

70-Mile Trail Oversight Committee Meeting

Monday, September 22, 2008

Long Lake Conservation Center, Palisade, MN

MINUTES

In Attendance: Robert Marcum*, Steve Aysta*, Mark Jacobs*, Brian Napstad*, Len Hardy*, Galen Tveit*, John Korpi*, Warren Spawn*, Rick Utech*, Ross Wagner*, Andrew Brown*, Frank Turnock *, Maynard Ahonen*, Harlan Kingsley*, Jerry Pawlak, Bob Moore, Russell Heittski, Larry Moses, Terry Kuelkm, Jeff Koehn, Joseph and Michelle Kohlgraf, Gilbert Eigsberg, Katie Fernholz**

* = Committee Member ** - project coordinator

6:05 PM – Call to Order

Approval of Meeting Agenda

(Motion by R. Utech, Second R. Wagner, Approved)

Approval of 8/25/08 Meeting Minutes

(Motion by R. Wagner, Second G. Tveit, Approved)

Review of Old Business

- EAW process

The EAW comment period closed September 10th and the agenda includes a discussion of the next steps.

- Monitoring and Enforcement Plan

The plan has been submitted to the DNR for review and a meeting is being planned to review the details of the plan and move toward approval of the plan.

EAW Response to Comments

- The comment period closed September 10th and a total of 4 comment letters were received. A response to comments has been drafted and will be updated based on committee discussions including direction to add more details to the discussion of the avoidance and minimization of stream crossing. The committee agrees to forward the draft response to comments to the county's EAW committee. The RGU (Aitkin County) must complete the response to comments process and make a decision on the need for an EIS. The Aitkin County EAW Committee is scheduled to meet on September 25th.

Trail Name Selections

The following names have been adopted by the committee:

Lawler Loop: North Lawler Loop, South Lawler Loop

Solana Loop: Solana Forest Loop

- The following names remain under consideration by the committee.

Moose River Connector: Moose River Segment, MooSoo Trail

Itasca County Trail: PenWar Trail

Overall Trail System: The Aitkin-Itasca Timber Cruiser, Aitkin-Itasca ATV Trail System, Aitkin-Itasca Rails to Trails System, Great Northwood's ATV Trail System of Aitkin and Itasca Counties, Great Aitkin Itasca Trail System, Aitkin-Itasca Great River Heritage Trail, Headwaters ATV Trail

Motion to amend names to reflect discussions and to table the selection of further trail names. (Motion by F. Turnock, Second W. Spawn). Approved. Discussion of trail names will be on the agenda at the next meeting. Additional name nominations should be sent to info@dovetailinc.org, 612-333-0430.

Phase II Updates and Review of Maps

Itasca County: Working on route options that utilize forest roads. Easements will be needed to cross private properties. Other routes are available on public lands but the wetland impacts would be greater. There are possibilities of using right-of-ways and the county is talking with MN/DOT but the use of the right-of way (ROW) creates safety concerns. The group is working to find routes or include a spur that will reach Warba and support local businesses.

Big Sandy/Palisade: There is the potential for a trailhead at a local business (Big Sandy Sports) that could help avoid areas of concern in the trail alignment but it would require additional access routes and the use of the ROW. The use of a county road may also need to be granted.

Swatara/Hay Point to Hill City: Need to plan for trail maintenance to address local concerns. There are wetland areas that need to be addressed and alternative routes that include road ROWs. Planning to look at routes more closely after the leaves drop.

Aitkin County Land Department Trail Signage

Aitkin County has posted trail signs related to allowable motorized uses and produced a poster to explain the different signs. More information is available from the Aitkin County Land Department.

Phase I Next Steps

After completion of the EAW process, the next steps will include applying for the necessary permits (e.g., wetland permitting and crossings), doing fieldwork to flag the routes, and putting together contracts for bidding. The committee agrees that structuring the project for multiple contracts is preferred. Construction is expected to begin in spring 2009, and some clearing could occur this winter.

Discussion of recent Star Tribune articles

The Star Tribune recently ran a three part series beginning on September 14th related to ATV use on state lands. The articles are available at the paper's website.

Schedule Next Committee Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, December 1, 2008 at 6 pm at the LLCC.

Public Comments

The Commissioner has signed an order restricting recreational ATV/OHV riding during the firearms deer season. The DNR has produced a new brochure to explain the order and the news release is available at the DNR website.

8:25 PM Adjourn

For directions to the LLCC, call 218-768-4653 or visit:<http://www.llcc.org/roadmap.html>