

MICHIGAN SNOWMOBILE AND TRAILS ADVISORY COUNCIL (Council)

MEETING MINUTES

September 13, 2010

Approved December 1, 2010

**Ralph A. MacMullan Conference Center
104 Conservation Drive, Roscommon, MI 48653**

PRESENT FOR THE COUNCIL

Frank Wheatlake, Chair
Sandra Batie
Jim Dickie
Jim Duke
Tom Dunn
Mike Foote
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
Bill O'Neill, Field Coordinator, FMD
John Morey, ORV and Snowmobile Safety Field Coordinator, Law Enforcement Division

PUBLIC ATTENDEES

Rose Ingram, Huron-Manistee National Forest
Roger Kilbury, Public
Dick Ranney, American Motorcycle Association, D-14
Pat Brower, Great Lakes Four Wheel Drive Assn. (GLFWDA)
Bill Stegena, Bader & Sons Co.
John Chad, Happi-Trails ATV Club

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 two new equine representatives (Sandra Batie and Mike Foote), Council members, the DNRE staff, and public attendees.

MINUTES

The minutes of the July 26, 2010 Council meeting were acknowledged.

Motion was made by Jim Duke, seconded by Tom Dunn, to adopt the July 26, 2010 meeting minutes. Motion for adoption unanimously carried.

Status of Equine Council Appointments

Deputy Director Ruswick reported that appointments of the equine representatives were announced at 4:00 on Friday, September 10, 2010.

Adoption of Rules of Procedure

Chief Boyd briefly reviewed and proposed adoption of the MSTAC Rules of Procedure.

Erin McDonough asked about communications with media - **Chief Boyd** responded that members are not to speak on behalf of the Council.

Jim Duke asked why the workgroups are appointed by Chair Wheatlake - **Chief Boyd** replied that all workgroups are appointed by the Chair, per statute.

Chair Wheatlake explained the background and reasons for appointments and statute.

Deputy Director Ruswick discussed the background on the equine legislation and the equine trails subcommittee.

Carolyn Kane motioned to adopt rules, seconded by **Jim Dickie**. **Motion for adoption of Rules of Procedure passed unanimously.**

Appointment of Vice Chair

Chair Wheatlake announced that the appointment of Vice Chair would be put on hold; add to December agenda.

Appointment of Council Advisory Workgroups

Off-Road Vehicle (ORV)

Tom Dunn worked with **Greg Yager** on the proposed ORV appointments. They proposed a seven member ORV advisory workgroup (ORVAW) on a staggered 2 and 3 year initial appointment; two MSTAC members, with one as Chairman; two motorcyclist; two ATV; one full sized 4 wheeler; and two general members.

Chair Wheatlake questioned the number of members (ETS has six). The ORVAW/SAW have their program funding to support their workgroups.

Tom Dunn distributed the O.R.V. Trails Advisory Board proposal.

Nonmotorized

John Gonway and **Carolyn Kane** proposed a five member workgroup (with two more possible), quarterly meetings.

Chair Wheatlake stated that regardless of funding issues we need UP representation on the workgroups. He also asked if metro parks/trailways were represented - **John Gonway** responded yes, two from Farmington Hills/Rochester area.

Chair Wheatlake asked about the agenda of the workgroup - **John Gonway** responded to build up trail network, greater access – how to handle development, user conflict (work with equine).

Erin McDonough asked how often the workgroups are to report to the Council. Chair Wheatlake suggested that the workgroups meet four to six times and report back to the Council quarterly.

Equine Trailways Subcommittee (ETS)

Sandra Batie and the ETS will meet on September 23, 2010. She would like members to share complaints, issues, praise – communication important with user conflict.

Mike Foote listed communication, getting groups together; would model after snowmobile group.

Chief Boyd stated DNRE staff support for these advisory groups would be as follows:

- *Equine Trailways Subcommittee (ETS)*
Jim Radabaugh, Annamarie Bauer, FMD, and Paul Curtis, Recreation Division; with Wildlife/Law Enforcement Divisions as needed.
- *Snowmobile Advisory Workgroup (SAW)*
Steve DeBrabander and Loretta Cwalinski, FMD; additional staff as needed.
- *Nonmotorized Advisory Workgroup (NAW)*
Jim Radabaugh and Annamarie Bauer, FMD
- *Off-Road Vehicle Advisory Workgroup (ORVAW)*
Steve DeBrabander and Steve Kubisiak, FMD

State Trail Inventory

Jim Radabaugh reviewed the Trail Program Mileage handout.

Mike Foote asked if the “nonmotorized” definition excludes equestrians - **Jim Radabaugh** responded that the definition was broadly inclusive of equestrians.

Sandra Batie asked about list of funding sources - **Chair Wheatlake** said it will be covered at the December 1, 2010 meeting.

Emily McDonough asked if the list includes two tracks, forest roads - **Jim Radabaugh** responded no, only designated and signed trails.

Jim Duke stated that trails are in constant change, mention of reroutes for Kennecott.

Deputy Director Ruswick summarized what has been covered and cautioned on how we use the numbers supplied.

