



OFF-ROAD VEHICLE ADVISORY WORKGROUP (ORVAW)

Meeting Minutes

Location: Virtual meeting

Date: August 24, 2022

5-7 p.m.

Welcome – Roll Call

PRESENT FOR THE OFF-ROAD VEHICLE ADVISORY WORKGROUP:

- James Maike, Chair
- Keith Lynch, Vice Chair
- James Hunt
- Bob Meyers
- Mike Timm
- Jarrod Biebel
- Trevor Hoffer

PRESENT FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (DNR) STAFF

Tim Novak, Jessica Holley-Roehrs, Annalisa Centofanti, Nick Van Bloem, Greg Kinser, Scott Slavin, Paige Perry, Rob Katona, Jill Sell, Ron Yesney, Peter Costa, Andrea Stay, Jason Wicklund, Michael Hearn (LED), Kristen Thrall (USFS)

Others: Paul Mulder, Karen Middendorp, Karl Davenport, John Newman, Howard Campbell

Meeting minutes

ACTION ITEMS

Meeting was called to order at 5:02 p.m.

Bob Meyers made a motion to approve the May 4 minutes as is, Mike Timm seconded, with all in favor. Motion carried.

Keith Lynch requested to add \$3.1M increase in ORV trails funds for ORV maintenance and equipment. Anna Centofanti asked to strike out the Silver Lake Park update.

Keith Lynch made a motion to approve the August 24 agenda with modifications, James Hunt seconded, with all in favor. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Paul Mulder mentioned that next spring or fall, the invite still stands from Leota Township to host an in-person meeting for ORVAW.

BUSINESS ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

ADOPT-A-FOREST / ANDREA STAY INTRO

Andrea Stay, DNR, recently joined the Adopt-a-forest DNR team. Andrea is based in the Lansing area, with a background in Natural Resource Management degree and a Public Administration degree. Andrea spent 12 years working in conversation districts running local clean-up, tree planting opportunities, and water shed planning. Andrea started working for the State with the Department of Agriculture and eventually moving on to the DNR as a grant coordinator for Natural Resource Trust Fund. She has been in this role new role since June of this year and has been reaching out to meet with all the stakeholders. New for the Adopt-a-Forest program is the online database to report litter/garbage. The Survey 1-2-3 app for is for mobile devices and allows a person to pin an area for reporting. Also, over the last couple years a short-term worker (STW) was hired to perform ground truthing and site clean-up. The program depends on the people that use trails and state lands to report areas in need of clean-up.

Paul Mulder is working with Andrea on details for their next Earth Day clean-up in his area, which he is hoping to be bigger and better than the last one.

James Maike asked Andrea if there are any costs associated with the program. Andrea said not costs are implemented. However, donations are allowed, which can help fund special case situations.

ORV SUNSET BILL

James Maike reported there has been no movement on this bill. Karen Middendorp shared the written draft presented to legislation with the ORVAW committee members. Karen said she is looking for feedback from this committee. Karen feels this is ready to move forward but will hold off until she receives comments from this committee.

Karen mentioned snowmobile legislation had the same sunset language and removed the date. Jim asked Karen to email the draft again to the ORVAW committee members. Karen said simply, the ORV Sunset Bill draft proposes to remove the date.

ORV SAFETY EDUCATION CLASSES

Michael Hearn with DNR Law Enforcement Division (LED) presented analytics from ORV safety and education classes from the past couple years. Michael said class sizes have increased from the past couple years; with in-person increasing in size and a drop in the online class participation. New instructors have been added to the program.

Bob Meyers suggested the need for mandatory ORV education and would like to see this topic remain in the spotlight, developing a program similar to hunter's safety awareness and education. Bob said about 50% of the people he encounters on the ORV trails say they do not know the rules.

John Newman added that he recently participated in an ORV class in June and Michael Hearn and Lieutenant Wanless did a phenomenal job leading the class. John said he learned a lot from this class.

AFTERMARKET ORV LIGHTING

Michael Hearn said the topic of ORV aftermarket has been brought up in various discussion over the past couple years with staff in his division. Michael asked the ORVAW committee where their support level is for aftermarket lighting. The Michigan ORV Handbook or statute does not tell you what color lights are to be used for headlights or taillights. One issue that arises involves ORV use on county roadways, which need to conform to the specific laws on color lights for vehicles. Side-by-Sides are causing issues when entering the roadways after they leave an ORV trail system due to incorrect lighting. Michael suggested the handbook should incorporate language clearly outlining colors allowed. Michael asked to have this topic on the next ORVAW meeting agenda.

