

MINUTES
OFF-ROAD VEHICLE TRAILS ADVISORY BOARD
Lansing West Hotel & Conference Center
7501 West Saginaw Highway
Lansing, Michigan
February 4, 2009

Chairman Ranney called the meeting of the Off-Road Vehicle Trails Advisory Board to order at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, February 4, 2009, in Lansing, Michigan.

Members Present:

Dick Ranney, Chair
Glenn Moll, Vice Chair
Sheriff Scott Strait
Larry Harrington
Peter Wyckoff

Members Absent:

John Bernard
Amy Spray

Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Staff Present:

James Radabaugh, Forest Mineral and Fire Management (FMFM), Lansing
Steve DeBrabander, FMFM, Lansing
Steve Kubisiak, FMFM, Lansing
Lt. Andrew Turner, Law Enforcement Division (LED), Lansing
Lt. Creig Grey, LED, Roscommon
Pete Lundberg, Parks and Recreation Division (PRD), Mears

USDA Forest Service Staff Present:

Rose Ingram, Huron Manistee National Forest, Cadillac

Welcome/Introductions -- Board members, staff and audience introduced themselves.

MINUTES

Acknowledged Minutes of the November 5, 2008 ORV Trails Advisory Board Meeting.

Mr. Harrington made a motion, supported by Mr. Moll, to accept the minutes of the November 5, 2008 ORV Trails Advisory Board Meeting as presented. Motion unanimously carried.

OLD BUSINESS

Resolution in Support of Educating to Control ORV Damage (ECORD) – Chairman **Ranney** provided background and read a draft resolution for board consideration. **Mr. Moll** suggested substituting the word “commends” instead of “supports”.

Mr. Harrington made a motion to amend with correction, seconded by Mr. Wyckoff. Motion carried.

IN SUPPORT OF EDUCATING TO CONTROL OFF ROAD DAMAGE (ECORD)

WHEREAS, inappropriate and illegal use of off-road vehicles (ORV) cause environmental resource damage on public and private lands;

WHEREAS, in many instances this damage is caused by uninformed ORV riders that do not have knowledge of federal, state, and local laws regulating ORV operation;

WHEREAS, Educating to Control Off Road Damage (ECORD) organized educational efforts in Luce County Michigan to educate and inform riders of regulations in an effort to reduce environmental resource damage, therefore be it;

RESOLVED, the Off-Road Vehicle Trails Advisory Board appreciates and commends the efforts of ECORD to promote responsible ORV riding in Michigan.

Mr. Moll will present a certificate of appreciation on behalf of the ORV Advisory Board to ECORD at a future Luce County board or commissioners meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

2009 ORV Management Plan Implementation Actions – **Mr. Kubisiak** reported on 2008 accomplishments and implementation actions for 2009. Highlights of 2008 accomplishments include: existing trails brought up to standard and maintained in good condition, approval of a Directors Order for motorcycle trail, trail expansion (116 miles approved and 164 miles now under review), ORV maps upgraded and posted on website, revised website, phase I rock crawl development at the Mounds. Planned 2009 actions include: phase II rock crawl development at the Mounds, rock crawl development at St. Helen Motorsport Area, development of a long-range financial plan, ORV user survey, map enhancements for GPS download, up-grade resource damage reporting system database, and continuation of ORV safety education program improvements.

Mr. Kubisiak asked the board for their thoughts and advice on making sign upgrades and development of a southern Michigan scramble area priorities for 2009. Discussion ensued.

Chairman Ranney recommended holding-off on sign upgrades and scramble area development due to the significant financial investment required. He suggested the long-range financial planning workgroup accomplish their task first.

Mr. Radabaugh suggested the idea of developing a scramble area in southern Michigan is a broad concept that could involve multiple funding sources and start with a re-evaluation of existing state-owned lands to determine if feasibility for scramble area development.

Chairman Ranney encouraged the Department to initiate efforts to re-examine existing state-owned lands in southern Michigan. He thanked staff.

Motorized Trail User Survey – **Dr. Chuck Nelson, Michigan State University** distributed a copy of the survey and reviewed study objectives, schedule, and passed trends. The survey will be distributed in three waves (spring, summer, fall) and include a question concerning user fees. A question concerning disabilities will also be added. Dr. Nelson will also examine accident and fatality records from Silver Lake State Park and Michigan State Police. He distributed a copy of the survey.

ORV Trail Designation on Private Lands – **Mr. DeBrabander** reported not all trail expansion can be accommodated on public lands. Key issues that need to be addressed include duration of permission and amount of program investment. He noted the length of permission has been discussed internally and the preference would be to require permanent easements in order to protect program investment. However, staff also recognizes this would limit opportunities because some land owners may not be willing to grant a permanent easement.

Mr. DeBrabander noted there are several trail proposals currently under review that involve private land. He asked for guidance from the board because decisions made on these proposals will set precedence for the program.

Sheriff Strait suggested alternative re-routes need to be considered when reviewing proposals involving private lands in the event the land owner revokes permission for trail use.

Mr. Moll suggested there needs to be some reasonable time frame in order to protect program investment.

Chairman Ranney expressed concern with annual use agreements and the potential for losing critical trail linkages, but recognizes the need to review each case on its own.

Chairman Ranney recognized Representative Lahti to get his perspective on the topic.

Representative Lahti noted some of his constituents have expressed concerns with requiring long-term agreements.

Mr. Wyckoff suggested the term of the agreement could be based on a graduated scale based on cost of infrastructure improvements.

Mr. DeBrabander said staff will draft some parameters and will bring them back to the board for further discussion.

Annual Election of Officers – **Mr. Moll** opened nominations for Chairperson. **Mr. Wyckoff** nominated Mr. Ranney with his acceptance, second by Sheriff Strait. **Mr. Moll** called for more nominations. No more nominations received.

