

70-Mile Trail Oversight Committee Meeting

Tuesday, May 12, 2009

6 PM

Trailhead Building, Itasca County Fair Grounds, Grand Rapids, MN (1336 Fairgrounds Rd, Grand Rapids, MN 55744)

In Attendance: Robert Marcum*, Jon Korpi*, T.J. Gustin*, Mark Jacobs*, Brian Napstad*, Len Hardy*, Andrew Brown*, Rusty Eichorn*, Laurie Westerlund*, Maynard Ahonen*, Warren Spawn*, Bob Moore, Larry Moses, Gilbert Eigsberg, Joe Majerus, Bob Dresser, Roger Olson, LeRoy Boudeson, Jim Berg, Katie Fernholz**

* = Committee Member ** - project coordinator

MINUTES

6:02 PM – Call to Order

Approval of Meeting Agenda – addition of presentation by R. Marcum addressing trapping; addition of time for Committee Member Comments (Motion by L.Hardy, Second M. Jacobs, Approved)

Approval of 3/23/09 Meeting Minutes (Motion by L.Hardy, Second M.Jacobs, Approved)

Review of Old Business

- Quarterly Progress Report: The next report is to be distributed in June and will include information about Phase I construction progress, award of the Yamaha grant and updated maps. The committee would also like to see the report highlight the contracts that have been awarded to local businesses and contractors.

Committee Member Comments

- M. Jacobs: The county has been getting many more calls this year from riders and clubs that are looking for trail information and want to know what the rules are, if trails are open and other details so that they aren't doing anything they aren't suppose to be doing. It seems riders are becoming more aware of the need and importance of following the rules.
- B. Moore: State trails are currently closed and riders are looking for information about available trails. The DNR website provides trail updates.
- B. Napstad: It is important to have closed trails well marked, including signs at both ends and all access points.
- J. Majerus: There aren't any tracks on the areas of new trail construction, so hopefully riders have gotten the message to stay away from these areas.
- M.Jacobs: The Blind Lake Trail opens soon and notices will be sent out.

Construction Planning Sub-Committee Update

- The county board approved the lumber and geoblock purchases discussed at the last committee meeting. The first round of bids was rejected and new bids requested to address the requirement to provide materials that do not include arsenic treated wood. The board was concerned that the use of arsenic in wetland crossings did not fit the environmental objectives of the project and that the county may be required to remove the crossings in the future if the use of the product is restricted or banned. Bids were resubmitted. There were four lumber bids, all from Minnesota companies, and

- contracts have been awarded to local companies.
- A full truckload of geoblock has been ordered and, although the installation is labor intensive, it reduces wetland impacts and helps meet the environmental objectives of the project.
 - On the Solana Forest Loop, 9 miles have been sheared. The Lawler North and South Loops (14+miles) are also prepped for further work and the wetland crossings have been located and mapped to support the permitting process. The trail planning and design has been effective in avoiding wetlands and impacts have been minimized through the environmental review and evaluation process, trail realignments, and field inspections of the routes. Less than a half-acre of wetland fill will be needed in the Lawler Loops. Construction will proceed over the course of the summer.
 - Itasca County has about 10 miles ready for work this summer, with the trail running up to the Goodland area. Committee members had a meeting at Goodland on May 11th to help continue to make progress on the project. There are still challenges related to routes that would require private landowners to grant trail access. It does not look like the trail will be able to connect to Warba and an alternative route to Swan River is being reviewed, including the possibility of a loop trail and use of existing forest roads in the area. If the route is changed, it will impact the planned Phase II segment and the plan for connecting to Jacobson. It would be much easier to complete the routes if county roads were opened to ATVs.
 - The trail construction this summer will include the use of Minnesota Conservation Corps (MCC) crews and the counties can check on the availability of Sentence to Serve (STS) crews.
 - The project is also addressing parking areas with upgrades at Lawler and McGregor and continued work at Palisade and Swatara.
 - Sen. Saxhaug has been updated about the status of the project; the progress that is being made and the need for continued support to address ATV trail needs and the management of motorized recreation.
 - The project's development of maps, signs and destination trails will help let riders know where they can go and should help manage the demand for motorized recreation and decrease the damage and conflict that is currently a cause of concern for residents and townships. By early fall there could be as much as 50 miles of new trail ready.

