

**Minutes  
Nonmotorized Advisory Workgroup  
January 18, 2019**

**MEETING ATTENDANCE**

NAW Members Present: Chairman John Morrison, Bob Wilson, Jim DuFresne, Mary Bohling, Kristen Wiltfang, Lori Hauswirth, Jason Jones

DNR Staff Present: Nikki Van Bloem, Kriss Bennett, Greg Kinser, Mike Morrison, Jill Sell

Guests: Taylor Reynolds – Orion Township Pathways Committee; Ryan Smith – Bay County GIS Tech/Transportation Planner; Laura Ogar – Bay County; Steve Davis – Noquemanon Trail Network Board Member/Non-motorized Rep MTAC; Jenny Cook – Southwest Equestrian Rep MTAC

**WELCOME**

Chair John Morrison called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. and asked everyone to introduce themselves. Jason Jones introduced himself and he will be taking Melissa Workman's place on the NAW. Jason has served on the NAW in the past and he is currently the President of MMBA and a board member of the Potawatomi Mountain Biking Association.

Mike Morrison – DNR Water Trails Coordinator introduced himself and announced that the applications for state designated Pure Michigan Trails, Water Trails and Trail Towns will be available in early February 2019 and applications are due on June 1, 2019.

**PUBLIC APPEARANCE**

There was no public comment at this time.

**ACTION ITEMS**

Bob Wilson moved the approval of the January 18, 2019 Meeting Agenda. It was seconded by Kristen Wiltfang and it carried unanimously.

Bob Wilson moved the approval of the November 16, 2018 Meeting Minutes. It was seconded by Kristen Wiltfang and it carried unanimously.

**BUSINESS ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

NAW Report to MTAC – Bob Wilson reported that the next MTAC meeting is on April 17, 2019 and his term on the Council expired yesterday (January 17, 2019). He has asked to be reappointed and is awaiting a decision. There is a unique opportunity for NAW to fashion a series of trail related policy recommendations for Governor Whitmer's Administration including Dan Eichinger, the newly appointed DNR Director. It is important to speak with consistent voice and have common priorities. Bob will be prepared to discuss this in more detail at the March NAW meeting and he is willing to report NAW findings to MTAC in April.

NAW Mountain Biking Representative – Jason Jones reported that he spoke with Paul Yauk. Paul confirmed that Jason is on the NAW representing mountain biking and his appointment letter has been delayed and is forthcoming.

Jason Jones also mentioned the need to be inclusive when talking about trails. There is a great deal of focus on motorized and linear trails and often the non-motorized, natural surfaced, single-track trails are overlooked and underfunded. There is a need to repair and maintain many of these trails in State and local parks and showcase their popularity.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

NAW Policy Stance for New Administration and Legislature – In an effort to produce a more meaningful work product from the NAW meetings, Bob Wilson discussed an idea to create a coordinated effort that will have a positive impact on trail related policy and build a stronger connection with the Michigan Legislature and Executive Office. Bob has noticed positive results on several pieces of legislation when members of the Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance reach out to legislators and speak with one voice and work in conjunction with state and local agencies on policy recommendations.

Jim DuFresne also identified the need for additional educational/communication information on recent proposed legislation like the Recreation Passport Opt Out.

John Morrison is also concerned about what NAW's influence is going to be and the role in Statewide Trails Implementation Plan. Overall, he agrees with Bob on finding ways to have an impact and a unified voice when reporting information to MTAC and working with the Legislature.

Bob and John will work to identify priorities and a communication plan to work with the Legislature. Bob also mentioned the possibility of partnering with the League of Michigan Bicyclist on Advocacy Day in May or during Trails Week in September. It will be an opportunity where everyone can come together and have a presence in Lansing to discuss trail related topics like Recreation Passport Opt Out, SJR O, Water Trails Program funding, appropriation items and recreation trespassing issues with legislators. The goal would be to identify immediate and long-term opportunities and a develop consensus agenda.

Nikki Van Bloem expressed that there is always a desire for more trails, however it is important to maintain existing trails, repair/replace culverts and bridges and fill missing gaps. She also noted that the Iron Belle needs to be completed.

Several NAW members agreed with this approach and voiced the need to create action items that will produce meaningful outcomes, otherwise there is not a lot of value in NAW. Nikki reiterated the need stay on track with origin of NAW and mission. NAW is a DNR workgroup and there needs to be consistency and conversations with additional people/groups.

Further discussion was had on the Recreation Passport Opt Out and the misperceptions that the public and legislators may have. There is a need to develop messaging and infographics with the DNR that is consistent and transparent on where the funding goes.

