



MICHIGAN TRAILS ADVISORY COUNCIL (MTAC)

Meeting Minutes

Grayling Township Hall

Dec. 10, 2024

1 – 4:30 p.m.

Welcome – Roll Call

PRESENT FOR THE MICHIGAN TRAILS ADVISORY COUNCIL

- Brian Beauchamp, Chairperson
- Kenneth Hopper, Vice Chairperson (virtual)
- Michael Maves (absent)
- Mark Losey
- Ryan Laporte (virtual)
- Jason Aric Jones
- Richard Williamson
- Jenny Cook
- Amy Scharmen-Burgdolf
- Karen Middendorp
- Tavon Brooks (virtual)

PRESENT FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (DNR) STAFF

Tim Novak, Annalisa Centofanti, Greg Kinser, Jessica Roehrs, Sage Hegdal, David Merk, Scott Slavin, Peter Costa, Chris Stark, Ron Yesney, Paige Perry, Heather Durocher, Lee Maynard, Jill Sell, Nicole Hunt, Jilanne Egleston, Cody Stevens, Matt Torreano

Meeting minutes

Meeting called to order at 1:01 p.m. by MTAC Chairperson, Brian Beauchamp.

ACTION ITEMS

Motion was made to approve the Sept. 24, 2024 draft meeting minutes by Karen Middendorp and seconded by Richard Williamson, with all in favor. Motion carried.

Motion was made to approve the Dec. 10, 2024 agenda by Jason Aric Jones and seconded by Jenny Cook, with all in favor. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Grant Clarkson/Matt Emeott – Michigan Backcountry Alliance

(see attached presentation)

Mr. Clarkson and Mr. Enya are outdoor recreation advocates and care about cultivating communities of land stewards dedicated for backcountry skiing. This is a new venture which started last year and is a nonprofit with approximately 30 members. The goal is to provide safe and appropriate backcountry ski runs incorporating safety and education. Backcountry skiing has increased since COVID. Michigan Backcountry Alliance has partnered with several companies that support this concept.

Dr. Tayo Moss – Michigan Health Endowment Fund

The Michigan Health Endowment Fund offers grants (Health Fund) to communities for developing master healthy living plans. More often, communities struggle to fund the development of a master plan, and the Health Fund can support planning initiatives. Grants are given for 2-years with a possible 3-year extension. A total of \$500K can be granted per recipient. More information can be found at this link: <https://mihealthfund.org/addressing-the-built-environment>

Ronald Grigg – Vehicle Registrations Trail Permits

Mr. Grigg is concerned with ORV's damaging snowmobiles trails. He is suggesting that the DNR reevaluate trail usage and require off-road stickers for UTV's and full-size vehicles. Mr. Grigg pointed out that snowmobiles require registrations and are licensed. ORV's do not have a system in place, and Mr. Grigg would like to see the same requirements for snowmobiles in place for ORV's and ebikes.

BUSINESS ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

RTP FY26 PROJECT LIST

Tim Novak, DNR

(see attached presentation)

Next Step: MTAC vote for approval at the 2025 Q1 meeting (March 25).

2024 TRAILS SUMMIT SURVEY RESULTS

Anna Centofanti, DNR

(see attached presentation)

Brian Beauchamp suggested having a third-party facilitator lead the 2025 Trail Summit and asked the DNR to explore this idea. Additionally, Brian mentioned the Strategic Trails Plan is cresting the 5-year mark and would like a running agenda item to check in on progress.

TRAILS SUMMIT BY-LAWS

Tim Novak, DNR

(see attached draft)

By-law drafts have been provided to all trail workgroups and discussed at the Q4 board meetings. Snow, ORV, and Nonmotorized are somewhat identical other than the structure of the members. Both MTAC and ETS are a bit different due to their statute. The DNR is not opposed to MTAC and ETS soliciting legislation changes.

Karen Middendorp expressed dissatisfaction that the draft ORV by-laws have been changed since the Q4 ORVAW meeting and is now excluding specific MISORVA representation, replacing with generalized ORV club representation. Tim Novak stated that was an error and the ORV draft by-laws should not have had the MISORVA representation.

Jenny Cook asked to consider adding equine representation to the NAW member structure by-laws.

Add committee recommendation for MTAC appointment to by-laws.

Brian Beauchamp asked board members to send comments/feedback directly to Tim Novak.

Next Step: The draft by-laws will be reintroduced at the Q1 MTAC meeting (March 25) for adoption after all the trail workgroups have approved their own by-laws.

UPDATES

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Equine Trails Subcommittee (ETS)

Jenny Cook

Report attached.

