

Northwoods Regional ATV Trail System Oversight Committee Meeting

Tuesday, May 4, 2010

6 PM

Long Lake Conservation Center, Palisade, MN

In Attendance: Frank Turnock*, Brian Napstad*, Bob Marcum*, Robin Baker*, Katie Fernholz**, Len Hardy*, Warren Spawn*, Maynard Ahonen*, Harlan Kingsley*, Tom Gustin*, Andrew Brown*, Ross Wagner*, Laurie Westerlund*, Jeff Koehn, Joe Meixell, Kevin Sarta, Don Aljets, Cedric Meixell, Scott Aljets, Rita Butterfield, Roger Olson, Gilbert Eigsberg, Sam Johnson, Bill Keefe, Roger Bentley, Larry Moses, Paul Grosh, Don Haller, Steven Saari, Jack Halverson, Ken LeVoir, Scott Turner, Michael Bergmann, Rod Myers
* = *Committee Member* **=*project coordinator*

AGENDA

6:10 PM – Call to Order

Approval of Meeting Agenda with addition of recognition of 2009 ATV Instructor of the Year (Motion by L. Hardy, Second by H. Kingsley, Approved)

Approval of 3/16/10 Meeting Minutes (Motion by L. Hardy, Second by R. Baker, Approved)

Review of Old Business

- As approved at the last meeting, the project logo has been posted at the project webpage and will be used to identify and brand the project. A new YouTube video has also been posted at the project website to summarize the planning and design process and the scope of the project. A news release has been drafted regarding the bonding funds that have been awarded to the project and the plans for moving forward with Phase II. The project webpage is accessible via:
<http://www.northwoodstrail.net>

Phase I Status

- Planning for Grand Opening Events for Phase I Routes (selection of dates)

Motion to hold Grand Opening at Lawler on June 30th at 2pm (Motion by L. Hardy, Second by R. Marcum, Approved)

(UPDATE NOTE: Following this meeting, it was recognized that not all committee members will be available on June 30th and so the Grand Opening Event was moved to Tuesday, June 29th at 2pm in Lawler, MN)

The project coordinator will work with the committee and the Land Departments to develop an invitation list that includes local elected officials, including Sen. Saxhaug and Rep. Solberg, as well as project supporters such as Polaris and Yamaha, County staff, area businesses, DNR employees and others. A news release about the event will be prepared and distributed to a complete list of local papers. A news release and photos will also be

distributed following the event. The event will include a ribbon cutting ceremony at the trailhead where the kiosk and informational signs are installed. Flyers and maps will be available and distributed at the event. The ribbon cutting will be preceded by a gathering and brief presentation at Jackson's Hole. A podium, powerpoint projector, computer and name tags will be needed for the event. Bob Marcum, Frank Turnock and Ross Wagner will serve as the Grand Opening planning sub-committee and will develop some additional event ideas and any budget requests for discussion at the next committee meeting.

Potential Program for the Grand Opening:

Master of Ceremonies: Brian Napstad

2 pm – 2:30 pm Presentation about the Project – Mark Jacobs, Aitkin County Land Dept.

2:30 – 2:45pm Introduction of Distinguished Guests

2:55pm Ribbon Cutting

3pm Optional trail ride by representatives of local clubs with light refreshments and food for purchase at Jackson's Hole

- Printing of Phase I Maps

An overall Northwoods Regional ATV Trail System map has been developed (on display at the meeting). It includes trails beyond the county boundaries so that connecting trails are visible. It was pointed out that the map currently lacks the Turnock Loop and this should be added. The overall system map will be posted at trailhead kiosks. Detailed maps for specific routes will be developed based upon the overall system map. Planning to prepare detailed maps in time for the grand opening at the end of June. The counties will be posting directional and "You are Here" signs along the routes. It was mentioned that advertising could be solicited to help pay for the development and printing of maps.

- Signs Subcommittee Update

Andrew Brown shared samples of the types of signs that are available from the DNR, including directional arrows, bridge crossings, stop signs, etc. There is no charge for these signs when they are used for designated trails. Bob Marcum and the committee noted that Joe Majerus with the Aitkin County Land Department has done an excellent job designing the informational signs to be placed at the trailheads and that they are very good.