Jim Radabaugh reviewed/explained the two sets of maps (ORV/Snowmobile), approximately 800 miles of overlap, regarding motorized/nonmotorized

Jim Dickie asked about thumb area snowmobile trails – **Jim Radabaugh** responded that we are waiting for GPS data from the trail sponsor.

Jim Radabaugh reviewed the MTGA trail map of all rail-trails in the state of Michigan.

Jon Gonway asked what happens with all this data – onto internet as separate or as one map.

Jim Dickie maps overlay? - **Chair Wheatlake** stated that a live demo of map overlay would be provided at the December meeting; add to agenda.

Jim Dickie/Jim Duke asked about trails – **Jim Radabaugh** reported that FMD forest roads and two tracks, etc. are not included on trail program information sheet.

Carolyn Kane MTGA working on a cross-state trail from South Haven to Port Huron (MGTA presentation/information available) and will forward information to the Council.

Erin McDonough asked if a survey regarding “how trails are searched” by use, county, etc. would be helpful for marketing. Discussion followed.

Pigeon River Country State Forest Access Plan Update

Chief Boyd explained the history of the 118,000 acres of PRCSF land, known as the “Big Wild.” This area was a state game area first and became a state forest. There was much controversy in the 1970’s regarding proposed oil and gas development. A settlement was approved allowing oil and gas development, with revenues going into what is now called the MI Natural Resources Trust Fund.

The NRC Commission, Director, etc. thought overuse of recreational opportunities was occurring and possible violation of federal and state game and fish funds use. In 2005 the NRC formed a steering committee to update the Concept of Management; the Director approved the Concept late 2007 and a LUOD in March 2008.

Chair Wheatlake commented that \$25 million of federal, and state game and fish funds at risk (potential for up to \$100 million), Wildlife Division to expand at December meeting; add to agenda.

USDA Forest Service

Rose Ingram gave a quick overview of Travel Management Rule and Roadless Rules.

Jim Dickie asked about county roads on forest service lands. **Rose Ingram** said some agreements with local counties for maintenance of forest roads. Much public confusion with open and closed forest roads.

Chair Wheatlake asked about handicapped access on federal land for hunting. **Rose Ingram** responded that federal land is either open for all users or closed for all users; no exception for handicapped accessibility

Rose Ingram reported that the UP is having issues with ORV damage on snowmobile trails. How to address resource damage (public lands) - **Jim Radabaugh** said ORV grants available \$300-400,000 annually (est).

Rose Ingram discussed Roadless Forest plan process. Huron-Manistee (2 areas identified) Sensabor Track and Bear Swap (should be removed); currently in limbo nationally.

Erin McDonough asked about Nordhouse dunes - **Rose Ingram** said it is a National designated wilderness.

Rose Ingram feels that participation of the Forest Service should be part of the workgroups/subcommittees - **Chair Wheatlake** stated that **Rose Ingram** would be the contact.

ORV Safety Education

John Morey gave an overview/background of the program. The DNRE took the program over from the Department of Education in early 2000. The ORV Advisory Committee recommendations of 2009 created an ORV Safety Coordinator position (John Morey). Draft of Policy/Procedure guidance for 600 ORV instructors due this week; was given to Assistant Chief Molner approximately three weeks ago.

ORV instructor academy two day, had hoped to have up and running 2010, program not in place.

Tom Dunn asked about program content changes - **John Morey** stated motorcycles and winching/recovery...worked with the CCC and GL4WD Association.

Chair Wheatlake Policy/Procedures address ethics (issues) - **John Morey** responded yes, part of academy training.

Greg Yager has been part of previous manuals.

Sandra Batie stated the importance for others to "speak up" when encountering equestrians on the trails; asked for it to be added to handbook.

John Morey would like to get academy up and running. Will start on snowmobile policy/procedure next year or so, once ORV is set.

Recreation Passport

Jim Radabaugh gave an overview of the Recreational Passport Field Journal from Chief Boyd and Chief Olson; highlighted upcoming events and distributed postcards.

Chair Wheatlake spoke of the passport campaign.

MSTAC Webpage

Jim Radabaugh gave an update and review of the webpage; handout.

Public Appearance

Chair Wheatlake called for public comment

Pat Brower asked **Rose Ingram** questions regarding trail inventory; database mapping

Bill Stegena asked about a list of SAW Members - **Bill Manson** read list/terms of SAW Members.

John Chad asked if there was a minimum number of kids needed to hold a class - **John Morey** responded no, for now.

Dick Ranney followed up on **Chair Wheatlakes** comments regarding tourism, etc.

Chair Wheatlake asked members how things are going - all good.

NEXT MEETING DATES AND AGENDA ITEMS

December 1, 2010

Ralph A. MacMullan Conference Center

- Members of the ETS and the advisory workgroups asked to attend
- Appointment of vice president
- Funding sources
- Live demo of map overlay

Chair Wheatlake motioned to adjourn the meeting at 2:00. Seconded by **Tom Dunn** and **Greg Yager**.