

MINUTES

NATURAL RESOURCE COMMISSION

Michigan State Parks Advisory Committee

Thursday, December 13, 2018

9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Lansing Community College West Campus
5708 Cornerstone Drive, Lansing, MI 48917

PRESENT FOR THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Commissioner Louise Klarr, Chair

Commissioner Chris Tracy

PRESENT FOR THE MSPAC

Ann Conklin

Tom Bailey

Bob Hoffmeyer

Chuck Hoover

Julie Clark

Mike McDonald

Mary Pitcher

Mike Foote

Jim Bradley

Chris Graham

Ron Olson – DNR Representative

ABSENT

Jefferson Gray

Jim Hendricks

OTHERS PRESENT

Jacklin Blodgett

DNR Management and Staff

MICHIGAN STATES PARKS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (MSPAC)

OPENING COMMENTS

The meeting was called to order at 9:04 a.m. by *Commissioner Klarr*. Commissioner Klarr welcomed everyone to the meeting. Committee member introductions were made around the panel.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Klarr motioned for approval of the September 13, 2018 meeting minutes with *Committee members Tom Bailey* and *Chris Tracy* seconding that motion. Motion to accept minutes passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF 2019 MEETING DATES

Meeting dates were approved for 2019.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chauncy Moran said he did some ground proofing in the Tobico Marsh area. He spent a couple days earlier in the week interviewing occupants in the area, the park manager, and some hunters and found no conflicts. Commissioner Klarr thanked him for his efforts and said everyone is appreciative.

ACTION

Fayette Historic State Park – General Management Plan

Matt Lincoln, PRD opened with background and a presentation on the 724-acre Fayette Historic State Park and the General Management Plan. The public had the opportunity to comment on the plan and the feedback was mostly positive. They are seeking a resolution today in support of the plan. *Committee member Tom Bailey* said he thinks there are great opportunities to incorporate interpreting Great Lakes Maritime history, schooner navigation, and other similar types of history into the interpretive efforts down the road, or to enlist partners or volunteers to assist. *Committee member Mike McDonald* recommended Dr. John Halsey, a former state archeologist and author, as a historian contact. He asked if there are planning efforts to have a fishing access site. *Matt Lincoln* said there is an old dock that is still there that could possibly be renovated and used, along with other historic docks. *Commissioner Richardson* suggested local historian Arnie Dunathan from the Escanaba area who was instrumental in the original land acquisition. His son and grandson (both Clint Dunathan) are still in the area and have a keen interest in Fayette because of the family connection. He also suggested Frank Ettawageshik,

former chairman of the Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians. Members thought it was important to keep the historic significance of the site.

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF: *Committee member Chris Tracy* asked for a motion of support for approval of Resolution No: 12-2018-07. The motion was seconded by *Committee members Mike McDonald* and *Mary Pitcher*. Resolution No. 12-2018-07 was approved unanimously.

YEAR IN REVIEW OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION SYSTEM

Metro and Rose Lake Districts

Mike Terrell, Metro District Supervisor and *Murdock Jemerson, Rose Lake District Supervisor* shared a presentation with the committee on highlights and key accomplishments for 2019. The Metro District received just over \$7M in revenue, with Algonac State Park emerging as a million dollar park. Rose Lake generated \$5.8M in revenue. Accomplishments for Metro included 4 new sewage lift pumps, and the district functioning at near perfect staffing levels. Accomplishments at Rose Lake included a new toilet and shower building at Bruin Lake Campground, a new park headquarters at Maybury State Park coming in spring 2019, and Mill Lake Cabin restoration of 5 cabins at Waterloo Recreation Area.

Plainwell and Cadillac Districts

Gary Jones, Plainwell District Supervisor and *Kasey Mahoney, Cadillac District Supervisor* shared a presentation with the committee on the 2018 and 2019 projects taking place or scheduled to take place in the districts, attendance data and revenue, staffing, and partnerships. Infrastructure improvements for 2018 in the Plainwell District are in Holland, Grand Haven, Ft. Custer, and Hoffmaster. Scheduled improvements for 2019 are Warren Dunes, Muskegon, Grand Haven, and Ft. Customer. Infrastructure improvements for 2018 in Cadillac are Ludington, Silver Lake, and the White Pine Trail. Scheduled improvements for 2019 are Silver Lake, Traverse City, Ludington, Interlochen and the White Pine Trail. Revenue in Plainwell topped \$10M.

