

OFF-ROAD VEHICLE ADVISORY WORKGROUP (ORVAW)

MEETING MINUTES

December 1, 2010

Approved February 9, 2011

**Ralph A. MacMullan Conference Center
104 Conservation Drive, Roscommon, Michigan 48653**

PRESENT FOR THE WORKGROUP

Thomas Dunn, Chair
Greg Yager
Jim Faiella
Tim Kobasic
Pat Brower
John Chad
Amy Trotter

PRESENT FOR STAFF

Lynne M. Boyd, Chief, Forest Management Division (FMD)
Steve Kubisiak, FMD
John Morey, ORV and Snowmobile Safety Field Coordinator, Law Enforcement Division
Jason Urbach, Intern, FMD

PUBLIC ATTENDEES

Rose Ingram, Huron Manistee National Forest
Lewis Shuler, Cycle Conservation Club of Michigan
Dick Ranney, American Motorcyclist Association, District 14
Sue Thrushman, ATV Off- Road
John Matonich, Natural Resources Commissioner

WELCOME INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Dunn called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. Workgroup members, DNRE staff, and guests introduced themselves.

BUSINESS ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Approval of December 1 Agenda:

Tim Kobasic moved seconded by **Pat Brower** to approve the agenda. **Motion unanimously carried.**

Rules of Procedure – Chair Dunn, Steve Kubisiak, and Lynne Boyd reviewed the rules of procedure for the Michigan Snowmobile and Trails Advisory Council (MSTAC) and the articles that apply to the workgroup. The workgroup supports the addition of provisions to address timely review/approval and posting of meeting minutes on the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE) website. This will be addressed at the council level.

Tim Kobasic moved seconded by Pat Brower to accept the rules of procedure. Motion unanimously carried.

Chair Dunn reviewed the mission of the workgroup. The purpose of the ORVAW is to assist the MSTAC in performing the duties and responsibilities of the MSTAC, and to provide the DNRE advice related to the off-road vehicle program. This includes advice related to the creation, development, operation, and maintenance of the designated ORV trail system.

2011 Meeting Schedule – The following dates were selected: February 9, May 11, August 10, and November 9. Meetings will be held during the evening in Lansing. The schedule will be posted on the DNRE website.

Chair Dunn asked each workgroup member what they see as priorities.

Greg Yager identified trail connectivity and need to get input from stakeholders to identify issues.

Tim Kobasic cited the ORV management plan as the blue print to follow, and need for enhanced financial support to sustain and grow the program. He believes the resource should come first and is concerned about impacts of a potential state hiring freeze.

Jim Faiella voiced concern with the ORV budget and supports a registration program to increase revenues. He believes many Michigan residents purchase ORVs out of state resulting in a loss of Michigan tax revenue. He supports tourism, and noted a need for better maintenance and education before expansion.

John Chad noted the trail system has a great economic impact in Crawford County, and believes there needs to be a focus on tourism in order to generate revenue and boost local economies.

Pat Brower represents the Great Lakes Four Wheel Drive Association and is an advocate for challenging routes.

Amy Trotter said revenue necessary to sustain the ORV program is critical and it is important to work early with the legislature with the proper message of safety, education, and conservation.

STAFF REPORTS

John Morey reported on the status of ORV safety education and instructor certification programs. Policy for instructors is nearly complete and potential on-line training course is under consideration.

Steve Kubisiak reported on the background and status of the motorized trail sign handbook. The document will be discussed at the next Snowmobile Advisory Workgroup meeting in hopes of resolving a couple of outstanding issues regarding snowmobile trail signs. The recommendations will then go to the FMD management team for final endorsement and to the office of legal services for review. The handbook will be provided to the ORVAW for information at the February meeting. The new ORV trail reassurance markers will begin to be phased-in starting in 2011.

Rose Ingram, Huron-Manistee National Forest reported she would represent the national forest on the ORVAW until a replacement is found for Carol Boll.

PUBLIC APPEARANCE

Dick Ranney said the ORV program is at the threshold of success or failure, and noted the need for an adequate revenue stream to sustain the program. He encourages stakeholders to contact their legislators.

Commissioner John Matonich is an ORV enthusiast, and is supportive of the program and the associated economic impacts to local communities.

Chair Dunn motioned to adjourn the meeting at 4:30 p.m. seconded by **John Chad**.

NEXT MEETING

February 9, 2011, 6:30 p.m. in Lansing. Meeting site to be determined.