

**Minutes of the  
Michigan Trails Advisory Council  
April 13, 2017**

The regular meeting of the Michigan Trails Advisory Council (MTAC) was called to order by Chairman Frank Wheatlake at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, April 13, 2017 at the Ralph A. MacMullan Conference Center in Roscommon. Members present: *Chairman Wheatlake, Sarah Nicholls, Tom Dunn, Jason Rolling, Nancy Krupiarz, Mike Foote, Tim Kobasic, Bill Manson, Jim Dickie, and James Duke.* Absent: *Drew YoungeDyke.*

The following Department of Natural Resources (DNR) staff was present: Paul Yauk, Barbara Graves, Anna Sylvester, Jessica Holley, Emily Meyerson, Kim Kennedy, Nikki Van Bloem, Bill Sterrett, and Scott Whitcomb.

**ACTION ITEMS**

MOTION: Mr. Jim Duke moved to approve the April 13, 2017 meeting agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. Tom Dunn and it carried unanimously.

MOTION: Mr. Tim Kobasic moved to approve the October 11, 2016 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Nancy Krupiarz and it carried unanimously.

**UPDATES**

Public Act 288 of 2016 – Mr. Scott Whitcomb of Forest Resources Division gave an update on the progress of the road inventory project (attached).

Forest roads are defined in statute (PA 451 of 1994) and State Land Administrative Rules as: *A Forest Road is defined as a hard surface road, gravel or dirt road, or other route capable of travel by a 2-wheel drive, 4-wheel conventional vehicle designed for road use. Forest road does not include a street, county road, or highway.*

Water Trails Draft Plan – Ms. Emily Meyerson reported that the policy is waiting for final approval by the DNR, and then they will need funding to implement it.

**BUSINESS ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

Subcommittee Reports

### Off-Road Vehicle Advisory Workgroup, Tom Dunn, Chair

- Since the last MTAC Meeting the ORVAW has had two meetings.
- A joint ORVAW and SAW meeting was held December 14, 2016 to see how the two programs may better work together to provide the users with a more fiscally responsible approach on trail maintenance and equipment usage, especially on shared trails.
- Also discussed were trail conflicts and possible approaches to solutions.
- The two groups agreed to meet twice a year to continue to find ways to work together.
- The work group's regular meeting on March 8th saw discussion on an Alpha Trail system in the Upper Peninsula to mark trail for East /West compared to North/South travel. This pilot project is believed to allow users to better plan their trips and aid in knowing where they are on the system. The project will continue as funding is found to pay for it.
- A Resolution passed to make a Michigan ORV Recognition Day on the First Free ORV riding weekend that falls this year on the June 10<sup>th</sup> weekend. Senate Resolution 34 passed last week making it so.
- The Committee also passed a resolution to approve the recommendation to endorse the use of Lake Gogebic State Park for ATVs with the understanding that it would need trail connections.
- Of particular concern of the Workgroup is the upcoming sunset of the ORV License/ Permit fees. The legislation as written provides no provision for funding after 2018. The Department is working on this. I have also had discussions with legislators as we work to solve it.
- Spring maintenance meetings are being held for the clubs and volunteers to provide guidance and trail maintenance expectations. Also discussed was the proper installation of the carbon fiber confidence markers on both trails and shared trail.
- NOHVCC annual meeting will be held in Grand Rapids Michigan August 14 – 18, 2018.
- The Department put out a survey for ORV's and we had over 10,000 responses with in the first few days, the data will be reviewed and see what trends and wants of our system exist.
- Next meetings: ORVAW/SAW May 3, St. Ignace, ORVAW June 14, conference call
- Mr. Tim Kobasic gave an update on the Hiawatha Integrative Management Plan and road closures. A comprehensive trail workgroup was put together, with specific representatives of the east and west complex for the Hiawatha. This workgroup will have a full definitive comprehensive plan for the Hiawatha completed by January of 2018 for submission. Good news that all of the work they did going back to 2012 is on the table and there has been no changes to that. Level 2 roads will stay on the table.

