

## **Northern Regional Trail Advisory Committee**

Meeting Summary of July 27th, 2023 (Draft)

Northwest Regional Planning Commission

1400 S River St

Spooner, WI 54801

Dan Thole, Barron County; Susan Tollander, Burnett County; Sue Smedegard, Burnett County; Dan Corbin, Douglas County; Jason Weaver, Sawyer County; Don Mrotek, Sawyer County; Cathy LaReau, Director at large; Dana Heller, Barron County; Lindley Mattson, Bayfield County; Mike Ninke, Polk County; Rod Polk, Polk County; Paul Krumenauer, Chippewa County

### Others Present

Clem Larson, NWRPC; Jim Smedegard

### Approve Agenda

Motion by Heller to approve agenda, seconded by Corbin - Approved

### Committee Introductions & Recognition of Guests

Members and Guests were introduced.

### January 26th, 2023, Meeting Summary

Motion by Corbin to approve the meeting summary from April 27th, 2023; seconded by Smedegard - Approved

### Chairs Comments

Thole addressed the group with comments emailed by Peterson, in regard to the success he feels the group has had in regard to the increased law enforcement funding.

### Election of Officers

Nomination of Mike Peterson as Chairman (unanimous consent) by Heller. Approved

Nomination of Dan Thole as Vice-Chairman (unanimous consent) by Smedegard. Approved.

Nomination of Sue Smedegard as Sec./Treasurer (unanimous consent) by Mrotek. Approved

### Financial

Larson gave a quarterly update on the NoRTAC budget. \$7,500 in budget, this balance includes 2023 membership from all counties.

### ORV Council update (Thole)

ORV council met in June to take a preliminary look at grant requests. Next meeting is at the end of August, to approve/deny applications. It doesn't look like there will be enough funding this year to approve all the requests. Projects applied for this year within the NoRTAC region include the Polk County intensive use area, pavilions in Barron County, and a campground in the Town of Barnes, in Bayfield County. Dust control is also likely to be a topic at the next council meeting. Highway approaches are also becoming problematic due to the transfer of trail surface materials to the roadway. ORV council will fund the construction of aprons at 50%. Rusk County has a large project application in for a natural trail surface (no gravel) to be added to a loop in the blue Hills area.

### SRC update (Smedegard)

The council will meet for 2 days in August, just prior to the ORV council meeting. Got half of request for increased aid to local law enforcement. Requests for 336 new miles of trail haven't been ranked yet. Total requests are for \$4.2 million plus \$6 million for maintenance. Councils are working on developing training for county trail coordinators. Also, when purchasing new equipment make sure that your bridges are rated to hold it, as there is no grant money for increasing the capacity or width of bridges. (Mrotek) noted that bridge improvements need 10

years before they are eligible again so if you are replacing decking make sure that the bridge is structurally sound, too.

#### Issue Briefs (Peterson)

No new briefs. Thole noted that sub-group breakout discussions might be a good on upcoming agenda.

#### EMS Response on Trails

Corbin noted that 911 system does not mesh well with the trail system in Douglas County. Polk noted that Polk County has placed signage for fire numbers at each intersection. This project was done through county zoning. Thole noted that Wild Rivers Trail has markers every 1/10<sup>th</sup> of a mile. Mrotek noted that signage on Sawyer County Trails comes out of the maintenance money. Mattson Bayfield County is using the US National Grid System on Hiking trails, every ¼ mile. Land records is doing the work of assigning locations for signage. Tollander noted that Burnett County uses intersection numbers. Krumenauer said that Chippewa County did mile markers on most trails, but signage fell into disrepair. Smedegard noted that the State senate has approved a bill for signs on State Trails, pending in assembly. The signage is to be used for wayfinding, not advertising. More uniform signage discussion to be placed on the upcoming NoRTAC agenda.

#### User Survey (LaReau)

Draft survey questions distributed to members and questions reviewed for clarity. NWRPC will get a mock-up of digital survey and distribute it to the group. Hoping to have it open to the public before winter.

#### Sub-Committee Updates

none

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

Barron (Heller) - Pavilions & portable toilets have been purchased by the County. Bridge decking was completed under budget. Approved to put Wild Rivers Trail signage up at the intersection of highways 8 & 48, at a cost of \$20,000 funding through tourism. Cooperation between clubs using County purchased equipment has been great.

Bayfield (Mattson) - Distributed snowmobile trail count data to group. Trail Counters currently set out on ATV trails. County is opening County Highways to ATV use. Meeting with Town of Barnes to discuss campground application.

Burnett (Tollander) - Highway Department is completing a 5-mile winter trial project today. County has 2 bridge construction projects on hold, due to beaver issues. 2 bridge projects currently out for bids.

Chippewa (Krumenauer) - More roads opening up to ATV traffic, some criteria for opening roads was eliminated. Waiting on contractors to get some trail maintenance done.

Polk (Ninke) - Application for intensive use area. The Stower Trail was ruled to be used for horses and snowmobiles. Working re-decking some bridges

Sawyer (Mrotek) – 7 grants out for bids, not sure when they will be started. Youth training is coming up in September, from the Ride Safe Foundation.

Douglas (Corbin) - New Crossing at B & Highway 53. Bridge on Gandy Dancer this fall.

#### Next Meeting Date

The next NoRTAC meeting is tentatively scheduled for October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Possible group ride to follow. Location TBD.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned by Vice-Chair Thole.