Motion unanimously carried to re-elect Mr. Ranney Chairperson.

Chairman Ranney opened nominations for Vice-Chairperson. **Sheriff Strait** nominated Mr. Moll with his acceptance, seconded by Mr. Harrington. **Chairman Ranney** called for more nominations. No more nominations received.

Motion unanimously carried to re-elect Mr. Moll Vice-Chairperson.

BOARD REPORTS

Chairman Ranney announced AMA District 14 has under study a means to offer a statewide publication to communicate with the ATV community and is receiving some positive verbal support from industry.

STAFF REPORTS

Forest Service – **Ms. Ingram** reported the Hiawatha National Forest and local stakeholders will begin construction of a 26 mile motorcycle trail in Delta County this spring. The Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) for the Huron National Forest will be re-published within the next 4 to 6 weeks. The Manistee National Forest MVUM is on schedule and will be published at the end September.

Law Enforcement -- **Lt. Grey** reported that according Lt. Cischke ECORD is making a difference in educating ORV riders of riding regulations. Conservation Officers and local Forest, Mineral and Fire Management staff are working with the counties on local ORV ordinances. He noted Roscommon County has opened winter access to the lakes and are using signs similar to the DNR's on their roads.

Forest, Mineral and Fire Management – **Mr. DeBrabander** reported the long-range financial planning committee met once and held two conference calls. Thirty program need areas have been identified and assumptions for future growth and costs are under review. The plan is expected to be complete within the month.

Mr. Kubisiak announced the Lansing Motorcycle Cycle Club was recognized by Director Humphries at the January Natural Resources Commission with a partnership in conservation award for their volunteer efforts on forest clean-ups and tree planting. He referred the board to the press release in their packets. He thanked the group.

Mr. DeBrabander thanked the ORV board and stakeholder groups and cited the partnership award as a positive thing. He noted this good working relationship has allowed the program to move forward and that we have better riding opportunities as a result of this positive relationship.

Mr. Radabaugh reported the Drummond Island workgroup completed its mission and a new ORV route has been approved. He reported a number of trail projects have been submitted for consideration under President Obama's economic stimulus package.

PUBLIC APPEARANCE

Ms. Peggy Ebert said she is working with Oscoda County on a local ORV access route system and asked if ORV funds could be used for repairing road shoulders. **Mr. Kubisiak** said funding from the ORV program could be used if the roads are designated by the Department as part of the state ORV route system.

Mr. Bill Gilbert, Michigan ORV Safety Association said user groups just want their permit fee's to be used for the intended purpose. He is critical of expenditures in the safety education grant program.

Mr. Mike Olmstead, Local Coordinator – Drummond Island Jeep Jamboree -- We're at the point where it's time to hand out some "Thank You's" for the establishment of the Drummond Island ORV Route system. I think it's important for the public record to reflect "Thanks" to the following individuals that worked so hard, diligently, and tirelessly over the last year and a half to establish the ORV Route system (individuals in alphabet order): Denny Bailey, Drummond Island Resort, Jerry & Betty Bailey, Drummond Island Tourist Assn., Pat Brower, Great Lakes Four Wheel Drive, Bob Devore, The HUMMER Club, Cliff Haley, Drummond Island Resort, Pat Hallfrisch, Unit Manager, Dept. of Natural Resources, Rob Katona, ORV Trail Analyst, Dept. of Natural Resources, Jim Kelley, Drummond Island Tourist Association., Mike Kelly, Drummond Island Off Road Club, Mike Olmstead, Jeep Jamboree USA, Mike Paluda, Dept. of Natural Resources Field Coordinator, Steve Walker, Drummond Island Off Road Club, and to all the people in this room who supported our efforts and provided insight and direction during this whole process!

And finally, to Great Lakes Four Wheel Drive Association who brought all their resources and expertise to bare to bring about this successful endeavor!

The efforts and time that we all spent should be a text book example of how user groups, local officials, government agencies and legislators can work together to meet a legitimate user group needs and simultaneously involve every stakeholder – all user groups (ORV, hunt clubs, snowmobile association, etc.), local businesses, community leaders, and environmental interests - and develop a solution that is much more than a consensus, but a solution that meets all stakeholder needs and requirements. Thank you!

Mr. Bob DeVore, Great Lakes Four Wheel Drive Association expressed concerns and distributed a letter to the board regarding the Department's event permit process. Staff will provide the letter to the Mineral and Land Management Section. **Mr. DeVore** thanked the board and the DNR for their support for development of rock crawl opportunities at the Mounds and at St. Helen.

Sheriff Strait made a motion to adjourn. Motion unanimously carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm.

NEXT MEETING

May 6, 2009, at the Lansing West Hotel & Conference Center, 7501 West Saginaw Highway Lansing, Michigan.

PUBLIC PRESENT

Bill Gilbert, MI ORV Safety Assoc.
Thomas Dunn, AMA District 14

Bob Devore, Great Lks 4Wheel Dr. Assoc.
Pat Brower, GLFWDA

Mike Olmstead, Jeep Jamboree/GLFWDA
Peggy Ebert
Greg Yager, CCC
Tim Thurman, ATV Off-Road Club
Bruce Menning, Grt Lks 4Wheel Dr Assoc.
Dan Gustafson, S & A Polaris
Jim Kitson, GLFWDA
Jerry Brower, GLLRC

Paul Hittie, GLFWDA
Steve Scofes, S & A Polaris
Sue Thrushman, ATV Off-Rd Club of MI
Lewis Shuler, CCC Director
David Diehl
Sam Boumis, S & A Polaris
Jim Mazzola, GLFWDA