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TRAVEL NORTHWEST WISCONSIN TOURISM COMMITTEE

April 11, 2025

Northwest Regional Planning Commission
Spooner, Wisconsin

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Mary McPhetridge called the meeting to order at 11:04 a.m.

ROLL CALL: PRESENT: Mary McPhetridge, Ashland Chamber; Brandi Nelson, Barron County; Mary Motiff, Bayfield County; Chuck Anderson, Burnett County; Lindsey Conley, Douglas County; Melissa Copp, Mercer Chamber; Brad Bearson, Polk County; Johnathan McArthur, Phillips Chamber; Mindy Simons, Hayward VCB; Kaitlin Horsch, Washburn County Tourism; Nick Trimner, Price County; and Kevin Klucas, Burnett County. **EXCUSED:** Sue Leonard, Chippewa County. **ABSENT:** Suzanne Vohs, Rusk County, Jim Crandall, Bayfield County, and Terri Nelson, Rusk County. **OTHERS PRESENT:** Christopher Jennings, Travel Wisconsin. **WCA STAFF:** Sarah Diedrick-Kasdorf.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion by Horsch, second by Simons, to approve the minutes of the March 6, 2025 meeting. Motion carried.

FINANCIAL REPORT: The financial report dated April 8, 2025 was emailed out to committee members. Revenue collected totals \$36,000.51; expenses paid in 2025 total \$6,231.61; the account balance is \$76,417.37; expenses approved but not paid total \$57,456.97; and total unallocated revenue is \$18,960.40.

2025 GOVERNOR'S FISHING OPENER:

Warren Knowles Award Nomination: Committee members reviewed the nominations for the Warren Knowles award. Motion by McPhetridge, second by Simons, to present the award to Don Erickson. Motion carried.

Sponsorships: The committee is working to increase sponsorship dollars - \$24,250 has been raised to date. Molson Coors is once again the title sponsor, and IFD has committed \$2,000 to the event's grocery bill. Kaitlin will call Drew Nussbaum who offered to help with a Kwik Trip sponsorship. Still need to hear back from St. Croix Rods. Tuesday is the cutoff for sponsors to be listed on the t-shirts.

RSVPs: There are 70 people on the RSVP list plus an additional 10 we know are coming but have not formally RSVP'd for the event yet.

Showcase Tours: The showcase tours have all been booked.

Social Media Influencers: Several influencers and travel writers are confirmed to attend. Most ask for a night of lodging as opposed to a cash payment.

Friday Night Banquet: The banquet will be held at the Elks Lodge in Rice Lake. Menu includes baked fish, chef-carved beef, carrots, baby red potatoes, and salad, with a strawberry pretzel dessert. If outside food can be brought to the venue, appetizers will be Moose Lake Mustard and pretzels and Poppy Popcorn Co popcorn. Brandi is working on the Governor's gift basket. Barron County is collecting items for the silent auction – each county must bring a basket with a minimum value of \$300. Banquet speakers include the Governor, DNR, and Barb Carey. Welcomes will be given by Travel Northwest Wisconsin and Barron County. The Warren Knowles award will be presented before dinner.

Giveaways: The event giveaway is a long-sleeve blue shirt. Rice Lake Tourism is giving away fishing towels. Approximately 150 VIP bags will be prepared for distribution. Sponsors have the opportunity to provide giveaways for the VIP bags, as well as the bags for Family Fishing Day. Rice Lake Tourism is providing coloring books and crayons for the family swag bags.

Fishing Hosts: We are still in need of a large number of fishing hosts. The Lake District will have a pontoon boat for the media. Barron County Economic Development will do additional outreach. Breakfast will be to-go style from Veterans Memorial Park.

Family Fishing Day: There are eight confirmed booths for Family Fishing Day. Sarah and Kaitlin will work on a Travel Northwest Wisconsin booth – need to make sure the new visitors guide is available at the booth. There will be a couple of food trucks available for lunch.

Staffing: Brandi and Kaitlin will send out a “how to help” email.

Social Media: Melissa sent out an initial press release. A reminder will be sent closer to the date of the event.

2025 MARKETING PLAN/MARKETING SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT: Kaitlin will send a follow-up email on the guides. Mary Motiff will email the group asking if any counties have changes to the corridor map. Melissa is working on ads for publications and scheduling the posts prepared by North of Eight. She will send each county their North of Eight ads as a double-check. Any counties that want to make their own Facebook posts should send their Facebook email to Mary Motiff.

TRAVEL WISCONSIN REPORT: Christopher Jennings reported on the following items: Laughlin Constable requirement for ACH payments – will accept other methods of payment; Governor's budget requests for tourism; Office of Outdoor Recreation recordings on do-it-yourself economic impact reports; 2025 summer campaign; new process for press releases; looking for Memorial Day festivals; Tourism Week May 4-10; Christopher will play a larger role in the Wisconsin travel reports; WIGCOT materials available online; Office of Outdoor Recreation award submissions due April 27.

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS: Sarah will email out the homework assignments.

NEXT MEETING DATES:

- April 28: Fishing Opener Bag Stuffing – Noon in Rice Lake
- May 1: Regularly Scheduled Meeting – Spooner and Zoom
- May 2-3: Governor's Fishing Opener

ADJOURN: Chair McPhetridge adjourned the meeting at 12:27 p.m.