Phase II Update

- A survey has been drafted to gather feedback from property owners adjacent to the proposed Phase II trail routes. The survey is intended to improve the committee's understanding of what public concerns exist and what mitigations might help address them (e.g., road maintenance commitments, restrictions on the season of trail use, enforcement and monitoring, etc). Workman Township is also planning a survey of residents to get feedback on the proposed trail. Committee members will meet with Workman Township as soon as possible. Meetings with Logan and Macville Township could also be helpful. Itasca County has completed meetings with townships. The committee's survey will be distributed following further input from the County Land Departments.

Trapping Discussion, Robert Marcum:

- While supporting the sport of trapping, it is noted that there are concerns about dog safety when trapping is allowed along trails. There is support for an ordinance restricting trapping along the trail and other counties have similar ordinances, including one for the Mesabi Trail. Some ordinances also have 6' leash restrictions for dogs. The ordinance should address the whole trail corridor, not just parking areas, and could

make exceptions for control trapping. R.Marcum provided examples of ordinances to be shared with the County Board and recognized the need for further study and public comment. He would like to make a presentation to the Board to provide some additional details about the issue.

- L. Hardy: Federal trappers use signs at trail entrances and near parking areas to warn of trapping activities in the area.

Trail Name Selections for the Moose River and Itasca County Phase I segment

The following names have been adopted by the committee:

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, Land O'Lakes Trail, Moose-Pengily Trail
Itasca County Trail: PenWar Trail, Itasca Aitkin Connection, Round Rapids Trail

Additional name nominations: Dead Moose Trail, Dead Moose Loop (for the Lawler Loop), Central Connection Trail, Minnesota Central Trail, Minnesota 70, 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

- Trail name selections tabled and nominations will continue to be accepted.

Schedule Next Committee Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 11, 2009 at 6pm at the Long Lake Conservation Center (For directions to the LLCC, call 218-768-4653 or visit: <http://www.llcc.org/roadmap.html>)

Agenda for Next Meeting:

Construction Sub-Committee Update
Phase II Update
Trail Name Selections

Public Comments

R.Olson: White Pine Club will do maintenance on Solana Forest Loop when it is opened. Want to know where the entrance is and if the club can put toilets at McGrath again (donated by credit union in Isle).

M.Jacobs: The entrance will be off the Soo Line by the old townsite of Solana, and yes, the toilets can be placed again. The wood won't be moved for a while, so the toilets could go on the other side.

R.Olson: The White Pine Club has 43 paid members and they monitor use of Solana and have the phone number for reporting violations and aiding in enforcement. Evergreen and PAC are working on safety classes will good sign up for the ones coming up later this month. They are doing 5 classes this month. Club members aren't participating in the Ambassador programs because they don't want to go all over the state.

L. Hardy: Ambassadors can define the areas they want to work in on the bid sheet, and they don't have to go everywhere.

L. Moses: Crow Wing Co. clubs sponsored a spring event and Joe Majerus was a presenter. Two townships have passed ordinances against ATVs on public roads, but some communities are still open to trail routes. The City of Crosby has put together a committee to look at alternatives.

M. Jacobs: Ceremony at Blind Lake on May 22nd, there will be a trail ride with members.

L. Moses: Crosby Club plans to go to Blind Lake on June 13th. Club has 46 members; Central Lakes Riders has 90 members. Recommend talking with township supervisors before sending out the survey.

7:52 PM Adjourn (Motion by L. Hardy, Second by T.J. Gustin, Approved)

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

More information is available at:
<http://www.70miletrail.net>