

**Off-Road Vehicle Advisory Workgroup
Minutes
March 7, 2018**

The regular meeting of the Off-Road Vehicle Advisory Workgroup (ORVAW) was called to order by Chair Dunn on March 7, 2018 at 6:30 p.m. Members present were: Chairman Dunn, Don Helsel, Tim Kobasic, Lewis Shuler, Jim Hunt, and Jim Maike. Pat Brower joined via telephone.

The following Department of Natural Resources (DNR) staff was present: Jacklin Blodgett, Paul Yauk, Barbara Graves, Amy Swainston, Nicole Toman and Kim Kennedy. Scott Slavin, Jessica Holley, and John Morey joined via telephone.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Dunn welcomed everyone and asked that everyone mute their phones. Everyone introduced themselves.

ACTION ITEMS

MOTION: D. Helsel moved to approve the October 10, 2017 amended meeting minutes. It was seconded by T. Kobasic and it carried unanimously.

MOTION: D. Helsel moved to approve the March 7, 2018 amended meeting agenda. It was seconded by T. Kobasic and it carried unanimously.

UPDATES

- Subcommittee Reports – The Handbook of Michigan ORV Laws and Safety Education Handbook Subcommittees were put on the agenda separately and were addressed later. P. Brower reported that the subcommittee to look at the ORV route system will meet again prior to the next ORVAW meeting and will have an update at that time.
- Shared Trail Maps – Kim Kennedy gave a presentation on the multi-use Snow/ORV interactive trail maps that she has been working on. It brings together the GIS data they have for Snow and ORV trails, including motorcycle, ORV routes, and ORV trails. She hopes to have them finished this month and be made available to the public soon (see attached example).
- Handbook of Michigan ORV Laws and Safety Education Handbook. Cpl. Morey reported that he sent the information for the handbook to Lansing again on 2/1/18 with all the changes. He did provide comments with those suggestions. He asked for an update and will meet with Lansing staff and Sgt. Orange on 3/14/18 to go over the handbook.

After T. Kobasic asked J. Holley to look in to the process, he said the issue with communication is between Law Enforcement and the publisher, not through the workgroup and Law Enforcement. The next step would be to see about advertising to help defray costs. P. Yauk suggested making a recommendation. Cpl. Morey is going to coordinate a meeting between Sgt. Orange, himself, and workgroup members. Chair Dunn would like to see them distributed in all the tourist centers.

MOTION: T. Kobasic made a motion that the DNR look in to the opportunity to sell advertising in the publication and work it into the same format as the Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Digest to see if it is feasible and if it will save money. That a directive be sent from the Department to the representative of Law Enforcement and the ORVAW group to conference about this issue and the adjustments that were recommended in the Handbook. Thirdly, that the mode of distribution be amended to make sure that they are at Point of Sale and tourist centers in the State of Michigan. D. Helsel supported, and J. Hunt seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

- Safety Education Handbook - T. Kobasic reported that some of the teaching material in the textbook and the written test are not comprehensible for kids. Based on information they received from a study done on behalf of the DNR by MSU student Dakota Hewlett, they found that those who had been riding ATVs/ORVs for the last 20+ years have never had any formal training. Anyone born since 1960 has to have hunter's safety certification. Why not apply this concept to the adult level? They want to consider a two-tier education program. He is involving teachers at grade levels and some adults to seek their opinions on content. Then, maybe set a second tier for adults to become certified. He hopes to have this outlined before the next meeting. They would look at the age requirement for certification, whether it is a physical or an online teaching mode, amendment of the teaching materials applicable to the age class, and amendment of the testing material suitable to the application of age class. He is asking for the workgroup's endorsement before they proceed.

P. Brower agrees with presenting the material in a more age-appropriate version.

N. Toman said they would need to take a look at what is being proposed to see if it presents any conflict of what is allowed in statute to see if they would need approval for it, or whether it is within their scope of what they have the authority to do. Requiring certification, because that is not currently required, would definitely be something that would need legislative approval.

MOTION: T. Kobasic made a motion that the Workgroup endorse his outline for a two-tier education program and to then work with the Department to develop and vet the proposal. D. Helsel supported and J. Hunt seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

- Legislation Update – Chair Dunn reported that P.A. 199 of 2017 passed and would extend the ORV permit until April 2024.

HB 4846 of 2017 - N. Toman said this bill was introduced in late 2017. It allows off-road vehicles to operate on far right of streets, roads, and highways; allow unless prohibited by local unit or MDOT.

RESOLUTION: Whereas the Off-Road Vehicle Advisory Workgroup does not support HB 4846 of 2017. Motioned by: T. Kobasic and seconded by D. Helsel. The resolution is unanimously supported.

HB 4997 of 2017 – N. Toman said this bill would be amended to strike the requirement for individuals under 16 years of age to wear a crash helmet while operating an off-road vehicle on their own property and also striking the requirement where an individual who is age 16 or 17 to get consent from their parents to ride without a crash helmet.

