



ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

MINUTES

August 20, 2019
Muskegon Winter Sports Complex
Muskegon State Park

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL (AAC)

PRESENT

Scott Norris, Chair
Tom Jones, Vice-Chair
Ken Buchholtz
Cindy Burkhour
Vendela Collins
Michael Harris
Sarah Peurakoski (*via conference call*)
Will Purves (*via conference call*)
Bryan Wilkinson

ABSENT

Jonathon Edgerly
Justin Lippe
Neal McKenzie
Kim Woolridge

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
Rachel Coale, Forest Resources
Tamara Jorkasky (*A-Team Chair*), Christie Bayus and Erin Campbell, Grants Management
David Haupt, Marketing and Outreach
Diana Paiz Engle, Michigan History Center
Angie Herrera (*A-Team Co-Chair*), Minerals
Mike Evanoff, Parks and Recreation
Ryan Soulard, Wildlife

INTERPRETERS

None Requested.

OTHERS PRESENT

Jim Rudicil, Executive Director of the Muskegon Winter Sports Complex
Greg Sherburn, Muskegon State Park Supervisor
Jessica Stark and Olivia Jacques, Lighthouse Neurological Rehab Center, Traverse City
Lori Burford, Finance and Operations (*Shooting Ranges*)
Kerry Fitzpatrick, Wildlife; Aaron Switzer and Elysse Walter, Fisheries

REGULAR MEETING

INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Norris called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. with roll call and introductions around the room. He then announced Jim Rudicil, Executive Director of the Muskegon Winter Sports Complex, and Greg Sherburn, Muskegon State Park Supervisor.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Norris asked the council if they had any additions, corrections or discussion regarding the May 7, 2019 Minutes. No additional corrections, edits or discussion was offered.

Chair Norris requested a motion to approve the May 7, 2019 Minutes; Cindy Burkhour motioned to approve the Minutes; Vendella Collins seconded the motion; the motion unanimously carried, and the May 2019 Minutes were approved.

WELCOME TO MUSKEGON STATE PARK AND THE MUSKEGON WINTER SPORTS COMPLEX

Greg Sherburn, Muskegon State Park Supervisor, welcomed the group to the park. Greg has been with the department for 20 years. He has spent most of his time at Silver Lake State Park and has been at Muskegon State Park for the last five years. Greg gave a brief overview of the park and its amenities, which includes two campgrounds totaling 250 campsites, 13 miles of hiking trails which includes five miles of lighted trails for cross-country skiing, two fishing piers, picnic areas, two mini cabins, a yurt, a lighted boat launch at Snug Harbor with a fish grinding station, and three miles of shoreline with two miles along Lake Michigan and one mile on Muskegon Lake, and a beach house.

Some of the accessible amenities include the hiking trail, the fishing pier on the channel, the picnic areas and picnic shelters, the modern restrooms, ADA accessible campsites, and the beach via an accessible brock dock, a wheeled beach chair, and a track chair.

Greg mentioned that the Channel Campground just closed for construction and is closed to camping. They are tearing down and rebuilding both toilet/shower buildings that were built in the 60s. They will be replaced with modern, accessible toilet/shower buildings. Almost all campsites at the Channel Campground are already ADA accessible so they will be adding more accessible campsites at the Lake Michigan campground. When reconstruction is complete, the entire Channel Campground will be fully accessible. The accessible fishing pier is also under water right now due to the exceptionally high water levels this season.

Greg also commented on the track chair that was donated to the park (which he had displayed outside the complex) and the track chair program they recently implemented. The park has received overwhelming response to the track chair program along with numerous reservations. The park is very grateful to have received one of five track chairs that were donated by Kali's Cure.

Greg also mentioned their unique partnership with the Winter Sports Complex. The complex is on a zero dollar, 25-year lease with the State of Michigan. Any profits above operational costs at the complex is reinvested into the complex and the remainder is donated back to the park. The Winter Sports Complex is one of the main attractions at the park.

Jim Rudicil, Muskegon Winter Sports Complex Executive Director, welcomed the council and expressed how excited he was to host this group today. Jim gave a brief overview of the

complex and reiterated how grateful they are to have such a great relationship with Muskegon State Park. This year marks the 35th anniversary of the Winter Sports Complex. The complex provides winter sports recreation to Michigan residents and visitors. In 1999 Jim wanted to incorporate summer events so he met with Cindy Burkhour and they received funding through the Kellogg Foundation's Access-to-Recreation program to build the first Olympic size luge track in North America. The luge has two Olympic size curves with speeds reaching up to 20 mph and it takes about 9 seconds to complete the run. Through ramping and transfer stations, they were able to bring the first adaptive luge to the State of Michigan. Eventually his dream would be to transition into and host the Paralympics. The complex also offers an ice-skating rink for hockey and public recreation, a sledding hill, a cross-country ski trail that goes to Lost Lake, and much more. All features at the complex are fully accessible, including the luge.

