

MINUTES

**CITIZENS COMMITTEE FOR MICHIGAN STATE PARKS (CCMSP)
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
Tahquamenon Falls State Park
41382 West M-123
Paradise Michigan 49768
Friday, July 15, 2005**

CCMSP MEMBERS PRESENT

Tom Bailey
Jim Bradley
Betsy Clark
Tom Ferguson
Robert Hoffmeyer
Murdock Jemerson
Charles Nelson
Mary Pitcher
Bill Rose
Todd Scott

CCMSP MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Hurley Coleman
Christopher Graham
Jim Hendricks
Kathy Lewand
Mike McDonald
Janet Howard Washington
Sam Washington

CCMSP EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT

Keith Charters
Sandra Clark

CCMSP EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Curtis Hertel
Donna Stine
Duncan Wyeth

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (DNR) STAFF

Mr. Ron Olson, Chief, Parks and Recreation Division (PRD)
Ms. Sandy Simpson, PRD
Ms. Vicki Anthes, PRD
Mr. George Cameron, PRD
Mr. Paul Curtis, PRD
Mr. Gary Ellenwood, PRD
Mr. Ray Fahlsing, PRD
Mr. Tony Herek, PRD
Mr. Harold Herta, PRD
Ms. Sue Rose, PRD
Mr. Lowen Schuett, PRD

Murdock Jemerson called meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Committee members reintroduced themselves and welcomed Mr. Jim Bradley, President of the Friends of the Porkies, as the newest member. **Bradley** replaced Mr. Gary Soukup who resigned for personal reasons.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM CCMSP MEETING – MAY 12, 2005

MOTION: Committee member **Tom Bailey** moved to approve the minutes of the May 12, 2005 CCMSP meeting. The motion was seconded by **Sandra Clark** and the minutes were unanimously approved as written.

PARKS & RECREATION DIVISION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Ray Fahlsing gave an overview of the State Stewardship Program and their mission/vision. **Fahlsing** stated the Stewardship Unit leverages its budget through the many grants received to run their programs (\$450,000 annual budget, plus grants.) and is only 1 percent of the PRD budget. **Chuck Nelson** stated that budgets for stewardship programs in other states is 5 percent and above. **Mr. Fahlsing** briefly discussed the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (excerpt) - Act 451 of 1994 and listed the program's 3-Year Goals as:

- To formally establish Division focus on stewardship;
- Incorporate a completed inventory of all threatened and endangered and special concern species, exemplary natural communities and cultural resources into the project development process and identify critical issues by district by September 30, 2003, and;
- Stabilize *all* most critically imperiled historic structures and preserve most critically imperiled natural communities

Mr. Fahlsing also presented an overview of the historic structures in state parks and recreation areas as follows:

- There are 308 structures determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places have been scored by the HSPT.
- Forty-one (41) Parks, RAM Center
- Linear Trail Parks (37 bridges, 3 Depots)

- Nike Missile Site (8 Buildings)
- Yankee Springs ODC's (49 Structures)
- Waterloo ODC's (44 Structures)
- Wells State Park (18 Structures)

Mr. Fahlsing highlighted the active stewardship field projects for the following state parks and recreation areas: Algonac, Bald Mountain, Bay City, Brighton, Fort Custer, Grand Mere, Highland, Hoffmaster State Park, Ionia, Island Lake, Pinckney, Porcupine Mountains, Saugatuck Dunes, Seven Lakes, Sterling, Warren Dunes / Grand Mere / Warren Woods, Waterloo, Wilderness / Fisherman's Island / Ludington / Leelanau / Tawas Point, Yankee Springs.

Committee members stated their appreciation of being kept informed on current/pending stewardship projects in the field and stated their support of the department's mission. With **Ron Olson** confirming that the department will keep the committee abreast on current/upcoming stewardship projects/issues. **Olson** also stated that the general public is very supportive of stewardship program efforts and the division is working to partner internally with other divisions to look at ways to bolster the funding efforts.

Ray Fahlsing stated that there is a stewardship network and will provide contact information to **Murdock Jemerson** who will share at the local level(s).

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

Mary Pitcher is not assigned to any specific subcommittee and will contact **Murdock** which subcommittee she would like to serve on. **Ron Olson** requested that after each committee meets to send report to him within 10-days after meeting.

