



## ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

### MINUTES

May 7, 2019

Glassen Education Center  
Rose Lake Shooting Range  
Bath

#### ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL (AAC)

##### **PRESENT**

Scott Norris, Chair  
Tom Jones, Vice-Chair  
Ken Buchholtz  
Cindy Burkhour  
Vendela Collins  
Neal McKenzie  
Bryan Wilkinson  
Kim Woolridge

##### **ABSENT**

Jonathon Edgerly  
Michael Harris  
Justin Lippe  
Sarah Peurakoski  
Will Purves

#### PRESENT FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (DNR)

Sharon Schafer, AAC Executive Sponsor  
Stacy Haughey, Upper Peninsula Regional Coordinator/U.P. Sponsor (*via conference call*)  
Alexis Horton, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer  
Michael Holsinger, ADA Coordinator  
Yolanda Taylor, Assistant to the AAC

#### PRESENT FROM THE DNR ACCESSIBILITY TEAM (A-TEAM)

Lynne Thoma, Fisheries  
Tamara Jorkasky (*A-Team Chair*), Christie Bayus, and Erin Campbell, Grants Management  
Jami Selden Manor, Law Enforcement (*via conference call*)  
Kirk Lapham, Legislative and Legal Affairs  
David Haupt, Marketing and Outreach  
Diana Piaz Engle, Michigan History Center  
Angela Herrera (*A-Team Co-Chair*), Minerals  
Mike Evanoff, Parks and Recreation

#### INTERPRETERS

April Davidson, Jenny Welling and Janna Rowan

#### OTHERS PRESENT

Rebecca Powell, Department of Civil Rights  
Kathy Garland, Archery Education Coordinator

## REGULAR MEETING

### INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Norris called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. with roll call and introductions around the room.

Chair Norris also announced that the department's accessibility team (A-Team) has a new chair, Tamara Jorkasky. Christie Bayus was the previous chair and her term expired May 1. Christie will also be stepping down from the A-Team but Erin Campbell, also with Grants, will take her place alongside Tamara. Tamara thanked Christie for her ten plus years on the A-Team. Christie commented that she still will continue to be involved with accessibility issues as part of the grant process.

Angie Herrera with the Office of Minerals Management will be the new Co-Chair. Angie came from the Michigan Department of Transportation and, prior to that, she served in the Air Force for 20 years. Angie spends a lot of her free time volunteering at the veteran's clinics. Since becoming a member of the A-Team, she has shared information/materials about the department's accessible recreation opportunities with the veterans and has received an overwhelmingly positive response. Many were not aware of the opportunities that are available to allow them to get back into their favorite sports and enjoy the outdoors. They were very thankful and appreciative for receiving the accessible recreation postcard and other information about the special permits and special hunts.

Erin Campbell, who also works in Grants, commented that she has been with the department for a little over two years. Prior to that she worked with a local regional planning agency on watershed and stormwater management. Since coming to the DNR, she has learned so much about accessibility and is excited to be a part of the team.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Norris asked the council if they had any additions, corrections or discussion regarding the February 26, 2019 Minutes. Vice Chair Jones would like to incorporate his comments regarding his efforts to place accessible hunting blinds/viewing towers in all state parks and/or game areas. No additional corrections, edits or discussion was offered.

*Chair Norris requested a motion to approve the February 26, 2019 Minutes, with the understanding that Vice Chair Jones' comments will be incorporated; Kim Woolridge motioned to approve the Minutes; Cindy Burkhour seconded the motion; the motion unanimously carried, and the February 2019 Minutes were approved.*

Further discussion about Tom's endeavors will be discussed under Council Business.

### MICHIGAN'S INCLUSION CAMPAIGN

Council member, Vendella Collins, introduced Jazmine Fewes, communications representative for the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC). In March, the DDC launched their inclusion campaign to advocate for the inclusion of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The multi-media campaign is aimed at creating fully inclusive communities, environments and opportunities.

