

MEETING NOTES
CITIZENS COMMITTEE FOR MICHIGAN STATE PARKS (CCMSP)
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
Stevens T. Mason Building
6th Floor - East Conference Room
Lansing, Michigan
Wednesday, March 9, 2005

CCMSP MEMBERS PRESENT

Betsy Clark
Sandra Clark
Tom Ferguson
Christopher Graham
Robert Hoffmeyer
Murdock Jemerson
Mike McDonald
Charles Nelson
Mary Pitcher
Bill Rose
Gary Soukup
Todd Scott
Janet Howard Washington
Duncan Wyeth

CCMSP MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Tom Bailey
Jim Hendricks
Kathy Lewand
Sam Washington

CCMSP EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT

Donna Stine

CCMSP EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Keith Charters
Curtis Hertel

CCMSP MEMBERS ABSENT

Tom Bailey, Keith Charters, Curtis Hertel, Robert Hoffmeyer, Sam Washington

**DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (DNR)/
PARKS & RECREATION DIVISION (PRD) STAFF**

Ron Olson, Chief
Sandy Simpson, Executive Secretary
Vicki Anthes, Chief of the Planning Section
George Cameron, Chief of Field Operations
Tony Herek, Chief of the Finance and Administration Section
Harold Herta, Chief of the Resource Management Section
Lowen Schuett, Assistant Chief

DNR/EXECUTIVE OFFICE

Director Rebecca A. Humphries
Dennis Fox, Chief of Staff
Dennis Fedewa, Chief Deputy
Mindy Koch, Resource Management Deputy

DNR/OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

Mary Dettloff, DNR Press Secretary

WELCOME

Director Rebecca A. Humphries

Director Humphries welcomed the members, and guests, and thanked them for taking on the challenge of the important mission in providing their expertise for guidance and on state parks and recreation areas development, management, and planning issues.

SUMMARY/PURPOSE OF THE COMMITTEE

Director Rebecca A. Humphries

DNR Director Humphries addressed the members present and stated they were chosen to serve as ambassadors because of their knowledge of state park and recreation system, natural and cultural resources, policy and development, and educational backgrounds.

The Director reaffirmed the purpose of the Committee as follows:

- Provide a process for citizen input on state parks and recreation system.
- Maintain effective public relations and advise on financial planning.
- Serve as liaison's to coordinate and form partnerships with other agencies.
- Evaluate the state parks and recreation programs and services
- Bring their own unique expertise to the table for discussion and recommendations.

The Director stated the members terms will be had not been determined and welcomed members to wishing have longer/shorter terms must discuss with her prior to the next meeting scheduled for May 12, 2005.

GROUP PROCESSES

Ron Olson, Chief, Parks and Recreation Division

The members divided into three groups to collaborate on the questions listed below and provided these responses as priorities:

1. What are your top three expectations that you have for the Committee to be successful?

- A permanent source of funding.
- Legislative understanding that Michigan citizen's do care about State Parks.
- Public voice within DNR decision-making process.
- Guide the state parks and recreation system to upgrade a strategic plan built upon the Vision 20/20 foundation.
- Develop a strategy to make the mission of the state parks and recreation system more receptive to more diverse populations.
- Study of the number of state parks and recreation areas managed by the State of Michigan.
- An intense study of employees and their financial security.
- Management of CCMSP (leadership, bylaws, attendance).
- Grow Michigan's strategy to include the state parks and recreation system.
- Develop specific tasks for the members that are defined with clear outcomes.
- More coordination/cooperation among other land managing efforts with all of Michigan's parks and recreation area units/agencies/programs.
- A successful functioning, credible advisory committee.
- Logical goal oriented network of state parks and recreation areas.
- Obtain more, better financial support for the state parks and recreation system for operations (stable, long term, permanent).
- Outstanding educational programs (re-established) again a model for the nation.
- Solid capital funds support, on a steady-long term basis.
- Outstanding biodiversity, natural features, natural areas plan developed – under implementation.
- Improving morale among field staff.
- Better overall visibility for Michigan parks and recreation areas – especially with tourism industry and legislators.
- Form statewide "Friends of Michigan Parks" group.

GROUP PROCESSES (Continued)**2. What do the members perceive are the top five issues facing the State Park System in the next three to five years?**

- Funding for sustainability, size, and scope of system.
- Co-existence/diversity of variety of users.
- Marketing of state parks and recreation system.
- Understanding the true cost of operating and maintaining the system.
- Over utilization.
- Permanent source of funding outside of fees and general funding.
- Loss of natural environment available to general public for access and utilization.
- Design of state parks and recreation areas.
- Hunting rights in state parks and recreation areas.
- Trouble with NRTF (Comben).
- Current land sales/exchange process/strategy.
- How to manage in a user pay environment.
- Visitation at state parks and recreation areas are down (Marketing).
- Keeping up with social changes/expectations/diversity.