The complex, through the department's Parks and Recreation Division, presented a proposal to this council in May 2017 and, with wholehearted endorsement from the council, received funding from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant program to install an accessible zip line a/k/a canopy tour. The zip line will be fully accessible. It will be a dual zip line that starts from the top of the dune/hill on the backside of the luge. It will traverse over both luge tracks, descending 1,300 feet to the landing tower. A hillside incline elevator will get participants to the top of the hill, it will also have an accessible trail up the back side of the dune, and participants will take slides down to the bottom from the landing tower. Construction will begin this fall in hopes of opening in the Spring of 2020.

Some additional features that Jim would like to incorporate into the complex include a rock-climbing wall and an accessible archery range. He stated that any recreational features that they add to the complex will have accessibility incorporated into the design.

Jim also introduced Doug and Steve Ogden, the two luge instructors that will be assisting the council members and staff on the luge run after the meeting.

Some members suggested changing the name to the "All Seasons Complex." Questions were asked and Jim responded that they have worked with the visually impaired on the cross-country ski trail and on the luge. With advance notice, a guide can be provided for the trail, and staff call out audibles on which way to lean for the luge.

ENDORSEMENT OF DNR RECREATION GRANT APPLICATIONS/PROJECTS

Chair Norris explained that the four grant applications/projects on the Agenda have been thoroughly vetted through the two subcommittees and department staff, and everybody on the council has had a chance to review all materials in advance of the meeting. Therefore, a brief overview of each project will be presented with very limited discussion, and each council member should be prepared to vote on them.

Tamara Jorkasky, chair of the department's A-Team Grant Application, Project and Program Review subcommittee, explained that all grant applications and proposed projects have been vetted through an accessibility review and input process involving the grant applicants, respective division representatives, representatives from the department's internal A-Team subcommittee, and the AAC's Infrastructure and Natural Resources Program subcommittee. Information and materials were also shared with all members of the AAC for their review and input as well.

Cindy Burkhour, chair of the AAC's Infrastructure and Natural Resources Program subcommittee proceeded to give a brief overview of each grant application/project. After brief discussions, and after entertaining questions, the council voted on each application/project, as follows:

Platte River State Fish Hatchery – Accessibility and Interpretive Improvements

TF19-0150; Fisheries Division, Jessica Mistak

Cindy Burkhour motioned in support of the Platte River State Fish Hatchery grant application as a universally accessible design project; Vendella Collins seconded the motion; the motion unanimously carried. The Council wholeheartedly endorses the Platte River State Fish Hatchery – Accessibility and Interpretive improvements grant application number TF19-0150, and highly recommend approval of this grant application by the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Board at their December 2019 meeting.

The council would further like to recognize the fact that the Platte River State Fish Hatchery had an ADA on-site review conducted by the Disability Network of Northern Michigan.

Holland State Park Channel Access Pathway Development

TF19-0080; Parks and Recreation Division, Matt Lincoln

Cindy Burkhour motioned in support of the Holland State Park Channel Access Pathway Development grant application as a universally accessible design project; Bryan Wilkinson seconded the motion; the motion unanimously carried. The Council wholeheartedly endorses the Holland State Park Channel Access Pathway Development grant application number TF19-0080, and highly recommend approval of this grant application by the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Board at their December 2019 meeting.

Gourdneck State Game Area Development Initiative

TF 19-0144; Wildlife Division, Kerry Fitzpatrick

Cindy Burkhour motioned in support of the Gourdneck State Game Area Development Initiative grant application as a universally accessible project on the condition that the slope of the Van Horn roll is modified and decreased from a 33% grade to a 10% grade; Michael Harris seconded the motion; the motion unanimously carried. The Council endorses the Gourdneck State Game Area Development Initiative grant application number TF19-0144 and recommends approval of this grant application by the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Board at their December 2019 meeting if the slope of the Van Horn roll is reduced to a 10% grade.

Western Upper Peninsula Shooting Facility – Porcupine Mountains

TF19-0184; Finance and Operations Division, Lori Burford

Cindy Burkhour motioned in support of the Western Upper Peninsula Shooting Facility – Porcupine Mountains grant application as meeting ADA standards, but cannot support it as being a universally accessible project based on the design concept; Michael Harris seconded the motion; the motion unanimously carried. The Council is willing to endorse the Western Upper Peninsula Shooting Facility – Porcupine Mountains grant application number TF19-0184 as meeting ADA standards, and would be willing to recommend approval of this grant application by the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Board at their December 2019 meeting if, during the supplemental period, the design concept is changed to meet the principals of universally accessible design.