**Action Item: Send 5-6 policy items/topics to John, Bob, Nikki and Kriss by February 15<sup>th</sup>. Bob will send a reminder email to NAW. Determine common themes. Discuss at the March NAW meeting.**

## UPDATES

Timelines for Updated State Trails Implementation Plan (*moved agenda order at the time with no objection*) – Kriss Bennett gave a brief background on the original plan and how the DNR has changed organizational structure of the departments and responsibilities. Today, the DNR Trails Section works on trails, not only in state parks, but also on forest land, wildlife land, other public land and private property. It is important that the updated State Trails Implementation Plan be the umbrella that feeds into the strategic plan and that metrics are evaluated and kept for all trails. The next step would be to hire a consultant to help oversee the planning process and plan development. A focus will need to be on evaluating other strategic plans and identifying metrics to show the successes and areas that need additional work. It will also be important to analyze the entire network of trails (public, private, state, non-profit and local) in order to be successful. Kriss hopes to have more information for NAW at the March meeting on how members can be a part of this process and develop a new plan that will meet everyone's needs. The overall project kickoff is anticipated to begin in summer 2019 and the plan development may be completed in late 2019/early 2020.

## ROUNDTABLE UPDATES

Lori Hauswirth – The Upper Peninsula is having a variable ski season since there is not much snow right now. However, the ski areas are open and events are still being held.

Bob Wilson – Bob needed to leave the call early, but John Morrison thanked him and reported that with a lot of help from MTGA, the White Pine Trail received a \$3 million appropriation from the State of Michigan which tremendously helps move the project forward to pave the remaining 29 miles of the 93-mile trail between Grand Rapids and Cadillac. Meetings with the DNR will take place in a couple weeks to plan how to move this project forward and raise the remaining funds.

Jason Jones – Jason is working with land managers to groom trails for fat bikes. Snowmobiles with grooming devices and track sleds will be used to groom these single-track trails. They are also selling grooming badges to trail users to help fund grooming/maintenance costs and approximately \$1,200 in grooming badges have been sold even though there is no snow in Southeastern Michigan. Also, the sales of fat bikes have increased significantly, and this trend is something to watch.

Kristen Wiltfang – The Clinton River Trail is kicking off their 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration on January 29, 2019. A full year-long schedule of events can be found on the trail website: [www.clintonrivertrail.org](http://www.clintonrivertrail.org). The federal funds have been obligated for the Michigan Air Line Trail development project, the project is advertised and the bids are to be opened on February 1, 2019. The communities in northwestern Oakland County are meeting to discuss potential alternative routes for the Iron Belle Trail-Biking Route.

Andrea Ketchmark – Not present. No update.

Jim DuFresne – Jim has been working to georeference trail maps using Avenza software and the map of Independence Oaks County Park is now available on their app [www.michigantrailmaps.com](http://www.michigantrailmaps.com). Many trail users express interest in having access to these types of maps on their smart phones.

Mary Bohling – The Quiet Water Symposium will be held on March 2, 2019 at MSU. Mary is working on the launch of an invasive species volunteer program. The Flint Water Trail is working on the final stages of developing a water trail map. In addition, there are two new launches and they are working to develop a third access site along the river. Kayak Flint, a livery service, will officially launch in 2019 and provide canoe/kayak rentals and shuttle service. The Flint River was also one of the first stretches of river to be designated as a Michigan Water Trail and there will be an announcement and celebration on January 31, 2019. The Detroit Heritage River Water Trail has been working on a new kiosk and a video with Beaumont Health Systems. The Rouge Water Trail has a leadership committee that will focus on the Lower Rouge River Water Trail and developing a 5-year strategic plan, finalizing a logo, managing woody debris and working on getting state/federal water trail designation.

John Morrison – MATAG (Mid America Trails and Greenways) Conference will be held in Grand Rapids August 30-September 2, 2020 at the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel. MATAG covers nine states around Michigan, including Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, and Missouri, and represents numerous kinds of nonmotorized and motorized trails. It's held in a different state every other year. We're working to build the local committee which will design the session program and numerous field trips. WMTGC is in the final stages of hiring a Development Coordinator to help in fundraising for the many projects we have in front of us with our strategic plan.

Nikki Van Bloem DNR Update – PRD leadership is working with the new DNR Director and Governor through the transition. The DNR received a \$5 million appropriation for the Iron Belle Trail and more information is to come on how those funds will be distributed. There was also a 3-day DNR Trail Section meeting that covered a variety of topics including some discussed during this NAW meeting with mapping, infrastructure inventory and maintenance, and MDOT partnership as it relates to rail trail project management.

Chairman John Morrison asked members to send Kristen Wiltfang their roundtable updates.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:  
Kristen Wiltfang