James Maike suggested for the next ORVAW meeting, to make a motion in support of modifying the Michigan ORV Handbook, adding language outlining allowable colors. Bob Meyers, as an ORVAW member, is second to support.

In responding to ORV trail accidents, Bob Meyers has encountered ORV trail users not stopping or pulling over to let him through due to the fact they did not think he was an official vehicle, they assumed his ORV vehicle was aftermarket LED lights. This definitely needs to be addressed and Bob hopes the ORVAW board will support this.

Jarrold Biebel asked if snowmobile trail users have light restrictions. Michael Hearn said yes because they operate on roadways. The snowmobile restrictions have been enforced for a long time.

Karen Middendorp added that snowmobile laws had to be changed with legislation.

\$3.1M INCREASE FUND ORV MAINTENANCE/EQUIPMENT

Keith Lynch asked if the DNR has any information to provide as he heard additional law enforcement and trail rangers are being utilizing these funds.

Tim Novak, DNR State Trails Coordinator, said significant hours will be added for rangers to be out on the trail system, these are trail rangers that are already in place. Law enforcement will be adding a certain number of patrol hours. We are still working on the project list, and it is not defined yet, we can plan to provide more information at the next ORVAW meeting.

UPDATES

USFS UPDATE

Kristen Thrall, USFS, said there has been a lot of trails use on the forest roads with the exception of Mio. Mio is seeing a decline in trail use. Big Snowmobile ATV Trail (H7) near Huron Shores is almost finished, with the help from DNR trail grants. Baldwin's southern tier is seeing a ton of damage on roads, we are hearing from snow clubs that they are concerned about maintaining the roads for snow season. Kristen has accepted a temporary assignment in Washington D.C., filling in as the Assistant Trails Manager. Andrew Kenyan, USFS out of Oscoda office, will fill in while she is gone.

NELP TRAIL SPECIALIST UPDATE

Greg Kinser, DNR, stated he is in the process of conducting interviews with a good candidate pool. Greg is optimistic there will be someone on board by the end of September to fill the Northeastern Lower Peninsula Trails Specialist.

N.O.H.V.C.C (NATIONAL OFF HIGHWAY VEHICLE CONSERVATION COUNCIL CONFERENCE)

Jessica Holley-Roehrs, DNR, said she received a scholarship to attend the National Off Highway Vehicle Conservation Conference (NOHVCC). Jessica said this conference brings together the best and the brightest of the off-highway vehicle communities, land managers, and enthusiast groups of all sorts. The groups get together and share industry information, problems, and successes. Information that Jessica brought back with her will be shared with stakeholders.

Bob Meyers said he attended the conference when it was in Grand Rapids and found it to be really rewarding and essential to the future of ORV riding. Bob mentioned the ORVAW committee should support attendance at this conference.

MISORVA MILLION UPDATE

Keith Lynch said MISORVA funds went out to clubs a couple weeks ago. Clubs posted on Facebook the equipment they received. These purchases will help a lot of clubs out and most of the clubs got the equipment they submitted a request for.

ORVAW COMMITTEE UPDATES

James Hunt asked the ORVAW committee for their support of 24" signs. James said a sign study he reviewed supported 24" signs for motorized trails, stating 18" signs should only be used for nonmotorized trails.

Paul Mulder said the Storm Damage Committee has developed a reimbursement form. Paul has asked Jessica Holley-Roehrs and Greg Kinser if there is any input from the DNR? Greg Kinser said the DNR appreciates the work that was done and are taking the form under advisement. Greg said a discussion will take place with Tim Novak, DNR, now that he is onboard as the State Trails Coordinator.

Paul Mulder said he is working with Scott Slavin, DNR, on the Avanza map program, dropping a pin, taking a picture, and downloading on Google Earth to build a map where the storm damage is located.

Q3 REGIONAL TRAILS STAFF REPORTS

(Written report provided to committee members)

2022 MEETINGS

(Nov. 9)

CLOSING/ROUND ROBIN

Bob Meyers said he is hearing from clubs that there is a need for support of ORV equipment purchases. Raising fees in the Sunset ORV legislation bill will appropriate more funds to the clubs that volunteer their time to maintain these trails and need equipment.

Paul Mulder suggested forming a subcommittee to discuss if snow tractors can be used for ORV use, adding this topic should be added to the November agenda?

Motion to adjourn was made by Trevor Hoffer and seconded by James Hunt, with all in favor. Motion carried. Meeting ended at 6:37 p.m.