

**North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department
Recreational Trail Program Advisory Committee
Annual Meeting Minutes
April 20, 2010**

Committee members present:

Non-motorized: Curt Glasoe, Curt Vanek, Mark Liebig, Mark Zimmerman, Tyler Jacobson, Alicia Hoffarth
Motorized: Daryl Brandner, Annette Behm-Caldwell, Keri Wanner
Federal Highway Administration: Sandy Zimmer

Others present: Arik Spencer, Jessica Riepl, Kevin Stankiewicz, Erik Dietrich

Committee members absent: Non-motorized: Bob Backman, Lisa Kudelka

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Arik Spencer, Recreation Division Manager of the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department (NDPRD). Spencer introduced NDPRD's new Recreation Grants Coordinator, Jessica Riepl. All others present then introduced themselves. Spencer introduced Mark Zimmerman, who is serving his last year as he is soon to be the new director of NDPRD.

Riepl gave a brief presentation of projects completed in the last few years and listed projects nearing completion.

Riepl updated the committee on the new Geospatial Database of Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and Recreational Trails Program (RTP) projects. Curt Glasoe questioned public access to this database, and Spencer explained that while it is not on the state's GIS hub yet, we are considering plans to do so. Wanner mentioned that the snowmobile trail system is already available on the GIS hub.

Kevin Stankiewicz, Recreation Program Coordinator for NDPRD, gave an update on the new State Trail Guide, which will be available soon. Erik Dietrich then gave an update on OHV issues in the state, including the NDPRD's new helmet use/safety campaign. He showed the PSA that is currently airing. He explained how NDPRD works with OHV dealers and manufactures to help promote helmet use and OHV safety. Dietrich also updated the committee on the Roughrider Trail, an OHV trail that was recently funded through RTP, and the department's plans for the Pembina Gorge recreation area.

Riepl then asked Alicia Hoffarth to share information about the North Country Trail (NCT), an association she represents on the committee. The Sheyenne Chapter of the NCT will be having monthly events beginning in May. Currently the NCT is working on securing land leases so they can begin construction of their 2009 RTP project. They've already begun work on trail enhancements and signage for existing trail.

Curt Vanek brought up the question of using RTP funds to pay for easements, to make the process of securing land easements easier for project sponsors. Spencer clarified that RTP funds may be used to pay for the easements but not for the staff time to secure them, because funding needs to be reserved for putting trails on the ground. Glasoe added that with an 80% failure rate on securing easements, if staff time for securing them was eligible for funding, the money would be used up quickly and wouldn't necessary end in actual on-the-ground trails. Hoffarth agreed that while the NCT does need more money for securing easements, private funding is a more appropriate place than RTP to look for those funds. Glasoe and Wanner both mentioned the importance of seasoned volunteers working with the landowners to form lasting partnerships.

Glaoe provided the committee with an update on the Maah Daah Hey Trail, the association of which he represents. He handed out maps of the new trail segments and trailheads that will be accessible to the public this coming season, including parts of their current 2009 RTP project. There was also conversation regarding the different names of the trail. While the entire trail system will be officially called the Maah Daah Hey Trail, segments of the trail are informally referred to as the North, the South, and the Deuce. Glaoe pointed out these different areas on the maps he provided.

After the NDPRD and Trail Association updates, discussion moved on to funding and the 2010 applications. Funding levels will be similar to last year's levels. Spencer explained that with 2 of the 3 motorized projects falling into the diverse use category, it was important to score all projects against each other this year, rather than score motorized and non-motorized separately. He then opened discussion up for the motorized projects.

Annette Behm-Caldwell explained the Burleigh County Fairgrounds OHV Riding Area project. The Power Sports Advisory Council designed two separate trail areas, one for less experienced riders and one for more experienced riders. This part of the project will be phase I. Phase II will expand the trail to connect the fairgrounds to the City of Lincoln. Curt Vanek noted that designated trails, such as this project, are important to control where OHV use occurs.

Spencer asked for thoughts on the Pembina Gorge application. Glaoe thought it was a good project and that the Pembina Gorge is a nice area for such a project. He noted that a designated trail in this area will also help control where OHV use occurs.

Wanner, from Snowmobile North Dakota (SND), said that she was grateful for consistent RTP funding for snowmobile trails in the past, but now with more motorized projects in the running, SND is looking elsewhere for additional funding.

Nonmotorized projects were discussed next. The Maah Daah Hey project was briefly discussed. Vanek stated the importance of the nationally notable Maah Daah Hey Trail and its benefit to tourism in the state.

Daryl Brandner brought up his concern that most of the applications this year are for trail rehabilitation or accessories, not new trail. Tyler Jacobson, from the Valley City Park District and the North Dakota Recreation & Park Association, explained that most Park Districts don't have the funds for new trails right now. Mark Zimmerman noted the importance of maintaining what trails we already have. There was discussion of negotiating with contractors to reduce the cost of new trails, but Zimmer reminded the committee that under the Federal Highway procurement guidelines, negotiation is not allowed. Bids may be rejected, but not negotiated.

Spencer asked the committee how they felt about the review process using the online RAM system. While most everyone agreed that the process could be better, they still preferred it to paper. Modifying the application and review process is something that will be worked on and improved for next year.

Because several members' terms will expire this year, NDPRD will be sending out a press release requesting nominations for new committee members. If any current committee member whose term will be up this year is interested in serving another 3-year term, he or she is asked to submit a letter of

recommendation from his or her user group or trail association, which will then be reviewed by NDPRD for a final decision.

As the meeting began to run long, Spencer announced the possibility of having a fall meeting to provide time and opportunity for more discussion. Riepl also told the committee that she will be sending them periodic updates to keep them in the loop of all RTP activity between now and the next meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Project Ranking*

Motorized:

Project Name	Total Cost	Fund Request	Rank
Pembina Gorge State Recreation Area	\$ 145,000.00	\$ 116,000.00	1
Fairground Power Sports Facility & Trails Phase 1	\$ 398,362.00	\$ 150,000.00	2
Snowmobile Trail Program	\$ 180,000.00	\$ 140,000.00	3

Non-Motorized:

Project Name	Total Cost	Fund Request	Rank
Maah Daah Hey 2010	\$ 150,000.00	\$ 120,000.00	1
State Park Nature Trail Enhancement	\$ 20,300.00	\$ 16,240.00	2
McDowell Dam Recreational Multi-Use Path	\$ 155,500.00	\$ 120,000.00	3
UND Bike/Walk Path Rehabilitation	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 80,000.00	4
Tom O'Leary Multi-Use Path Rehabilitation	\$ 209,162.65	\$ 150,000.00	5
Devils Lake Transcity Pedestrian/Bike Project- PV	\$ 146,672.43	\$ 117,337.94	6
Tinta Tawa Trailhead/Parking	\$ 20,200.00	\$ 16,160.00	7
Greenway Signs	\$ 21,085.00	\$ 16,000.00	8
Lake Metigoshe Hiking and Biking Trail Equipment	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 24,000.00	9

Diverse Use:

Project Name	Total Cost	Fund Request	Rank
Pembina Gorge State Recreation Area	\$ 145,000.00	\$ 116,000.00	1
Maah Daah Hey 2010	\$ 150,000.00	\$ 120,000.00	2
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Tinta Tawa Trailhead/Parking	\$ 20,200.00	\$ 16,160.00	9
Greenway Signs	\$ 21,085.00	\$ 16,000.00	10
Lake Metigoshe Hiking and Biking Trail Equipment	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 24,000.00	11

*Please note that while these lists are the final rankings, projects must pass the environmental review process, and depending on funding levels, not all projects will receive funding.