



OFF-ROAD VEHICLE ADVISORY WORKGROUP (ORVAW)

Meeting Minutes

Location: Virtual meeting

Date: February 23, 2022

5-7 p.m.

Welcome – Roll Call

PRESENT FOR THE OFF-ROAD VEHICLE ADVISORY WORKGROUP:

- Curt Brower, Interim Chairperson
- James Hunt
- James Maike
- Bob Meyers
- Keith Lynch
- Mike Timm
- Jarrod Biebel

PRESENT FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (DEPARTMENT) STAFF

Kristen Bennett, Jessica Holley-Roehrs, Annalisa Centofanti, Scott Slavin, Nikki Van Bloem, Michael Hearn, Greg Kinser, Paige Perry, Rob Katona, Ron Yesney, Nicole Hunt, Jody Johnston, Jason Fleming, Kristen Thrall (USFS), Spring Rosales (USFS)

Others: Thomas Dunn, Paul Mulder, Karen Middendorp

Meeting minutes

ACTION ITEMS

Meeting was called to order at 5 p.m. by interim Chair, Curt Brower.

Curt Brower made a motion to take agenda items out of order, James Hunt seconded, with all in favor. Motion carried. Curt Brower asked to change the previous minutes date to October 27, 2021. Curt Brower added agenda items under Silver Lake, Trail Map and Equine Shoreline Ride. James Maike asked to move the "Committee Terms" to the first agenda item, followed by vote for chair and vice chair.

Curt Brower made a motion to approve meeting minutes from October 27, 2021. Thomas Dunn requested to change the minutes to reflect third page, first paragraph, from Craig Brunet to Ken Burton. Kristen Thrall requested to change page 6, USFS Update, from roads to trails. James Maike and James Hunt approved, with all in favor. Motion carried.

Curt Brower made a motion to approve the Feb. 23 agenda with changes. James Maike and Keith Lynch approved, with all in favor. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

PAUL MULDER

Supreme Court Order January 28, 2022 (see attached).

BUSINESS ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

COMMITTEE TERMS

Committee

Three committee members terms are expiring in March 2022

1. James Hunt
2. Curt Brower
3. Keith Lynch

Both James Hunt and Keith Lynch have elected to stay on the committee for an extended term, while Curt Brower has decided to step down. Curt Brower made a motion to keep James Hunt and Keith Lynch on the committee for an extended term, James Maike seconded the motion, with all in favor. Motion carried.

COMMITTEE VOTE FOR CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

Curt Brower asked committee members for their interest in serving as either the chair or vice chair.

- James Hunt – pass
- James Maike – chair
- Keith Lynch – vice chair
- Bob Meyers – pass
- Mike Timm – pass
- Jarrod Biebel – pass

Curt Brower made a motion to accept James Maike as the Chair and Keith Lynch as the Vice Chair. James Hunt seconded the motion, with all in favor. Motion carried.

STORM DAMAGE COMMITTEE – NEXT STEPS

Paul Mulder – (see report attached)

Paul Mulder submitted a report which outlines points, definitions, and recommendations from the Storm Damage Committee previously held meetings. There will be a final report submitted at the May Meeting. Jessica Holley-Roehrs, DNR, and Scott Slavin, DNR, acknowledge this is a large topic to cover and believe it is going in the right direction, but will take time to sort through. Curt Brower added the information provided by the Storm Damage Committee created a great foundation to build on and hopes to see solutions soon.

ORV GRANTS – PROPOSED CHANGES

Jessica Holley-Roehrs, DNR, presented an outline for proposed ORV trail improvement fund grant program advancement (see report attached). The project scope identifies committees have been formed to explore advancement and improvement opportunities in the coordination of the ORV TIP Grant program work and funding. Jessica is preparing a formal response to be presented to DNR administration for approval. Jessica hopes to see program advancement for FY2023. This project will not address any changes through legislation.

ALPHA SIGNAGE U.P. / DNR MARKETING AND OUTREACH

Jessica Holley-Roehrs, DNR, presented a draft version of an ad release for publication and advertisement of the new alpha sign system in the U.P. (see attached document). The ORV handbook has been updated to include the instruction for sign standards. Each grant sponsor will be provided written explanations for each sign and meaning. Curt Brower asked why the lower peninsula has not been considered in this campaign. Ron Yesney, DNR, said the alpha system was approved by ORVAW as a pilot project in the U.P. to see how it works. Thomas Dunn added some history of the pilot program, stating the U.P. and lower peninsula are 2 separate systems. There was contention between the U.P. and the lower peninsula when this pilot was first put in place, at the time the lower peninsula did not want it. Paul Mulder said the snow trail routes are names and the alpha number is created with either the first or second initial of the named trail. Paul feels these limit and confuses people, alpha trail numbers should start on the west end of U.P. and start in a numerical value, similar to the highways.

ORV LEGISLATION SUNSET INFORMATION

Thomas Dunn provided a document (see attached); Enrolled Senate Bill No. 552, also known as the Sunset Program. Every 5 years this bill will be reviewed and approved by legislation. As long as there are no changes requested, the process is smooth. If there are any changes requested, such as fee increases, then the process can be drawn-out. Thomas said if the DNR is considering any changes than open discussions need to take place now.

