

Northern Regional Trail Advisory Committee

Meeting Summary of April 27th, 2023 (Draft)

Northwest Regional Planning Commission

1400 S River St

Spooner, WI 54801

Members Present

Clint Meyer, Douglas County Forestry; Glen Sikorski, Chippewa County; Dean Gullickson, Chippewa County; Dan Thole, Barron County; Jeff Wolfe, Barron County; Susan Tollander, Burnett County; Sue Smedegard, Burnett County; Chuck Anderson, Burnett County; Dan Corbin, Douglas County; Mike Peterson, Washburn County; Doug Johnson, Polk County; Don Mrotek, Sawyer County; Cathy LaReau, Director at large; Dana Heller, Barron County; Lindley Mattson, Bayfield County; Mike Ninke, Polk County

Others Present

Clem Larson, NWRPC; Brian Markowski, WI DNR; Jerrad Macholl, Rusk County

Approve Agenda

Motion by Johnson to approve agenda, seconded by Gullickson - Approved

Committee Introductions & Recognition of Guests

Members and Guests were introduced.

January 26th, 2023, Meeting Summary

Motion by Johnson to approve the meeting summary from January 26th, 2023; seconded by Gullickson - Approved

Chairs Comments

Chair Peterson thanked all for attending. Would like to keep momentum going on projects.

Financial

Larson gave a quarterly update on the NoRTAC budget. \$7,680 in budget, this balance includes 2023 membership, with the exception of 1 member county.

ORV Council update (Thole)

Council Had 2 meetings regarding storm damage, all requests approved. Project grant applications were due April 15th. Reviews will be in June, approval in August. 1.6 million available for grants. The council proposed to no longer fund radios as purchases, looking to use a rental system, instead. The council announced Polk County Intensive Use Area project.

SRC update (Smedegard)

Storm damage requests of \$873,614 this year. Disagreements on council about how to handle Storm Damage. Priorities this year are additional miles and bridges. (Mrotek) participated in audit committee. Training is necessary for trail coordinators. (Smedegard) Committee being set up to train new/existing coordinators, Douglas and Burnett are participating from NoRTAC region.

Issue Briefs (Peterson)

Legislature in budget process, issue briefs seem to be going well. Anything not specifically budget related is likely to be put on hold. Motion made to draft issue briefs in support of SB 130 & SB 198 by Mrotek, Seconded by Smedegard-Approved.

User Survey (LaReau)

ATV/Snow User Survey questions nearing draft stage. Focus on trail desires for rider/demographics/spending. Motion to allocate \$1,000 of NoRTAC funding to online survey development, by NWRPC, by Johnson. Seconded by Heller-Approved. NWRPC will have an on-line draft survey ready to review at the next meeting. (Peterson) would like trail counters added as agenda item for next meeting. What Counties are using/pros/cons.

Sub-Committee Updates

(Peterson) would like trail counters added as agenda item for next meeting. What Counties are using/pros/cons.

County Updates Relating to Trail Development/Maintenance and Other Projects or Points of Interest

Bayfield (Mattson) – Installed trail counters. Traffic is up.

Barron (Wolfe) - \$95k rehabbing bridges. Submitted projects to council for the year. Acquired GPS units for clubs. County has been renting equipment to clubs when not in use. System seems to be working well.

Burnett (Tollander) - \$52k in storm damage, requested \$16k ATV/ \$36k snowmobile. Opening bids to pave road approaches soon. Road limits come off on Monday. Applied for 2 bridge projects.

Douglas (Meyer) – Waiting for trails to dry out. 4 bridge projects w/ engineering and construction. The Forestry Board voted to open parks up to ATVs.

Polk (Ninke) – Applied for grant for park in Town of Sterling. Hauling lots of gravel and grading.

Rusk (Macholl) – Lots of Storm damage, work still being done, after deadline. Trails projected to open on Memorial Day. New 6-mile trail and awarded contract for 100 ft. bridge of Wiergor. Applied for new loop in Blue Hills. Contentious access in County Forest, Chapter 30/ DNR Issues.

Sawyer (LaReau) – County Closed snowmobile trails. Some Landowner agreements have expired. County has been working on ATV ordinance since July. Allows to apply for routes in May, Aug., & Oct., No time restrictions.

Chippewa (Gullickson) – Working on Opening railroad grade from Chippewa to New Auburn. Windshield inspection identified 2 wetlands. Possibility of easement. Hotels interested in building along river if where trails are possible. Meeting with Economic Development Director to discuss plan of action. (Sikorski) County has a vocal group looking to open unsuitable roads, residents are not in favor.

Washburn (Peterson) – 5-6 grants for rehabs/ 1 bridge. New trail at Trego interchange. Major Washout on Wild River Trail, off of CTH B. Need DNR engineering to let the County know what can be done, probably won't be open by Memorial Day Weekend. Trail cleanup from storm damage is still noticeable after snow melt. Wondering if anyone else is struggling to have everything read for the grant cycle. Busy time of year. Should be pushed back to May.

Question regarding Bike races. Bike events every weekend in the Seeley area. Close sections of trail for them.

DNR (Markowski)- Significant flooding on Red Cedar, North of Luck. The bridge project in Douglas County moving forward, going out to bid soon. Sarah Bolser replaced Daniel Yankowiak, at DNR.

Douglas County having issues with EMS finding people on trails. What do other Counties do? Add to agenda for next meeting.

Spring Forestry meeting was in Douglas County

Next Meeting Date

The next NoRTAC meeting is tentatively scheduled for July 27th, 2023, at Spooner DNR HQ.

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Johnson. seconded by Gullickson- Approved.