

**North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department (NDPRD)  
Recreational Trail Program Advisory Committee  
Annual Meeting Minutes  
April 28, 2011**

**Committee members present:**

Non-motorized hiking: Curt Glasoe, Maah Daah Hey Trail Association  
Non-motorized horseback: Curt Vanek  
Non-motorized mountain biking: Mark Liebig, International Mountain Biking Association  
Non-motorized at-large: Alicia Hoffarth, North Country Trail Association  
Non-motorized at-large: Lisa Kudelka  
Motorized off-highway vehicle: Mike Burke, North Dakota Off-Road Vehicle Association  
Motorized snowmobile: Keri Wanner, Snowmobile North Dakota

**Others present:**

Arik Spencer, Recreation Division Manager, NDPRD  
Jessica Riepl, Grants Coordinator, NDPRD  
Mark Zimmerman, Director, NDPRD  
Sandy Zimmer, Financial Manager, Federal Highway Administration

**Committee members absent:**

Non-motorized paddling: Bob Backman, River Keepers  
Non-motorized at-large: Tyler Jacobson, North Dakota Recreation & Park Association  
Motorized at-large: Annette Behm-Caldwell, North Dakota Power Sports Dealers Association

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m. by Arik Spencer, who introduced himself, Jessica Riepl, and Mark Zimmerman. All others present then introduced themselves.

Riepl gave a power point presentation highlighting projects completed in the last year. She also mentioned the 2010 American Trails National Symposium in Chattanooga, TN, where Keri Wanner, with Snowmobile North Dakota, received the North Dakota Trail Advocacy Award, and Marc Brown, trail planner for NDPRD, received the North Dakota Trail Worker Award.

Keri Wanner gave a presentation on Snowmobile North Dakota (SND). She started with a brief history of SND, including its establishment in 1974. SND has grown to 14 trail systems/associations and 39 clubs. Wanner discussed SND's program objectives, mission, and its management, including securing and maintaining easements and 1200 leases, obtaining insurance, and the importance of volunteers. Volunteers groom and maintain the entire trail system. Lastly, Wanner highlighted some of SND's events, such as the State Ride, MichCanSka, and Pink Ribbon Riders, and showed a video of the Cheyenne Valley trail system.

Riepl then asked Alicia Hoffarth to share information about the North Country Trail (NCT). The Sheyenne Chapter of the NCT has its summer events schedule out, beginning with a spring hike in May. Currently the NCT is working on completing its 2009 RTP grant. They hired a contractor to secure easements and they are working on closing the gaps in their trail system to complete the trail. They've also done some enhancements to the existing trail, such as creek crossings and horse barriers.

Next Curt Glasoe gave a presentation on the Maah Daah Hey Trail. He began with the history of the trail, from its initial conception as a road in the 1960's to its construction in the late 1990s. He described the management of the trail, and the agreements between the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service, and the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department. He also spoke of the different elements of the trail, including trail markers every 500 feet, the many campgrounds they maintain, and the dozens of self-closing gates. The Maah Daah Hey Trail Association was created in 1999, and now has over 75 members.

After the NDPRD and Trail Association presentations, discussion moved on to the 2011 applications and the funding levels. There were 9 eligible applications this year, including 2 motorized and 7 nonmotorized. Riepl handed out a spreadsheet of how these projects will meet the 30/30/40 motorized/nonmotorized/diverse use requirements. She also handed out a spreadsheet of the final ranking of the projects. The committee then discussed this ranking, and each individual project. Glasoe mentioned that he was pleased to see more small projects this year, such as the Tower City and Valley City projects. There were some questions about the Icelandic State Park application, which involves the need for a new trailhead as a result of a dam project. There was also a question on the Turtle Mountains trail application. This application involves re-routing some trails to move them away from private property and to make them more sustainable. The existing trails were built by the North Dakota Forest Service, but now NDPRD has a trail management agreement with them, and has plans to rehabilitate the trail system.

The consensus of the committee was that all 9 projects were good projects and should all be funded. After funding these 9 projects, there will still be a couple hundred thousand dollars remaining, so NDPRD will hold a second grant application round. This round will open immediately and will have a June 1 deadline. Riepl asked the committee about lowering the minimum and raising the maximum for this second round only. The committee showed support in lowering the minimum so that smaller communities could apply, but decided that the maximum should stay at \$150,000. Glasoe made a motion to lower the minimum to \$10,000. Mike Burke seconded the motion. The committee was all in favor. Riepl clarified that the total project cost would need to be at least \$10,000, which would mean an applicant could request as low as \$8,000 for their project.

Riepl then asked the committee how they felt about Bismarck Park District's request for additional funding beyond the \$150,000 for their Scheels Sports Complex Trail System project. Their total cost is nearly \$300,000, and they have requested to receive the full 80% if additional funding is available. After some brief discussion, the committee decided that Bismarck had a couple options. The first option was that they could apply for a second phase in the second grant round, assuming that the project could be split up and billed separately. The alternative is that the additional amount could be ranked as a project against all new applications. Either way, the project will be ranked against the new applications in the second round to be considered for funding above the current maximum level of \$150,000.

Next Spencer addressed the future of RTP. The 2012 budget proposes a new livability program that would condense programs such as RTP, Safe Routes to School, Transportation Enhancements, etc., into one program, likely to be managed by the State's DOT. This could mean that NDPRD would no longer have an RTP program. In this scenario, NDPRD will continue to manage the existing projects until they are all closed out. There is still the possibility, however, that the current highway bill could be extended for another year or two, in which case NDPRD will continue to manage the program as it has been.

Spencer asked the committee to think about whether or not they would be interested in continuing to meet in a slightly different capacity should NDPRD no longer manage RTP. He mentioned a few different ideas, such as holding a state trails conference in conjunction with the state snowmobile conference or the state North Dakota Recreation and Park Association conference.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

**Project Ranking\***

<b>Project Sponsor</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Grant Request</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>
Valley City Park District	Bjornson Trail	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 25,000.00
NDPRD	Turtle River State Park Trail Development	\$ 76,032.00	\$ 95,040.00
USDA- Forest Service	Maah Daah Hey 2011	\$ 96,000.00	\$ 120,000.00
NDPRD	Turtle Mountains Trail Development	\$ 150,000.00	\$ 211,200.00
NDPRD- Icelandic	Icelandic State Park Trail Development	\$ 26,010.00	\$ 41,606.00
Bismarck Park District	Scheels Sports Complex Trail System	\$ 150,000.00	\$ 295,680.00
City of Tower City	Alexander Park Bike/Walk Trail	\$ 32,000.00	\$ 40,000.00
Bismarck Park District	Cross Country Skiing Grooming Equipment	\$ 26,520.00	\$ 33,150.00
SND	Snowmobile Trail Program Updates	\$ 140,000.00	\$ 180,000.00

\*Please note that while this list is the final committee ranking, projects must pass the environmental and cultural review before they are approved. Not all of these projects will necessarily be funded. This list does not include the applications yet to be submitted in the second application round.