### Nonmotorized Advisory Workgroup, Nancy Krupiarz, Chair

- The NAW met February 1 in conjunction with the Michigan Trails Summit in Grand Rapids. Scott Whitcomb updated them on P.A. 288. The majority of the meeting was used to discuss funding. So far they have tallied \$538.5M from all state and federal public sources, not including local match.
- Local and private funding sources – Fred Meijer Trail Endowment Fund and local millages.
- Strengths on trail maintenance – they have the most number of rail trail miles in the nation, the Iron Belle, Lake-to-Lake; MRPA did a hard surface trail manual so they have their hands around tasks and costs; the DNR has come up with a manual for maintaining state rail trails.
- They built on to research that was done by Dr. Sarah Nicholls and MSU about how other states pay for Nonmotorized trails to get an idea of what mechanisms they may have overlooked.
- Discussed ideas working with CVBs, setting up state-wide fund for trail maintenance using volunteer hours, and looking to get ahead on new funding sources (possibly medical marijuana.).
- The goal is to establish a sustainable source of funding for maintaining nonmotorized trails - they need citizen investment, corporate investment, and more partnerships in terms of volunteers and youth involvement for projects throughout the state.
- They have turned this discussion into a briefing packet for proposals, legislators, etc.
- They have a new member, Melissa Werkman, Executive Director of the Michigan Mountain Biking Association as their mountain biking representative. Brindley Bird has stepped down due to medical reasons.
- The Mountain Biking Association had a statewide summit and Treetops on March 25. There is going to be a statewide skills clinic on August 25 – 27 at Boyne Mountain.
- Ebikes – they have been working with the various groups to be proactive on this.
- She is retiring June 1. Bob Wilson, who starts May 15, is her replacement at the Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance and is their recommendation to replace her on MTAC.
- Next NAW meeting is May 16.

### Equine Trails Subcommittee, Mike Foote, Chair

- The last meeting was March 8, in conjunction with the Michigan Horse Expo.
- It was pointed out to him from someone from out of state that we have a lot of campgrounds and trails that equestrians can use, but for basically a weekend trip. We need to expand that somehow so that we can offer people extended trips.
- They are going to pick their top three goals in the Trail Plan to tackle first, and then on to more.

- The issue of user fees seems to be becoming more and more acceptable, considering options such as bridal tags. He is going to research what others have done and go from there.
- The MHC expo president, Col. Don Packard spoke to the committee in March and presented info on the legislative day at the capitol.
- The Horse Expo was a success this year, with a good draw of people and good speakers.
- The economic impact study will begin done next month.
- Somehow they need to address the clear cutting along the Shore-to-Shore. He gets the impression that they are still not getting an answer that everyone is happy with. Some more dialogue needs to take place.
- They are looking at great lakes shoreline riding. It is a big deal on the west coast and in other countries such as Ireland. People are paying money to do it. Paul is going to be providing potential areas to do this to see if it's a possibility. It could potentially have a huge impact on tourism.
- Long distance riding, or endurance riding. It would be one day, 25 miles or more. No one has reported back to him so he will reach out and see where that is it.
- They sent a letter out to various friends groups asking for potential connector areas.
- Department staff presented an update on the equestrian trail mapping project. Final edits are currently being made.
- He has talked to several park managers regarding the use of carts on trails.

#### Snowmobile Advisory Workgroup, Bill Manson

- The December 14, 2016 joint meeting between ORVAW and SAW discussed options on how the two groups could work together. One being on how to utilize equipment year-round.
- They had a SAW meeting in conjunction with the Groomer Workshop on 3/2/17. The Equipment Subcommittee is working well with the Department on equipment purchases and working with the different groups to move equipment around.
- After the meeting with Jacklin Blodgett and Bruce Currier from the department to review the last seven years of equipment purchases, they determined there was enough money in an account for purchases. Six pieces of equipment were bought.
- 20,000 snowmobiles were not renewed (3-year registrations) this year. Trail permits were at about what they were last year.
- They received good feedback from the 10 GPS groomer units. They hope to have all the equipment equipped with the units in the future, not only to track where they have groomed, but for billing purposes as well.
- The Easement Subcommittee is working well. Three land employees were hired in the department in WUP, EUP, and NLP to push through the easement process.

