

Northern Regional Trail Advisory Committee

Meeting Summary of July 30th, 2026 (Draft)

WI Department of Natural Resources – Spooner Northern Region HQ

810 W Maple St. Spooner, WI

Members Present:

Pete Schneider, Barron County; Sue Smedegard, Burnett County; Scott Luostari, Douglas County; Clint Meyer, Douglas County; Nina Eisold, Chippewa County; Dennis Bachman, Chippewa County; Paul Krumenauer, Chippewa County; Ron Freeman, Rusk County; Randy Neuman, Sawyer County; Don Mrotek, Sawyer County

Others Present

Dalton Bygd, Barron County Trails Coordinator; Sara Hudson, Bayfield County Parks & Recreation Coordinator; Clem Larson, NWRPC; Dan Thole, ORV Council

Approve Agenda

Motion by Krumenauer to approve agenda, seconded by Mrotek - Approved

Committee Introductions & Recognition of Guests

Election of Officers

Nomination of Dana Heller as Chair (unanimous consent) by Smedegard. Approved

Nomination of Chuck Anderson as Vice-Chairman (unanimous consent) by Smedegard. Approved.

No nominations made for Secretary/Treasurer

April 24th, 2025, Meeting Summary

Change in minutes by Meyer to change “dam removal” to “dam repair” under Douglas County update

Motion by Schneider to approve the summary from April 24th, 2025; seconded by Mrotek - Approved

Financial (Larson)

Larson gave a quarterly update on the NoRTAC budget. \$5,542.31 in budget, as of June 30th 2026. 2026 membership has currently been paid by 8 of the 9 member counties.

ORV Council Update (Thole)

ORV Council met in Rhinelander this week. Thole supplied handout with breakdown of 2025 funding, expecting it be similar to 2026. 2026 funding breakdown will be available after next meeting, in August. Total of \$6.2 million available. \$3 million taken off the top for maintenance. \$2.8 available for grant projects. \$200k set in reserve for storm damage, although no storm damage requests had been made, as of July meeting. 2 project cost increases were approved. One was for Fish Creek/Tri-County corridor crossing in Bayfield County. \$2.5 million in project funding requests. 11 of 14 requests are for the Cheese Country Trail in southwest part of State (Mineral Pt. to Monroe). 47 miles of trail with 68 crossing structures. Many bridges along trail are failing according to inspection report. Detours vary from 500 ft. to 5 miles. Largest project is bridge replacement for \$1.6 million currently using a 5 mile re-route. Looking at possibly using former rail flatbed as bridge. ORV Council to meet with Cheese Country Trail Committee to prioritize projects. If trails are on private land, projects are being looked at differently vs. public land. Recommended that counties keep putting in applications whether projects are funded or not, as it demonstrates needs for more funding. Council discussed fee increase and is in favor of it. UTV's should have higher fees than ATV's. Gas tax hasn't changed in a long time. New law regarding tinting on windshields being enforced.

SRC/AWSC update (Smedegard)

SRC- \$6 million in funding requests, \$1.5- \$2.5 million to spend. Meeting next Thursday to discuss solutions for Cheese Country Trail. \$6 million in maintenance contracts, put aside some money for storm damage, \$1.5 million for bridges. AWSC- lots of bridges rotting out due to neglect. Lobbyists working to get fees increased. American Council of Snowmobile Associations meeting in Siren Feb. 3rd through 7th. Rec Council also meeting there that week. AWSC magazine editor filed for bankruptcy, information newsletter will be going out still. Moving forward with economic impact study through UW Whitewater.

Issue Briefs

None

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

Barron (Bygd) – Did a bridge replacement in May, used box culvert installed by county staff. Looking at doing more box culverts vs. bridge replacements. 2 solar projects in Barron County. 1 goes through snowmobile ATV trail, meeting with project manager to discuss. (Schneider) meeting tomorrow (invite only) with several legislators to discuss solar projects

Burnett (Tollander via email) – Construction of the new Trail 45 North Fork Flowage bridge is scheduled to begin next week. Our Highway Department removed the old bridge in early June and completed some trail work to improve access to the bridge site earlier this week. The contractor will complete construction of the abutments in August, and the prefabricated steel bridge will be delivered in the fall. Other upcoming projects include finishing an ATV trail rehab project that involves graveling problem areas on two miles of Trail 8 in the Towns of Swiss and Webb Lake, and straightening a short stretch of Trail 45 just outside of Danbury in order to address safety and maintenance issues. Grants applied for include \$85,000 split between snowmobile and ATV to go toward the replacement of the Trail 925 Bents county forest road bridge, a \$32,000 trail rehab request on Trail 925 east of Highway 35, and a request for \$10,800 toward paving ATV trail approaches in the Town of Swiss. The town would provide matching funds for this if approved. (Smedegard) Funding finally complete for Crex Meadows project.

Bayfield (Hudson) – Ounce River bridge has been delivered and will be installed. Trying to salvage existing bridge for future use. 2 bids for 18 mile trestle contract. Some storm damage from July 17th storm, a few miles closed on Forest service land that the county manages. Lindley working with clubs on bridge decking projects. New gates manufactured in Hayward were installed.

Chippewa (Krumenauer) – Been quiet, good weather. Followed logging operation, had signage put up. Applying for a trail rehab.

Douglas (Meyer) – dry conditions, has been difficult to grade. Highway 105 winter ATV project complete. 120 ft clear span bridge. Much safer. Trail 7 had large culvert replacement done. Clubs finishing up opening a new trail from Solon Springs to Amnicon.

Sawyer (Neuman) – Began mowing some trails to combat oak wilt. Opening some new miles on reservation. Complaints from residents about loud music asking users to keep it down. (Mrotek) New trail along 63 near KOA.

Rusk (Freeman) – Forest administrator said everything is going well.

DNR (Not present) – Pat Anderson's replacement has been hired. Based out of Rhinelander.

Next Meeting Date

The next NoRTAC meeting is tentatively scheduled for October 29th, 2026. Possible Sawyer County group ride. Details to follow

Adjourn