Nonmotorized Advisory Workgroup (NAW)

Jason Aric Jones

Jason Aric Jones presented a Nonmotorized Funding Resolution, outlining a percentage of funding going towards natural surface trails. The resolution was originally presented to MTAC at the Q3

meeting but was sent back to NAW for review and comment. The NAW board members agreed to table the motion pending upcoming changes with the NAW structure. One proposed change will create a Natural Surface Trails Subcommittee under the new NAW by-laws.

The NAW board members participated in a robust dialogue around the draft by-laws, most importantly increasing the board member from 9 to 11 members, covering a broader range of trail users.

Lastly, the DNR regional Trail Specialists provided updates on projects.

Snowmobile Advisory Workgroup (SAW)

Karen Middendorp

Report attached.

Don Britton, SAW Chair, has resigned. Karen Middendorp is now Chair and Chad VanBennekom was voted in for vice chair. Chad will also replace Don's seat on the Snow Equipment Subcommittee. Sponsors are still reporting issues with the Verizon GPS tracking. Free snowmobile weekend is Jan. 17-19. The DNR provided feedback regarding a proposed Land Use Order (LUOD) to define the width for snowmobiles and recommended a legislative initiative rather than a LUOD.

Off-Road Vehicle Advisory Workgroup (ORVAW)

Bob Meyers

Report attached.

The ORV Equipment Subcommittee sent a survey to the sponsors and is reviewing the data. The focus for the survey is to make equipment recommendations to the DNR for purchases. Michael Maves will not be seeking reappointment to MTAC and ORVAW. The ORVAW board members recommend that Bob Meyers apply for the MTAC position.

Saw Equipment Workgroup

Karl Davenport

The hot topic is using tracked equipment in the summer months. Hoping for a good snow season.

Nonmotorized Funding & Maintenance Workgroup

Report attached.

Nonmotorized Signage Workgroup

The DNR is discussing and reviewing signage available for trail etiquette and the processes. Trail advisory board members are involved in the discussions and have contributed great feedback with action items. Internally trails staff is attending monthly parks and recreation signage meetings with the opportunity to present these ideas.

U.S. FOREST SERVICE (USFS)

Nick Edington, USFS

Still in a holding pattern until the budget is finalized and new administration takes over.

2025 MEETINGS

- MARCH 25 (TBD)
- MAY 14 (RAM CENTER)
- SEPT. 23 (TBD)
- DEC. 16 (TBD)

INFORMATIONAL

Water Trails Subcommittee Proposal

John Bollman/NAW – *(see attached)*

MTAC Appointments Expiring

- Mark Losey (Jan. 2025)
- Mike Maves (Jan. 2025)
- Jason Aric Jones (Jan. 2025)
- Karen Middendorp (Jan. 2025)
- Amy Scharmen-Burgdolf (Jan. 2025)

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned 4:10 p.m.



Michigan Backcountry Alliance

ADVOCATES FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION

Our Purpose: To create a community of human powered backcountry users that prioritize safety, education, and care for the wild places we all love and enjoy – **earn your turns!**

Our Goal: is to create and maintain gladed, natural ski runs that allow for recreation, but do not impact the overall quality of the forest. **Leave no trace except tracks!**

Let's Build Something



**Better land management
and stewardship.**



**Glades that will be safe and
routes/trails that are marked.**



**Increase winter
traffic/commerce.**

The Issues Raised

Runs are too thick with overgrowth, deadfall, and need to be maintained.

Need for clear parking/access.

Need to educate safety and a healthy stewardship of our beautiful lands.



The Solution

Foster the backcountry movement in MI!

Facilitate the largest growing part of the ski industry to Michigan's wild outside spaces.

Create a partnership/program with local, state and private land managers.

Help bring new users, commerce, and stronger community throughout Michigan.





The Time Is Now

Already a proven concept in other states.

This is the fastest growing sector in the ski/snowboard industry.

Existing passionate community that's growing right here in Michigan.

The Future Of Backcountry Access In Michigan



Schedule an annual event with the community

Partner with a sponsor/athlete/resort

Work with state and local agencies

Good Humans

Target Market



- Outdoor enthusiast who enjoy Michigan's winter beauty and exploring new places.

- Skiers and Snowboarders that are seeking alternative experiences from lift access and resort riding

- People looking for more freedom and opportunity within the ski industry.

Leading the way



Matt Emeott

President

Josh Reyes

VP



Leading the way



Marc Collier

Safety / Risk Control

Kirk Ranney

Secretary



Leading the way



Grant Clarkson

Ambassador/Adviser

Eric Rademacher

Communications Adviser



John Curtis

Treasurer





High fives & heck yeahs.