The overall objective is to educate Michiganders on the value of including persons with disabilities in their community. Specifically, they are focusing on general inclusion and employment in the first phase of this campaign. They also want to target business owners,

employers, community leaders and HR directors. Although it is a statewide campaign, they focused on specific counties through TV spots on cable, TV, network TV, radio, social media and on-line advertising. The counties they initially targeted include Ingham, Wayne, Oakland, Flint, Macomb, Kent, Delta, Marquette, Ottawa, Alpena and Grand Traverse.

For the next phase of the campaign, they would like to focus on housing and recreation. They are in the beginning stages of brainstorming and planning and, therefore, are seeking the council's and the department's input on specifically what they should highlight as far as accessible parks, inclusive clubs, adaptable equipment, and which parks across the state would be best to highlight in these upcoming commercials.

Some of the places suggested by the council to highlight in their campaign include:

- Ocqueoc Falls, the first truly universally accessible waterfall in the nation. It provides accessible routes for people with disabilities to access the river and experience the waterfall.
- The Muskegon Winter Sports Complex where they are building the first accessible zip line experience and dune tour. They currently have an accessible luge that has already been in operation. The council is having their meeting there in August 2019.
- State parks where they have installed accessible playgrounds (i.e. Ludington State Park and Grand Haven State Park).
- Accessible kayak launches around the state. The development of water trails around the state is exploding.

Chair Norris suggested having a way that people can submit their suggestions on-line or on a social media channel.

Cindy Burkhour suggested working with the Disability Networks throughout the state. They have very active disability networks and are doing projects and activities to enhance access to community and recreation. Inclusion Kent is a huge initiative happening in Kent County, and Grand Traverse County is also connecting with the recreation communities specifically.

Disability Networks of Michigan

<http://www.dnmichigan.org/cil-directory/>

Inclusion Kent

<https://www.accesskent.com/Departments/CountyAdministrator/CIC/>

They are also looking for individuals, groups or organizations that would be willing to be showcased or featured in their videos. Suggestions included Duncan Wyeth, former council member, or any of the council members:

- Sara Peurakoski is with the Superior Alliance for Independent Living and can provide information about events being held in the Upper Peninsula.
- Ken Buchholtz runs the Wheelin' Sportsmen program, also in the Upper Peninsula.
- Tom Jones is with Michigan Operation Freedom Outdoors and coordinates special hunts for people with disabilities in state game areas.
- Bryan Wilkinson organizes adaptive sports events (i.e. wheelchair and adaptive stand-up tennis, hand cycling, wheelchair softball and basketball, and Special Olympics).

Cindy also mentioned that the Michigan Victory Games is being held at Michigan State University on May 16-19, 2019.

Neal McKenzie reminded them to include closed captioning on their videos or live filming. The council was instructed to submit their suggestion, ideas or comments directly to Vendella Collins or Jazmine Fewes at [collinsv1@michigan.gov](mailto:collinsv1@michigan.gov) or [fewsj@michigan.gov](mailto:fewsj@michigan.gov).

Kim Woolridge also reported that the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Compliance Division is planning the “30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the ADA” campaign for 2020. They would also like to work with the DDC to coordinate efforts.

In August 2018, Pure Michigan attended a council meeting and was very receptive to the council’s ideas and suggestions. Both organizations are interested in connecting their campaigns with Pure Michigan, and Michigan State Parks is having their Centennial Celebration this year as well.

For information and updates about the Michigan Inclusion Campaign, visit [Michigan.gov/DDCouncil](http://Michigan.gov/DDCouncil). To view the campaign, visit the [MDHHS YouTube page](#).

### **PURE MICHIGAN CAMPAIGN**

Diana Engle chairs the accessibility team’s marketing subcommittee and is also a member of the department’s marketing team. She reported that Pure Michigan is getting ready to release an accessible travel page on their website called “In Michigan - All Are Welcome.”

### DNR Marketing Team Updates

The department’s marketing team is working on the RecSearch web site. It now allows a person to search for areas or sites that have accessible features. Parks and recreation is evaluating those features and updating them on the website. They are also working on making the site more accessible in terms of screen readers, etc.

The marketing team is also highlighting accessible events on the department’s calendar, especially events targeted to specific groups. For example, April was Autism Awareness Month, so they highlighted Leelanau State Park’s sensory events, and they also highlight Interlochen State Park’s adaptive kayaking, paddle boarding and cycling events.

