

**Minutes of the
Michigan Snowmobile and Trails Advisory Council
October 8, 2012**
Approved March 13, 2013

The regular meeting of the Michigan Snowmobile and Trails Advisory Council (MSTAC) was called to order by Acting Chair Carolyn Kane at 10:03 a.m., on Tuesday, October 8, 2012 at the Ralph A. MacMullan Conference Center, 104 Conservation Drive, Roscommon, Michigan 48653. The following members were present:

*Carolyn Kane, Acting Chair
James Dickie
James Duke
Bill Manson
Thomas Dunn
Greg Yager
Ron Olson
Mike Foote
Sandra Batie*

The following Department of Natural Resources (DNR) staff were present: *Donna Stine* and *Mary Dettloff*, Executive Office; *Chief Ronald A. Olson*, *Jacklin Blodgett* and *Paul Curtis*, Parks and Recreation Division; *Kristin Phillips*, *Kathleen Erikson* and *Jolene Priest*, Marketing and Outreach Division (MOD); *Corporal John Morey*, Law Enforcement Division (LED); and *Loretta Cwalinski*, Finance and Operations Division.

ACTION ITEMS

Approval of the October 8, 2012 Agenda

Ms. Donna Stine noted that Ms. Erin McDonough was not able to attend the meeting and so there would not be an update of the Blue Ribbon Panel. She also noted that Ms. Kristen Phillips was present and would be discussing the Pure Michigan Website.

MOTION: Mr. Tom Dunn moved to approve the revised October 8, 2012 meeting agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bill Manson and unanimously carried.

Approval of the July 31, 2012 Meeting Minutes

Ms. Sandra Batie noted corrections on Page 4, under *Equine Trailway Committee* remove "Our next meeting is August 2," and a typo "trails" in the second to the last sentence.

MOTION: The revised July 31, 2012 meeting minutes were unanimously carried.

Proposed 2013 MSTAC Meeting Schedule

The proposed meeting dates were reviewed and approved as follows:
February 7, April 22, July 9, and October 29.

PUBLIC APPEARANCE

Mr. Wayne Koppa, Chair of Crawford County Trails, presented a proposed initiative for a bike trail from North Higgins to Otsego Lake and Hartwick Pines state parks. Mr. Koppa feels it would be a national attraction. He would like the MSTAC to look it over and endorse it.

Ms. Batie asked what type of surface would be used; recommended paved.

Acting Chair Kane asked what the total cost would be. Mr. Koppa responded that he thought it would cost about \$5 million. They are looking for Enhancement grant funds.

Ms. Karen Gentry with Michigan Trails Magazine talked about their magazine; they are hoping to expand. It has information on trails and is quite popular; also totally supported by advertising. She shared copies with MSTAC members.

BUSINESS ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Trail User Survey

Ms. Donna Stine summarized the August Survey Monkey. They received a lot of great comments on trails and users; 50 percent of respondents were 50 years old or older. Of note was that respondents said their "favorite trail activity" stayed about the same over the past five years, and the number of hikers increased but snowmobilers dropped a bit. We have a lot of information on what trail users would like and what they expect. Another interesting statistic, 80 percent of respondents said they would be willing to pay for trail maintenance.

Statewide Trails Network Plan

Ms. Stine reviewed the Draft Plan. She said that this could be a huge opportunity to impact communities in a positive way. She would like the MSTAC to review the seven recommendations and objectives today.

Discussion continued on clarification of "fix it first" comments. The off-road vehicle and snowmobile trails are already inspected and maintained regularly.

Chief Olson added that funding has to be there for repairs before creating new trails. Also, preserve the diversity of trails.

Acting Chair Kane said that the page 14 comments are more agreeable and the "fix it first" needs corrected.

Ms. Stine was hoping to modify the Plan to reflect the opinions of all users.

Chief Olson explained the meaning of "resolve conflicts" as one idea. He said this statement could be reworded more clearly. Discussion continued and a recommendation was made to change "reviewing policies" to "Aligning of the policies on multi-use trails to minimize conflicts."

Ms. Batie would like to see Pure Michigan mentioned and the Natural Resources Trust Fund added in stronger statements. She would also like to see stronger wording added on the importance of funding.

Ms. Stine would like to see MSTAC create a subcommittee to edit this report.

The Recreation Passport was also discussed. Need to identify short term needs, and infrastructure costs and needs.

Ms. Stine asked if there should be a recommendation to identify funding needs by year for the next five years; establish a budget. Define short term in 2 years and long term has 8-10. Discussion continued.

Ms. Batie would like to see it mentioned in the recommendation of the impermanence of these trails; i.e. a homeowner can end a trail section that runs through their private property for any reason at any time.

Ms. Stine suggested maybe having a conference call instead of a subcommittee, and letting everyone have the option of calling in and sharing information. Ms. Stine asked the MSTAC to let her know dates.

Ms. Stine explained the Land Cap Fund and the process of having regional meetings with local land use needs. She will be heading that process.

Pure Michigan Website

Ms. Kristen Phillips reviewed marketing of trails and the Pure Michigan website www.michigan.org/outdoors. A big component of the website is the Trip Planner. Everything DNR is in there. Ms. Phillips said that if anyone knows of anything missing on the website, just let her know.

Off-Road Vehicle Budget

Ms. Jacklin Blodgett, Program Services Chief, presented a general overview of ORV trail users, registrations, and grants information.

UPDATES

Equine Trailways Subcommittee and Advisory Workgroups Reports

Equine Trailways Subcommittee (ETS)

Ms. Batie, Chair, reported there are three members working on this plan; it has involved a lot of data collection. A survey went to riding associations, with help from many DNR staff. They have had a good response and continue to analyze the data.

Nonmotorized Advisory Workgroup (NAW)

Ms. Krupiarz, Acting Chair, reported they recently had a nonmotorized meeting which included new member Mr. Dennis Hansen. They felt rather confused in the beginning keeping pathways, rail-trails, single use, etc. separate and how to differentiate trails. They chose to concentrate on each type of trail and look closely at a vision for that. They are working with Ms. Paige Perry and Mr. Todd Neiss, Recreation Specialists, on the pathway section.

Ms. Batie, member of the equine planning group, stated that she would like to see the nonmotorized planning group mention in their report that equestrian use is also considered to be a nonmotorized use but it has its own chapter for the MSTAC plan.

Off-Road Vehicle Advisory Workgroup (ORVAW)

Mr. Tom Dunn, Chair, reported that Mr. Steve Kubisiak, Recreation and Trails Program Coordinator, was nationally recognized and awarded the Off-Highway Vehicle Program Manager of the Year, through the National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council. The Next ORVAW meeting is scheduled for November 7.

Snowmobile Advisory Workgroup (SAW)

Mr. Bill Manson reported that the next SAW meeting is October 16. He referenced the new snowmobile trail signing, and that they were primarily concerned with the safety on the trails. Signing will be consistent throughout the state and there will be two trail inspections each season to ensure consistency. He also said the program is short on funds, and can purchase only five pieces of grooming equipment, where normally they purchase ten.

Meeting adjourned at 1:38 p.m.