Chair Dunn requested the Department keep them updated on these bills.

- Consumers Energy Property and DNR Trails – N. Toman reported that Consumers is one of the largest land owners in the state. A number of trails and trail connections that they use actually utilize a portion of the Consumer's properties. There is now a desire and a need to formalize that usage. They would be looking at putting together an agreement between the clubs and Consumers, recognizing the usage. They will work with everyone on this and more information will be sent.
- P.A. 288 of 2016 Update – P. Yauk gave an update on the forest road inventory project. They met yesterday on the signage for the Northern Lower Peninsula. All the signs have been purchase and distributed to the field. They will be installed by Parks and Forestry staff in April, or soon after the ground thaws. T. Kobasic asked what the estimated cost is year to date for the project. P. Yauk will get them the total year to date. J. Holley said there will be public meetings May 14 in Houghton, May 15 in Iron Mountain, May 16 in Marquette, and May 17 in Newberry. They will be run similar to the meetings held in the Northern Lower. On May 1st the public comment road viewer will be on line where you can drop comments on the map: www.michigan.gov/forestroads. The public comment closes on June 15 and then the comments will be compiled and the divisions will evaluate them and make the final recommendations. July and September the maps will be completed and the divisions will make those approvals and in October there will be a press release regarding a second public input period. November, the public review will close then the divisions will finalize the maps. A press release and final maps will be posted live on the web in December.
- Finance Review/Update – Jacklin Blodgett introduced herself as the new Assistant Chief for the Parks and Recreation Division. This new position will be charged with helping strengthen the relationship between Parks and the other divisions. In the future, someone else will be doing the financial updates when they fill the vacant Section Chief position. She then gave a brief overview of the ORV financials (see attached presentation).

- MI-TRALE Request to Retain the Current Route Names – D. Helsel asked the workgroup for permission to keep the format of the signs. Chair Dunn recommended he and T. Kobasic sit down and talk and then bring it back to the workgroup at the next meeting.
- Project Lists 2017 & 2018 – P. Yauk briefly went over the spreadsheet of the PRD Trail Construction Projects.

NEW BUSINESS

- Chair Dunn went over the ORV Preseason meeting dates (see attached memo to the ORV Grant Sponsors and Stakeholders).
- Marketing Ideas – D. Helsel said he does not think the state does enough to market the sport. P. Yauk said they have marketing staff and there is a plan in the works. He will invite marketing staff to the next meeting. Chair Dunn and P. Yauk mentioned the upcoming Governor’s Conference on Tourism and for the first time they have been invited.
- Easements – D. Helsel thought someone from the department was going to give an update. Nothing new to report.
- 2018 NOHVCC Conference in Grand Rapids – L. Shuler said the conference will be 8/14/18 – 8/18/18. There will be a preconference ride on Monday at Silver Lake. A workshop will be in Lake County on Thursday that will include Yamaha’s Factory Trailers, KTM, and Honda. There will be sessions on Friday and Saturday in Grand Rapids. Call Lewis if you want more information. Contact Paul Yauk for the Silver Lake event.
- Discussion on Success of Free ORV Weekend Campaign – Chair Dunn wants to expand the ORV Free Weekend to go alongside NOHVACC weekend. Chair Dunn and P. Yauk will discuss.
- DNR Staff Reports

A. Swainston reported that the internal request for DNR projects that utilize forest officer hours was done March 1. P.A. 288 – they are still working on what the formal process will be to change any roads that were closed or if they were open do they need to be closed. There is no formal process on that yet.

P. Yauk reported that the Northern Lower Peninsula Trail Coordinator, Emily Meyerson has resigned, so that position will be open. Pat Olson was hired to fill the Property Analyst position. The Oakland County project is moving forward and they have organized a committee to set up a plan. He will share it with the workgroup.

J. Morey, Law Enforcement Division - there are two ORV Instructor Academies scheduled for April 27 – 29 at the RAM and June 8 – 10 in Escanaba. Regarding HB 4997, they have sent an inquiry to the Michigan State Police because any personal accident and fatality would be done on a crash form which is sent to MSP. They have asked for statistics which would provide information they could in turn present to legislators in regards to the bill. They are staying involved.

L. Shuler updated the workgroup on the Mahindra company which is a tractor company out of India. They have come to Michigan and have a plant now at 75 and 59. They are building the Roxor; they do not intend to plate this vehicle. It is a 45 MPH, 4-cylinder diesel engine that can have up to 120 hp. It looks a lot like a Jeep. They also build side-by-side utility vehicles. Peacock is going to be a dealer for the Roxor. They are looking forward to getting more involved with ORVs in the State of Michigan. They will have info at the conference. The UTV they make is called the Retriever.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:16 p.m.