

**Off-Road Advisory Workgroup
Minutes
June 14, 2017
Conference Call**

The regular meeting of the Off-Road Vehicle Advisory Workgroup (ORVAW) was called to order by Chair Dunn on June 14, 2017 at 6:35 p.m. Members present were: **Chairman Dunn, Don Helsel, Tim Kobasic, Lewis Shuler, Pat Brower, Jim Hunt, and Jim Maike.**

The following Department of Natural Resources (DNR) staff was present: Jacklin Blodgett, Barbara Graves, Jessica Holley, Rob Katona, Paige Perry, Amy Swainston, Nicole Toman, and Paul Yauk.

Guests: Jim Keltz, Michigan Snowmobile Association; Mike Wade, Great Lakes Four Wheel Drive Association; Karen, Cadillac News; Doug Johnson, Mud Chuggers; and A.J. Lee.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Dunn welcomed everyone and asked that everyone mute their phones when not speaking. Everyone introduced themselves.

MOTION: J. Maike moved to approve the March 8, 2017 meeting minutes. It was seconded by D. Helsel and it carried unanimously.

MOTION: T. Kobasic moved to approve the amended June 14, 2017 meeting agenda. It was seconded by D. Helsel and it carried unanimously.

UPDATES

- Budget Overview – J. Blodgett reported a 7.0% increase in ORV license sales through May from last year, and an increase of 10.7% in trail use permits (See [Licenses and Permits Sales Reports](#) on the Natural Resources Commission web page. This report is updated monthly). Revenue is up \$1.3M, expenditures are up about \$847K. They have granted out about \$2.2M for maintenance and development, restoration, law enforcement grants, and other law maintenance grants; another \$1.1M will be issued out soon. Tom would like a meeting with department staff to discuss this in more detail.
- Event Fees – N. Toman briefly updated the workgroup on changes to the event management policy and use permit, specifically as it relates to fees. Chair Dunn expressed concerns with the climbing of fees. N. Toman said that the Department

will work with groups that put on the same events every year. Chair Dunn would like the workgroup to look at the new policy so he can collect feedback. He would like this on the next agenda. If there are any questions, please send them to N. Toman at TomanN@michigan.gov.

- Subcommittee Reports

- T. Kobasic - in their meeting with the Travel Trail Workgroup through the Hiawatha National Forest, he learned that they, in motorized trail riding, can obtain grants for equipment through the USDA. He is going to get that information and forward it to the SAW/ORVAW subcommittee to entertain. It may also help them with some of their budgetary concerns.

- Staff Reports

- R. Katona, Central U.P. - They are working with DTMB and engineering firms on several projects. Nearing 100% completion on engineering design on Foster City Bridge and also work on the Norway Trail that includes two bridges. The Forest Islands Trail and Route is also nearing 100% completion; to start construction late summer or fall. They are waiting to put out on bid the Escanaba Route Improvement to link up the Escanaba-Hermansville Trail into the city of Escanaba. Gwinn to Arnold ORV Route improvement was approved last year, slated to be out for bid shortly. The 33rd Annual Michael R. Burlingham Memorial Six Days of Michigan event will take place in Gwinn and Newberry July 22 – 29.

****Update as of June 15, 2017**** Escanaba-Hermansville and Gwinn projects will be advertised for bids starting tomorrow, June 16, with a pre-bid meeting for the Escanaba project on Thursday, June 22 at 10 am EST beginning at the Great Lakes Sportsman's Club in Escanaba. The bid openings for both projects will be on Thursday, June 29.

- A. Swainston, Roscommon - Have had a lot of active beavers this spring, so spent some time repairing damming in front of culverts. Have had more and more use in the winter time with ORVs and activity in the area so has been looking at larger maintenance projects. Have been getting out for springs inspections and working on carsonite changeover inspections as well.
- P. Yauk reported that Jeff Kakuk has been working on a number of projects in the West U.P. where there are a number of blown-out culverts. Ron Yesney and others are working on streamlining the easement process. They have come a long way on moving forward to connect land for both motorized sports. A

number of applications were submitted to the Trust Fund for permanent easements, including costs of bridges and culverts. He will send the workgroup a list.

- Safety Education Subcommittee – D. Helsel reported that after numerous emails to LED regarding the Subcommittee’s recommended changes to the ORV safety handbook, they found the 2017 handbook was printed without the recommended changes. He questioned the department on how to rectify the issues between LED and PRD.

