

MICHIGAN SNOWMOBILE AND TRAILS ADVISORY COUNCIL (Council)

MEETING MINUTES

June 28, 2010

Approved July 26, 2010

**Ralph A. MacMullan Conference Center
(Upper Classroom)
104 Conservation Drive, Roscommon, MI 48653**

PRESENT FOR THE COUNCIL

Frank Wheatlake, Chair
Jim Dickie
Jim Duke
Tom Dunn
John Gonway
Carolyn Kane
Bill Manson
Erin McDonough
Greg Yager

PRESENT FOR STAFF

Frank Ruswick, Deputy Director, Stewardship
Lynne Boyd, Chief, Forest Management Division (FMD)
Jim Radabaugh, State Trails Coordinator, FMD
Andrea Turner, Administrative Assistant, FMD

PUBLIC ATTENDEES

Bill Stegena, Bader & Sons Co.
Keith Litchfield, Bader & Sons Co.
Dick Ranney, Cycle Conservation Club of Michigan
Lewis Shuler, Cycle Conservation Club of Michigan

WELCOME

Chair Wheatlake called the Michigan Snowmobile and Trails Advisory Council meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Chair Wheatlake welcomed everyone and introduced himself, followed by introductions of the Council members and the DNRE staff.

COUNCIL CHARGE AND RULES OF PROCEDURE

Deputy Director Ruswick said two additional appointments to the Council would be forthcoming. The six appointments to the Equine Trailways Subcommittee are in the final stages, of which two members will be appointed by the Governor to serve on the Council.

Deputy Director Ruswick gave an overview of Public Act 451, Part 721, Michigan Trailways, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act. The following sections were highlighted: 72110(2), 72110(16) (a) and (b), and 72114(4).

Deputy Director Ruswick reviewed the Draft Rules of Procedure. Council members had the following questions.

Article 1 – Public Meeting, Section 7: Voting

What constitutes a conflict of interest? **Chief Boyd** stated that if there was a direct benefit to you it would be considered a conflict of interest.

Article IV – Amendments

What is the definition of “concurring vote to the majority?” It was suggested that there be a “super majority,” such as two-thirds of members present.

Article 1 – Section 10: Agenda

Chief Boyd agreed to the *twenty-one day rule*, depending on the frequency of meetings.

It was agreed that no action would be taken until the final two Council appointments are made.

BUSINESS OPERATIONS

Chief Boyd reviewed the funding sources and stressed that the statute did not come with funding. Funds will come from the two motorized programs, snowmobile and off-road vehicle (ORV). A small amount of money from the Trailways Fund was approved for transfer and will be used to help cover the nonmotorized program portion.

Chair Wheatlake asked for a cost estimate for the Council meetings.

Chief Boyd reviewed the Travel Expense Reimbursement form. Receipts are required for meals (no alcohol), and for lodging. Members were asked to submit their receipts in a timely matter, preferably bi-monthly, and within the fiscal year (October 1 through September 30). Bridge receipts are no longer required. Prior approval is required for member expenses incurred while representing the Council at events other than Council meetings.

It was suggested that the Meeting Notice include information for public attendees who would like to order lunch.

It was also suggested that USDA Forest Service staff, in addition to DNRE staff from the FMD and Law Enforcement Division (LED), be invited to future Council meetings.

COUNCIL PLANS TO MOVE FORWARD

Chair Wheatlake asked Council members to state problems or issues that they would like to see addressed.

Greg Yager agreed that it was a good idea to have the USDA Forest Service and LED involved in future meetings, as there are always questions for LED.

Erin McDonough brought up road closures on federal land, has concerns regarding access to state and federal forests.

Chair Wheatlake thought there was a good working relationship with the previous Snowmobile Advisory Committee. Staff agreed that is was a good idea for a Snowmobile Subcommittee; discussion followed regarding the number of members (between five and seven).

Lewis Shuler suggested that an ORV Subcommittee be created. Discussion followed regarding if the Subcommittees Chair would be a Council member.

Chair Wheatlake asked the Council to bring options to the next meeting and he would appoint the Subcommittee Chairs.

John Gonway discussed the Michigan Mountain Biking Association (MMBA) and the number of volunteer hours (9,000) worked. They do not have a funding source. The MMBA would like additional trail access. Most of their trails are single track trails, 18" wide.

Conflicts with hikers sometimes occur. Members have experienced some friction with equestrians. Horses cause erosion issues and MMBA would prefer separate trails.

Bill Manson asked if there were other bicycle groups. **Carolyn Kane** mentioned the Michigan Trails & Greenway Alliance (MTGA), and referenced the North Country Trail Association (NCTA).

Chair Wheatlake would like a list of all groups and list of acronyms.

Chief Boyd stated that the NCTA is a hiking and biking trail, no horses are allowed.

Carolyn Kane's passion is connecting Michigan. She would like to see more access, and have people out and about; not in their car(s).

Jim Duke likes everything suggested. Multi-use trails and trying to tie them together; the question is how to maintain and fund.

Bill Manson agrees with Jim Duke.

Erin McDonough stated that access is a huge issue for Michigan United Conservation Club (MUCC); specifically motorized access onto federal land.

User conflicts; ways to improve and solve.

Recommends publicizing access.

Tom Dunn would like to continue cohesiveness with user groups.

Jim Dickie would like to resolve differences at the Council level, discuss alternatives.

Greg Yager thought the old ORV Committee was a great opportunity for users to present ideas to the DNRE.

Jim Dickie stated conflict with safety training, trail development opportunities, and event permits (competitive and noncompetitive events).

Chair Wheatlake asked about how to handle conflict. Discussion followed regarding statutory limitations and requirements.

Chair Wheatlake mentioned conflict within the Pigeon River Country (PRC).

Jim Radabaugh explained details of the Michigan trail map; all trails on the map are designated public trails.

NEXT MEETING DATES AND AGENDA ITEMS

Monday, July 26, 2010
Roscommon Operations Service Center

Monday, September 13, 2010
Ralph A. MacMullan Conference Center

- List of user groups goals/actions to enhance programs, including program conflicts, to be sent to Andrea Turner.
- Staff to invite USDA Forest Service staff to speak at next Council meeting.
- Inventory of what the DNRE has in term of types of trails and trail miles.
- Subcommittee recommendations.
- Rules of Procedure, any changes.
- Individual maps representing snowmobile, ORV, and nonmotorized trails, and a map of the PRC.
- Appointment of vice president.

Chair Wheatlake adjourned the meeting at 12:06