

MINUTES

NATURAL RESOURCE COMMISSION

Michigan State Parks Advisory Committee

April 13, 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
Chuck Hoover
Jim Bradley
Julie Clark
Ann Conklin
Jim Hendricks
Chris Graham

ABSENT

Mike Foote
Tom Bailey
Jefferson Gray
Mary Pitcher

OTHERS PRESENT

DNR Management and Staff
Ron Olson
Matt Lincoln
Stephanie Yancer
Jason Fleming
Tim Machowicz
Brad Garmon

MICHIGAN STATES PARKS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (MSPAC)

OPENING COMMENTS

The meeting was called to order at 9:33 a.m. by **Commissioner Louise Klarr**. Commissioner Klarr welcomed everyone and made introductions; welcoming new committee member **Chuck Hoover**. New member Chuck Hoover lives in the Saginaw area and is a member of MUCC.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes were approved for the February 9, 2017 meeting. Commissioner Klarr motioned for approval of the minutes with **Chris Graham** and **Julie Clark** seconding that motion. Motion to accept minutes passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Brad Garmon, Michigan Environmental Council spoke about an upcoming event they are hosting in early May. Garmon noted that parks with sand dunes are some of the most visited in Michigan. This celebration will give the opportunity to engage with people and survey them on how they recreate at the dunes as well as what other activities they enjoy there.

Garmon also spoke about the mining at the Porkies, encouraging the DNR to spend more time on this issue in collaboration with the DEQ. Feels this is not rational mining at a state park. Garmon also shared that the Porcupine Mtn. State Park is listed in Backpacker magazine as one of the top 10 places to hike/back pack. Garmon further stated that we need to keep on track of this and develop a better understanding of mineral rights in that area.

Commissioner Klarr commented that mineral rights are a very important part of any land ownership; stating that it is her understanding that the DNR is very actively collecting information on mineral rights for all state parks. Other committee members also noted that several cities along Lake Michigan have had to deal with these same types of issues.

PRESENTATION

Blue Ribbon Plan Update – Infrastructure Targets:

Ron Olson, Chief, DNR Parks and Recreation, provided an update on the Blue Ribbon Panel Plan on State Parks and Outdoor Recreation. Olson provided highlights and accomplishments for each of the report's seven recommendations. The Blue Ribbon Panel was established in 2011, with a 16 member panel to provide a vision for the future. Goals have been cross referenced with the DNR's various plans to assist in outcomes and to ensure we find ways for sustainable funding going forward.

Questions were presented by various committee members regarding working with RV companies in Indiana and if there has been any consideration for a lifetime recreation passport? Olson noted that we have in the past and that there may be another opportunity to go back and revisit those items. Olson noted there is an extra 10 million being considered in the legislature for state park infrastructure.

ACTION ITEMS

Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Grants 2017:

Ron Olson reminded the group that at the last meeting, Matt reviewed a draft list of grants to be submitted to the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund. Since that time there has been additions to that list. One is for snowmobile bridges, culverts and infrastructure. There is a growing gap in funding for this group. Multi use trails get a lot more interest than single use trails.

Matt Lincoln, DNR Grants Coordinator, reviewed details of the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Grants for 2017. Matt spoke about projects presented to the group in February; all those projects are still on the list. There was also six applications submitted for permanent snowmobile easements for Northern Lower Michigan, these added applications were to address some of the snowmobile issues.

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF: The committee unanimously approved a resolution supporting the projects submitted. The resolution was previously reviewed and approval recommended by the MSPAC Stewardship subcommittee at a meeting held on January 25, 2017. Resolution No. 04-2017-02 approved unanimously.

Sleepy Hollow State Park General Management Plan:

Matt Lincoln, DNR Grants Coordinator, reviewed details of the Sleepy Hollow State Park General Management Plan. Support and approval of the plan by the MSPAC Stewardship subcommittee was noted.

Matt noted that much of the work was completed in house with Chuck Nelson assisting with data, which is important to the planning process. Matt reviewed background on the park and what is unique to this park. The parks lake was created by dammed up farm land, done in the 1960's. The park has a 410 acre manmade lake with boating and fishing opportunities. This lake is a no wake lake, open to hunting, has a variety of forests and wetlands and is only 20 minutes north of Lansing. It is also the only park within 40 miles with Equestrian trails. Recently added rustic and modern cabins also open to equestrian use. Campground is newer in the system with some private sites. Many new green initiatives have been tested and implemented there and have been able to be implemented at other parks.

An online and onsite survey was conducted about the park; there were 155 who returned online survey responses, 103 completed the onsite survey.

Camping is the most popular activity that people do at this park. The surveys also showed that this park is lake focused; people come here for the lake. Goal is to focus on improving the trails that exist. The lake is currently invaded with milfoil; we will be developing a lake management plan. This disease makes it hard to fish and paddle, lake has diminished in the last few years due to this issue.

Chris Graham commented that this is a great park and always full, we need to pay special attention to this park and urge your approval.