Innovations and Marketing Committee – Chairperson Tom Bailey reported that this subcommittee has not met and will schedule a meeting after today's meeting

Programming and Operations – Chairperson Betsy Clark stated she has not met with the full subcommittee and **Tom Bailey** is working on the charge. **Ms. Clark** stated the subcommittee will be looking at possibilities for outsourcing (state trail system, park operations that extend beyond the parks and recreation system) and for duplicative programs as well. **Ms. Clark** also stated that this subcommittee will interlace with other subcommittees and will work with them as well.

Stewardship –Chuck Nelson for **Chairperson Mike McDonald** stated that the subcommittee has met and ready to move forward. **Nelson** stated that Ray Fahlsing’s presentation helped to support the necessity for the stewardship program. **Nelson** explained the subcommittee’s challenges and looking at additional partnerships and long-term relationships for co-management [MOU’s internal (all DNR) and external] and getting more citizens involved in volunteer programs. Updates will be provided as applicable.

Interpretation and Education – Harold Herta reported that **Chairperson Kathy Lewand** was unable to attend today’s meeting and is reporting on her behalf. **Herta** stated the subcommittee met and discussed the interpretative program that was previously within the parks and recreation division (now in the Office of Communications). The subcommittee looked to make the program more centralized, not in just one division. **Herta** shared a document drafted by Doug Finley, with the DNR/Office of Communications entitled *Interpretive Education, Visitor Centers and Outreach* that outlined the interpretive, and education, the explorer programs and listed the various visitor centers and programs being managed by the Office of Communications as follows:

- Eddy Discovery Center – Waterloo State Recreation Area
- Wolf Lake Visitor Center – Wolf Lake Fish Hatchery
- Great Lakes Visitor Center – Ludington State Park
- Michigan Fisheries Visitor Center – Oden Fish Hatchery
- Michigan Forest Visitor Center – Hartwick Pines State Park
- Saginaw Bay Visitor Center – Bay City State Recreation Area
- Carl T. Johnson Hunting and Fishing Center – Mitchell State Park
- Gillette Sand Dunes Visitor Center – Hoffmaster State Park
- Wilderness Visitor Center – Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park
- Tahquamenon Falls State Park
- Platte River, Marquette, Thompson, Herrietta State Fish Hatcheries (seasonal staff only)

Keith Charters explained the NRC’s Technology, Information, Marketing, and Education (TIME) and **Pat Stewart**, Chief of the Office of Communications, had attended/ presented an overview of her division. **Charters** asked that representative from the CCMSP attend the TIME meetings to provide input, as well as a staff member from the parks and recreation division as well. **Ron Olson** recommended the subcommittee members contact **Pat Stewart** and invite her to attend next interpretive subcommittee meeting.

Sandra Clark, History, Arts, and Libraries (HAL), explained her Department’s interpretative program (historical and cultural) and the cross-sectional interpretation (between the DNR and HAL) as locations such as North Higgins Lake, Hartwick Pines, Fort Wilkins, East Tawas, Bay City, Father Marquette, Sanilac petroglyphs.

Herta stated the subcommittee will report back to the CCMSP when applicable.

Short-Term Finance – Chairperson Chuck Nelson shared the short-term finance subcommittee proposal that will be submitted to the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) for their August 11, 2005 meeting for "information only." This proposal a one-year approach to generate \$4.5 to \$4.7 million in additional revenue for fiscal year 2005 – fiscal year 2006 to meet identified needs and funding shortfalls and **not** a substitute for long-term financing needs for the Michigan state parks and recreation system.

The recommendations of the proposal are as follows:

1. The non-refundable reservation fee increased from the current \$2.00 for reservations to \$8.00 to be in line with fees in WI (\$9.50), OH (\$8.00) and MN (\$8.50) as well as Ontario (\$12.00 Canadian).
2. A non-refundable transaction fee for drive-in/walk-in campers with no reservations be established at \$5.00 per transaction for an initial registration (not applicable to an extension or transfer) as all camping registration transactions are part of the revenue stream of the reservation contractor and considerable staff cost is expended to register drive-in/walk-in campers.
3. The non-refundable cancellation fee of \$5.00 be increased to \$10.00 for all cancelled electronic or phone reservations to be in line with WI (\$5.00 plus other fees), OH (\$8.00 - \$18.00), MN (\$5.00 per site) and Ontario (\$9.00) and to discourage the practice of making multiple reservations to lock up multiple potential camping opportunities for a minimal cost, thus depriving drive-in campers and others trying to make a sincere reservation an opportunity to camp.
4. Institute a \$5 transaction fee for individuals wishing to transfer sites while camped at a park.
5. Raise the per night camping fee \$4 per night for the 2006 camping season at campgrounds with occupancy of 85 percent or greater in July of 2003 to provide incentive to use other, less visited state park campgrounds, to price based on demand and to provide some additional funds to better manage heavily visited campgrounds

MOTION: Committee member Nelson made a motion to support the proposal to present to the NRC for approval at the September 8, 2005 meeting. Motion supported by committee member Pitcher for approval. Motion unanimously carried and proposal approved.