T. Kobasic called for a motion from the ORVAW that the ORVAW supports such changes and at this time are formally requesting a time, date, and explanation as to why they have not been implemented and if and when they will be done. D. Helsel seconded. Some members were concerned about passing a resolution when they could not remember the exact recommended changes to the handbook.

Chair Dunn called for a vote on the following amended resolution:

RESOLUTION: The ORVAW resolves in support of the changes suggested to the Michigan ATV/ORV Handbook that were submitted to Law Enforcement Division in 2016 and they expected implementation. This resolution goes to the Directors of Parks and Recreation and Law Enforcement Division or answer as to if anything has been done and when they can expect changes to be implemented.

In favor: T. Kobasic, D. Helsel

Opposed: L. Shuler, J. Maike, P. Brower

Abstained: J. Hunt.

The motion failed.

Chair Dunn pressed the department to get it to the Director anyways to get things looked at. He called on D. Helsel to provide those proposals again and at any point in time he can call a meeting.

- P.A. 288 of 2016 Department Update – J. Holley. The DNR Roads Web Map is now available on line and identifies which roads are proposed to be opened, closed, or seasonally closed to ORV use and can be found on the Road Inventory Project page at www.michigan.gov/forestroads. Public input can be taken online, in person, via email or regular mail. The comment period will close July 15. Project timeline is also available on the site.

Chair Dunn entertained the following motion:

MOTION: ORV funds should not be used to pay for the inventories or signing of the public roads open by P.A. 288 of 2016. The ORV fund cannot sustain the funding liabilities of maintaining, signing, repair, or enforcement of roads that are not part of the designated trail system. J. Maike moved the motion and it was seconded by D. Helsel.

An amendment to the motion was offered by L. Shuler:

Amended MOTION: ORV funds should not be used to pay for the inventories or signing of the public roads open by P.A. 288 of 2016. The ORV fund cannot sustain the funding liabilities of maintaining, signing, repair, improvement, or enforcement of roads that are not part of the designated trail system. The amended motion was moved by J. Maike and seconded by D. Helsel. All were in favor.

T. Kobasic wants P. Yauk to verify if the department is requesting outside assistance in funding and what the projected numbers for cost are going to be on the inventory.

J. Maike and Chair Dunn thanked the Trails staff for all the hard work and hospitality they have provided to the group.

- Confidence Marker (Carsonite) Installation Update – J. Holley reported that there are people out in the field doing installs. She has reported updates from the Trail Specialists and will forward them to the workgroup after she compiles them. Great updates, great work, positive feedback. Project is moving forward. (Updates attached.)

J. Hunt reported that everything is going excellent with their carsonite installs. They are working on the removal of old signage. L. Shuler said they are moving forward and he thinks they are out of their current inventory.

- Joint SAW/ORVAW Meeting Update – J. Holley said the last meeting had heavy attendance. The feedback was that Dakota Hewlett's presentation was a great presentation. A lot of good things came out of the meeting and they learned some things need to change. They need to sharpen the focus on the top issues and not get lost.
- ORV Permit Sunset – P. Yauk reported that they have a legislator that is looking at sponsoring a bill. Anna Mooney, Legislative Liaison for the department is making contact and they are moving forward. Chair Dunn said Senator Hansen has talked to the department and has received feedback. Senator Casperson is willing to sit down and talk as well. He made a big point that they are not looking to change anything, just remove the sunset.

