

MINUTES

NATURAL RESOURCE COMMISSION

Michigan State Parks Advisory Committee

September 13, 2018

9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park
Wilderness Visitor Center Auditorium
22203 Headquarters Rd., Ontonagon, MI 49953

PRESENT FOR THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Commissioner Louise Klarr, Chair

PRESENT FOR THE MSPAC

Ann Conklin
Tom Bailey
Chris Tracy
Chuck Hoover
Julie Clark
Mike McDonald
Mary Pitcher
Jim Bradley
Ron Olson – DNR Representative

ABSENT

Bob Hoffmeyer
Jefferson Gray
Jim Hendricks
Mike Foote
Chris Graham

OTHERS PRESENT

Jacklin Blodgett
DNR Management and Staff

MICHIGAN STATES PARKS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (MSPAC)

OPENING COMMENTS

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 a.m. by *Commissioner Klarr*. Commissioner Klarr welcomed everyone to today's meeting. Committee member introductions were made around the panel.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes were approved for the August 9, 2018 meeting. *Commissioner Klarr* motioned for approval of the minutes with *Committee members Tom Bailey* and *Julie Clark* seconding that motion. Motion to accept minutes passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jim Harter expressed interest to the committee in making the Porkies a National Lakeshore instead of a state park. Further requesting that the committee consider this.

PRESENTATION

Western Upper Peninsula Major Maintenance Update

Doug Rich, Western UP District Supervisor and *Dan Dowdy, Baraga State Park Manager* shared a PowerPoint presentation with the committee on major projects underway in the Western UP district. This district is currently working on repairs from a 2016 flood in Gogebic County. There was extensive trail damage in this area, with approximately \$20 million worth that occurred in June 2018. The Parks and Recreation Division (PRD) continues to address the erosion problem at McLain State Park; which includes shoreline and infrastructure being eroded away due to high waves on Lake Superior.

Western Upper Peninsula Storm Damage

Ron Yesney, Land Program Manager, PRD, spoke about the June 2018 storm event that dumped seven inches of rain in a short 2 hours. This storm resulted in 158 washouts, some of considerable size, on trails throughout Houghton County. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) incident response team have been working on repairs; this team includes multiple divisions and other state departments. The projects have been reviewed, with health, safety and local economics as a top priority. Yesney stressed the importance of educating trail users about the places they can go.

GENERAL UPDATES

Chief Updates (v)

Chief Ron Olson, PRD, spoke about the impact of raising the price of the recreation passport that are purchased at parks. The price went to \$15.00 if purchased at the park. This increase generated an additional \$1.3 million in revenue. The number of passports sold at parks has decreased by 6%; this incentive to purchase at the Secretary of State is having the desired outcome.

Olson further noted that non-resident passport sales are up by 3%, lodging up 1.4% and boating harbor nights are up 15%. Much of these increases seem to be associated with promotion on social media.

A 2018 survey of campers showed high levels of customer satisfaction; 92% said they would recommend state parks to a friend, 96% feel the experience is a good value, while just under 90% were satisfied with their experience. These figures remain consistent with previously completed camper surveys.

Western Upper Peninsula Project Update

Several major Upper Peninsula projects were shared by *Doug Rich, Western Upper Peninsula District Supervisor*. Some of the projects discussed were: improvements to the day use area at McLain State Park, Van Riper State Park water system failures, improvements to campground flooding sites, and the design phase for the Lakeshore Shooting Club.

Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park Update

Jeff Gaertner, park manager, Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park, and *Mike Knack, park supervisor*, shared that visits to the park are up by 40% since 2014. The Porkies expect to see 440,000 visitors by the end of next month. A new back country camping reservation system has received a very positive response from the public. Currently there is no indication that there are plans to pursue mining in the Porkies.

INFORMATION ONLY

Written Updates included

County Road 107 Draft Issue Statement (w)

Next meeting to be held on December 13, 2018 in Lansing, Michigan.