



Non-Motorized Advisory Workgroup (NAW)

Meeting Minutes

Virtual - TEAMS

October 12, 2023

10 a.m. – Noon

Welcome – Roll Call

PRESENT FOR THE NON-MOTORIZED ADVISORY WORKGROUP (NAW)

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

PRESENT FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (DNR) STAFF

Tim Novak, Lee Maynard, Scott Slavin, Greg Kinser, Nicole Hunt, Sage Hegdal, Jill Sell, Rob Katona, Jeff Kakuk, Ron Yesney, Annalisa Centofanti, Heather Durocher

Meeting minutes

ACTION ITEMS

Meeting called to order at 10:01 a.m. by committee Chair, Andrea LaFontaine.

Motion was made John Bollman by to approve the July 12 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 October 12 agenda as is and seconded by John Bollman. With all in favor, motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

STEVE VIGNEAU, PUBLIC TRAIL USER

Mr. Steve Vigneau expressed concerns with trail signs placed on the North Country Trail (NCT) being incorrect. Steve is working with the NCT Association to correct these issues. Steve is asking the committee to keep this item on the radar.

Scott Slavin, DNR, mentioned that portions of the NCT have been labeled “no bikes”, and Scott has been working with the NCT staff to correct the signage.

Jason Aric Jones added that the DNR online interactive maps identify these same sections of trails as hiking and not open to bikes. Jason is asking the DNR to look at the maps and make corrections if needed.

GARY WOOD, FRIENDS OF BERRIEN COUNTY TRAILS, PRESIDENT

[HTTPS://WWW.BERRIENTRAILS.ORG/BCMASTERPLAN.ASP](https://www.berrientrails.org/bcmasterplan.asp)

Mr. Gary Wood shared with the committee that a trail master plan for the entire County of Berrien has been completed as of December 2022. Twenty-two of the thirty-nine municipalities have committed to contribute money towards the master plan and over thirty of the municipalities have passed a resolution of support for the master plan. Regional connections are the focus. One of the key elements is the connection between the Marquette Greenway and the Van Buren State Park Trail, (Kal-Haven, lake-to-lake trail), which will effectively provide a path from Chicago across our State. Another key destination will be Warren Dunes State Park, and it is important to complete a trail in the state park as part of this master plan. Gary is working with Jill Sell, DNR, on the trails within the Warren Dunes State Park.

BUSINESS ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

WARREN DUNES STATE PARK TRAILS

Jill Sell, DNR

Jill is working with Gary Wood on this trail plan. Funds have been allocated for design and engineering of a trail in Warren Dunes State Park.

RIDE RIGHT SAFETY MESSAGE

Ron Yesney, DNR

Ron Yesney is part of the Ride Right team leading a public campaign which relays safety messages to trail users. The campaign started with snowmobile and ORV but wants to expand to the nonmotorized users. This campaign tool will convey safety and etiquette messages to users. Ron is looking for assistance to develop messages focused towards the nonmotorized trails and users.

Neil Glazebrook agrees that this sounds like a good mechanism for safety and education messages. More specific, this will provide better understanding for ebike users. Neal would like to be part of the committee.

Bob Hendrickson suggested that a unified message/branding is important for a broader audience. Bob would like to be part of the committee.

Andrea LaFontaine suggested to keep it simple for people to understand, like sticking to safety and speed; *know before you go*.

Brent Bolin expressed his most important element is the ebike communication. In the Petoskey area, the Top of Michigan Trails, has been spreading etiquette messages in the community regarding ebikes, and any electric mechanisms (scooters, skateboards, one wheels, etc.). This is a pilot project, and the communication uses common language to educate the people. The Top of Michigan Trails would like to work with the DNR to expand the ebike communications across other areas of the state.

Jason Aric Jones asked Brent to please share the information of the work they are doing. Jason is working on adding QR codes to kiosk areas where people can scan, and information will be provided. Jason agrees that a uniform message will be most beneficial.

Ron Yesney concluded that this is an introduction to the Ride Right campaign idea and based by the feedback received from this committee, he will move forward by scheduling a follow-up meeting in early 2024.