The council thanked Tamara, Cindy and the presenters for their efforts.

TRACK CHAIR PROGRAM AT MICHIGAN STATE PARKS

Mike Evanoff, Parks and Recreation, reported that five state parks received track chairs that were donated by Kali's Cure. They include Belle Isle, Island Lake, Maybury, Tahquamenon Falls and Waterloo.

There is no charge to use the track chairs but they need to be reserved in advance. The parks have received overwhelming responses and praise for their track chair programs and have received numerous reservations. Muskegon's chair was made available for anybody that wanted to use it after the meeting.

Michael Harris recommended the parks have rules in place for use by children because there have been incidences where they have hurt other people. To kids, it's a toy. The chairs weigh over 600 pounds and could easily cause severe injuries.

Evanoff responded that safety training was provided to all five parks and their staff and safety policies are in place at these locations. They also instituted a new rule that people, children and pets must remain two feet away from the track chair.

Cindy Burkhour also commented that the governor on the chairs can be turned down to reduce or limit their speed.

Michael Harris thanked Kali's Cure directly for their generous donation of the track chairs. He also mentioned that ITC Holdings is another organization that is very proactive in providing accessible outdoor recreation. They donated ten chairs to the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans Association. He offered to reach out to ITC to notify them of the state park's interest in receiving more track chairs. Michael also received a track chair from Lighthouse Rehab. Instead of keeping it he gave it to the association for use by its members.

Ken Buchholtz also cautioned that the chairs need to be plugged in when they are not in use. The batteries can cost up to \$600 so maintenance is key in maintaining the longevity of these chairs.

The members asked if the state parks would be acquiring or pursuing more track chairs. Since the track chairs were introduced, the parks are getting inundated with calls and reservations. Kali's Cure was so impressed with the response the parks were receiving, they may consider donating more chairs in the future.

A list of the days/hours that the chairs are available are posted on-line under the accessibility page or on each state park's web page.

Tom Jones closed this discussion by reminding the council that he will be giving away another track chair in his third David Pollie Classic giveaway. He will be announcing the giveaway in conjunction with Trails Week and the State Park Centennial. The winner will be announced in December.

UPDATE ON THE U.P. STATE FAIR AND WHEELIN' SPORTSMEN

Ken Buchholtz once again attended the U.P. State Fair, where he had his Wheelin' Sportsmen's accessible hunting blind and equipment on display at the Pocket Park where they educated visitors on accessible recreation opportunities.

They have also been hosting the National Trapper's Convention at the fairgrounds for the past two years, with the highest attendance in history this year. Ken's organization has also been going around to several nursing homes, assisted living homes, and reaching out to others with disabilities to give them an opportunity to do some target shooting and/or hunting.

In 2018, they had over 65 hunters, with 40 new hunters that have never had an opportunity to hunt. They harvested 9 turkeys and 34 deer. They also shoot crop damage deer for the

farmers which gives people with disabilities an opportunity to hunt outside of the regular hunting season. For the spring turkey hunt, they had 26 hunters that harvested 10 turkeys.

They also constructed three more hunting units this year for people that have had strokes.

They also created a new event called “Re-Creating in the Outdoors” where they hire buses with wheelchair lifts and pick people up at apartments or assisted living facilities. They take them to the Pocket Park to take them fishing or target shooting. UP Sail (council member Sarah Peurakoski) provides adaptive fishing equipment and hand cycles, and local residents from the area offer up their pontoon boats to take people out on the harbor. People with more mobility get the opportunity to go out on a sailboat. Wheelin’ Sportsmen has been partnering with SAIL and Pathways for over 9 years.

Ken also received a “Volunteer of the Year” award from the Health Care Association of Michigan and the National Association of Activity Professionals for the work he does for people with disabilities, the elderly and others who want to get outdoors.

Ken is also working with Sara (UP Sail) and Tom (MiOFO) on some other joint programs that they would like to offer in the future.

30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ADA

Kim Woolridge was unable to attend the meeting so Vendella Collins gave an update on what she knows about the planning process. Numerous agencies and organizations have met a couple of times to work out logistics, planning, roles and responsibilities, financial support, etc. The good news is they are working together for one huge statewide celebration to give people a better understanding of the ADA and how it benefits people with disabilities. The next meeting is scheduled for August 26 at 1:00 p.m. at the Michigan Disability Rights Coalition Office, 3498 East Lake Lansing Road, Suite 100 in Lansing. Council members interested in attending can contact Vendella, Kim Woolridge or Kelly Frake at frakek@michigan.gov.