Roscommon and Gaylord Districts

Rich Hill, Gaylord District Supervisor and *Bill Doan, Roscommon District Supervisors* shared a presentation beginning with some of the challenges going into the 2018 season, including the amount of snow, which slowed some park operations. Both districts are up in the number of camp nights for 2018. Trends show that over multiple years, they continue to show steady growth, with an increase in day use areas. *Bill Doan* mentioned challenges they have had in Roscommon with staffing vacancies due to retirements, lateral moves, etc. He gave kudos to staff who kept up with their duties while facing these challenges. One of the biggest infrastructure challenges is the electrical set up at the parks because of the amount of big rig use. Bay City flooding was a challenge in Roscommon, with most campsites being closed. *Rich Hill*

mentioned the Lakeshore Campground at Wilderness that is being redesigned in a variety of phases.

Eastern and Western Upper Peninsula Districts

Eric Cowing, District Supervisor Eastern U.P. and **Doug Rich, District Supervisor, Western U.P.** went over the projects in 2018, which included a new headquarters building at Muskallonge State Park, stairway rebuild at Laughing Whitefish Falls, and a new playground at Brimley State Park in honor of a former ranger. Western U.P. projects included over 25 projects at Ft. Wilkins from painting to clearing that were completed by 150 volunteers through Michigan Cares for Tourism, a new storage building that was built at the Escanaba Field Office, and Phase 2 of major reconstruction at McClain State Park due to lake erosion. Eastern U.P. challenges include filling vacant positions, recruiting qualified applicants, utility costs, expansion of duties, and many projects. Challenges in the Western U.P., included Lake Superior Erosion, staff retention and recruitment, storm damage, and budgetary shortfalls (utility costs are high in the U.P.). Storm damage continues to be a constant struggle. East U.P. projects set for 2019 completion include the Lime Island general management plan, Muskallonge Lake electrical improvement, and the Mackinac Island Harbor Comfort Station. Western U.P. future projects include the Eagle Harbor Marina upgrade, the F.J. McLain phase II & III, the Oman Creek BAS, and the Porkies 107 partnership with the road commission.

Stewardship

Ray Fahlsing, Stewardship Manager shared some of the challenges they have had concerning forest health with Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA). There are currently 7 parks with confirmed HWA. They deployed a Michigan Civilian Conservation Corp crew to treat and survey these parks. Oak Wilt continues to be a problem; 2,000 feet of vibratory plow line has been installed at some of the parks. Belle Isle projects included a flatwoods hydrology restoration project, the Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory (ASWC) and Belle Isle Aquarium greenhouses capital campaign feasibility study is nearing completion, and the ASWC Truss Replacement project, with temporary closures due to corrosion. Prescribed burns: 12 completed out of 48 proposed burns, totaling 892 acres. Fayette State Park, historic race track burn, was the first PRD burn in the U.P. and the first burn for cultural resources. Other updates include Stewardship is in the process of hiring a U.P. Stewardship Field Specialist, addressing issues with the Spring Mill Mine, at the Lake Hudson Recreation Area establishing 655 acres of grassland habitat, and Coldwater State Park phasing out of farming in partnership with Future Farmers. Completed projects include 8 new roofs on the Mill Lake Outdoor Center at Waterloo Recreation Area, roof improvements at the Chief Noonday Outdoor Center at Yankee Springs, and the Saw Mill restoration plan at Belle Isle Park.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Chief Updates:

Ron Olson, PRD updated the committee on SB 1258 and SB 1259, tie-barred, that would amend the statute to allow for a Recreation Passport opt-out, and would also make adjustments in the revenue formula. This formula takes the infrastructure and operational percentages and

combines them together rather than having them be 50/30. It would total 75% instead of 80%. The local grant section would change from 10% to 15%. This would only take place if the opt-out passes. The bills have passed the Senate Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Committee on a 2/3 vote and are now in the House.

There was language in legislation that prohibited charging a fee in the state forests that is going to be corrected. Trailheads, along with state forest campgrounds, will be passport required, some of which have been required already. There are about 197 trailheads associated with motorized trails and about 350 associated with non-motorized trails.

The Trust Fund Board met and approved projects including the Ludington State Park – inholding Acquisition for Sargent Sands, permanent trail easements along the Iron Belle in the U.P., the Iron Belle Trail - West Riverfront Connections in Detroit, the Watkins Lake State Park land consolidation, and the Tahquamenon River access. Development projects included the picnic shelter replacement at Belle Isle Park, the Carp River Bridge replacement on the Iron Belle Trail, the Visitor Center accessibility improvements at Fayette Historic State Park, and the Raft Canopy Replacement at Palms Book State Park.

Chairperson Klarr asked how the committee would like the structure of the committee set in 2019. *Committee member Chris Graham* would like to revive the finance committee. *Committee member Mary Pitcher* would like a list sent out as to who is on what subcommittee.

Ann Conklin thanked and applauded Director Keith Creagh on his leadership and many accomplishments.

INFORMATION ONLY

Next meeting to be held on February 14, 2019 in Lansing, Michigan.

Meeting adjourned at 11:43 a.m.