

MINUTES

NATURAL RESOURCE COMMISSION

Michigan State Parks Advisory Committee

February 9, 2017

MSU Diagnostic Center
4125 Beaumont Road
Lansing, MI 48910

PRESENT FOR THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Commissioner Louise Klarr, Chair
Commissioner Christine Crumbaugh, Co-Chair
Commissioner Chris Tracy, Co-Chair

PRESENT FOR THE MSPAC

Ann Conklin
Mike McDonald
Tom Baily
Julie Clark
Ann Conklin
Jim Hendricks
Chris Graham
Brad Garmon

ABSENT

Mike Foote
Jim Bradley
Jefferson Gray
Mary Pitcher

OTHERS PRESENT

DNR Management and Staff
Ron Olson
Matt Lincoln
Vicki McGhee
Jason Fleming
Debbie Jensen
Scott Pratt
Linda Walter
Paul Yauk

MICHIGAN STATES PARKS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (MSPAC)

OPENING COMMENTS

The meeting was called to order at 9:07 a.m. by Commissioner Louise Klarr. Commissioner Klarr welcomed everyone and made introductions; welcoming new Commissioner Chris Tracy. Chris is new to the NRC and the MSPAC committee; Chris is from Kalamazoo and is a lawyer. Commissioner Klarr also thanked Chris Graham and Ann Conklin for their reappointment and continued support of the committee.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes were approved for the December 8, 2016 meeting. Commissioner Klarr motioned for approval of the minutes with Jim Hendricks and Tom Baily seconding that motion. Motion to accept minutes passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment today.

PRESENTATIONS

Outdoor Adventure Center:

Linda Walter, Director, Outdoor Adventure Center (OAC) presented an overview of the first year's progress and programs at the OAC. Linda shared a slide presentation that reviewed the project from its beginning; showing the site and building condition prior to renovation. The building was built in 1892, 40% of the original building was able to be saved in this renovation, creating a wonderful story for the City of Detroit and the DNR. Linda also shared the variety of programs and new program ideas that are at the OAC or are being developed. The OAC is a gateway to the Michigan State Park system. One of the features there is the "Park of the Month" program; where displays, videos and other great items tell the story of a particular state park. Some of the other programs include:

- Wild over Wednesday – the OAC is open from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m., free of charge to visitors of all ages.
- Archery program – this is a growing program with great interest and demand for this sport.
- Trip Planning Corner – this provides various pamphlets for our parks and area attractions, and is one of the more popular spots in the OAC.

The OAC's goal is to inspire, educate and provide engaging opportunities for people of all ages by providing a variety of programs and reaching out to groups, seniors, young professionals and children; as well as introducing them to the many outdoor recreational activities Michigan has to offer.

Linda and a very enthusiastic staff at the OAC work as a team to provide great customer service to the 100,000 guests they received in the first year of operation. Linda noted that for the first year of operation there was no real marketing plan for groups, but word of mouth traveled fast and the groups started coming in. They are currently working on the ability to provide some level of transportation for groups so the OAC is also able to connect them to our state parks in the area. Several committee members offered ideas and questions about the opportunities for private or non-profit funding to help support some of these ideas. Committee members Ann Conklin and Mike McDonald thanked Linda for her leadership and commitment and sharing her knowledge with the committee today. Ann further suggested that a "recreation passport plus" that included the OAC might be a viable option to consider.

Ron Olson, Chief, DNR Parks and Recreation, spoke about the initial business model that was developed for the OAC and how it was set up to be self-supporting. It had been hoped that each display within the OAC would be sponsored by an outside entity, thus assisting with the operational costs of the facility. At this time sponsorship of the displays has not been successful; however the ultimate goal is to try and get more investment to the site. Ron further spoke on the changes to the area and working with the local park services and City on the revitalization of the riverfront area, which the DNR is very involved in.

ACTION ITEMS

Menominee River State Recreation Area:

Deb Jensen, DNR Park Plan Administrator, reviewed details of the Menominee River State Recreation Area Management Plan. This management plan is a result of a joint effort with the State of Wisconsin. The collaborative effort hopes to present a one place, one feel experience from the river. Support and approval of the plan by the MSPAC Stewardship subcommittee was noted.

This is a widely used river, so community input in the planning process is vital. This park was established in 2011, acquired by a Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant. The park consists of 7,652 acres in several counties and encompasses 17 miles of the Menominee River frontage. The park offers camping, hiking, boating and other recreational activities. Significant items at this park are a large track of undeveloped land that provides an excellent opportunity for game and non-game wildlife. It is believed that there is also historical and cultural significant quite likely here. Providing improved access to the area with more defined parking lots, trails, a picnic area, resource protection and management are the goals. The question of mineral rights on the property was brought forth; Deb indicated that approximately 30% of the mineral rights are not owned by the DNR.

Upon completion of the presentation a resolution of support from the subcommittee meeting held on February 25, 2017 was accepted.

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF: No motion needed as support was approved when previously reviewed and approval recommended by the MSPAC Stewardship subcommittee meeting held on January 25, 2017. Resolution No. 02-2017-01 approved.

2017 Proposed Workshops:

Ron Olson reviewed the topics the team would like to consider for workshop discussions in 2017. The workshops are typically held on the off months when no MSPAC meeting is scheduled to be held. Topics included: camping fees, RAM Center, Infrastructure funding, marketing and the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan. Dates for these workshops will be discussed and arranged in the near future.