- Rogers City and Millersburg Bridge is finally coming to an end. The bridge is in, but there is still some work to finish up.
- They approved to take back the signing and brushing amount to \$90 a mile.
- Manistee River Bridge is still on the forefront. A new trail went in from Copemish and there is a b-route around the bridge to get to Mesick.
- This year was the lowest snowmobile fatality rate that he could find on record.

State Trails Implementation Plan – Mr. Paul Yauk said they are working with the different subcommittees. They are looking at the “opt-out” with staff and are moving forward with economic impacts. He thinks they are doing a good job moving forward with a number of the aspects. The big one is the funding strategy for Nonmotorized trails.

#### Kim Kennedy, Mapping Update

- Ms. Kim Kennedy showed where they left off on the Marquette Pilot. She showed a draft interactive map. They added the Marquette trail pilot data into the recreation search, but it is not currently available to the public. There are lack of funds to finish the project.

Chair Wheatlake charged the committee and department to come back in July with a funding plan to finish the Marquette pilot project and other on-line mapping projects. Mr. Yauk said they will have better direction on what they need and have it formulated and share it beforehand. This will be added to the next meeting agenda.

## **STAFF REPORTS**

#### Emily Meyerson, Parks and Recreation

- DNR partnered with the Michigan Mountain Biking Association on a mountain bike trail forum in March to bring land managers together with mountain bikers to see how they can best work together. It was a good partnership and a good start to get mountain biking in northern Michigan.
- Last weekend there was an ORV workshop that the trail specialists put on with good participation.
- Their pathway signs are finally going in. She is going to be working this summer on promoting pathways.
- Alpena to M65, an upgrade of snowmobile trail to a multi-use trail is ongoing.
- White Pine Trail – 11 miles to be constructed next year.
- Iron Belle Trail – Northern Lower Peninsula is the biggest gap. The work currently being done near the Ralph A. MacMullan Conference Center is work being done on the Iron Belle. It is a partnership with North Higgins Lake State Park. They are putting

in a Nonmotorized trail that will connect into Roscommon headed towards Iosco County and head north towards Grayling and Gaylord, connecting to the North Central State Trail.

- Otsego County – they have grants to the DNR and Otsego County partner to put in a rail with trail, extending from the North Central State Trails on the north end of Gaylord going through town down to Waters. Funding is in place and will be constructed next year.
- Crawford County – working on a piece to get from the city of Grayling to Kirtland Community College.
- Mesick – held a meeting and brought all trail partners together. Notable was how to improve the Thompsonville to Yuma section, and the Manistee River Bridge. There is another meeting to talk about partnerships.

#### Jessica Holley, Parks and Recreation

- She has been working closely with both the subcommittees and user groups to understand their concerns. She has found welcoming communities who are willing to talk to her and partner with the DNR. They are moving forward with the joint meetings and a way to move forward with better communication.
- Mr. Kobasic thanked Amy Swainston on working with them on the ORV handbook.

#### Paul Yauk, Parks and Recreation

- The Gordie Howe Bridge is going to have a pedestrian walkway and bikeway that will connect Michigan to the Canadian system; great for tourism.
- Partnerships - working closely with the city of Detroit, Ralph Wilson Foundation, Washtenaw County Parks, MDOT, Calhoun County. Working with Michael Levine on a \$5 million donation on Lakelands Trail. They are making a lot of headway on the North Country Trail.
- Iron Belle Trail - For private fundraising efforts, they are having a “Challenge Match” through the Michigan Fitness Foundation. Right now they have \$100,000 donation from the Meijer Foundation. Quarterly reports will be posted on line.
- Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Applications (attachment) – There is a significant request for development for bridges, culverts, etc. and also acquisition requests for snowmobile/ORV trails.
- They are looking at partnering with a nonprofit to collect a voluntary fee and to manage grants as a new funding suggestion for non-motorized use.
- A survey was administered to snowmobile and ORV users. In the first two days they received over 10,000 responses. Right now, they have 11,500 responses from ORV users and over 5,800 snowmobiler users. A report of the data will be prepared.