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MBA
MICHIGAN
BACKCOUNTRY
ALLIANCE

Trails District	Implementation	Phase	Trail Name	Designated Use	Other Authorized Use	E-Bikes Allowed	Project Name	Project Description	Estimated Cost	Project Designation	% of Funding
SELP	MDOT CONSULTANT	CON	Paint Creek Trail	Hike, Bike		Yes	Paint Creek Trail Connector Bridge	New bridge to connect Bald Mountain Recreation Area to the Paint Creek Trail/Iron Belle Trail.	\$ 400,000	Diversified	4%
NWLP	MDOT CONSULTANT	PE	Shore to Shore Trail	Equestrian	Hiking	No	Manistee River Bridge	Complete bridge replacement with new abutments and approach on each end.	\$ 2,000,000	Non-motorized	18%
SWLP	MDOT CONSULTANT	CON	CIS Trail	Hike, Bike		Yes	CIS Trail Repair and Resurfacing	Resurfacing of the entirety of the trail and replacements of 4 bridges.	\$ 3,000,000	Diversified	26%
NCLP	MDOT CONSULTANT	CON	High Country Pathway	Hike, Bike		No	Black River Bridge Replacement	Complete bridge replacement with new abutments and approach on each end. Engineering and design have been completed.	\$ 500,000	Non-motorized	4%
NCLP	MDOT CONSULTANT	PE	High Country Pathway	Hike, Bike		No	Pigeon River Bridge Replacement	Design, bid, and construction of a complete bridge replacement with new abutments and approach.	\$ 750,000	Non-motorized	7%
NCLP	MDOT CONSULTANT	PE	Pickere Lake Pathway	Hike, Bike		No	Pickere Lake Bridge Design and Build	Design, bid, and construction of a complete bridge replacement with new abutments and approach.	\$ 1,000,000	Non-motorized	9%
NELP	MDOT CONSULTANT	PE	Au Sable River Trail	Hike		No	Au Sable River Trail Bridge Designs	Design of several pedestrian only bridges on the trail that need replacement.	\$ 500,000	Non-motorized	4%
CUP	MDOT CONSULTANT	CON	Days River Pathway	Mountain Bike	Hiking, XC Ski, Snowshoe	Yes	Days River Pathway	Approximately 10 miles of single track trail construction designed for mountain bike use.	\$ 750,000	Diversified	7%
CUP	MDOT CONSULTANT	CON	Gene's Pond Pathway	Hike, Bike		Yes	Gene's Pond Pathway Development	Construction of 1.75 mile accessible pathway with scenic overlooks adjacent to state forest campground located near Ralph in Dickinson County.	\$ 750,000	Diversified	7%
WUP	MDOT CONSULTANT	PE	Bergland to Sidnaw Rail Trail	Multi: Hike, Bike, Equestrian, ORV, Snow		Yes	Agate Bridge	Bridge repair and decking replacement.	\$ 1,250,000	Motorized	11%
CUP	MDOT CONSULTANT	PE	Roger's City Spur of the NEST	Hike, Bike, Equestrian	Snowmobile	Yes	Swan River Bridge	Bridge repair and decking replacement.	\$ 500,000	Diversified	4%

TOTAL									\$ 11,400,000		
Non-Motorized % Total (30%)									42%	\$ 4,750,000	
Motorized % Total (30%)									11%	\$ 1,250,000	
Diversified % Total (40%)									47%	\$ 5,400,000	



TRAILS ADVISORY
BOARD
2024 SUMMIT MEETING

Survey Summary

Lansing, Michigan

Sept. 25-26, 2024

TRAILS ADVISORY BOARD SUMMIT 2024 / LANSING MI

AGENDA

MEETING LOCATION:
DELTA TOWNSHIP HALL
7710 W. SAGINAW HWY.
LANSING, MI 48917

WEDNESDAY SEPT. 25

8:30AM Introductions
9:00AM Mission and Goals Introduction
DNR Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan Review
Parks and Recreation Division Strategic Plan Review
10-Year Trails Plan Review
9:30AM MTAC Mission & Goal Work
10:15AM Subcommittee Breakout Mission & Goal Work
11:30AM Bylaw Introduction
MSPAC Review
Belle Isle Park Advisory Committee Review
Waterways Commission Review