UPDATES

PURE MI APPLICATION STATUS

TIM NOVAK, DNR

Tim Novak announced the State is accepting PURE MI/Trail Town applications now through Jan 15, 2024. Interested applicants can obtain the application online or email Tim or Anna Centofanti. Please pass on this information to any trail groups that would be interested.

WATER WAY FUNDING UPDATE

TIM NOVAK, DNR

Tim Novak confirmed that a water trail appropriation of \$500k has been allotted for a one-time funding opportunity for water trails in Michigan. The DNR is still working with legislature for clarification of how money is appropriated and extended.

John Bollman asked Tim if he can verify the water trail funding cannot be used for salaries and can only be used for infrastructure, maintenance, or development for established water trails. Also, provide a deadline when criteria will be released. Tim hopes by the end of this month he will have more clarity.

Jason Aric Jones added that he finds it ironic that \$500k for maintenance of water trails has been appropriated, and out of the \$250M ARPA funding, only \$100k will go to natural surface nonmotorized trails. Jason would like to see something similar for natural surface nonmotorized trails. Andrea LaFontaine suggested that Jason lobby the legislatures for possible one-time funding opportunities.

TRAILS WEEK UPDATE

HEATHER DUROCHER, DNR

Heather is new to the DNR within the last six months and is a communication rep for Parks and Recreation, focused on trails. Heather mentioned that during this year's trails week, Sept. 17-24, the DNR launched trails focused merchandise through a retail partner, Great Lakes Proud. Heather hopes to rally more organizations throughout the state to get involved in future trails weeks.

EBIKE SUBCOMMITTEE

NICOLE HUNT, DNR

The ebike subcommittee met in Sept. and Oct. The subcommittee reviewed a letter sent by the League of Michigan Bicyclist (LMB) which identified nine areas to address before moving a Land Use Order of the Director (LUOD) forward.

1. Include trial period in the LUOD.
2. Inclusive process accepting comments.
3. Working on educational messages, best practices, safety, and etiquette
4. Allocate resources, train state personnel, identify ADA compliance.
5. Apply same access standards to trails in state park system and forest resource division trail system.
6. Engage with disability rights establish a policy to including Class II
7. Measure trail use and prepare to invest in increased trail maintenance.
8. Establish data metrics and benchmarks.
9. Public meeting invite comments from Michigan biking organizations

The nine areas were reviewed by the subcommittee, and they identified where progress has already been made. Next, they focused on areas where room for development is still needed. The last meeting included discussion about trail signage, ways to collect data, and ways the department could create a portal to collect comments. Would like to have a solid response to each of the nine areas (listed above). Proposed timeline for the LUOD; in either December or January to have a discussion with Michigan State Parks Advisory Committee (MSPAC) to discuss the proposed LUOD and received comments, next will be to add the proposed LUOD to the February Natural Resource Commission (NRC) meeting for feedback and action. There is a lot to have in place prior to the Jan./Feb. meeting dates.

TRAIL PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

GREG KINSER, DNR

Greg reported the implementation action items are still hovering in the same place. The trails staff is working on ideas of how to gain additional support/resources.

2024 MEETINGS

COMING SOON

ROUND ROBIN/CLOSING COMMENTS

Neil Glazebrook has been focusing on the ebike subcommittee. Looking forward to the Trail Summit next weekend in St. Ignace and meeting/networking with board members. Neal reported that this year's LMB tour season has seen a decline in event registrations, as much as 50%. Vacant volunteer positions are not being backfilled and they are

experiencing challenges to get people to commit. The LMB decline in events affects their granting abilities and community support. Better Bicycling grant applications just opened.

Lori Hauswirth reported with the change of seasons, trail groups in her region are working hard to pull together volunteers.

Bob Hendrickson Iron Ore Heritage Trail is looking forward to submitting RFP's for a 5-mile extension in Chocolay Township, a nonmotorized corridor. This will be more of a trailhead destination.

John Bollman mentioned the Cedar River held its first annual River Day Fest. Grant proposals have been submitted for river maintenance in Ingham County Parks and Trails. MSU interns are working on application to designate the Red Cedar River as a PURE MI Water Trail.

Stephanie Swanberg appreciates the work the ebike subcommittee is doing. A lot of ebike discussions have taken place at the 2023 NAW meetings and she is looking forward to hearing the results from the 9 listed items that Nicole outlined earlier in this meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned 11:07 a.m.