- E-bike legislation – there is a rough draft proposal on what they would like to see from the department that they will share with their partners.
- They are going through a LEAN process with the snowmobile program in the next few weeks. They will report back when finished.
- The Governor’s Conference on Tourism was in Detroit a few weeks back. The department won two major awards in regards to creative partnerships.
- They are working with the Native Americans to promote, enhance, and provide history to residents.

Bill Sterrett, Forest Resources Division

- The Best Management Practices was signed by the director.
- They are continuing on their sign interpretation project.

**PUBLIC APPEARANCE**

- Mark Janeczko from Harrison – he is an enforcement officer in two counties. One of the biggest complaints he gets is for ATVs not following the rules. He suggests having identifying plates on the vehicles. IF they find someone violating the law, they can turn the information over to law enforcement for violations. NPS rangers said a lot of violations are down because of the public who have cell phones that can snap pictures and report them. Most of the information he gets is from the public.
- Martin Johnson from Clare County said he agrees with Mr. Janeczko and that there should be something identifiable on the machines. Another issue is funding, as a volunteer, generally people are in favor of user fees. Changing the passport from an opt-in to an opt-out would be beneficial. Right now counties do not have the money and recreation brings in money. He thinks if this is portrayed to the local counties, they would be in favor of it. Lastly, they are working to get the Pier Marquette rail trail in Clare County completed from Midland to Reed City. They have some lovely trails in what was formerly the Lost Lake Scout Camp; it has lots of trails, roads, and lakes and is currently for sale.
- Brian Beauchamp, Traverse Area Recreation and Transportation Trails (TART) in Grand Traverse. After P.A. 288 was passed, the skiers, bikers, mushroom hunters, and others were concerned how this would affect the non-motorized users. They got together with all the users groups and event organizers and discussed. They had a meeting with the DNR in January. Their coalition of user groups is looking forward to what the inventory says. Their goal is to continue to protect and preserve what they currently have. They are reaching out to other Northern Michigan user groups to

coordinate their messages. He thinks it feels rushed and is moving quickly. They feel like no one was brought in to give an opinion. They are going to talk to their legislators about extending public input. These roads cross the trails and they are concerned about more traffic. Proper signage is important as well. See attached for Coalition Policy Position.

Chair Wheatlake suggested they go through the public process because the DNR will be cognizant of what they say.

Chair Wheatlake stressed that with all the new subcommittee vacancies, they need to push for newer, younger members and to reach out to the communities to see if anyone is interested in serving on them.

Chair Wheatlake thanked everyone for their updates and adjourned the meeting.

# Road Inventory Project Update

*April 12, 2017*

## Public Act 288 Background

Public Act 288, which was signed by Gov. Rick Snyder on Sept. 28, 2016, changes rules for:

- ORV use on state forest roads
- Use of ORVs by hunters to retrieve game
- Use of pack and saddle animals for the retrieval of game

In addition to these changes, PA288 also requires that the DNR conduct a comprehensive inventory of all of the state forest roads and map them.