MICHIGAN’S INCLUSION CAMPAIGN

Vendella reported that the Developmental Disabilities Council has an ongoing inclusion campaign. They have been running ads on television, cable, YouTube, Facebook, and a lot of other media to reach out to employers. This first phase focuses on employment, letting employers know that people with disabilities want to work and should be given a chance to use their abilities.

The next phase of the campaign will focus on recreation. They plan to target cable stations in Detroit, Grand Rapids, Traverse City, Flint and Lansing, as well as using audio stream, YouTube and placing ads on Pandora. They will soon be meeting with Pure Michigan and the DNR in hopes of partnering on the recreation campaign. Vendella asked for videos or photos of people with disabilities using accessible equipment, visiting accessible recreation sites, or enjoying any other outdoor recreational activity.

Cindy Burkhour suggested they get in touch with mParks (Justin Lippe) since they are the statewide organization for all local parks and recreation organizations. One of their projects was to capture those types of videos or photos throughout the state. Erin Campbell will assist with getting a list of accessible projects that have been funded through the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant program.

The next phase of the campaign will focus on housing.

TRAVEL MICHIGAN UPDATES

Dave Haupt reported that the DHHS, DDC, DNR and Pure Michigan are working on a summer inclusion campaign focusing on inclusive recreation activities offered throughout the state. The campaign will highlight individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and how they can enjoy a wide range of activities without requiring separate facilities. They want to showcase that Michigan has opportunities for all to enjoy. The Michigan.org site is using DNR trails information. The DNR calendar is also automatically shared with the Travel Michigan web site, and the DNR accessibility web site continues to grow.

The department and Pure Michigan are also looking for photos or videos to post.

Yolanda reported that Pure Michigan is also working on their fall campaign. They have been provided with information on special hunts, accessible shooting ranges, and other fall-related activities.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

DNR Executive Updates

Sharon Schafer reported there are two new people in the Executive Office. Kelly Hamilton is assisting the Legislative Liaison's Office with the processing of house and senate bills, along with other responsibilities. Jennie Kahn-Jacques is doing Good Government work.

The department is moving forward with some renewable energy challenges. Two pilot projects include Seven Lakes State Park in Holly and the Oden State Fish Hatchery in Alanson where they are proposing to install solar photovoltaic systems (technology that converts sunlight into direct current electricity) to supplement or replace current nonrenewable energy consumption. A Request for Proposal for an energy consultant will be posted in the next month or two.

Sharon was also asked to supervise the Office of Minerals Management. She is learning all about minerals leasing and management in this state, as well as supervising an additional 18-20 employees.

A-Team Updates

Tamara Jorkasky reported that some members of the department's accessibility team showed up for the annual Come Out and Play at the Capitol event that is hosted by mParks. The accessible hunting blind and the wheeled beach chair were provided, and materials regarding accessible recreation were passed out to visitors. Dave Haupt brought Wardens TV who filmed some of the events. Wardens TV will also be filming today's luge ride.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

Vacancies

Yolanda reported there are four vacancies on the council. Chair Norris repeated that he is not getting much input from this group. He asks that members reach out and solicit organizations or individuals that are not represented on the council and ask them to submit their application to Yolanda. He would like to see four more applications by the end of December.

Vendela recommended Steven Locke, former Disability Network Mid-Michigan Executive Director, who is now the Executive Director for the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC). Cindy Burkhour also recommended Dave Bukowski, Executive Director of Disability Advocates of Kent County and said she would reach out to him.

Council Updates

The council requested a summary of how many funded recreation grants received universal design points. Tamara Jorkasky will provide that information.

Tom Jones also mentioned he would like to work with the department and the Wildlife Division to identify accessible hunting within state game areas; places where he could start placing accessible hunting blinds. Sharon Schafer suggested he work with the department's accessibility team to come up with a list of locations.

Diana Paiz Engle mentioned she will be working with department staff to write an article on accessible recreation.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

CLOSING BUSINESS

The next meeting of the council is scheduled for December 3, 2019. It will be held at the DNR Lansing Customer Service Center.

ADJOURN

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

Vendela Collins motioned for adjournment; Cindy Burkhour seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 12:45 p.m.

Following the meeting, council members and department staff were given the opportunity to ride the fully accessible luge and/or tour the park using their track chair.

Many thanks to Muskegon State Park and the Muskegon Winter Sports Complex for hosting this meeting, and for taking the time to give council members and staff the opportunity to ride the luge.