Phase II Update

Itasca County: A. Brown reported looking at routes between Goodland and Jacobson but that things are held up as the Itasca County permitting process is developed. The permitting process is moving along and the County is on track to have a potential alignment for this route ready to include in the EAW. The meeting with Goodland Township was constructive and they are looking at the opportunity for the grant-in-aid designation to provide dust control on roads if needed. The township plans to follow a similar permitting process as the county. The stretch of trail north of Jacobson relies on right-of-way areas and if there is night riding it needs to be done "with traffic", so both sides of the road may need to be designated for trails. The Warba segment does not appear feasible due to the lack of gas and other services in that area. The lack of options and the potential impact to three trout streams in that area also makes the route infeasible. The Phase I route in Itasca County may be open later this year, depending on the construction season.

Hill City Route: H. Kingsley reported a potential route is coming together, but he doesn't have an official update. It looks like a potential route has been GPS located by the Land Department and it is included in the overall systems map that has been developed.

Sandy Lake: B. Napstad reported on meeting with the landowner U.S. Steel to evaluate possible routes, and there was also a tour of the golf course area. It appears there are still some options, including some potentially more scenic routes.

The potential Phase II routes will be detailed at the June meeting and are needed to support the development of the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) as was done for Phase I. The Phase I EAW is available at the project website.

Legislative Sub-Committee Update

- Reported on the bonding funds at the last meeting and have also received the DNR grant funds and renewed the agreement for DNR support. It sounds like the Federal Trails application may also have been successful.

Schedule Next Committee Meeting:

The next meeting will be Tuesday, June 8th at 6pm at Long Lake Conservation Center.

Agenda for the Next Meeting to Include:

- Final Plans for Grand Opening Event
- Phase II routes for EAW development

Public Comments

F. Turnock: Recognition and round of applause for Rita Butterfield who is the 2009 ATV Safety Instructor of the Year for Minnesota. She helped train 128 kids in 2009. Palisade will be added to the list of class locations in 2010.

K. LeVoir: When will trails be open this spring and where is this information available? The Over-the-Hills Gang has questions about when the Moose River Connector will be open.

A: Most ATV trails in Aitkin County are scheduled to open May 15th. Some trails may open a week early if conditions remain dry. The Lawler Loop Trails will open on May 21st. All information and updates about trail openings or closures in Aitkin County are available at the Aitkin County Land Department website or by contacting the Aitkin County Land Department.

Q: What is the proposed trail route in Sago Township and how has it changed? Some of the areas that are normally wet around there are deceptively dry this year and won't work as trail routes in the long run. Suggest that representatives from the project get on the agenda for a Sago Township meeting like was done in Goodland.

A: The old proposal was to use a ditch bank for part of the route, but that was found to be outside of the right-of-way. The new route is shown on the overall map (available to review at the meeting) and will be made available via the EAW development process and at the project webpage.

B. Marcum: It should be noted that the people involved with this project expect the highest level of sportsmanship from anyone using these trails.

R. Butterfield: Suggest that notices about the Grand Opening be sent to the Moose Lake papers (including the Star-Gazette and Arrowhead Leader)

R. Olson: What's happening with the Solana Forest Loop? Our club, the White Pine Riders, wants to work on this trail when it is done.

S. Johnson, DNR: Working on trail right now. This is the first week of work.

S. Turner, Sheriff: Need trail signs at public road crossings and as reference points for emergencies and EMS calls.

S. Johnson: All snowmobile trails have 911 system and ATV trails can do the same.

B. Napstad: Plans are for the trail system to have mile markers, 911 signs, etc.

S. Turner: The signs should be coordinated with GPS to tie into county address system.

L. Moses: This has been done by the Crow Wing County snowmobile clubs. There are mile markers along all routes and links to GPS coordinates and the sheriff's department. The clubs and grants paid for the signs.

7:43 PM Adjourn (Motion by L. Hardy, Second by R. Baker, Approved)

For directions to the meeting location, call: (218) 768-4653 or visit <http://www.llcc.org>