Point of Sale

Vendors point of sale fees were brought up by James Maike, wondering if they should be increased. Thomas Dunn said this would be part of a request for increased fees for the Senate Bill mentioned above. The committees overall consensus was not to address this topic, as it does not have overall value.

UPDATES

SILVER LAKE SAND DUNES

Traffic Flow Changes

Curt Brower said there has been discussions with Silver Lake state park staff regarding proposed changes to the ORV entrance and exit in order to change the flow and allow dune ready vehicles to make a right turn on the paved section to avoid congestion. DNR staff indicated they may be short staffed and cannot commit at this time. Jason Fleming, DNR, said worst case scenario is to try and see how it works, Jody Johnston, DNR, has talked to Jason and it sounds like this may move forward after approval is received from DNR administrators.

Groomer Magnet Grant Funds

Curt Brower reported that Silver Lake Association is working with Richard Kennedy, DNR, to discover if any funds can be allocated to this kind of equipment (groomer magnet). Curt mentioned EGLE has not provided a grooming permit for the season, and it is still in progress. Jason Fleming, DNR, said they are updating the permit details with EGLE since it has been a few years. Jason mentioned this is not an easy process and several edits have been made along the way.

Youth Education Training Course

Silver Lake Association is looking for onsite training programs this year targeting youth. Curt Brower asked if trainers need to be qualified. Corporal Michael Hearn, DNR, said potential instructors will need to be trained and be certified in order to hold classes. Corporal Hearn said the online class versus an in-person class attendance numbers are half and half; it seems most parents do want the kids to obtain certification in person. Curt has some people that are interested in attending the academy to become an instructor and will reach out to Corporal Hearn for more information.

Proposed New Silver Lake Trail

James Hunt has mapped out a route on 20 for dual sport use (map attached). Jessica Holley-Roehrs, DNR, provided a presentation outlining steps to follow when proposing a new trail (see attached). It is noted that the proposed trail mapped goes through a State Game Area.

Equine Shoreline Fall Ride 2022

Curt Brower, on behalf of the Silver Lake Association, supports the equine shoreline ride in the fall, off-season, at the Silver Lake Sand Dunes.

MISORVA MILLION UPDATE

Karen Middendorp opened the discussion by saying the funds are in motion and a committee board has been formed. Bob Meyers and Keith Lynch are on the board and Keith Lynch will be providing updates going forward. Keith Lynch said the program is going to be split 50/50 (ORV and snow). Applicants do need to be a trail sponsor through the DNR. The application deadline is April 30, 2022. Grants may be awarded on a point system and the board has asked clubs to think about their needs. This fund will not provide for any expenses that are already covered or funded by the

current DNR grant program. Clubs that cover both snow and ORV trails can apply for both funds. All the money needs to be allocated by 2023. A letter will be sent to all the DNR trail sponsor clubs soon. Michael Timm asked does the club retain ownership if a club buys equipment with these funds if they default. Keith replied saying most clubs are 501(3)c. In this scenario, if the club defaults, they will be required to turn equipment over to another nonprofit. Additionally, Keith wanted to make it clear this is not a reimbursement process, these funds are for proposed needs.

ORVAW COMMITTEE UPDATES

USFS UPDATE

Kristen Thrall, USFS, reported they are still under some leadership changes, and they have a new acting forest supervisor. Have recently held statewide coordination meetings discussing trail signage and communicating overall messaging across all agencies within the State. Alcona ATV trail and snow trail 966 (h7) is temporary closed will be worked on through DNR grants. Paul Mulder mentioned the Storm Damage committee does not have representation from the federal side and asked how this can happen. Kristen said this is a great idea. Paul asked Scott Slavin to reach out to Kristen to coordinate the connection. Spring Rosales, USFS, reported the Ottawa National Forest in 2017-2018 surveyed the public and they received a tremendous amount of feedback asking for more connections and loop opportunities on opening roads for ATV use. A decision was made to look at several roads to do this on and a safety assessment was performed. As a result, the Ottawa National Forest is getting ready to publish a new map this year with more ATV roads added. Also, the USFS has applied for funds for reconstruction on roads that need work before adding proposed ATV use. There are multiple use trails in Ottawa National Forest that are reaching the end of life. The USFS is coordinating with MDNR and MI Trail to improve design standards and replace bridges. A wider bridge width expansion has been agreed upon and will accommodate construction equipment which helps aid in storm damage clean-up.

Q4 REGIONAL TRAILS STAFF REPORTS

(see attached written report)

2022 MEETINGS

(May 4; Aug. 24; Nov. 9)

CLOSING/ROUND ROBIN

James Maike would like copy of Michigan Trails Advisory Council by-laws sent to the ORVAW committee. James also extends his thanks and appreciation to Curt Brower for all the time he served on the ORVAW and stepping into the interim Chair.

Paul Mulder would like to extend an invitation to the ORVAW committee to hold a meeting in the Leota area. His group can host and possibly provide a ride.

Bob Meyers extends his thanks to Curt Brower for his time and mentorship.

ORVAW meeting
Feb. 23, 2022

James Maike made a motion to adjourn the meeting. James Hunt seconded, with all in favor. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.