### **DEPARTMENT UPDATES**

#### Meet/Greet with Director Dan Eichinger

Sharon Schafer introduced the new director of the Department of Natural Resources. Daniel Eichinger was appointed director in December 2018 and took office in January 2019.

Director Eichinger thanked the council for inviting him to this meeting. He gave the council information about his background and his career.

Beginning in 2004, he served as a policy advisor to Lt. Governor John Cherry. He then came to the department in 2007 and worked in various capacities, first as legislative liaison where he was heavily involved in passing the Recreation Passport to fund state parks, and later established the first Policy and Regulations Unit for the agency’s Wildlife Division. In 2012 he went to Central Michigan University where he worked as an administrator, supporting CMU’s educational programs offered to active-duty military and veteran students. Eichinger then moved on to Michigan United Conservation Clubs in 2014 where he served as Executive Director. He is a strong advocate for conservation and was directly involved in legislation supporting professional, scientific management of our fish and wildlife resources, and advocated for policies to protect the Great Lakes from invasive species. He helped shape response to fish and wildlife disease, and worked at the national level on conservation funding, invasive species and the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

Director Eichinger addressed the department's top-level priorities and expressed his commitment to making sure the department continues to work towards providing accessible recreation, especially on all new builds or renovations.

The council members and accessibility team members then introduced themselves and identified which organization or division within the department they are affiliated with, and then the floor was open for questions. Afterwards, the council thanked the Director for taking the time to address the council and for his commitment to further accessible recreation in this state. The Director expressed his appreciation for the council's leadership and their continued advice and participation.

#### Meet/Greet with Alexis Horton

Alexis Horton introduced herself as the department's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer. She came from the parks and recreation division where she coordinated the Summer Youth Employment Program for underprivileged youth. She also worked as the diversity coordinator for mParks. When she was asked to serve as the department's diversity coordinator, she was very excited to accept this position. Alexis further reported that she has met with the director, the deputy directors, division chiefs, the department's accessibility team and other various individuals, workgroups and committees in the department, including human resources. She will be developing an action plan while working on diversity, inclusion, marketing and outreach programs, partnerships, and connecting with communities. She expressed her appreciation for being a member of the council and the department's accessibility team.

#### Executive Updates

Sharon Schafer reported that, of course, we have a new Director, Daniel Eichinger, as well as a new Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer, Alexis Horton. Deputy Director Bill O'Neill will be retiring at the end of May after 34 years with the department. Shannon Hanna from the Wildlife Division will be the new deputy director and is currently shadowing Bill to ensure a smooth transition. The department also has a new legislative liaison, Craig Brunet. Craig came from DTMB, a place that only dealt with minimal legislative issues, to a department that handles a magnitude of senate/house bills, legislative issues and hearings.

Sharon also reported that the Office of the Great Lakes, which was merged with the Department of Natural Resources in October 2018, has now been transferred to the new Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE), effective April 2019, pursuant to Governor Whitmer's Executive Order.

#### ADA Coordinator Updates

Mike Holsinger reported he recently discovered that the department's HR department will assist people with disabilities with reasonable accommodations, upon request, with the application and interview process.

#### A-Team Updates

Tamara Jorkasky, A-Team Chair, reported that the accessibility team received a presentation from a company called AbleEyes. Sleepy Hollow State Park was considering using this company for a pilot project. Since the presentation, the Michigan History Center contracted with AbleEyes and is now using their app at their facility. She also reported that she and Diana Engle attended a training with the Michigan Autism Association, which was mainly for the history center interpreters, but it was very informative. They are also in the process of revisiting the department's strategic plan on accessibility.