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF: Committee Member **Chris Graham** asked for a motion of support for approval of Resolution No: 04-2017-03. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Julie Clark. The Stewardship subcommittee has previously recommended approval at a meeting held on January 25, 2017. Resolution No. 04-2017-03 was approved unanimously.

Bay City Recreation Area Name Change:

Commissioner Louise Klarr, tabled discussion on the Bay City Recreation Area name change so further review can be completed. The committee will take up the name change resolution at the next meeting to be held in June 2017.

Recreation Passport Fees:

Ron Olson discussed the adding of a \$5.00 fee to the Recreation Passport purchases that occur at state parks as opposed to through the Secretary of State (SOS) at the time of license renewal. This would align with the \$5.00 charged by the SOS when a recreation passport is purchased outside of the usual license renewal cycle. This would also incentivize people to purchase the passport at the time of renewing their vehicle licenses. The intent is to have this charge effective January 1, 2018.

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF: Committee Member **Mike McDonald** asked for a motion of support for approval of Resolution No. 04-2017-05. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Ann Conklin and seconded by Committee Member Chris Graham. Resolution No. 04-2017-05 was approved unanimously.

INFORMATIONAL

The next workshop will be held on May 17, 2017 from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m.

GENERAL UPDATES

Update on Porcupine Mtn. Wilderness State Park:

Ron Olson spoke about the copper exploration occurring in and near the Porcupine Mountain State Park. Recent DNR press releases were included in all committee members' packets.

One critical point to note is that exploration within the park was ended in February due to the ground in the park thawing. Exploration on frozen ground was a condition the DNR put into place. Additional exploration is currently transpiring that the road commission granted a permit for with no stipulation on frozen ground.

This is the company's exploratory effort to update their records; at this time there are no imminent plans to mine minerals that are beneath the park. A letter from Director Creagh to the company was included in member's packets. The letter requested public input on any potential mining and requested the following of all DEQ requirements.

Committee member **Chuck Hoover** questioned if we are now reviewing our minerals rights at other parks? **Olson** further explained that we are doing an analysis of each one so we are aware of what we do own. Noting that there are parts in areas including the porkies where we don't own the mineral rights and it is more pervasive than we thought. We do want to ensure accuracy and where it's feasible develop a strategy to secure those rights. Some areas may not be possible to secure due to the price being prohibitive.

Committee member **Chris Tracy** expressed concern that the county should be communicating with us when permitting for these items. Noting a letter to them should be sent so we are all working on the same page; as the Public thought this area was the park when it was not.

Jason Fleming provided some clarification on what portion of the area is owned by the county. **Commissioner Louise Klarr** requested that a status update be completed every 6 weeks on this item or when something significant happens.

Finance Subcommittee Update:

Committee Member Ann Conklin spoke about the recent subcommittee meetings that have been held. Noting that the committee has requested additional information and will continue to work on the funding topic. **Committee Member Chris Graham** added that the numbers are astonishing, and a source of funds for capital projects for the next 15+ years must be found. The funding source must be a sustainable fund; to bring needed repairs up to date. There is still no definitive answer but the committee continues to work and look for a solution as many items needing addressed are health and safety issues in these parks.

Social Media Our Next Steps:

Jason Fleming shared a handout of what we are doing in conjunction with other departments in the social media arena. **Stephanie Yancer** shared a slideshow presentation on our efforts about social media in our parks. Some channels that are being used are Facebook (largest method), Pinterest, and Instagram. All are great ways to showcase what we have at our parks. Twitter is also used; however we are working to get away from twitter as it is more of a newsfeed site. **Stephanie** noted that the number one demographic is 25 -34 year olds. Destination marketing has been a key tool and has been very successful in driving people to particular destinations.

Senate Bill 280:

Included in the member's packet was a memo from Committee Member **Tom Bailey** regarding Senate Bill 280 and how this bill would adversely affect funding. After committee discussion, the committee passed a resolution urging the department to oppose Senate Bill 280, which affects the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund. The bill would allow the Legislature to determine the amount of funds made available for awards for acquisition and development through the fund. This bill would also limit to two years the time period for Trust Fund project completion.

Committee Member **Ann Conklin** expressed that this was a great example of what some of the problem is; expressing concern over how we are handcuffed on how we can apply for funding for our parks. Committee Member **Mike McDonald** complimented Tom Baily on an extremely well written memo and plans to share with others. McDonald also noted that this would diminish the addition of more land for not only recreation but for hunting, fishing etc. This is a real threat to our recreation.

Committee Member **Ann Conklin** motioned that we as a committee oppose SB 280 as presented. Committee Member Julie Clark seconded that motion. The resolution was passed unanimously.

Director Keith Creagh spoke briefly that the DNR can't independently take a positon on this issue but that we can share that the MSPAC is opposed to this. It should be noted that the commission does not support SB 280

The meeting was adjourned at 11: 50 a.m.