

Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee Meeting
Itasca State Park
Jacob Brower Visitor Center
August 22, 2013
9:00 am – 2:30 pm

M I N U T E S

Members present: Rick Anderson; Lynnea Atlas-Ingebretson; Kathy Bergen; Bob Bierscheid; Nancy Hanson; Brian Hubbard; Chuck Kartak; Dwight Morrison (WebEx); Wayne Sames; Jan Shaw Wolff; Jenny Smith; Tom Stoa; Barry Warner; Tony Yarusso
Agency Liaisons: Courtland Nelson; Arne Stefferud
Guests: Mike Kimball, City of St. Paul (WebEx); Mary Vogel, University of Minnesota, Center for Changing Landscapes
Staff: Laurie Young; Colin Kelly; Darin Newman

1. Welcome to Itasca State Park – Bob Chance, Park Manager

Bob Chance, Itasca State Park Manager, welcomed the Legacy Advisory Committee (LAC), gave a brief history of the park and summarized upcoming projects including bike trail improvements and LED lighting. He also discussed the future Heartland State Trail connection that would connect Park Rapids and the park.

2. Approval of Agenda Approval of Minutes

Agenda approved

The following corrections were made to the minutes. Appropriation numbers were missing some zeros. On page 2, second paragraph, Metropolitan Council's appropriation for FY 14 should be \$16,821,000. The appropriation for Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission capacity building in the 4th paragraph should be \$100,000.

3. Updates from the Liaisons

Courtland announced that the 2013 Pedal MN Bicycle Summit will be held September 30th October 1st. He distributed information about the event.

He noted that the 13 member Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission should be appointed by the Governor shortly (two from each of six districts and an at large member. \$100,000 has been appropriated for capacity building.

It is anticipated their first meeting will be held in September.

Next Meeting

October 24

Committee Actions Required

Lynnea will contact the other Legacy Fund managers regarding potential of coordinating across funds. Tom Ryan will be included on this outreach effort.

Tony will bring the contract with the Citizen's League regarding Citizing for the Committee's consideration at the next meeting.

Committee members should complete the demographic and interest survey if they have not done so.

Lynnea will provide contact information for the Non Motorized Transportation Pilot Project to Barry Warner.

Staff and Liaison Actions Required:

Include an update on the DNR System Plan as an agenda item for the next meeting

Invite non profits including Trust for Public Land, Nature Conservancy and the Parks and Trails Council of Minnesota to discuss strategic land acquisition plans and potential for coordination.

Develop talking points regarding the need for additional acquisitions and other key points in the Legacy Plan and use them to increase awareness of the plan recommendations.

Develop a summary of the role state and regional parks play in natural and cultural resource protection. This should be distributed to other Legacy Fund managers.

Include the topic of how to more effectively engage other funds on a future agenda.

Make additions to the Legacy Advisory Committee website listed in the minutes.

By the next meeting, pie charts will be developed that illustrate how Legacy Funds have been used since 2009 by DNR, Metro Council, and for grants to Greater Minnesota.

Laurie will forward the feedback regarding the five year anniversary to the DNR communications staff.

DNR, Division of Parks and Trails is developing a system plan for state parks and recreation areas, state trails, state forest recreation areas and water recreation facilities. Courtland would like to present a system plan summary at the next meeting.

ACTION: Include a DNR System Plan update on the next agenda

Arne Stefferud reported that he has been preparing grant agreements for the upcoming fiscal year. The Parks and Open Space Commission needs to be reappointed due to redistricting. The Regional Park Policy Plan will be updated in FY 14. There will be an emphasis on providing access to diverse populations. He will bring issues to the LAC for feedback.

4. Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC funds for wildlife habitat/restoration projects regional parks and state parks

Arne summarized the funding proposals submitted to the Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Council for habitat enhancement and restoration in regional parks.