NOON *Lunch (Sultan's Express)*

1:00PM Bylaw Group Discussion & Outline Work
2:00PM Large Group Discussion
Trail Needs & Issues
Maintenance Reporting Process
Connecting Trail User Groups
User Education & Trail Etiquette
4:00PM Break – Activity Preparation

4:30 *Group Dinner One North Kitchen & Bar – 5001 W. Saginaw Hwy.*

Wed Activity After Dinner

- Horseback Ride – Jenny Cook
- Bike Ride – Neal Glazebrook
- Hike – Tim Novak

THURSDAY SEPT. 26

8:30AM DNR Finance Review
9:00AM DNR Trails Survey Results Summary
9:30AM TAP Program Overview
10:30AM MTAC Restructure Update, Discussion, and Action Items
11:30AM Departing Remarks

NOON *Dismissal*

2022-2032 Trails Plan

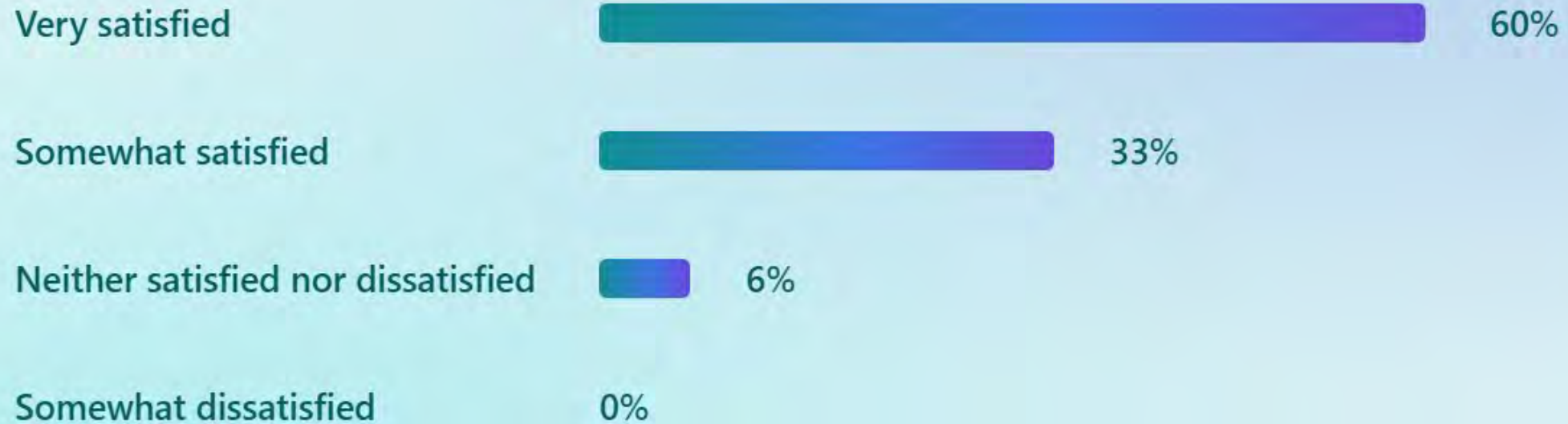


Mike Smith - TAP Manager

www.Michigan.gov/TAP
smithm13@michigan.gov

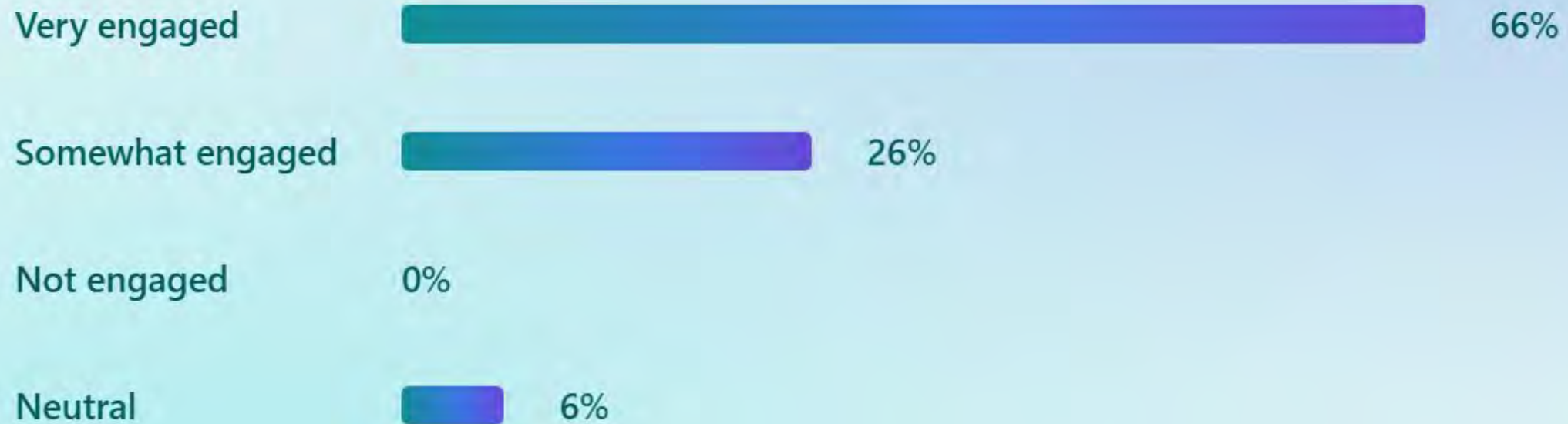
30 responses submitted

On a scale how satisfied were you with the overall meeting experience.



30 responses submitted

How engaged did you feel throughout the meeting?



30 responses submitted

Did you feel there were ample opportunities for participation and interaction?

100%

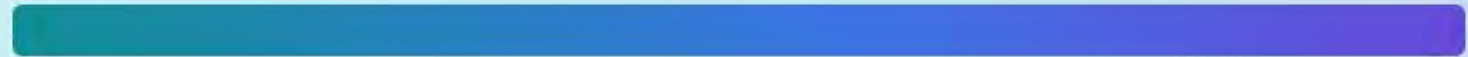
Yes

A horizontal bar chart with a blue-to-purple gradient. The bar is filled to the 100% mark, representing the percentage of 'Yes' responses. The text '100%' is centered on the bar, and 'Yes' is centered below it.

30 responses submitted

Were the key messages and objectives clear and well communicated?

Yes



96%

No



3%

30 responses submitted

How would you rate the overall effectiveness of the meeting in achieving its intended outcomes?

4.27



0%



0%



13%