Tamara also reported there will be four department grant applications that will be going through the review process for the council's endorsement in August, as follows:

- Fisheries Division (TF19-0150)  
Platte River State Fish Hatchery Accessibility and Interpretive Improvements
- Finance and Operations Division (TF19-0184)  
Western Upper Peninsula Shooting Facility – Porcupine Mountains
- Parks and Recreation Division (TF19-0080)  
Holland State Park Channel Access Pathway Development
- Wildlife Division (TF19-0144)  
Gourdneck State Game Area Development Initiative

Dave Haupt reported that the department's accessibility team created a flyer that informs the general public when they enter an office that staff are available to assist them if they are a person with a disability. Mike Holsinger, field manager with the Finance and Operations Division, has authorized the posting of this flyer at all department customer service centers and, after more staff have been properly trained, the hope is to have it posted at all state park headquarters, field offices, interpretive centers and other public facilities where feasible.

Kim Woolridge likes the flyer and would like to share it at her ADA coordinator training in July on reasonable accommodations.

## **COUNCIL BUSINESS**

### Reappointments

Yolanda Taylor reported that four members will be reappointed to the council, with a term expiring January 1, 2022. They are Vendella Collins, Justin Lippe, Sarah Peurakoski and Will Purves.

### Vacancies

Yolanda also reported that Al Bobrofsky with the Wild Turkey Federation resigned so this now leaves four vacancies on the council. Chair Norris reminded council members that it is incumbent upon them to reach out to communities or organizations that would be a good fit with the council and have interested parties apply directly with Yolanda. Some areas where we are lacking representation include the autism community, the aging, etc.

Tom Jones volunteered to replace Al Bobrofsky on the council's infrastructure and natural resource programs subcommittee.

### Council Updates

Vice Chair Jones reiterated that he is trying to bring more accessible hunting/viewing blinds to public lands. He signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Union Sportsmen's Alliance. They are a national union conservation organization that protect and promote outdoor heritage, with a commitment to educating future generations of sportsmen and sportswomen, conserve healthy wildlife habitat, and volunteer their time and skills for projects that improve outdoor access for all. When they heard Tom was working with Ford Motor Company to build these accessible hunting/viewing blinds to be placed on state lands, they reached out to Tom and wanted to get involved by providing grants for the materials. Tom's goal is to get one of these hunting/viewing towers at every state park or state game area. He is meeting with Ford later today so, what was once a dream is now becoming a reality. Ford and the Alliance are ready to start producing. Tom has reached out to some people in the DNR but is still waiting for a response. They are also building accessible patios (or viewing areas) to be placed at the Sharonville State Game Area for bird watching or photography.

As mentioned at the February 2019 meeting, Tom also wants to partner with Pure Michigan and the Centennial Celebration to advertise and promote getting these structures distributed throughout the state. He is asking to partner with anybody that is willing to help him get these structures disbursed on state lands. Council members or department staff that have suggestions or ideas can contact Tom directly.

Tom also mentioned that Garmin is having their 8th annual technology and charity golf outing on June 4th at the Tanglewood Golf Club in South Lyon. Proceeds will help support three local charities that assist military veterans and those in need in the community. The three organizations that are also sponsoring this event include Michigan Operation Freedom Outdoors, Blue Star Service Dogs, and Warriors for the Homeless. Michigan Out of Doors will also be there to film the gifting of two accessible hunting blinds at this event.

Chair Norris mentioned that the Braille and Talking Book Library is having their semi-annual "Libraries Without Walls" seminar where they will talk about assistive technology and wayfinding for people that are blind or have limited sight. The cost is \$15 and the registration form and agenda can be found on their website: [www.michigan.gov/btbl](http://www.michigan.gov/btbl)

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment.

#### **CLOSING BUSINESS**

The next meeting of the council is scheduled for August 20, 2019 and it will be held at the Muskegon Winter Sports Complex in Muskegon. Chair Norris stressed the importance of all members presence at this meeting.

#### **ADJOURN**

Chair Norris asked if there were any further comments. No additional comments were offered. He then asked for a motion to adjourn.

*Cindy Burkhour motioned for adjournment; Tom Jones seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at noon.*

*Following the meeting, council members and department staff were given the opportunity to try out the fully accessible shooting range, which included archery shooting, archery lessons, skeet/trap shooting, the target range, the elevated platform and the elevated hunting blind.*

*Many thanks to the Rose Lake Shooting Range manager and staff, and to Kathy Garland, the department's archery education coordinator.*