2017 Subcommittee Assignments:

Current committee assignments were maintained. It was noted that Tim Nichols will no longer be on the Finance Subcommittee, current members will continue to serve. It should also be noted that regular meeting dates for the Stewardship subcommittee have been established and all committee members have agreed to these dates.

GENERAL UPDATES

Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park Memo:

Ron Olson, Chief, Parks and Recreation Division, reviewed the recent memo distributed to all committee members. Olson explained that coring samples were previously obtained, approximately 20 years ago. The mining company is currently updating their records and has requested and received a permit to do core sampling. They have worked very closely with us to avoid any destruction or disturbance in the affected area. They do own the mineral rights and are able to take this action. Mineral law allows for reasonable access. Ron pointed out the criteria that were required for the company to remove the core samples.

Going forward the DNR intends to inventory all park lands, determine the lands that are affected by encumbrances of any mineral rights associated with the property. Many property purchases go back years; so research is necessary. As the data for this evolves we would like to have the stewardship subcommittee review the collected data and suggest resolutions. **Committee member Tom Baily** stated he was disturbed to see this happening and questioned the grounds for what is reasonable access in a state wilderness area. Going forward legal and administrative rules should be examined and up to speed to deal with issues of this nature in the future.

Committee member Chris Graham questioned how much of the park was at risk and how long it was likely to take to get DNR records up to date? Ron noted that it may be up to one quarter of the land that is affected and we expect to have more data in 3-4 months.

Commissioner Chris Tracy suggested that as we move forward if the owners of the mineral rights have not met their obligations we may be able to legally pursue ownership of them.

Director Creagh further spoke to the committee about the department looking at many parcels where subsurface rights have been severed. Some of this happened back in the early 1900's. Director Creagh further stated that this is a priority land strategy and we are looking at what we own, so we are more in control of our destiny.

Finance Subcommittee Update:

Ron Olson, spoke about the subcommittee meetings that have been held regarding current and future funding. He also noted that an additional \$10 million was being set aside for state park infrastructure funding. There is a meeting schedule for Friday, February 10, 2017 to discuss other initiatives for the future and what our priorities should be. Meeting is scheduled to begin at 9:00 a.m.; please contact **Renee Parker** for entrance to Constitution Hall.

PRD Strategic Plan Progress Update:

Vicki McGhee, Chief, PRD Planning Section, shared a slideshow of the many accomplishments achieved throughout 2016 and covered the main goals of the draft strategic plan. Vicki spoke about this ongoing project throughout 2016 with workshops, public meetings, various stakeholders and advisory groups taking part by offering their comments and suggestions. Data is currently being collected for an action plan for each year of the strategic plan. Our next steps will be to seek comments from our advisory groups, staff, DNR management team and tribes. As well as periodically discussing the plan with stakeholders and other groups. We intend to seek final approval of the plan at the June DNR Management Team meeting.

Review potential projects for 2017 Grant Applications:

Matt Lincoln, Grants Coordinator, PRD Planning Section, presented the ideas we are proposing for grant application projects. Matt will bring forth the final list of applications that were applied for at a later meeting. At this time there are 18 projects on our priority list. Listed below are some of the projects that were presented at today's meeting.

Land and Conservation Fund:

- Wilderness State Park Phase 4 - \$300,000 – additional campsites and toilet/shower building
- McLain State Park - \$300,000 – Phase 1 of masterplan to include construction of contact station and utility work
- Hoeft State Park - \$400,000 – Replacement of electrical system, current system failing

Development Grants:

- Belle Isle park - \$200,000 – Lake Okonoka Habitat restoration, includes kayak launches
- Belle Isle park – Scott Fountain - \$300,000 to construct side paths and place a ramp.
- Iron Belle Trail – Gaylord - \$300,000 – 11 miles of multiuse trailhead to Gaylord.

- Island Lake Recreation Area - \$300,000 – connect the park to the Lakeland Trail/IBT and to other regional trails.
- Hancock to Calumet Trail - \$300,000 – Phase 1 Development – replacement of culverts etc.
- Holly Recreation Area - \$300,000 – multiuse trail between campground and day use area.
- Petoskey State Park - \$300,000 – Taking trail through the park due to various safety concerns, this will also provide a trailhead for the Iron Belle Trail. Critical dunes in this area do create some additional expense.

There are many other grants that were reviewed as well as various property purchases. The committee will receive an update at their April meeting of what grants will be applied for.

Committee member Julie Clark commented on how the state is working so well with local communities on these various trail issues and other items that the communities value and support.

Marketing Plan Status:

Ami VanAntwerp, Communications Coordinator, DNR, shared a slide presentation of the 5 marketing plans that will be focused on this year. Social media planning has been a big focus; and a very successful program this year. Ami noted that we recently launched an Instagram page. A pilot program recently run focused on 3 parks: Waterloo RA, Palms Book, and Fort Wilkins with great success. The program was of minimal cost at only \$350.00 with fantastic metrics for these parks from the program. The focus was on 5 plans: snowmobile, boater registration, destination marketing, dark sky parks and the recreation passport. Further marketing efforts for the recreation passport will be forthcoming; GUD marketing is developing a new message that everyone is very excited about. **Jason Fleming** shared that the new DNR website should be ready to launch by June 2017.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m.