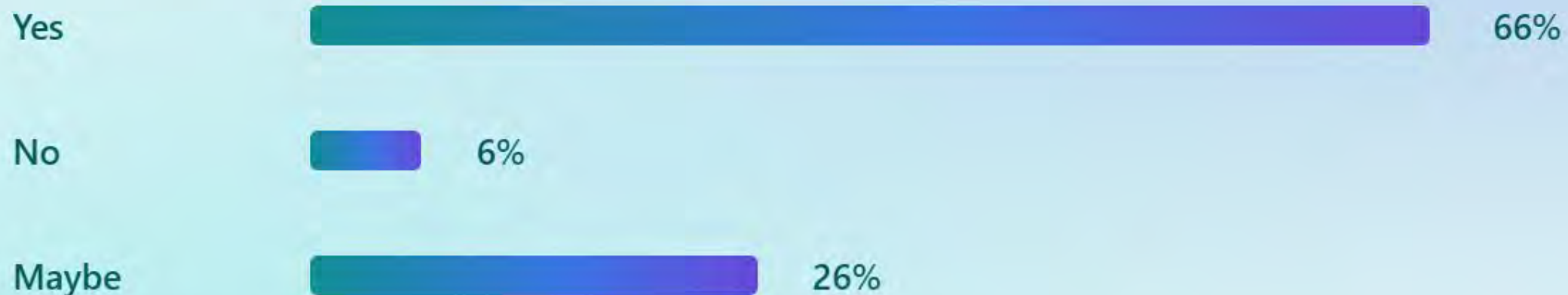
46%



40%

30 responses submitted

Did the meeting provide actionable insights or solutions to the challenges discussed?



Were there any aspects of the meeting environment that positively or negatively influenced your engagement?

I enjoyed the opportunity to interact with other members of the advisory committees. I also enjoyed the opportunity to do something new--ride a horse.

MDNR organizers actively engaged and requested input from participants, which was good.

A lot of time was dedicated to presentations. I learned a lot of new information but some of that content could have been shared ahead of the meeting to allow more time for discussion.

It would be good to be able to spend more time in our sub-committees. I also felt last year's summit offered more time for cross interaction with other sub-committee members, but feel I missed out on some of that by retiring early after the group activities and I didn't attend the social time in the evening.

Felt like you were able to have an open conversation.

Yes, I'd say that the board as a whole is starting to understand better the needs of all the different rider groups. In saying that I believe we still have some ground to cover with finding solutions to funding on behalf of all the different biker groups as well as equine riders. Although there has been a great deal of discussion, we still lack the mechanism to require a registration/ head/ bridal fee's that could support those groups who are not currently funded.

Appreciated the well-run meeting

How can future meetings better support your service and define board expectations.

