

Northwoods Regional ATV Trail System Oversight Committee Meeting

Tuesday, June 8th, 2010

6 PM

Long Lake Conservation Center, Palisade, MN

In Attendance: Frank Turnock*, Brian Napstad*, Bob Marcum*, Robin Baker*, Katie Fernholz**, Len Hardy*, Harlan Kingsley*, Andrew Brown*, Ross Wagner*, Laurie Westerlund*, Mark Jacobs*, Jon Korpi*, Rita Butterfield, Roger Olson, Bill Keefe, Roger Bentley, Larry Moses, Cedric Meixell

* = *Committee Member* **=*project coordinator*

AGENDA

6:10 PM – Call to Order

Approval of Meeting Agenda with addition of promotional items discussion and update on Itasca County permitting process (Motion by L. Hardy, Second by F. Turnock, Approved)

Approval of 5/4/10 Meeting Minutes (Motion by R. Wagner, Second by L. Hardy, Approved)

Review of Old Business

- At the last meeting the committee identified a date for the Grand Opening and following the meeting the date was moved to fit committee schedules. It is necessary to again adjust the date of the Grand Opening to fit schedules of invited guests.

Phase I Status

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

The committee identified 2 pm on July 14th as the new preferred date for the Grand Opening, weather permitting. The alternative date would be July 21st. The final date of the grand opening will be communicated to committee members and announced to the public after confirming the availability of invited guests.

The agenda for the grand opening will include about one hour of scheduled activities:

2:00 pm Welcome and Introductions

2:20 pm Overview of Northwoods ATV trail construction and environmental considerations

2:45 pm Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

3:00 pm Guided Trail Tour (optional)

Motion to approve up to \$400 for expenses associated with the Grand Opening, including cake, coffee and rental of portable toilets. (Motion by L. Hardy, Second by H. Kingsley, Approved)
Funds to be used by the planning subcommittee and provided from the grants received from Polaris and Yamaha foundations.

B. Marcum can provide a screen and PA system for the event. The Evergreen PAC has

volunteered to do the guided trail tour. The ATV club will host a guided trail ride and club members will have side-by-side (Class II) style ATVs available for non-ATV owners. The tour will be 1 to 1.5 hours long depending on the route that is taken. The shorter southern loop provides a variety of sites as well as a picnic area. RSVPs for grand opening guests will be requested by the end of the month to give the club some estimate of how many will need rides.

- Printing of Phase I Maps

The Aitkin County Land Department has updated the Lawler Loops map and it is available at the county website. The map can be printed for the Grand Opening. It would be helpful to have the map provide more context to show where the trail is in relation to the City of Lawler. The county is also posting “You Are Here” signs along the route. Jeff Tidholm from Aitkin is producing the metal signs. The overall trail system map will be on display at the grand opening but not mounted in the kiosk because some of the trails are still just in the proposal and evaluation stage.

- Promotional Materials

There is an opportunity to provide local businesses and others the right to use the logo and to assist in promoting the trail with t-shirts, hats and other items. While recognizing the potential benefit of promotional items, the committee doesn't want to get into the business of reviewing and approving a large number of requests. Local businesses can request the logo files from the project coordinator for development of materials for the grand opening. The project coordinator will track requests. Reuse of the logo and other project materials will be by permission only and for limited runs.

Signs Sub Committee Update

Kiosk with sign is up in Lawler. The land department can provide information about the final costs. The rest of the trailhead kiosks will be put up this summer in parking areas.

Phase I Routes

Itasca Routes: Pengilly to Goodland route is expected to be completed by fall in conjunction with the completion of the UPM connection. Final development of routes will depend in part on the outcome of the permitting discussion.

Solana Loop: Work got done while conditions were dry and work will continue once it dries out again. Some segments will be contracted to speed up the process. Need to order additional geoblock and still have crossings to work on. Will have a better idea of the completion date this fall.

Moose River Connection: Still doing some work on the trail. May want to do ribbon cutting on new Willow River Bridge with the park board.

Phase II Routes

The SooLine to Blind Lake and SooLine to Rabey Line routes are pretty well identified and ready for EAW development. The Big Sandy segment requires further meetings and easement development with the landowner, U.S. Steel. They have provided trail easements for other properties and there are farm roads on the property that may work well for trail use. The easement may need to be at least a 20 year commitment to meet the terms of the project funding and the route of the trail may need to be flexible to accommodate changing land uses and activities by the landowner who is using the property for wetland banking.

The funding for Phase II is shaping up to include grant-in-aid funds, legacy funding, bonding dollars, and federal grant funding. Much of the grant-in-aid dedicated funding is already committed to past and current construction activities. The bonding dollars will need to be matched and confirmation of the federal funding won't occur until later this year. To date, there have been Aitkin and Itasca county funds invested in the project as matching funds and with staff time. There is a seven year duration on the bonding funds.

The UPM trail has been added to the project and the first phase has been pretty well defined. The rest of the UPM route still needs to be identified and could potentially include a connection to Remer.

Itasca Permitting Process Update

Itasca County has initiated development of an "ATV Corridor Access/Road Use Permit" process. The permit would regulate the use of all-terrain vehicles on county state aid highways and county roads within Itasca County. The language for the permit and the policy and process for it have been developed with input from the county land department, county attorney, DNR and others. On Monday, June 14th the Transportation and Land Management board will review it. The county wants to develop a permitting process rather than an ordinance because an ordinance would restrict use of the route to only licensed drivers. The proposed permit requires that the corridor connect grant-in-aid trails, be less than five miles in length and an established club that meets several criteria must propose it. The Land Commissioner would issue the permit to the club. Andrew Brown can provide copies of the draft language for the permit policy and process.

Schedule Next Committee Meeting:

The next meeting will be at 6pm on August 31st at Quadna Mountain near Hill City, MN

There will also be an Open House regarding Phase II on August 24th from 7-9pm at Quadna Mountain near Hill City, MN.

Agenda for the Next Meeting to Include:

- Phase II routes for EAW development

Public Comments

L. Moses: This project is well known throughout Minnesota and manufacturers could be asked to bring machines to the grand opening. Snowmobile clubs print maps and raise funds to pay for printing and trail maintenance. Need to use right paper for maps so it holds up in moisture and is resistant to tearing. Need to watch for skimmers who will approach map sponsors for reprinting ads.

M. Jacobs: The Aitkin County Land Department held the final public meeting regarding the Comprehensive Recreation Trail Plan on May 21st.

R. Marcum: What is the source of information for trail closures? Can it be posted at the trailhead kiosk?

M. Jacobs: Trail info is posted at the county website and want to get it linked better to the main homepage rather than just at the land department section.

B. Napstad: Should be able to get info that gets a lot of hits posted at the main page.

M. Jacobs: If gates are closed, the trails are closed.

R. Olson: Why will the Turnock Loop signs be moved? Riders have used the trails for a long time the way they are.

M. Jacobs: We're looking at sign placement to avoid confusion about routes along the Lawler Loops.

8:05 PM Adjourn (Motion by L. Hardy, Second by R. Baker, Approved)

For directions to the meeting location, call: (218) 697-2880 or visit <http://www.quadna-resort.com/>