Long-Term Finance – Harold Herta shared the long-term subcommittee report on behalf of **Chairperson Sam Washington** who was unable to attend. **Herta** stated that the first meeting was held on July 7, 2005, with **Ron Olson**, Chief of the Park and Recreation Division presenting an overview of the financial problems currently faced by. The subcommittee also reviewed the history of parks and recreation areas funding, with an emphasis on the roles played by general fund dollars and various bond initiatives. Proposal P was also included in the discussion.

Questions posed during the discussion were:

- How capital projects should be funded (general public or fee based)?
- How operating costs should be funded (general public or fee based)?
- Whether or not Michigan's parks are funded in a manner similar to the parks systems in other states?
- The ranking of our parks compared to other states' parks (size and facilities)?
- Whether our park system is consistent with per capita needs (too big, too small, or right for our needs)?
- Do we have parks that should be closed?
- Should income generated by a park be the gauge for the success?
- Should parks or selected park operations be privatized?

Harold Herta stated topics for discussion at the next subcommittee meeting are:

- Legislative options to generate sufficient general fund dollars for capital needs.
- Optimum cost of operations.
- Discussion on the size of the system and current/future needs.
- Creative sources of funding through private enterprise efforts.

CCMSP members accepted the Long-Term Subcommittee report with the recommendation to keep moving forward.

Establish Long-Range Planning – Chairperson Murdock Jemerson opened the floor for discussion for the creation of a long-range planning subcommittee for purposes of updating the 20/20 Vision plan and create long-reaching objectives. **Vicki Anthes** discussed the land phase process and will ask **Kerry Wieber** and **Paul Yauk** of her Planning staff to make a presentation at the next CCMSP meeting.

MOTION: Tom Bailey motioned to suspend the creation of this committee.
Committee of the whole supported the proposal and motion approved.

UPDATES ON CURRENT ISSUES

Fiscal Year 2005 Budget Overview –Tony Herek provided an update for PRDs budget for fiscal year 2006 budget stating that revenues are less than the current budget. PRD has capital outlay funding of \$20 million for waterways and boating projects for fiscal year 2006, but only \$1 million for park projects. **Herek** state the Legislature has not passed the fiscal year 2006 budget, but expecting to receive it by September 2005.

Park Usage -- Ron Olson stated that the camping numbers are up over 3 percent, but that will fluctuate as the summer season continues. **Olson** will continue to provide updates as appropriate.

Project Go – Ron Olson shared updated list of activities for the GO Program scheduled for Saturday, July 23, 2005, and invited the CCMSP members to participate. **Olson** stated the staff did an excellent job on their planning efforts and partnering with others groups. **Olson** stated the DNR may a GO Program event during winter 2006.

ELECTION OF COMMITTEE OFFICERS

Chairperson Murdock opened up the floor to nominate committee officers. The committee of the whole concurred to appoint the positions:

Vice- Chairperson	Tom Ferguson
Secretary:	Betsy Clark

CLOSING REMARKS

Tom Ferguson recommended that Travel Michigan become a member of the CCMSP, but per the public act the membership can only consist of 17 full-time members. The membership concurred to add an individual from Travel to serve as an ex-officio member. **Ron Olson** will discuss with Director Humphries to ascertain the next steps for their participation.

Murdock Jemerson reiterated the charge of the committee is to advise and make recommendation(s) to the Governor and Legislature through the DNR Director's office. **Olson** stated he will create an executive summary to send to the Governor's office and members of the Legislature.

George Cameron stated that he will present an overview of the operations of the state parks and recreation areas at the next meeting.

NEXT MEETING

Chairperson Jemerson stated that at the meeting held on May 12, 2005, the committee agreed Thursday as the day of the week to meet and discussed holding the next meeting at either Hartwick Pines or Rifle River.

Sandra Clark stated that she will not be at the next September 22 meeting and will send another staff member on her behalf.

Ron Olson cited that for future meetings materials will be sent electronically 10 days prior to the meeting and members asked members to print their own meeting packets.

MOTION: **Murdock Jemerson** motioned to hold the next meeting on Thursday, September 22, 2005 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. (location to be determined). Motion supported by committee members. Motion unanimously carried.

The CCMSP meeting adjourned at 1:45 p.m.