If the Department and MTAC can continue to build the trust and understanding from both sides as we are now, I believe we can overcome the challenges previously seen with other boards. We have made in my opinion significant progress this year in our meetings to further this objective. Additional work will be needed but I believe that with this team being focused on how to better communicate needs and the complexities of the wide range of different user groups to the department we will make vast improvements.

Provide opportunities for each trail user group to share their celebrations and struggles to gain new perspectives and spark ideas of how help Michigan to be "The Trails State" for the most trails and the BEST trails.

More break out sessions with clear, defined goals that have been shared prior to the summit. Share preparatory documents/goals/objectives to help get this process started. This meeting did require the discussion we had, but we may be able to focus on more brainstorming sessions at the future summits.

Discuss individual members expectations - what would you like to see accomplished...

Possibly have the subcommittee meetings also so cross attendance by other committee members can occur.

Continue to establish clear goals and anticipated outcomes. Provide a synopsis of action steps at the end of each meeting or summit.

Please share areas to improve and any other thoughts you have about your meeting experience.

Longer breaks which provide time for good interaction between the user groups and staff. There is always good conversations and problems solved during these times. It also provides time for relationship building. Breakout sessions with staff intermixed.

I feel that this is an important gathering for the Advisory groups and DNR Trails staff. I've heard many positive comments and seen tangible results happening from our interaction. These special meetings help them feel heard - above and beyond just the quarterly meetings. Good stuff!

I have nothing but good things to say about the summit. It is a great idea. However, it can be made even better. I would: 1. Include a timeslot for the workgroups/subcommittees to hold one of their quarterly meetings at the summit. Take advantage of the fact that you have all of the groups together in one place and have the workgroups address the following: a. What recommendations does the workgroup have for improving the statewide trails network? b. What are the impediments to improving the statewide trails network? c. What are the biggest concerns? d. How can the workgroup provide assistance to MTAC or DNR in managing the statewide trails network? Have a session to discuss the responses from the workgroups. 2. Have a session for DNR to report: a. How it is doing in implementing the statewide trails plan? b. What are the impediments to implementing the statewide trails plan? c. What changes does the DNR recommend for improvements to the statewide trails plan? d. How does DNR view its role in marketing trails in the state? e. How does the DNR view its role in supporting non-state-owned trails that are part of the statewide trails network? f. How can the advisory groups assist DNR in carrying out its mission with regard to trails? g. For Michigan to be the "Trails State," do we have sufficient funding? If we do not have sufficient funding, what is the shortfall and how does that shortfall affect particular trail types. 3. Consider expanding the summit to include interest groups for part of the summit. 4. Identify subjects that affect all workgroups to gather input. For example, the Pure Michigan Trails program is a terrific idea that, in my opinion, is underutilized as a tool to promote the best Michigan Trails and provide trail users with valuable information. Having all groups provide input on improvements would be very beneficial. There are other topics affecting all workgroups, as well, and the summit is a great opportunity to brainstorm.

What is your ideal time of week and/or time of day for future trail summit meetings.

**MID-WEEK AND
WEEKDAYS ARE THE
MAJORITY PREFERENCE**



BYLAWS OF THE MICHIGAN TRAILS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this organization shall be the Michigan Trails Advisory Committee (MTAC), herein referred to as “The Committee.”

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

The purpose of this Committee is to:

- Advise and make recommendations to the Trails Section of the Parks & Recreation Division, the Chief of the Parks and Recreation Division of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the Director of the DNR on state-designated trail development, management, stewardship, funding, and planning issues.
- Seek the development of a broad variety of programs, facilities, and services for citizens utilizing state-designated trails.
- Inform and educate the public about the importance of, and need for, Michigan’s trails.
- Strive to involve citizens in the planning and development of Michigan’s trails.
- Advise on financial planning and pursue adequate budget support for Michigan’s trails.
- Evaluate the state’s trail programs, including their facilities, services, and relationships, periodically to ensure that the committee’s goals and objectives are being achieved.

ARTICLE III - COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: Composition

The Committee shall consist of 11 individuals appointed by the Governor pursuant of MCL 324.72110.

Makeup:

11-member committee

- At least 5 members of the advisory council shall be an owner of an ORV licensed as required under section 81116 or an owner of a snowmobile registered under section 82105.
- At least 3 members of the advisory council shall be owners of a snowmobile registered under section 82105.
- At least 1 member of the advisory council shall possess experience as an instructor in a snowmobile safety education and training program or an ORV safety education course.
- At least 2 members of the advisory council shall be residents of the Upper Peninsula of this state.
- At least 2 members of the advisory council shall be members of the equine trailways subcommittee created in section 72110a.

