

There should be consideration given to setting up a contractual relationship between the 501(c)(3) and the DNR. The DNR could be allowed a spot on the trust fund board and could potentially provide some seed money if we set up the scoring process to have some sort of skewing towards a state sponsored trail.

The other potential for seed money would be to go to a foundation (BCBS) or a corporate sponsor like REI or Consumers or DTE and give them a visible identity with the organization. There will be a significant new marketing and promotional opportunities in the creation of this fund and we see an attractive opportunity for corporate sponsors to be associated with the state wide effort.

Initial marketing and branding of the entity will be key to the success of the fund. The primary communications vehicle is envisioned to be its website, which will be the main tool for informing on trails, uses, supporting stakeholder groups, as well as, for soliciting individual and corporate donations. Driving nonmotorized trail users to the website via social media and use of some traditional media will be important. A simple draft process flow document for the website is attached.