

## **Northern Regional Trail Advisory Committee**

Meeting Summary of January 30th, 2025 (Draft)

Northwest Regional Planning Commission

1400 S River St. Spooner, WI

### Members Present:

Dan Thole, Barron County; Dana Heller, Barron County; Pete Schneider, Barron County; Susan Tollander, Burnett County; Sue Smedegard, Burnett County; Karen Lotts, Chippewa County; Paul Krumenauer, Chippewa County; Dan Corbin, Douglas County; Clint Meyer, Douglas County; Don Mrotek, Sawyer County; Cathy LaReau, Director at large; Doug Johnson, Polk County; Tony Nowak, Polk County; Jerry Smith, Washburn County

### Others Present

Clem Larson, NWRPC; Brandon Shutt, Washburn County Forestry; Jeff Wolfe, Barron County; Jeff Hahn, Polk County; Pat Anderson, WI DNR; Brandon Shutt, Washburn County

### Approve Agenda

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

### Committee Introductions & Recognition of Guests

Members and Guests were introduced.

### July 27th, 2023, Meeting Summary

Changed made to previous meeting date on draft minutes. Motion by Johnson to approve the summary from October 31st, 2024; seconded by Lotts – Approved

### Discussion of Committee Leadership with Chair Vacancy

Vice Chair Thole agreed to run the next meeting until the election of new officers at the July meeting.

### Financial

Larson gave a quarterly update on the NoRTAC budget. \$2,271.90 in budget, as of January 1<sup>st</sup> 2025. Membership dues will be sent to counties in the near future

### ORV Council update (Thole)

Council had a Zoom meeting on December 10<sup>th</sup>, to award unused funds to projects. Shortfall of money to fund grants. 2 large requests. One for an overrun on a project in Langlade County. Project went from \$400k to \$1.2 million. Project required re-engineering due to a gas pipeline. The other project was 53 crossing at Trego. Dollars were re-allocated for preliminary engineering. DNR to track unused dollars for re-allocation. Priority reviews and cost sharing percentages to be reviewed. Funding percentages could be based on trail type. Some council members feel too much money is being spent on gravel and gravel should only be funded at 100% on railroad grades. Discussion on gravel likely at April meeting. Heller commented how Minnesota riders are very happy with graveled trails in the area. Johnson noted that gravel is required for sustainable trails. Meyer commented that as Douglas County Forest is certified, trails can be shut down due to deterioration. Thole has applied for another term on ORV Council.

### SRC/AWSC update (Smedegard)

SRC still lagging behind in funding for projects due to 2022 ice storms. SRC will meet in early February. \$487k for \$5 million in requests. Bridges are top priority for funding requests. SRC is asking counties to spend maintenance money during seasons with low snow amounts. SRC is looking at working at getting increases for registrations and trail pass costs into the State budget. 6 members on SRC are up for re-appointment. New Chair/Vice Chair on Council. 4 ad-hoc committees formed for bridge issues. Estimated 2/3 of grooming equipment is above bridge

capacity. Members to attend an upcoming grooming trade show. Mrotek noted that bridge numbers are highly underestimated. Council is looking at setting up a percentage system to use on overrun costs.

#### Issue Briefs (Meyer)

Meyer explained how the Minnesota DNR is currently in the process of updating their Trails Master Plan, and would like to see a connection opened to the Wrenshall Grade in Douglas County. NoRTAC to send a letter of support for opening this trail to MN DNR in support of making this connection.

#### User Survey Report (Larson)

User surveys still underway 1,205 responses in ATV survey as of this morning. Snowmobile only has 200 due to lack of winter.

#### NoRTAC Website/Social Media Presence (LaReau)

No updates at current time.

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

Barron (Wolfe) – Projects wrapped up, closing out some grants. Working with DNR on using aluminum box culverts, instead of bridges. Cheaper, 70-year lifespan, 100k lb. load ratings

Burnett (Tollander) – County is lacking snow. ATV trail rehab on trl 5 in Webb Lake. One bridge inspection came back bad in Town of Blaine, allows access to County forest. Looking at funding repair through the County. Cost overrun on another bridge, DNR required additional engineering. Anticipating a lighter year for grants.

Chippewa (Krumenauer) – ATV trails closed, not going to be open for winter. County using millings in approaches on 7 County roads. Cutting down on washouts

Douglas (Meyer) - Winter ATV trails open. 4 bridge projects. 2 complete, 1 beginning today. The other is Pokegama bridge on highway 105. Issues with DNR water regs, hoping to go to bid this year.

Polk (Nowak) – a few culvert replacements coming up. Gandy Dancer open to ATV. Luck bridge replacement under discussion with DNR. Likely to be replaced with at grade crossing.

Sawyer (Mrotek) – Snow on lakes is good, Chippewa flowage had good snow. Sheriff's snowmobile ride this week. County policy is ATVs allowed on trails until they are groomed, No UTVs. (LaReau) bad bridge off trail 25, Rusk County maintains. Reroute on Mathy Rd for trail 8 approved. Closure on trail 31 in LCO due to ice heaves

Washburn (Shutt) – Rehabs for spring. Section of Snowmobile only trail lost due to Heartwood under new ownership. Transferred miles to unfunded segment. Hay Creek crossing panels on track for Feb/Mar.

DNR (Anderson) – RTP project currently funded , Not subject to freeze on federal grants. New guidance and applications are out due May 1st

#### Next Meeting Date

The next NoRTAC meeting is tentatively scheduled for April 24th, 2025.

#### Adjourn