Ron Olson stated he an employee survey was sent to all PRD employees and received much valuable input with suggestions on enhancing the state park and recreation system. Ron held meetings with 7 of the 8 Districts involving over 250 employees (face to face) and listened to their perspectives and ideas for ways to improve the state park and recreation system as well.

PARKS AND RECREATION SYSTEM OVERVIEW/PRESENTATION***Ron Olson, Chief, Parks and Recreation Division***

Ron thanked the Committee and stated he values their expertise in assisting to achieving the DNR/PRDs mission toward a sustainable state park and recreation system. Ron presented to a PowerPoint presentation of the Michigan state park and recreation system that provided an overview of the system and a comparison of other state parks and recreation systems. Additionally, Ron stated the newest state park, Tri-Centennial State Park and Harbor, is significant toward PRDs efforts to reach out to non-traditional users.

The presentation also summarized the Division's responsibility of maintaining 800+ boat launching facilities and 15 public mooring facilities are owned and administered by PRD staff.

PARKS AND RECREATION SYSTEM OVERVIEW/PRESENTATION *(Continued)*

Compared to other states in the nation, Michigan is ranked:

- 1st in campground revenue generation
- 2nd in the number of campers
- 9th in overall visitation
- 16th in total operating expenditures
- 33rd in the number of full-time employees
- 49th in general and other public fund support

PRD receives no general fund support. State parks and recreation areas annual operating budget comes from three primary sources: camping fees, motor vehicle permits and from oil and gas revenue in Michigan. The Boating program is funded from the state Waterways Fund, paid by Michigan boat registrations, state gasoline sales taxes and fees at selected public access sites.

The Michigan State Waterways Fund is used for water recreation opportunities and is reviewed by the State Waterways Commission advisory group. State parks and recreation areas funding comes from two primary sources; the Park Improvement Fund (MVP and camping sales) and the State Park Endowment Fund (Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund - derived from the oil and gas leases held by the State of Michigan). FY04 expenditure activities for PRD is 91.6% on direct operations; 8.4% is spent on program services, planning and administration with only a small amount left for infrastructure.

Fees for campsites range from \$10 to \$29 with most sites in the low \$20s a night, for example:

- \$10 for a rustic campsite
- \$16-\$23 for a modern campsite
- \$29 for a full-hookup site
- \$45 for a mini-cabin

Camping fee comparisons with other surrounding states are shown as listed below:

- Ohio: \$13 to \$33 per night
- Michigan: \$10 to \$29 per night
- Illinois: \$6 to \$20 per night
- Indiana: \$8 to \$31 (varies with weekday and amenities)
- Minnesota: \$7 to \$15
- Wisconsin: \$8 to \$12 (fees based on residency)

The Motor Vehicle Permit (MVP) is our entrance fee charge. Access is FREE to non-motorized traffic and fee schedule is as follows:

- \$24 for a resident annual MVP
- \$29 for a non-resident MVP
- \$6 for a resident daily MVP
- \$8 for a non-resident daily MVP

PARKS AND RECREATION SYSTEM OVERVIEW/PRESENTATION *(Continued)*

PRD staff continues to gather information on funding needs to address the remaining infrastructure needs, early estimates indicate over \$200 million. For example, roads into North Higgins Lake are falling apart, Park infrastructure buildings are leaking, and routine preventative maintenance has been repeatedly deferred.

A question arose relative to the number of full hook-ups at the parks and PRD staff stated that there are about 200 full hook ups. Also, it was stated that PRD does not collect gate fees for snowmobiles entries into the parks and is something to consider/review relative to funding issues.

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE, PROCESS, LOGISTICS

The CCMSP concurred to for the next meeting to be scheduled on Thursday, May 12, 2005. These meetings will be held on a quarterly basis, at various locations around the State of Michigan, and selected Thursday as the day of the week to hold these meetings.

A nominating committee was appointed to select the Chair for the CCMSP with members consisting of Mike McDonald, Chris Graham, and Betsy Clark. The nominating committee will report their recommendation to the CCMSP at the May 12, 2005 meeting. Tom Ferguson agreed to be the interim Chair until the position is filled.

The bylaw committee members appointed are Donna Stine, Charles Nelson, and Harold Herta and will develop the guidelines and process/procedures the CCMSP.

NEXT MEETING

Thursday, May 12, 2005
Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC)
2101 Wood Street
Lansing, Michigan 48912-3785
10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Proposed Agenda Items:

1. Adoption of Meeting Notes - March 9, 2005
2. Financial Status
3. Parks and Recreation System Review
4. Issues and Challenge Summary
5. Vision Planning Process

CONCLUSION

Ron thanked the CCMSP for their dedication to this effort and restated the urgency to move forward with review of the financial picture in detail and developing credible solutions.

Meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.