The members of the Committee should consist of a broad geographic representation of the state and a diverse representation of the populace.

Section 2: Compensation

Members shall serve without pay. Members of the committee may be reimbursed for their actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their official duties as members of the committee pursuant to established guidelines.

Section 3: Terms

Committee members shall serve a term of four years, unless otherwise noted in their appointment letter, as directed by the Director of the DNR.

ARTICLE IV - OFFICERS

Section 1: Title and Number

The appointed officer of the Committee shall be the Chair, as appointed by the Governor. The elective officer of the Committee shall be a Vice-Chairperson.

Section 2: Election

The Vice-Chair shall be appointed by a majority vote of the Committee. They will remain for the duration of their term, until they willingly step down, or until a majority vote of the Committee for removal occurs. If the officer is reappointed to the Committee by the Governor after the expiration of their term, they will also need to be reappointed to the officer position by a majority vote of the Committee.

Section 3: Chairperson

The Chairperson shall preside at meetings of the Committee, appoint sub-committees, and perform all duties generally pertaining to the office of the Chairperson.

Section 4: Vice-Chairperson

The Vice-Chairperson shall perform the duties of the Chairperson in their absence.

Section 5: Vacancy

The Governor will select a member to fill a committee vacancy. A person so appointed shall serve for the remainder of the term or until otherwise noted in their appointment letter.

ARTICLE V – MEETINGS

Section 1: Number

The Committee shall meet a minimum of four times per year that coincide, if possible, with regularly scheduled NRC meetings and other trail advisory committee meetings.

Section 2: Special Meetings

Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson with at least 48-hours' notice.

Section 3: Quorum

A majority of the appointed members of the Committee at the time of the meeting constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at a meeting of the Committee. Vacancies shall not impact the Committee's ability to transact business.

Section 4: Policy Position

All proposed policy positions shall be sent to the Committee members at least one week in advance of the next scheduled meeting. Electronic mailings are acceptable.

Section 5: Emergency Resolutions

The adoption of emergency resolutions - those not sent out one week prior to a scheduled meeting shall require the approval of three-fourths of those constituting a quorum.

Section 6: Official Records

The official records of the Committee shall be kept by and at the offices of the Department of Natural Resources. A writing prepared, owned, used in the possession of or retained by the committee in the performance of an official function is subject to the Freedom of Information Act, 1976 PA 442, MCL 15.231 to 15.246.

Section 7: Notice

Notice of all meetings of the Committee shall follow the notification procedures consistent with those of the Natural Resources Commission. Minutes of the previous meeting shall be submitted to the Committee members prior to the next meeting.

Section 8: Open Meetings

The business that the committee may perform shall be conducted at a public meeting held in compliance with the open meetings act, 1976 PA 267, MCL 15.261 to 15.275.

Section 9: Conduct

Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the Committee, except as provided in the adopted bylaws.

ARTICLE VI - REMOVAL OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Section 1: Removal

The Committee or the DNR may make recommendation of removal to the Governor for a member of the Committee due to incompetence, dereliction of duty, malfeasance, misfeasance, or nonfeasance in office, or any other good cause. Removal may occur upon a majority vote of the members or under the direction of the Director of the DNR or the Parks & Recreation Division Chief.

Section 2: Non-Attendance at Meetings

An individual shall be removed from the Committee if he or she does not attend three consecutive meetings of the Committee.

ARTICLE VII - AMENDMENTS

These Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the Committee at a meeting at which a quorum is present, provided that the proposed amendment is circulated to the members at least ten days in advance of the regular or special meetings at which the members are to vote.

Special thanks to Jenny Cook for her assistance with this article and the Shoreline Historical Club at \$1.50.

Shoreline Horseback Riding Season **article was featured** on the front page of **The Oceana Echo** on December 6, 2024. This paper is delivered to 14,000 mailboxes throughout Oceana County. We appreciate the warm welcome in Oceana County and are happy to hear about the positive economic impact that equestrians bring to the area.

https://issuu.com/theoceanaecho/docs/oceana_echo_-_december_6_2024?fr=sYWM1ZDY0Mzk4MDY

Equestrians appreciated the **DNR Trail Summit** in September where we could share ideas and communicate with other trail user groups. There were several DNR managers and other trail user group representatives who enjoyed a horseback trail ride at Sundance Riding Stables. These experiences provide valuable insight of the pleasure, therapy, and vulnerable aspects of operating a live, prey animal along the trails.