The Outdoor Heritage Fund is one of the four Legacy Funds created by the Constitutional Amendment approved by the voters in 2008. It funds projects that protect (via acquisition), restore and enhance wildlife habitat. About \$100 million is appropriated from this Outdoor Heritage Fund every year. The Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) recommends how the upcoming fiscal year appropriation should be spent. It requests funding proposals in the early summer (June), reviews them in July-August-September and makes its funding recommendations to the Legislature and Governor in November-December.

The Metro Regional Park agencies in collaboration with the Metropolitan Council submitted a funding proposal in June comprised of 14 projects totaling about \$6.4 million dollars that would restore 1,819.7 acres and enhance 628 acres of wildlife habitat within the Metropolitan Regional Park System. These projects implement natural resource management plan components of regional park master plans that have been approved by the Council. The attachment provides details for each project within the packaged funding proposal.

In addition to this packaged funding proposal, some metro regional park implementing agencies submitted their funding proposal independently of the packaged proposal. On August 1, the LSOHC met to consider all the funding proposals. They asked that all projects submitted by the Metro Council as a package be considered as independent proposals. For projects that cost less than \$400,000 the regional park agency could withdraw its funding proposal and resubmit it for consideration under the Conservation Legacy Partners grant program.

There is opportunity for regional park and trail providers to obtain funding for habitat projects. Two examples were mentioned. DNR Parks and Trails has received a LSOHC grant for Whitewater State Park related to its significant trout fishery. The Northwoods Property in the Brainerd area is another example.

Also, the importance of bringing in private funds was stressed.

The importance of education and programming needs to be emphasized. People give people a stronger connection to nature and a specific facility. Education furthers all Legacy Fund goals.

The Committee discussed the importance of coordination among the four Legacy Funds. A discussion about how to more effectively engage with the other funds is needed. The need for land acquisition funds was discussed.

ACTION: Invite non profits to a Legacy Advisory Committee Meeting, including Trust for Public Land, Nature Conservancy and the Parks and Trails Council of Minnesota, to discuss strategic land acquisition plans and potential for coordination.

ACTION: Lynnea will contact the other Legacy Fund managers regarding potential of coordinating across funds. Tom Ryan will be included on this outreach effort.

ACTION: Develop talking points regarding the need for additional acquisitions and other key points in the Legacy Plan and use them to increase awareness of the plan recommendations.

ACTION: Develop a summary of the role state and regional parks play in natural and cultural resource protection. This should be distributed to other Legacy Fund managers.

ACTION: Include the topic of how to more effectively engage other funds on a future agenda.

5. Subcommittee Meetings

Subcommittees met from 11:00 – noon.

6. Lunch and Conversation with Nancy Carroll

Nancy Carroll attended the meeting to provide insight into the recreational issues and opportunities in the Park Rapids area. Nancy served on the city planning commission for four years, then was appointed to fill a vacancy on the city council. She was elected and re-elected to the city council for a total of eight years, then elected mayor and served six years in that position. As mayor, she was appointed to several regional and state organizations.

She discussed the value connecting Park Rapids to Itasca State Park by the Heartland Spur Trail. She also discussed the needs for development of recreational opportunities on the local level and lack of funding for making that happen.

7. Subcommittee Reports

Communications Subcommittee

Tony Yarusso is taking the lead on working with the Citizen's League on reconnecting with Citizing.

ACTION: Tony will bring the contract for the Committee's consideration at the next meeting.

The Communications Subcommittee made the following recommendations regarding the website:

ACTION: Add the following to the website

- Edited governing documents
- All approved agendas (prior to meeting with directions and day of contact information) and minutes and supporting documents (handouts)
- List of subcommittees with scope statement and membership
- Link to Park and Trail Legacy funded projects (on home page)
- Link to the 25 year plan (on home page)
- Sponsoring agency to the member page with information about the liaisons and contact information.
- Edit talking points to include:
 - Messages for multiple audiences with each having its own page with a relevant message and answer to questions that they may have. These should include:

- General public (information on what the tax is doing, how they can help and get involved, the goals of the plan, and what this is doing for you and your future)
 - Legislators (what the plan and funds are for what we will accomplish in 25 years how can they help)
 - Parks/trails/professional staff (information on the use of legacy fund, eligibility, coordinating with other agencies, who to contact for what).
 - Media: who to contact summary information (members, agencies, partners)
- Benchmark page
 - Add bios to the members' photographs
 - Include agency liaisons on the website

Governance Subcommittee

The Governance Subcommittee reminded the group to complete the demographic and interest survey.