NEW BUSINESS

- Discussion on Future Direction of the Joint SAW/ORVAW Meetings – P. Yauk would like to see a more focused group from both sides; a couple members from each workgroup. Everyone seemed to be in agreement. If members are interested, let Chair Dunn know.
- ORVAW 2017 Meeting Dates: Chair Dunn suggested dropping it down to three meetings a year. They may have to adjust or drop the September 13 meeting because they will be meeting again in October in conjunction with the MTAC. He will let members know.
- ORV Expo Possibility – There was a request from a member of the public for more family-friendly ORV events. L. Shuler suggested an event at Belle Isle where they could bring manufacturers together. P. Yauk said he would entertain that idea. J. Maiké also suggested a place in the middle of Northern Michigan where people can ride to from their communities and could gather to have lunch, get prizes, etc. Chair Dunn asked the members to look into what their communities could do for this. He likes the idea of Belle Isle.
- Progress Report on Escanaba to Hermansville Trail – T. Kobasic asked department staff for an update on this because it has been waiting too long. R. Katona said it is currently sitting in Procurement waiting to be submitted out to bid. J. Blodgett said she will reach out to Procurement to see if they can make it a top priority. **See Update under Central U.P. Staff Report.**
- Nahma Grade Trail - T. Kobasic said the USFS has tentatively approved the Nahma Grade Trail and is progressing towards final approval. They have a concrete proposal for trails, routes and connectors, as well as level 2 and 3 roads. They are also working with the non-motorized segment. He is going to come back to the workgroup with a resolution for support.
- P. Brower – reported that they have had some accidents on the Drummond Island route. The route was designated with full-size, 4-wheel drives in mind, and with it a plan to accommodate a variety of difficulty levels. In talking with other states, the general consensus is to use difficulty ratings on 4-wheel drive trails, with “easy, moderate, difficult, and extreme” symbols. P. Yauk suggested they document what they want accomplished so they are all on the same page. P. Brower will send the group a map of the Drummond Island trail system and what signage would be desired at each intersection, prior to the next meeting. R. Katona will share some background information with J. Holley and P. Brower.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- A.J. Lee commented that the Kalkaska Colosseum is a good spot to hold an event because there are a lot of trails that approach the area. Chair Dunn said the Kalkaska community is very big on ORVs, but to tread lightly with the local area due to issues they had in the past with the local LED. He advised Mr. Lee to reach out to the local community members in charge.
- See note from G. Conley (attached).

With no other business before the workgroup, the meeting was adjourned at 8:48 p.m.

Carsonite Installation Update from Trails Specialists

Todd Neiss (Cadillac):

Nearly ALL (3236 of the 3266) carsonite posts have been taken from the Baldwin location by various clubs for installation.

- **Lansing Motorcycle Club** Nearly finished with North Missaukee Trail, and North Missaukee Route. They need to go back and remove orange triangles observed via a spot check. They have completed their paper work to obtain a 2017 Amendment for reimbursement, but have not submitted any reimbursement requests.
- **Twin Bay Trail Riders** Nearly finished with Grand Traverse Cycle Trail, Leetsville Trail, Grand Traverse Route, and ~50 miles of the MCCCT. TBTR has a 2017 amended grant to install the carsonites but have yet to submit a reimbursement request for work accomplished.
- **Irons Area Tourist Association** They only have the backers to install --they have taken ownership of the backers but not sure if they have installed them as of yet.
- **USFS** Despite ordering nearly 3300 carsonites it was determined that there were not enough to **install** on USFS lands, and those were ordered did not have the USFS shield, or specialized decals that they want. USFS is ordering carsonites, decals, etc. for their system (shields for ALL USFS trails in MI) on their next grant application for installation in 2018.
- **MCCC** Some of the chapters have reported being nearly complete (Evert cycle trail nearly **done**) but have not heard from other chapters. I do not think they have an amended 2017 grant for this project.

I have yet to receive a 2017 reimbursement request from any of the above. The good news is that they are mostly gone, the not as good news is that I cannot at this time verify if they are where they are supposed to be--I will get in the field to verify someday soon.

Jeff Kakuk (Western U.P.):

I only have one 50" trail in my region and it should be complete. The carsonites were installed on the Baraga Plains Trail under normal signing and brushing allotment.

Paul E. Gaberdiel (Eastern U.P.):

Some of the markers have been installed on Drummond Island. I have heard from no one else that they are getting started on the carsonite marker installs in my area.

Rob Katona (Central U.P.)

The Bass Lake and Moss Lake cycle trails are nearing completion. They will be starting on Porterfield Lake cycle trail soon.

Amy Swainston (Roscommon):

Last count of Carsonites Posts about a month ago:

145 Route

890 50" Trail

90 –SOS Cycle

This is based on the notification of completion. I believe some of the other groups are working on the changeover or completing the brushing other trail responsibilities. I hope to get out some later this week to verify.

Paige Perry (Gaylord):

Sorry so late but figured you might need this for tonight's ORVAW update. In the Gaylord District, we still have a good stockpile of all the new confidence markers that we've had printed to date (421 ORV Route on Plastic Backers, 220 ORV Route on Carsonite Posts, 990 ATV Trail on Carsonite Posts, 440 Motorcycle Only on Carsonite Posts, 370 Green MCCCT on Carsonite Posts) except MCCCT Stickers- I have zero.

