

70-Mile Trail Oversight Committee Meeting

Monday, December 1, 2008

6 PM

Long Lake Conservation Center, Palisade, MN

MINUTES

In Attendance: Robert Marcum*, Steve Aysta*, Mark Jacobs*, Brian Napstad*, Len Hardy*, Galen Tveit*, Robin Baker*, Ross Wagner*, Andrew Brown*, Frank Turnock*, Maynard Ahonen*, Tom Gustin*, Bob Moore, Russell Heittola, Beth Jacqmain, Larry Moses, Chris Glunz, Jeff Koehn, Gilbert Eigsberg, Katie Fernholz**

* = Committee Member ** - project coordinator

6:10 PM – Call to Order

Approval of 9/22/08 Meeting Minutes

(Motion by R. Wagner, Second L.Hardy, Approved)

Approval of Meeting Agenda

(Motion by L. Hardy, Second R. Baker, Approved)

Recognition Award

At the Aitkin County Board Meeting on October 21st, Mark Jacobs, Aitkin County land commissioner, received a Certificate of Appreciation from Len Hardy, vice president of the All-Terrain Vehicle Association of Minnesota (ATVAM) for dedicated support given to the ATVAM.

Review of Old Business

- EAW response to comments

The EAW process for Phase I of the project has been completed. This is an important benchmark for the project and reflects significant effort by the project partners. The EAW is also a benchmark for the release of grant funding. The EAW was prepared and distributed for public review on August 11th, and the 30-day comment period closed September 10th. At the Aitkin County Board of Commissioners meeting on October 28th the Board reviewed the response to comments and issued its Record of Decision on the need for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the project. The Aitkin County Board of Commissioners decision was to not require an EIS for the project. The complete EAW, Record of Decision and Response to Comments are available at the project website (www.70miletrail.net).

- Distribution of Quarterly Progress Report

The next progress report for the project has been drafted. The report highlights the completion of the EAW process for Phase I and construction to begin in 2009. Contractors are invited to contact Itasca or Aitkin County if they are interested in being placed on a contractor contact list. Aitkin and Itasca County will look into hosting meetings this winter to discuss the trail design guidelines and construction requirements

for the project. The meetings would likely be held in multiple locations, well publicized and include DNR and SWCD personnel. Attendance at a meeting may be included as a requirement in the bid notice and as part of the “responsible bidder” qualifications for the project. The progress report will be distributed to local businesses, township and city government, and contractor lists provided by Aitkin and Itasca County. The report will also be posted at the project website and distributed via email to the project contact list. The drafted report will be edited to add Andrew Brown from the Itasca County Land Department as a committee member and to change the language related to contractor meetings. Motion to approve the Quarterly Progress Report with the edits discussed by the committee. (Motion by S. Aysta, Second L. Hardy; Approved).

Formation of Construction Planning Sub-Committee

A Construction Planning Sub-Committee was formed to develop guidelines for the trail construction as outlined in the EAW. Guidelines will address trail design, width, signage and other considerations. The guidelines will create a unified trail experience and consistent set of rules for contractors. The guidelines will be used to develop project contracts and to support the bidding and permitting processes. The sub-committee will provide updates at future oversight committee meetings and bring in technical advisors as needed.

Members of the Construction Planning Sub-Committee

Bob Moore, MN DNR

Andrew Brown, Itasca County Land Department

Mark Jacobs (or other designated County Land Department staff), Aitkin County

Len Hardy, ATVAM

Frank Turnock, Aitkin SWCD and Aitkin County ATV Alliance

Trail Alignment Updates

Lawler Loop – The Aitkin County Land Department has been flagging the trail route and found some wet spots due to beaver activity. Re-routing was accomplished within the bounds of the EAW description and to minimize wetland fill. Total wetland fill is estimated at less than 3/10th of an acre. The re-routing also avoided wildlife openings. The trail is now ready for the review needed for wetland permitting.

Itasca County, Phase I Trail – The Itasca County Land Department has informed the wetland delineator about the project and is painting the route to support the delineation that will occur in the spring (May 9th at the earliest).

Itasca County, Phase II Trail – The proposed route needs to change because of an unwilling private landowner. Alternative route would require 1,700 feet of wetland crossing while another alternative is to use county roads (Cnty Rd 72) as a corridor access trail.

Trail Name Selections

The following names have been adopted by the committee:

Lawler Loop: North Lawler Loop, South Lawler 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, Great Northwood's ATV
Trail System of Aitkin and Itasca Counties

Additional name nominations are welcome and can be submitted via email (info@dovetailinc.org) or by contacting a committee member.

Monitoring and Enforcement Plan Update

The plan has been reviewed by the DNR and revised in response to DNR comments. The second draft is being circulated and the final document will be provided to the committee at the next meeting. The first draft is available at the project website.

Schedule Next Committee Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 23rd 2009 at 6 pm at the Trailhead Building at the Itasca County Fairgrounds (1336 Fairgrounds Rd, Grand Rapids, MN 55744).

Agenda for Next Meeting:

Construction Sub-Committee Update
Phase II Update
Trail Name Selections
Discussion of the role of Trail and Rider Clubs in Trail Maintenance

Public Comments

J. Koehn: Will the trails be open to snowmobiles?

B. Moore: The trails won't be designated as snowmobile trails, at least in the beginning.

J. Koehn: The Aitkin County ordinance doesn't currently restrict cross county snowmobile use, so the trails won't be designated as snowmobile trails and they won't be groomed but it won't be illegal for snowmobiles to ride them.

B. Marcum: Need to address prohibited activities within the vicinity of the trail, including the hazards associated with trapping activities. A raccoon trap killed a neighbor's dog.

R. Baker: The Minnesota Trapper's Association meeting in January will include a proposal for no trapping within 300 feet of county or state roads. The association is also

considering a restriction on trapping within 200' of posted walking, horse, hunting, and cross-country ski trails.

M. Jacobs: The County encourages trapping along the Soo Line to help control beaver populations.

B. Napstad: The State of Minnesota governs trapping and it is outside the scope of the Oversight Committee for the 70-Mile ATV/OHM Trail Project.

L. Moses: The ATV trail from Brainerd to Emily has been approved by the County Commissioners and the DNR is assisting with the EAW. There will be public meetings in January. The snowmobile trails in Crow Wing County have GPS located mile markers and this approach should be used for the ATV trails and 70-Mile Trail Project. The trail from Emily to Moose River is in place, and we have at least 98 miles of trail now.

B. Napstad: Emily is a nice destination and the route can link to the overall trail system.

M. Jacobs: The Outing club is proposing a number of trail segments including a connection that is the same as the Phase I Moose River Connector.

Motion to Adjourn (Motion by L. Hardy, Second R. Wagner, Approved)

7:46 PM Adjourn

If you have questions about the project or meeting location, call: 612-414-8041

Driving Directions to Itasca County Fairgrounds, Trailhead Building:

Take Hwy 169 or Hwy 2 to North Pokegama Ave (stoplight at intersection of 169 and 2) in Grand Rapids

Go North 7 blocks on Pokegama Ave to 11th St. NW/Crystal Blvd

Turn Right onto 11st St NW/Crystal Blvd and go 3+ blocks to E 12th St

Turn Right onto E 12th St and take first left onto NE 3rd Ave/Fairgrounds Rd

Continue Straight off corner into the fairgrounds.

Trailhead Building is on the left and signs will be posted.

More information is available at:

<http://www.70miletrail.net>