## Key Messages

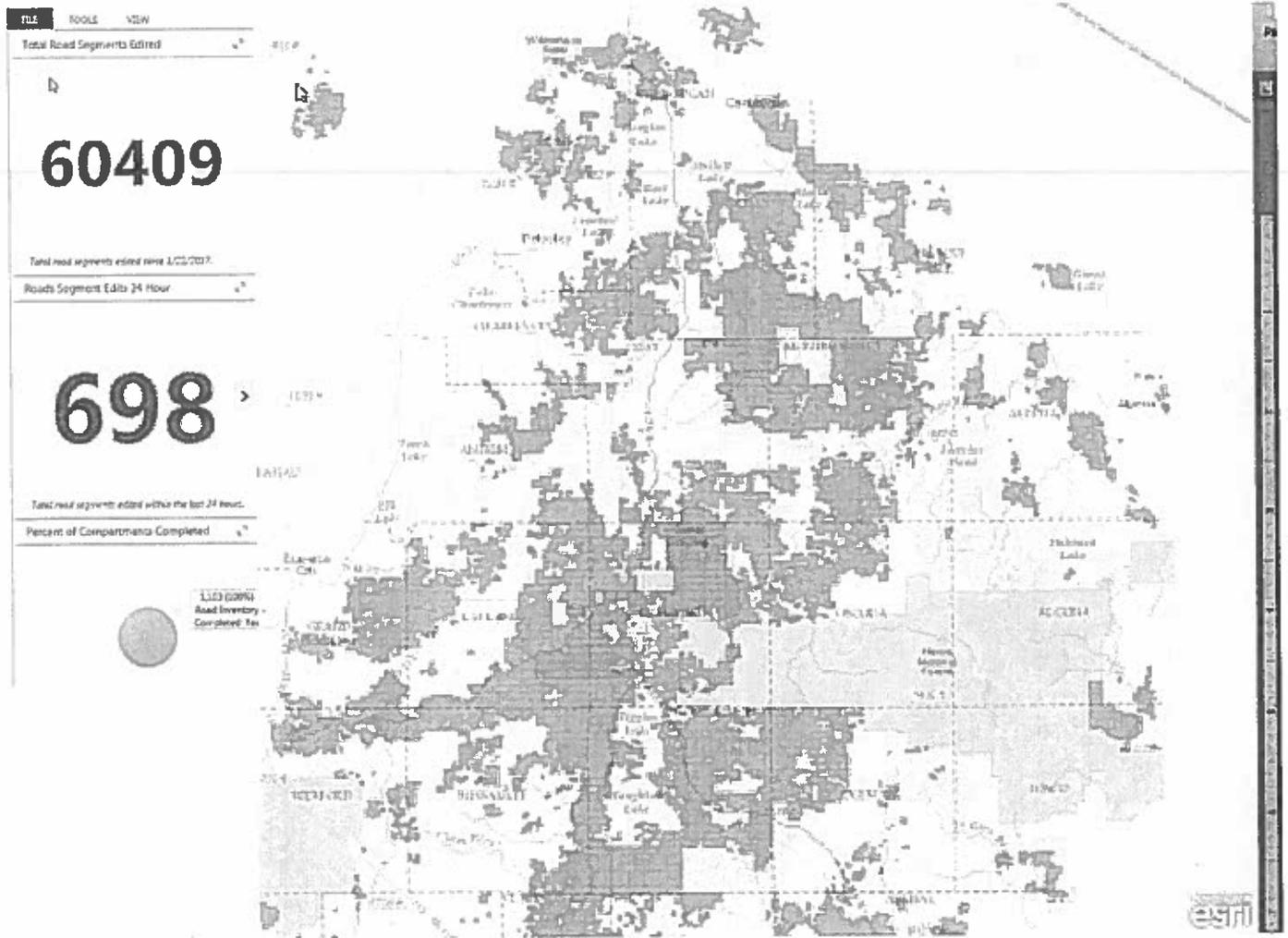
- The DNR is conducting an inventory of all state forest roads to be inventoried and mapped:
  - In the northern Lower Peninsula by Dec. 31, 2017
  - In the southern Lower Peninsula by Dec. 31, 2018
- Forest roads will be opened for ORV use in the northern Lower Peninsula following the inventory and mapping, but they aren't open yet.
- At the end of 2017, maps will be published online to let users know what's open for usage and which forest roads aren't. These maps will be updated every year.
- This is an inclusive process. There will be an opportunity for folks to have their voices heard. This public input component will be crucial to the decision-making process.

## Project Completion Timeline

- Road Classification System approved by DNR (January 2017)
- DNR will gather input from tribes and interested stakeholders (Winter/Spring 2017)
- FRD Staff have completed initial classification on 99% of forest roads in NLP since January 23rd. DNR staff in UP started classification process in March 2017
- DNR Divisions review recommendations for restrictions and/or closures of Northern Lower Peninsula (NLP) roads - (May 2017)
- Tribal notification and consultation on proposed road restrictions/closures in NLP (July 2017)
- Stakeholder meetings in Lansing (early June 2017)
- Public meetings in NLP (late June 2017)
- Final decision by Department on road restrictions – (August 2017)
- Prepare Land Use Order for review and decision (September-November 2017)
- Maps published online for NLP by **December 31, 2017.**
- Timeline for the UP and SLP will overlap the above with maps published on the DNR website by December 31, 2018

