

MSPAC PLANNING SESSION

COMMISSIONER INPUT

Renee and Ron,

Thanks for putting on today's meeting...as you write out the notes let's not forget that these Go To Meetings need to have the work up on the screen. For instance today's meeting should have had the bylaws posted. I wanted the looseness of the chatter today so everyone would get to say what was on their mind but from now on the agendas need to be more to the point and not a lot of items.

We need to pursue the information library and get the 2016 meeting schedule to the group again and maybe build in some conference calls.

The group was interested in 3 main things:

- 1) MSPAC members to serve as focus group for parks and recreation system
- 2) Leadership role for larger issues, including advocacy with legislators
- 3) Ambassadors for the state park and recreation system
 - a. Media and getting the word out

This includes Trevor and Kristin being at some of your meetings.

Once again I see the committee on the same page to help and work with the State Parks department to be the best it can be.

Louise

Notes—MSPAC Conference Call 14 December, 2015

(Notes from Tom Bailey)

ROLE OF THE COMMITTEE:

There are three basic roles for committee members as an advisory group:

- **FOCUS GROUP:** Provide input and feedback to the department on planning, management and other issues including park management plans, marketing, and so on. In this role, the committee acts as a focus group or sounding board to provide input and advice to the department.
- **ADVOCATES:** Members work on policy issues in public and with elected officials and others. In this role we sometimes go “out front” and help to promote policies and programs or occasionally fly trial balloons for policy issues.
- **AMBASSADORS:** Members promote the parks and recreation system to the public and other organizations to help spread the word about state parks and recreation programs. To promote information and understanding of the parks, important issues, and the significance of the parks to the larger Michigan community.

These roles will align with the outcomes of the Governor’s Blue Ribbon Committee adopted report.

The ADVOCAY function needs clarification in two ways: first, we need to develop general guidelines for how committee members approach advocacy, when we do and don't contact legislators, and how we coordinate with the staff—which is critical! Second, we need to maintain, on an ongoing basis, a list of major policy issues and positions which we are working in the legislature or trying to sound out among legislators. This may require some background work by certain members and staff, and preparation before the general meeting.

Regarding the AMBASSADOR function, it is important that we have information and materials that we can reference for the public, the media, service clubs, professional groups, etc. These would all be done in alignment with the Parks and Recreation Division of the DNR.

ISSUES AND PRIORITIES

There seems to be broad agreement that the future of the State Park Endowment is of critical concern. Long-term sustainability of the fund, balance between funding operations and capital, and other matters are of concern.

There was also interest in maximizing the efficiencies of our meetings. We should develop more specific agendas for our meetings and stick to the agenda.

It is important to separate action items from information items, and spend an appropriate amount of time on things requiring action.

1. Chris Graham Date: Nov 18, 2015

These things come to mind for my list.....

First, to find highly helpful Legislators to lead the way on changing the Parks Passport to opt out, and get them going full speed ahead on that. I would expect Rebekah Warren would be very helpful on her side in the Senate -- who in the House? And who on the Republican side in both houses?

Second, to work out a better handle on capital improvements/major repairs vis a vis income from the Natural Resources Land Trust. It is not good to be spending such a high percentage of those dollars on operations (though I am sure there are significant projects being done as part of absolutely essential operations expense). This probably needs to happen regardless of opt out -- how to continue to gain more people purchasing the Passport?

Third, to continue to increase the amount of Stewardship occurring on behalf of natural features on the Parks, and perhaps, to begin to monitor and measure and mitigate where we can the effects of climate change. And, perhaps, to begin a deer management program where needed -- there no longer is a Trillium Festival at Hoffmaster State Park, once a place highly famous for the presence of that plant (and quite a number of other plants and trees no longer able to grow there -- but which would recover if deer numbers on the Park were brought back down and kept down).

Fourth, to begin some development in accordance with the Master Plan on Rockport/Negwegon/Thompson's Harbor (mostly on Rockport).

Fifth, to be completely prepared and ready to combat any effort in this Legislature to touch the constitutional provisions of the Trust Fund -- unless there is genuine and widespread political willingness not to mess with the essentials, only make improvements widely agreeable.

2. Bob Hoffmeyer Date: Nov 21, 2015

1. Establish plan to remove "opt-in" and install "opt-out" for Recreation Passport. Plan to educate citizens as to benefits of Recreation Passport.
2. Prioritize infrastructure needs in our parks and develop funding to help meet the needs.
3. Increase stewardship throughout the system, and continue to improve educating the visitors to our parks about all of the natural features in our parks.

3. Jim Hendricks Date: November 23, 2015

I appreciate Mary's suggestion for the upcoming Planning Session. My suggestion would be to look at how we can clarify the role of the MSPAC. This might help us stay focused on what we should be doing, and stay away from things we shouldn't be involved in.

As background, in the committee's previous iterations (Citizens Committee for Michigan State Parks), and in the committee even before that, members were very active in pursuing passage of both a long-term plan (Vision 20-20) and then the Passport program to help address the financial shortcomings that were identified in that report.

Follow-ups become very active, including members meeting directly with legislators, etc. in pursuit of the Passport legislation. Many other recommendations from the 20-20 report have been incorporated in one form or another into ongoing Parks Division activities and management. In general, these early committees were very active and, in partnership with the division, somewhat freewheeling in problem identification and responses.

We realize that the committee's duties and responsibilities have changed, and while the committee has evolved into a sub-committee of the NRC, the committee still has a great deal of energy, and we perhaps need some direction on how we can best be used to advance the Michigan State Parks system. I was happy to see that the agenda starts with a review of the Executive Order and the committee by-laws. Perhaps a review of the Committee's By-Laws (which is really what our charge is) would be useful, posing the following questions as we look at the items:

How do we accomplish this item?

What should we be doing, or studying to advance this item?

Anyhow, that's my two-cents.

Jim Hendricks