I have not had the chance to field check anything yet but have had the following reports and recollections:

- Twin Bay Trail Riders is complete with Big Bear, Crapo Creek and the connector between the two. I **have** TBTR RFR for spring maint and carsonite install in my office.
- Great Lake ORV Association Some work was done last fall but field check hasn't been completed. About 2/3 of the Route is dual use Snowmobile Trail so can utilize plastic backed Route markers, the other 1/3 is forest road and would I would recommend using

the Route Carsonites instead of backers on cedar on this portion due to the remote nature of the Indian Gardens Route.

- Great Lake 4WD Association I believe some work has been done last fall in terms of plastic backers on cedar where dual use. Only a small segment of ORV Route only would utilize Route markers on carsonite posts so I don't anticipate an amendment request for the Indian River Route, North Branch Route, Atlanta Routes or Mio Routes.
- Cycle Conservation Club of MI has notified me of work on Tomahawk system, Atlanta system and some MCCCT. I don't remember hearing about Mio ATV, Hunt Creek M/C or Frederic ORV Trail or Route- could be wrong. I don't know that the amendment has been approved.
- ATV Off Road Club of MI has done some work but not documented yet. They have requested grant amendment for install on Black Lake Trail & Route, Red Bridge Trail & Route and Bummers Roost ORV Trail at this time. Iosco County Parks & Rec Commission - Haven't heard from Iosco on this subject but the same questions as below for the Huron Trail.
- Alcona County Parks & Rec Commission Willing to perform CM changeover on Alcona ATV Trail. No agreement as to what USFS requires on fed land (carsonites on ATV Trail? How much is concurrent with Snowmobile Trail and can use plastic backed ATV signs on cedar? USFS logo?) No amendment requested yet.
- **USFS Would like a DNR-FS rec trail summit meeting to discuss this and other rec trail projects in Mi**
 - Huron Shores District- See Iosco and Alcona above. I don't believe they've requested any carsonites on their 2018 grant.
 - Mio Ranger District- They typically order some carsonites and decals but we need to assure the consistency of marking. Haven't heard as to status of spring brushing and signing OR anything regarding ne CM changeover from Bob Magon.

To ATV Trails and Route Committees

I would like to offer the following comments.

As background my several friends and I ride the Michigan trails or routes several times a year, usually making a trip north for several days. We ride in both the lower and upper peninsula's, the UP preferred, however distance and expense effect that.

We are all in our seventies so while we are looking for some adventure we are not looking for anything unsafe, mud bogging or other extremes. We ride astride ATVs not UTV or side by sides. Preferring the wider routes and or trails, two tracks where legal or sand county roads if needed. Stopping often to review maps to determine where we are and enjoy the day.

When picking lodging we try to find places that are close to the trails or we can legally get to the route from our lodging. We like to avoid trailering, and the loading and unloading many times on a several day excursion.

We have learned that calling and asking motel and or other business owners for information such how far to the route and can we ride there, is very unreliable. Businesses tend to be vague or really don't know and are very likely to give somewhat false information. Their business is selling and getting us to stay there. Also what the local people may do or get away with is not what we are seeking.

Several times we have been on routes/trails to have the system end, and cannot find the continuation. This has happened twice in the Munising area, even though the map shows the trail/route continues. We have discovered a lot by trial and error, which is an inconvenient and costly way to find new locations.

Markings. May be improving? We find that where the routes coincide with the snowmobile trails they are marked better, and usually a wider track. However often snowmobile trails are closed off for ATVs.

We have pulled into trailheads and checked the posted maps and signs and still have been unsure what is ahead. Narrow twisty or a good route. I suggest better information posted at the trailheads. Maybe a narrative description of the trail or route and in larger print if it is a route or a trail. Sometimes the little symbols just don't help, especially if the maps are weather or damaged.

Maps. The printable maps on line are very difficult to match up with a county or state map. To find trail heads, or even where we are at when riding, the trail maps have few if any indicators we can check against a county map to see where we are at. If it is getting late or low on fuel (especially in the UP) it is nice information to figure out. We may need to take a quickest way via county roads (where legal). Such information could be very important in an emergency.

We do carry state and local maps, a compass and often a GPS. However, unless one is really well versed in using the GPS and have the latest up to date software, we are still unsure a lot of time where we are on the trail maps, and especially relating to the general area. As far as I know the printable maps have no GPS information. I notice on line there are now other versions of maps which I do not understand or have the knowledge or equipment to use.

Gene Conley Charlotte Michigan