**Public Meeting Dates**

- JUNE 19<sup>TH</sup> West Branch, 5:30 to 7:30pm QUALITY INN FORWARD CONFERENCE CENTER, WEST BRANCH
- JUNE 20<sup>TH</sup> Cadillac, 5:30 to 7:30pm CARL T. JOHNSON CENTER, CADILLAC,
- JUNE 21<sup>ST</sup> Gaylord, 5:30 to 7:30pm JAY'S SPORTING GOODS CONFERENCE ROOM, GAYLORD



DRAFT 2017 PRD MNRTF SNOWMOBILE TRAIL DEVELOPMENT NOMINATIONS

Priority Number	District	Location	Project Title	Description	Primary Planning Document Support	Grant Amount	Other Partners
1	Western UP	Hancock to Calumet Trail	Regional Trail Development Phase 1	Replace culverts on a 13.5-mile regional trail to address public safety issues for snowmobile access in order to prevent further trail wash-out. (engineering completed)	Trail Plan	\$300,000	
2	Eastern UP	Snowmobile Trail 8	Bridge Development	Replace three bridges along UP trail 8 in Schoolcraft and Alger Counties. This trail serves as a major link connecting Sault Ste. Marie with Ironwood. Project would increase safety and provided for an important link between communities.	Trail Plan	\$210,000	
3	Western UP	State Line Trail	Menominee River Bridge Development	Repair and upgrade bridge over the Menominee River between Michigan and Wisconsin in Iron Mountain. Project will correct safety concerns and provide a connection for both motorized and non-motorized users to travel between Michigan and Wisconsin. (50% Engineered)	Trail Plan	\$300,000	
4	Western UP	Baraga to Antheim Rail Trail	Baraga to Antheim Trail Rehabilitation and Bridge Development	Phase 1 will address repair of trestle bridge and culverts along the 12 mile rail trail. The project will correct structure concerns and drainage problems to improve safety and prevent future trail damage. (90% Engineered)	Trail Plan	\$300,000	RTP
5	Cadillac	North Missaukee ORV Trail	North Missaukee Trail Bridge Development	Replacement of two bridges in Wexford County on the North Missaukee ORV Route/Snowmobile Trail #6. Updated bridges will provide for safe weight capacity for users as well as trail grooming equipment.	Trail Plan	\$300,000	
6	Eastern UP	Snowmobile Trail #47 and Iron Belle Trail	Iron Belle Trail - Bissell Creek Culvert Replacement	Replacement of culverts on snowmobile trail 47, also ORV and non-motorized trail, in Mackinac County that serves as a link between St. Ignace and communities to the north. Trail currently washes out easily causing environmental damage. Project would replace existing culverts with a single box culvert and prevent further trail washout and safety concerns.	Trail Plan	\$100,000	
7	Eastern UP	Snowmobile Trail 2	Bear Creek Swamp Repair	Project would repair holes in Bear Creek Swamp that cause safety concerns for snowmobile season. Project would include equalization culverts as well as building up a trail bed of aggregate to get the trail above water level.	Trail Plan	\$80,000	
8	Eastern UP	Snowmobile Trail 43	Sunken Lake Bridge Replacement	Replacement of two bridges on a section of proposed snowmobile trail in Schoolcraft County. Proposed trail would create a 12-mile line receiving traffic from trail 43. (Both bridges engineered, DEQ permits valid until Oct. 2019)	Trail Plan	\$300,000	

