

MINUTES

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION *Michigan State Parks Advisory Committee (MSPAC)*

July 9, 2014
Belle Isle Park
Detroit, Michigan

PRESENT FOR THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Commissioner Louise Klarr, Chair
Commissioner Tim Nichols, Co-Chair

PRESENT FOR THE MSPAC

Julie Clark
Ann Conklin
Chris Graham
Jefferson Gray
Bob Hoffmeyer
Mike McDonald
Mary Pitcher

ABSENT

Commissioner Vicki Pontz, Co-Chair
Tom Bailey
Jim Bradley
Tom Ferguson
Mike Foote
Jim Hendricks
Amy Trotter

OTHERS PRESENT

Other DNR Management and Staff

MICHIGAN STATE PARKS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (MSPAC)

INTRODUCTIONS

Commissioner Klarr called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. The Parks Committee thanked the staff on Belle Isle for the tour of the island.

Commissioner Klarr then took roll call, made introductions around the room and asked if there were any additions or adjustments to the agenda. No adjustments to the agenda were offered.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Klarr asked if the committee had any edits, changes or discussion regarding the draft Minutes from the April 10, 2014 meeting. No comments or edits were offered.

Mike McDonald motioned to approve the Minutes; Tim Nichols seconded the motion; the motion unanimously carried and the April 10, 2014 Minutes were approved and adopted.

RECREATION PASSPORT AND CAMPING METRICS

Jason Fleming, Resource Management Section Chief, gave an overview of the Recreation Passport and camping numbers to-date. He reported that the City of Detroit alone has seen 34% participation in the Recreation Passport in just one month, which is higher than the state percentage overall. Jason also mentioned that they will be revamping the Passport Perks program and are creating a new marketing strategy for next year.

TIPPY DAM STATE RECREATION AREA GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Deb Jensen, Park Management Plan Administrator, gave the committee an overview of the General Management Plan for the Tippy Dam State Recreation Area and highlights of the recreation area. She entertained all questions and comments regarding the recreation area and the management plan.

Chris Graham, chair of the MSPAC's Stewardship Subcommittee, reported that the subcommittee was thoroughly briefed on this plan on June 10, 2014, and the subcommittee fully supported moving the plan forward to the full committee for review and approval.

Commissioner Klarr asked for a motion on Resolution 07-2014-01 Recommending Approval of the Tippy Dam State Recreation Area General Management Plan. Julie Clark motioned to support the Resolution; Ann Conklin seconded the motion; the motion unanimously carried and Resolution 07-2014-01 was approved and adopted.

FISCAL YEAR 2015 BUDGET OVERVIEW

Chief Ronald Olson gave a presentation/overview of what is being proposed in the Fiscal Year 2015 Executive Budget. It has been presented to the Governor but still needs to be signed by the Governor.

Members can refer to the handout in their packets for exact programs and proposed funding.

UPDATE ON BLUE RIBBON PLAN AND INITIATIVES

Chief Olson gave the committee a memo regarding a summary of all DNR strategic plans that have been completed in the past few years that impact recreation, along with the progress report that details how the DNR has addressed the outcomes identified in the Michigan State Parks and Outdoor Recreation Blue Ribbon Panel's report, "*The Future of Michigan's Parks and Outdoor Recreation Report*" (a/k/a The Blue Ribbon Report). He also indicated that the Department will be providing a status report to the Governor on the implementation of all plans, including the Blue Ribbon Report, and the Parks and Recreation Division, with input from the Parks Committee, will update the progress report on a yearly basis.

Commissioner Nichols commented that this is a work in progress. It could prove to be very useful for not only reporting progress and accomplishments to the Governor on the Blue Ribbon goals that are being met, but it could also be used as a tool to help identify needs within the Michigan state parks system that possibly members of this committee could help move forward or assist with (i.e. funding, partnerships, etc). The benefit of having this committee and the expertise on the panel is to help the park system do the heavy lifting wherever possible.

Chief Olson recommended we may make more progress if we reactive all of the subcommittees, and possibly create another subcommittee that focuses on infrastructure or it could fall under the Finance subcommittee, to review infrastructure needs and funding.

SILVER LAKE STATE PARK ORV VOUCHER RESERVATION SYSTEM

Charlotte Kiefer, Silver Lake State Park Manager, was asked to attend this meeting to give the committee an overview/presentation on a new ORV voucher reservation system. Charlotte gave the committee an overview of how the ORV staging area and voucher system currently works. After conducting a survey, it was determined that allowing customers to reserve their vouchers on-line would increase efficiency by redistributing staff, increase safety and sound enforcement, allow for quicker response time for emergencies, and would be more customer friendly.

After entertaining questions and comments from the committee, a motion in support of this new voucher reservation system was requested.

Commissioner Klarr asked for a motion in support. Ann Conklin motioned to support the new ORV voucher reservation system; Mary Pitcher seconded the motion; the motion unanimously carried and the motion was approved and adopted.

Next step will be to present it to the NRC Committee of the Whole.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Commissioner Klarr asked if anyone present or from the general public would like to address the committee at this time.

Todd Scott, Detroit Greenways Coalition, mentioned he was a former member of this committee so is familiar with a lot of the faces in the room. He had heard the committee was going to be in Detroit and was interested in attending the meeting. Todd commented that he is very excited about the focus on Belle Isle and the improvements that have been made to the island so far. He is also looking forward to partnering with the DNR to expand the trail system that already exists in the City of Detroit to implement the Governor's Showcase Trail. He mentioned they have already received significant funding to expand trails in the Detroit area, including dollars from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund. He invited everyone to check out the over 157 miles of biking trails that already exist whenever they are in the Detroit area.

Ron Scott, applauds the state for what they have accomplished so far with Belle Isle and the increase in Recreation Passport sales just in the Detroit area. However, he encouraged the DNR Parks and Recreation Division to reach out to other stakeholders in the City (i.e. businesses, organizations, the districts, and the general public) and the surrounding areas. For whatever reason, some groups or individuals have not felt comfortable or welcome on the

island. He feels that if the department were to reach out to these groups (i.e. have public meetings, discussion or interaction), regarding what would encourage them to visit and enjoy the island, it would not only benefit the island with increased revenue, but it would also help the city and local businesses. He also recommended reaching out to surrounding communities to encourage interest in Belle Isle and point out what it has to offer on a more localized level. Organizations like the Detroit Greenways Coalition, the state, and others would benefit by meeting, having these discussions and figuring out ways to attract more visitors to the area.

He also reminded the committee that the state needs to be sensitive to the way enforcement is handled on the island. Mr. Scott was reminded that the Belle Isle Park Advisory Committee is probably the more proper committee/forum to address these types of issues.

Tawanna Simpson with Detroit Public Schools was also present but she was too far away from the recorder so any statements made by her were not audible.

No further comments were offered and no questions were posed. Commissioner Klarr thanked the public for their comments.

CLOSING REMARKS

Mike McDonald expressed that he still has concerns with the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund being raided and would like for this committee to be kept informed of any legislation or action that could negatively impact the Trust Fund and/or the Park Endowment Fund.

Commissioner Klarr reminded the group that a tour of the Outdoor Adventure Center is optional after the meeting adjourns. Those interested in a tour should meet at the Center at noon, and a self-guided tour of Milliken State Park and Harbor and the Detroit RiverFront is also encouraged.

The committee adjourned at 11:30 a.m.