

**Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee Meeting
Tamarack Nature Center – Bald Eagle-Otter Lakes Regional
Park
5287 Otter Lake Road, White Bear Township, MN 55110
Thursday, June 23, 2016
9:30 am – 2:30 pm**

M I N U T E S

Members Present:

Bob Bierscheid, Kathy Bergen, Peter Royer, Les Ollila, Wayne Sames, Tim Mitchell, Brian Hubbard, Brook Maier, Patrick Stieg, Nancy Hanson, Asha Shoffner, Jenny Smith, Katherine Bloom (via Webex: Renee Evans)

Liaisons Present: Emmett Mullin, Renee Mattson, Laura Preus, Erica Rivers, Mike Hulett, Jan Youngquist

Guests: LuAnn Wilcox, Jon Oyanagi, Marcie Oltman

Staff: Paul Purman, Kelsey Depew

1. Welcome *[handouts – June 23 agenda; April draft minutes]*

Round-Room introductions.

Marcie Oltman welcomed the committee to Tamarack Nature Center.

Agenda approved.

April minutes approved.

2. Circle Back to GM Presentation (from April meeting)

Paul and Renee Mattson reviewed the GM presentation. The benchmark committee held a meeting to assess the GM presentation. We need more eyes and ears on the regional parks and trails and the projects that happening.

Emmett comment that the presentation was very good and very informative.

3. Continuation of 2016 Legacy Assessment process – DNR presentation

Paul introduced Laura before presentation. He also broke down the process of how the DNR developed the presentation. The DNR staff met with the DNR advisory committee appointees (Les and Brook – Renee E was unable to attend) to discuss the direction of the department. Paul explained the flow the presentation.

Laura presented the DNR legacy assessment presentation (attached).

Next Meeting – August 25, 2016

Hartley Nature Center
3001 Woodland Ave
Duluth, MN 55803

Committee Actions Required Attend subcommittee meetings as scheduled.

Field visit. Ramsey County Parks Director Jon Oyanagi and Tamarack Nature Center Staff gave a tour of the adjacent Discovery Hollow Nature Play Area and Garden, which is a Legacy-funded project.

- Gave overview of DNR system and its history.
- Showed Legacy Fund within context of FY14-15 Budgeted Expenditures by Fund about 25% of funding sources. Keep in mind that the DNR budget numbers include many dollars that 'pass through' on to local and regional government.
- Trends – Our state is changing in age and ethnicity. Our state has health concerns.

Pause presentation to break into four groups and allocate dollars to the four Legacy pillars as though managing DNR, in light of the information presented so far.

Report - outs from groups 1-4:

1. Good consensus - Taking care of what we have largest, followed closely by Connecting people. Take Care should consider both built and green resources.
2. Largest investment in Take Care, with Acquire develop a close second. Land acquisition needs to be approached opportunistically, but within a strategic vision, and working closely with many partners, including feds and counties, major northern MN landowners. Connecting people received a lower level of investment but is also very important. Take Care - We need to maintain quality with in all the parks and trails opportunities.
3. Connecting People top category, followed by Take Care. We need to do a better job managing across jurisdictions to connect people. Social media - People like lists! i.e. top 5 best places to visit at "park"
4. The most important areas are connecting people and taking care of what we have.

Laura then presented 2nd part of presentation

- Taking Care has been the majority of DNR Legacy expenditures from FY10-15, about 54%, followed by Acquire and Develop, which combined were about 28%, and Connecting People at about 17%. Coordinate with partners has been consistently at about 1%.
- The presentation then provided accomplishments and prospects on each of the pillars.
- Information on the recently-developed [Parks and Trails system plan](#) was provided, which helps guide investments (including, but not limited to, Legacy).
- Presentation concluded with some strategic questions facing DNR leadership, about which the insights of the PTLAC would be welcome:
 - How best to pursue **integrated approaches** (We believe our system should strive for proactive adaptation to climate change and natural resource resilience. Ideally this would include 'coordinating with partners' across jurisdictions and scales.)
 - **Acquire Land, Create Opportunities.**
 - Thoughts about most effectively striking a balance between creating new opportunities, while being able to sustain our system for the long term?
 - System sustainability – implementing energy and water conservation approaches for low-maintenance/high sustainability.
 - **Connecting People.** We are making progress on making the outdoors accessible to diverse audiences. I Can Camp is an example. What additional approaches would you recommend we try?
 - **Take Care of What We Have.**

- Our work in ‘take care’ protects our investment in both the built environment and our ‘green infrastructure.’
- What are the places in our system that EVERYONE should be able to visit (including potential accelerated ADA provisions).