ACTION: Members should complete the demographic and interest survey if they have not already done so.

Funding Subcommittee

The Funding Subcommittee is looking to identify a common set of criteria that can be used to disperse Park and Trail Legacy Funds between DNR, Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Coalition and Metro Council. They would like to have a meeting two weeks after the Commission's first meeting. They are also conducting research on what other states are using to allocate funds

They hope to bring information to the LAC at the October meeting.

It was suggested that the subcommittee look at the Non Motorized Transportation Pilot Project as an example

ACTION: Lynnea will provide contact information for the Non Motorized Transportation Pilot Project to Barry Warner.

Youth Subcommittee

Work of the Youth Subcommittee is summarized below.

- Involving youth and young adults of 12-24 years of age in the assessments of Parks and Trails.
- Inviting youth councils in the state of Minnesota to be involved in assessments of parks and trails.
- Training youth in assessment and participatory evaluation.
- Creation of surveys to be utilized and created together with youth participants in assessments and to stakeholders of parks and trails services and organizations provided in Parks and Trails.
- The implementation of youth summit(s) to share what has been learned by youth participants and stakeholders.
- Partnering with University of Minnesota, Youth Studies Department, Professor Ross Roholt and Environmental Education Department, Professor Mae Davenport for assistance with strategy and implementation.

Benchmark Subcommittee

The Benchmark committee reported on the results of the questionnaire that was sent to Committee members regarding which of the 5 year priorities they would like to assess first. The top vote getters were:

1) Preserve existing high-quality natural areas and water resources. It is far more cost-effective to preserve existing communities than it is to restore or reconstruct them.

2) Focus on acquiring priority trail segments according to established criteria.

3) Accelerate investment in capital asset management projects that reinvest in existing infrastructure to ensure high-quality and safe experiences.

The following comments were made:

- Concern that the 5 year priorities listed cover all of the potential priorities. This may be something we want to look at as a group.
- Recommendation made that we should assess something from each strategic direction.
- Suggestion that we might want to look at what everybody has done and try to assess them across the board. The annual reports on the LCC website provide lots of detail.

ACTION - By the next meeting, pie charts will be developed that illustrate how Legacy Funds have been used since 2009 by DNR, Metro Council, and for grants to Greater Minnesota.

7. Committee Connections

Five Year Celebration

DNR has been talking about some ideas and plans to celebrate the five year anniversary of the passage of the Legacy Amendment and when funds became available. There is an opportunity for this committee to be involved. DNR communication staff have been talking about a low-key celebration (i.e., news release) around the amendment passage this fall, but a bigger celebration (i.e., map of projects, rotunda event) next summer to mark when funding began.

The Committee had the following feedback:

- This is an opportunity to let people know about the Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee and what we do and when we meet. Doing something across agencies is a good idea and we need to get communities involved those that have received Legacy funding.
- Thought for the July celebration: Enter your address, find the closest Legacy funded projects, go to the site, take and upload your picture enjoying the location.
- Recommendation was made that this should be a celebration of Legacy more broadly. Not just Parks and Trails. Need to be all funds. This is about everyone who helped pass the amendment. Not about facts and figures. The focus should be about the stories and what's been left to future generations.
- If there is going to be a story tied to the passage of the Legacy amendment, we need to tell the story about what has been accomplished. Where were those dollars spent?
- Another approach: Develop a template press release that can be completed by local communities and sent to local media outlets expressing how community projects came to be a reality thanks to Legacy funding.
- Something could be done akin to what's been done in Whalan. The "Great Legacy Standstill Parade"?

ACTION: Laurie will forward the feedback regarding the five year anniversary to the DNR communications staff.

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