Public Comment was offered-

Concerns about recent trends: Local snow clubs are seeing county road commissions deny road access permits. Joe would like to see the DNR participate in requests for access if the club meets with resistance.

Paul Anderson/Joe Bartlett

Mr. Bartlett and Mr. Anderson discussed the trends in using snow-rolling equipment.

Karl Davenport

Mr. Davenport pointed out that Pinney Bridge has not been on the SAW agenda over the last few meetings

A motion was made to keep updates on Pinney Bridge on the agenda, which was supported.

The motion passed to support Snow LUOD for state parks, as written, which had been previously submitted.

SNOWMOBILE LUOD MACHINE WIDTHS

Nicole Hunt, DNR, continues to pursue a LUOD to define an over-snow vehicle further as the larger Sherp machines become more in focus and used on trails.

~A snowmobile, including a historic snowmobile, as those terms are defined in Part 821 of PA 451 of 1994, that exceeds 48 inches between the centers of the spindles shall not operate on any lands open to snowmobile use.

The proposed LUOD is for the width of a snowmobile, Nicole suggests proposing along with State Park LUOD at the same time as the state parks, but as separate LUOD.

DNR staff is waiting on guidance from the AG's office for the prevailing wage mandate.

~Clubs are receiving feedback from contractors that they are not bidding on projects due to the requirement to sign the prevailing wage form. Pending the outcome, this may stifle the Snow Program advancements and repairs.

No update yet on the Registration sticker size for snowmobiles

PERMANENT TRAIL EASEMENTS - Longyear Company in Marquette, Michigan, has expressed an interest in selling easements on their property to the DNR. Longyear has asked the DNR to move snow trails due to the proposed residential development. The costs for the DNR to develop new trails will be challenging due to land issues, crossings, and private properties. Longyear is working with DNR staff on about 35 miles of trail.

SNOW EQUIPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE -MACHINE HORSEPOWER LIMITATIONS

Three groomers and six drags were purchased this year. The snow equipment subcommittee has been discussing renting versus purchasing grooming machines for some locations.

Karl Davenport stated the equipment costs over the last 3 years has increased by almost 50%. Questions asked were: Are we purchasing more robust equipment than is needed? Do we need a standard equipment list? Part of the issue is extra grooming due to the ORV traffic on the snow trails. Is it time to return to restricted grooming schedules? It has been noticed that some grooming machines have been active in the off-season. Chad VanBennekomp recommended an annual inspection of the equipment.

CARMEUSE/ROGERS CITY SPUR

DNR staff is continuing to meet regularly with Carmeuse staff to formalize an agreement.

We will keep the topic on the agenda for further updates.

MINERS CASTLE The Department has responded to the Alger County Road Commission letter, letting them know the Department is not in support of funding the road and that the road commission's offer is not acceptable. Alger County had not yet responded.

VERIZON FLEET MANAGMENT

DNR field unit contacts have been working with Verizon to get GPS trackers installed on machines. Snow clubs still have concerns over the battery drainage.

The snow staff transition is moving forward smoothly. Some areas are increasing staff. Expect the full transition is still on schedule for October 2024.

Don Britton will be resigning as Chair of the SAW committee and his position on the Equipment Sub Committee at the end of 2024 and proposed the nomination of a new chair and vice chair. Chad VanBennekorn volunteered to serve as chair or vice chair. Karen Middendorp was nominated by Jim Kelts for chair.

Non-Motorized Maintenance and Funding Subcommittee Report

MTAC meeting Q4 12/5/2024 – Amy Scharmen-Burgdolf

This subcommittee has been formed to tackle the maintenance and funding issues we have concerning our unimproved surface, non-linear, non-motorized trails in Michigan.

The direction of this subcommittee:

- Local level maintenance needs and efforts – A survey have been created to distribute to unit supervisors and completed in cooperation between DNR, supervisors, staff and volunteers to access the needs on their trails, to find out who is doing the work, the training they have had and to gather their thoughts on how and by who they feel the trails should be maintained.
- Trail repair/re-route needs – discussion of the collection of all the needed improvements data
- Sustainable funding for non-motorized trail – discussion of possible funding sources such as Rec Passport, Non-motorized tag, RTP funding, etc.

Local level efforts will be identifying an efficient and consistent process by which to maintain our non-motorized trails in cooperation between volunteers and DNR. The trail repair and re-route needs will include creating a process by which to identify and use best practice for the larger scale improvements that are needed for the future sustainability of our trails. And efforts will be made to identify and secures sustainable funding sources for our non-motorized trails.

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.