Lunch

Lunch from Casa Lupita – Spicy Chicken and Ground Beef Tacos

4. Discussion/questions on DNR presentation

- What timeframe is the DNR thinking of for the strategic questions? The three systems are dynamically changing over time, which will change what coordination strategies to employ over time. [Response – we’re looking to the next biennium at this point, but also thinking beyond that]
- Discussion of the I Can! Program and I Can Camp! Youth Outreach program.
 - PTLAC members were prompted to think also in terms of “I Should” – what are those activities and outcomes Legacy \$ can promote that will be beneficial to Minnesotans and the problems they face?
 - What about barriers to participation in I Can programs, which tend to be marketed to families and limited to state parks. What are ways to reach out further?
 - I Can is a DNR managed - program, so it will continue to serve audiences at DNR facilities.
 - DNR does promote ‘I Can’ more broadly as part of sampler programs, like Take A Day Off at several non-DNR locations.
 - DNR also partners with groups like Wilderness Inquiry to reach more youth.
 - DNR has a youth outreach I Can Camp program that Kelsey is administering this year and working very hard to make connections to under-served youth, particularly in the Twin Cities.
 - Couldn’t I Can at DNR sites still be a platform for informing participants about other parks around the area, including regional parks?
- Following on the I Can discussion, PTLAC discussed youth and young adults as key audiences:
 - Making good connections to these audiences, like the I Can youth group outreach, are supported by good planning, which is based on research and talking directly to them about what they are looking for (for example, ‘Best Park’ map Kelsey handed out she created from 4th & 5th grader comments to her).
 - Let’s keep youth research and involvement in Legacy before us as we move into planning the next biennium.
 - Legacy should support more jobs for young adults. – examples being Right Track and Conservation Corps – We need to put more money to create more opportunities for programs like these to happen. They make a real difference in people’s lives, including people around the table.
- A couple of degrees temperature difference makes a world of difference when getting outside. More visitors earlier in the year makes a huge difference in parks and trail operating costs, AND tourist spending. Climate change is causing this difference.

- Climate change comment points to the need for optimal **flexibility** in managing parks and trails. Flexibility in management would allow agencies to act more creatively on the shoulder seasons.
- Erika notes that additional flexibility in managing the State Park Account would be beneficial, such as turning it into a statutory account.
- Erika explains that Legacy dollars are not used for general operations, and that the new System Plan guides different investment priorities for destination, core, and rustic state parks and trails. For example, destination state parks and trails might receive more (and more frequent) funding than rustic state parks and trails. But “Unforgettable” means different things to different audiences, and doesn’t all cost the same – thus the System Plan.
- Would it be possible for DNR to partner with Greater Minnesota on selected rustic state trail development and upkeep? This kind of coordinating with partners could be very important.
- Is DNR working on creating communications in other languages to hit a different demographics, including people who are not currently using parks and trails? (Yes – and this could also be addressed in engagement focus groups out of the DNR P&T Planning Section, which will be a priority as soon as the fall of ’16.)
- Re ADA and accessibility more generally, Erika noted that DNR is complying with the law, but would be interested in insights about options for accelerating progress. Comments from the group including using the ADA audit process effectively, and not overlooking the potential high impact of small projects in key locations.
- Question about how DNR acquisition priorities are decided. Funding for key trail connections has been a priority, and established state park inholdings.
- Would DNR consider contributing to a general Legacy acquisition opportunity fund that spans the three Legacy agencies?
- DNR has done some Legacy projects that cross DNR-managed Legacy (e.g., at Whitewater SP, both P&T and Clean Water funds have been used to improve projects). Where beneficial the agency will continue to look for those opportunities.
- Group concluded by considering if they would change their \$\$ allocations earlier in the day based upon the afternoon discussion. No major changes from the ‘Taking Care’ and ‘Connecting People’ priorities earlier.

5. Updates

DNR public engagement/focus groups (Laura)

- As mentioned before, DNR is kicking off a [public engagement campaign around the System Plan](#). As we reach out to users, and non-users, this fall, we would like your suggestions on ways to most effectively connect. Please let Laura or Erika know your ideas.

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Status of UM Survey work (Paul, liaisons)

- Survey work kicked off on Memorial Day
- A challenge was finding enough people to do the survey work
- We are now in our 4th week
- UM and three partner agencies are coordinating regularly to ensure we are getting the number of surveys we will need to get meaningful data. When complete the UM will come to group to present.

Brief Subcommittee Reports/updates

- Communications
 - o Going forward with printing out table tent cards.
 - o Send content to pt.legacy.ac@gmail.com. You can send pictures, videos, and summarizes to this email by computer or phone.
- Youth
 - o Kelsey handed out a summary for “The Best Park According to 4th and 5th Graders”
 - o She will organize a meeting of the subcommittee soon.

Other

- Luann Wilcox – Idea for enhancing ‘Connecting People’ in MN
 - o Asked PTLAC to consider establishing a task force including members from all the 3 agencies to put higher priority on connecting people to the outdoors.
 - More partners should be involved with connecting people to the outdoors.
 - All kids should have an outdoor recreation experience.
 - o Emmett noted that the October PTLAC will focus on the Coordinating with Partners pillar, which this would involve as well as Connecting. Encouraged LuAnn to attend that meeting.
 - o Erika and Laura noted the Coordinating portion of the biennial proposals have been around 1% of total Legacy appropriations to date. This could be expanded if there were solid proposals for use of funds. One challenge to think through would be that ‘Connecting’ funds/projects tend to be targeted to the particular features of the three different systems – ideas for working across systems?
 - o Possibilities include
 - Partnering with a ‘Connecting’ organization such as Wilderness Inquiry to deliver a progressive set of experiences to K-12 youth.
 - Expanding video connections from parks and trails to classrooms as one fairly low-cost way of exposing more K-12 students to features of systems. E.g. Soudan Underground Mine SP is currently doing this.

6. Ramsey County Legacy Projects (Jon Oyanagi)

Jon talked about numerous Legacy projects that have been happening in Ramsey County. They have received almost 7 million dollars for legacy projects. They have lots of plans to improve Tamarack Nature Center. They have been seeing anywhere from 25 to 40% in emotion increase in students who attend their nature preschool.

Re: public engagement, Ken Pelto has been hired to go out in the field and ask people in the county what they want to see at the Ramsey county parks.

7. Meeting Adjourned