TOTAL \$1,890,000

DRAFT 2017 PRD MNRTF SNOWMOBILE ACQUISITION NOMINATIONS

Priority Number	District	Location	Project Title	Description	Primary Planning Document Support	Grant Amount	Other Partners
1	Western UP	Marquette Township, Marquette County	Longyear Multiuse Trail Easement	This request is for 30-foot wide permanent easement located on Longyear Realty property for Snowmobile and non-motorized trail use, which will allow for permanent public access to various multi-use trail systems including hiking, mountain biking, cross country skiing, snowmobiling and the NCT in northern Marquette County from the Iron Ore Heritage Trail. Marquette Township is currently in the design stages for a multi-use recreational trail underpass project below US-41 that would provide a safe crossing below this busy business corridor and provide connectivity to this request and adjoining trails. This acquisition will include construction of one bridge and one large culvert structure and new trail construction at the landowners discretion. The trail will travel through forested woodlands and provide permanent easement as well as connectivity for the snowmobile and other non-motorized users, vital to ensuring un-interrupted access from year to year. 3.95 miles	Trail Plan	\$510,000	
2	Western UP	Snowmobile Trail 13, 12, and 3 Ontonagon County	Weyerhaeuser Multiuse Trail Easement	This request is for various 30-foot wide permanent multi-use trail easements located on Weyerhaeuser properties in Ontonagon County for snowmobile, ORV and non-motorized trail use. Purchasing these easements will reduce the use of private lands and eliminate the opportunity for trail closures due to permits being denied. Easement requests include 9.35 miles on Snowmobile Trail 13, 3.75 miles on Snowmobile Trail 12 and 0.51 miles on Snowmobile Trail 3.	Trail Plan	\$310,300	
3	Western UP	Pioneer Trail Ontonagon County	GMO Multiuse Trail Easement	This request is for one 30-foot wide permanent multi-use trail easement located on GMO property for snowmobile, ORV and non-motorized trail use. This will ensure the long term use of this popular recreational trail known as the Pioneer Trail and Snowmobile Trail 3 and 13. Purchasing this easement will reduce the use of private lands and eliminate the opportunity for trail closures due to permission being denied. This multi-use trail is considered a key component to the Ontonagon area economic recovery strategy and overall recreation plan. - 3.2 miles	Trail Plan	\$74,200	

DRAFT 2017 PRD MNRTF SNOWMOBILE ACQUISITION NOMINATIONS

Priority Number	District	Location	Project Title	Description	Primary Planning Document Support	Grant Amount	Other Partners
4	Western UP	Snowmobile Trail 109 Houghton County	Snowmobile Trail 109 Multi-use Trail Easements	This request is for 3, 30-foot wide permanent multi-use trail easements located on Moipus, Penegor and Keweenaw Land properties for snowmobile, ORV and non-motorized trail use. This will ensure the long term use of this popular recreational trail. Purchasing these easements will reduce the use of private lands and eliminate the opportunity for trail closures due to permits being denied. - 2.98 miles	Trail Plan	\$84,400	
5	Western UP	Snowmobile Trail 3 Keweenaw County	Snowmobile Trail 3 Multi-use Trail Easements	This request is for 23, 30-foot wide permanent multi-use trail easements located on various properties for snowmobile, ORV and non-motorized trail use. This will ensure the long term use of this popular recreational trail known as Snowmobile Trail 3 and the Keweenaw ORV Trail. Purchasing these easements will meet specific goals and objectives identified by the Houghton-Keweenaw Recreation Authority to secure permanent multi-use trail agreements. - 5.4 miles	Trail Plan	\$123,800	
6	Eastern UP	Strong's to Raco Trail Chippewa County	Canadian Pacific Railroad	Canadian Pacific RR owns the grade from Strong's Rd. to Old Brimley Grade Rd. (approx. 12 1/4 miles by 100' wide) and they are wanting to sell the property. This section is the main artery for the EUP that connects Soo to Strong's, Trout Lake, Rexton and Hulbert. Includes 20% for processing fees.	Trail Plan	\$290,850	

TOTAL \$1,393,550



# Pere Marquette State Forest Non-Motorized Trail User Coalition

## Policy Position on PA 288 Forest Roads Inventory and Legislation

Non-motorized user groups in the Traverse City State Forest are working together to improve and expand the trail network. The coalition of trail users is seeking:

- Recognition that the area of the Traverse City State Forest within Grand Traverse and Kalkaska counties are a recreation destination with an emphasis on safe zones for non-motorized recreation.
- Recognition that coordination with motorized trail groups in the Forest will provide better recreation opportunities for all users.
- A request to slow this forest roads inventory process down. The December 31 deadline is too fast approaching to give this process the energy and time that it deserves in order to have a satisfactory outcome for everyone.

## Coalition Goals

*Non-motorized trail user groups including hikers, cyclists, walkers, runners, skiers, snowshoers are working to ensure that as a result of PA 288 that:*

- Established non-motorized trails in the State Forest are preserved

- Existing trails and new trail connections are enhanced and improved upon

