

## Silver Lake Off Road Vehicle Area (SLORVA) Parking Lot Committee Meeting Discussions/Outcomes

March 25, 2015

**Attendees:** Tony Malinowski, Jeff Beemer, Charlotte Kiefer, Annamarie Bauer

The following items were discussed and/or conclusions reached concerning the parking at the Silver Lake State Park ORV Area.

There is not enough parking; however, short term and single vehicle parking appear to have adequate capacity typically.

Currently there are approximately 210 pull through spaces. An evaluation of the current layout confirmed that the maximum parking capacity is being achieved with the current design. An alternate pattern was considered by realigning the rows of parking in an east west configuration but that caused circulation concerns and only yielded 175 pull through spaces.

Current parking deficiencies total 75 spaces on average with the exception of the three major holidays (and holiday weekends) based on those willing to wait. The demand is greater over the holidays. It is also recognized that if there was more parking there would be more visitors.

Additional offsite parking is not really an option due to the need to get to the dunes with vehicles that are not licensed for public road travel.

It is recommended that the current parking area be doubled in size (minimum with future expansion consideration capabilities). The area north of the current parking would be the most desirable area to expand the parking into. NOTE: There have been previous discussions (and concept drawings provided) by other task force participants suggesting the expansion of the parking to the east (outside the current ORV boundaries). Both the north and east areas are within the critical dune boundaries and would require permit application to the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Please see notes regarding DEQ Permits at the end of this report.

The parking expansion to the north is being recommended for several reasons:

- 1) It is within the current ORV boundaries and would require no revision of the current Land Use Order of the Director.
- 2) Planning and layout of this area could also help with circulation and access to the dunes.
- 3) An additional safety check station should be added as part of the new parking.

Miscellaneous discussion items included:

There are circulation issues at the parking lot entrance due in part because of the air pump activity on private land.

If parking is to be expanded (adding another lot) the existing parking lot (or part of it) could potentially be repurposed for dune ready stacking.

DEQ Permit for work within the critical dunes.

RE: Original DEQ Permit

The DEQ District Office checked with Lansing regarding the old Shorelands Data base, which is where the file number for the 1990 permit would be stored. The Lansing staff was unable to locate any files identified for Silver Lake State Park prior to 2000. Files over 20 years old are generally destroyed so it is unlikely they have the original file.

The DNR was told that even though the current access drive location is part of the platted public road system, it has no bearing on the permitting process.

RE: New DEQ Permits

The DNR field planner spoke with our Department of Environmental Quality representative for the area (on Monday 2/23/14)

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She outlined the following permitting process (Flow Chart attached) when proposing work in a critical dune area. Applicant would be required to complete a joint permit sections 1-9 and section 20 for critical dunes. If the proposal impacts slopes steeper than one on four or is within 100 feet of the crest, plans must be prepared and sealed by a licensed architect or engineer. The initial application process will take no more than approximately 3 months after the file is complete unless a special exception is required.

To have a complete file a soil erosion permit or waiver, a septic permit or waiver and a vegetation removal assurance must be submitted.

A secondary step in the process may be required if the proposal impacts slopes with a gradient of greater than one on three slopes. This type of application must be noticed to the local unit of government. Process must allow 60 days for a local government response. Note: if there is no action by the local unit of government you must allow full 60 days. If you know you are impacting areas of greater than 33% you may file the special exception application along with the joint permit to help expedite the process.

The following reference materials are attached for additional information:

Joint Permit Application Review Process Flow Chart  
Frequently asked questions  
Permit Fee Schedule

Next Steps: Have DEQ provide input on areas for additional parking due to critical dune impacts. Charlotte will bring up potential locations for parking expansion during her next meeting with the DEQ the week of March 30, 2015.

Update:

Charlotte met with the DEQ Grand Rapids District Office to familiarize them with the site and the issues raised by the SLORVA Task Force including the need for additional parking and improved access to the ORV Area.

Since the legislature has “found that Critical Dune areas of the state are a unique, irreplaceable, and fragile resource that provide significant recreational, economic, scientific, geological, scenic, botanical, educational, agricultural, and ecological benefits to the people of Michigan,” many facets need to be explored and considered before a permit would be approved. DEQ’s Water Resources Division is willing to assist Parks and Recreation with this project within the confines of the Critical Dune law. They are willing to meet with us to review draft proposals.