

# Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee Meeting February 24, 2022

*MINUTES PROVIDE A RECORD OF MINNESOTA'S PARKS AND TRAILS LEGACY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS. THESE MINUTES HAVE NOT BEEN APPROVED AND WILL BE REVIEWED ON APRIL 28, 2022.*



DRAFT 02/24/2022

## Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee Meeting

Thursday, February 24, 2022

10:00 AM-2:00 PM

Virtual Meeting via WebEx

### Updates and Announcements:

**Next Meeting:** Thursday, April 28, 2022

**Meeting Host:** Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission

**Meeting Location:** Virtual Meeting via WebEx

### Action Items:

- DNR staff will post the approved meeting minutes on the LCC Website.
- New PTLAC members will have orientation before the next meeting.

### Meeting Minutes:

**Members:** Lynnea Atlas-Ingebretson (Absent), Alysa Delgado Misfeldt, Steve Dubbs, Janice Erickson, Cecily Harris, Alexandra Houchin, Gina Hugo, Cathy Jordan (Absent), Matthew Lindaman, Sumbal Mahmud (Absent), Allison Mark, Dolf Moon, Jon Oyanagi, Jim Shoberg (Absent), Heather Stirratt, Dan Trudeau, Tom Watson

**Liaisons:** Emmett Mullin (Met Council), Rick Anderson (Greater MN - Absent), Renee Mattson (GMRPTC), Ann Pierce (DNR), Laura Preus (DNR)

**Staff:** Lars Erdahl (DNR), Kaci Warneke (DNR)

**Jon Oyanagi opened the meeting and welcomed members and guests.**

PTLAC approved meeting agenda and reviewed conflict of interest statement and member expectations/roles.

Approved December 2, 2021 PTLAC meeting minutes.

Jon Oyanagi led ice-breaker activity, and introductions of the new and returning members.

### Introductions & Welcome PTLAC appointees

---

(Jon Oyanagi)

PTLAC committee member re –appointees, new members, liaisons, and staff introduce themselves and share a little on their background.

Five New Members joining the PTLAC:

- Lynnea Atlas-Ingebretson
- Alexandra Houchin
- Gina Hugo
- Allison Mark
- Tom Watson

Four PTLAC Re-Appointees:

- Sumbal Mahmud
- Jon Oyanagi
- Jim Shoberg
- Heather Stirratt

## DNR Legacy Accomplishments and Future Priorities

---

(Laura Preus, Verónica Jaralambides, Arielle Courtney)

Reviews the background and role of Legacy Funds, a summary of the four pillars and shares some pillar projects.

- Challenges and/or opportunities for PAT:
  - Increasing visitation
  - Modernizing the PAT system
  - Changing recreation trends
  - Connecting folks to the outdoors
  - Future funding
  - