

## **70-Mile Trail Oversight Committee Meeting**

Tuesday, August 11, 2009

6 PM

Long Lake Conservation Center

*In Attendance:* Frank Turnock\*, Laurie Westerlund\*, Robert Marcum\*, Katie Fernholz\*\*, Robin Baker\*, Jon Korpi\*, Ross Wagner\*, Andrew Brown\*, Harlan Kingsley\*, T.J. Gustin\*, Len Hardy\*, Brian Napstad\*, Mark Jacobs\*, Bob Moore, Larry Moses, Roger D. Benly, Terry Kullhem, Ken Futhey, Dennis Wetterling, Kenneth Grell, Dick Valley, Rachell Gunz, Gloria Westerlund, William Olmsted, Derek Wasow, Rich Hermann, Brian Ristow, Don Haller, L.P. McCorm, Walt Sauerbrei, Ron Smith, Marvin Hohston, Carole Holten, Jim Berg, Dick Ladd, Warren Spawn\*

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

### **MINUTES**

6:04 PM – Call to Order

Approval of Meeting Agenda with the addition of a presentation from Workman Township (Motion by L. Hardy, Second by R. Baker, Carried)

Approval of 5/12/09 Meeting Minutes (Motion by L. Hardy, Second by A. Brown, Carried)

Review of Old Business

- Quarterly Progress Report distributed in June. Each report is mailed to a list of about 200 businesses and townships in the project area, distributed via email to interested parties and posted to the project website. Interested parties can include their email and/or mailing address on the sign-up sheet at the committee meetings if they would like to be added to this distribution list or send your contact information to [info@dovetailinc.org](mailto:info@dovetailinc.org).

Construction Planning Sub-Committee Update

- Powerpoint presentation by Mark Jacobs, Aitkin County Land Department: Progress Report on the Lawler Loops ATV Trail. The trail includes 19 miles on North and South loop trails that will accommodate Class I and II ATVs. The area had pre-existing damage and the trail needed to be located to minimize wetland crossings and on suitable soils. Trail clearing and staging of materials was done in the winter to minimize soil impacts and construction materials have been stored at Frank Turnock's farm. The materials include environmentally-preferable and non-arsenic treated lumber as well as SFI-certified materials and wood from local FSC-certified forests. All of the vendors have been local and selected through a competitive bidding process. There are a total of 7 wood puncheon wetland crossings and 6 geoblock crossings. Only 3 wood crossings remain to be completed. Minnesota Conservation Corps crews from Moose Lake, Bemidji and Brainerd have assisted with the geoblock installation and their time is compensated with existing DNR grants. Vegetation has re-grown through the geoblock in just a few weeks. The material is expensive, but it allows construction to occur without the use of fill and without severely altering the wetland hydrology. Wood puncheon construction is being used in peat soil areas. The Lawler Loops are expected to cost about \$120,000 when completed this fall and a grand opening is anticipated for Spring 2010. Trail maps will be developed this winter and signs are also being installed. A fall tour for the press, land management and permitting agencies, politicians and others will be held. The crews have seen a few riders in the construction areas and it is important that local businesses and trail clubs remind people not to ride in these areas until they are officially opened. The powerpoint presentation will be posted at the project website.

- Solana Loop – Moving forward and have an identified strategy for stock piling and moving materials. Plan to use DNR construction crew in October.
- Swatara/Moose River Connector – Bids are due on Monday and the construction should be completed this fall.
- Itasca Phase I – Need to harden 1.5 miles and the 14 mile route should be completed this fall.
- All 4 segments of Phase I should be ready for a grand opening in Spring 2010, including the 19 mile Lawler Loops, 14 miles in Itasca, 15 miles for Solana and 6 miles on the Moose River Connector.

#### Phase II Update

- Results of Itasca Phase II survey: The Oversight Committee conducted a survey with the objective of gaining information about the perceived impacts of alternative Phase II trail routes in Itasca County. The survey was developed to gain information about the level of support for alternative route alignments, concerns about potential impacts, and the degree to which mitigations might address concerns. The mail-in survey was conducted from June 25<sup>th</sup> to July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2009. The survey was mailed to property owners adjacent to the proposed trail alignments in Itasca County. A total of 102 surveys were mailed and a total of 36 survey responses were received for a response rate of 35%. The results show that route A is slightly preferred over route B. Overall, 71% support at least one of the routes while 29% support neither route. The majority of respondents indicated that the potential impacts included in the survey would not be negative and/or the level of impact would be acceptable. Only the placement of trash receptacles was identified as a mitigation that would fully address concerns. Other mitigating actions were largely viewed as doing nothing to address concerns. Written comments emphasized several specific property owner concerns and potential mitigations. Several respondents identified the mitigating action of monitoring and enforcement and identified concerns about trespass and property damage. The full report of the survey results will be posted to the project website with the addition of labels to the roads shown in Figure 1 of the report (motion by R. Baker, second by R. Wagner, Carried)
- There will be an meeting of the construction sub-committee to decide the next steps for the Itasca Phase II route
- There will be additional maps at the next meeting to review the possible route by Hill City.
- Additional funding will be needed to complete the project. A legislative sub-committee is designated to develop a funding proposal. Members of the legislative sub-committee are: Brian Napstad, Bob Moore, Len Hardy, Ross Wagner and Rick Utech. (Motion by F. Turnock, Second by W. Spawn, Carried)

#### Workman Township Discussion – Jim Berg

Mr. Berg congratulates the committee on their efforts and commitment to the trail project. Surveys were sent to 67 property owners in Workman Township (on Grouse Street, 241<sup>st</sup> Place, 235<sup>th</sup> Place, north side of 480<sup>th</sup> Street from Rat Lake to Grouse Street) and 4 businesses. Survey included postage paid envelope and a map of the proposed trail route provided by the Aitkin County Land Department. As of July 30<sup>th</sup>, 43 surveys have been returned. Recipients were asked to indicate if they are full or part time residents, if they do or do not own an ATV and if they are neutral, in favor, or against the proposed route. Overall 25 (60%) are against, 9 (21%) are neutral and 8 (19%) are in favor. Safety and noise were identified as top concerns. On August 19<sup>th</sup> the Board Supervisors will meet and will likely be voting against the proposed trail route based upon the survey results. The Board is willing to work with the committee on alternative locations and the committee will continue to explore alternatives. In response to a citizen question, the committee clarified that the counties will not use eminent domain to condemn any private property to develop the trail project.

## Trail Name Selections

### Names under consideration:

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, Itaskin, Aitsca

It is the consensus of the committee to table Trail Name Selections until the Next Meeting.

Schedule Next Committee Meeting and Phase I Field Tour event

**The next meeting of the 70-Mile Trail Oversight Committee will be at 6pm on Tuesday, October 6<sup>th</sup> at Jackson's Hole in Lawler and will be preceded by a 3 pm Field Tour for committee members. Participants in the field tour should plan to meet at Jackson's Hole by 2:45 pm on Tuesday, October 6<sup>th</sup>.**

### Public Comments

L. Moses: As an ambassador and trail user, I've seen a reduction in off-trail riding and riders keep things clean and pick up litter. It is not accurate to say that 100's of ATVs will be out on a trail. I see an average of maybe 30 to 50 on a trail - during a ride of 35 or 40 miles.

F. Turnock: I offer my assistance to Itasca County as a private landowner who has had a positive experience with allowing an ATV trail on his property, also note that liability coverage is available through the club.

L. Hardy: On June 13<sup>th</sup>, Silver Bay had about 2,000 ATV riders in a parade to set a record. There were 5 conservation officers up there all weekend and they wrote 2 tickets. Silver Bay can't wait for the riders to come back again. The legislature changed the law about ATV violations and the 1<sup>st</sup> offense of riding in a wetland is a ticket, but with a 2<sup>nd</sup> offense you lose your machine and also have to pay restitution.

8:15 PM Adjourn (Motion L. Westerlund, Second R. Wagner, Carried)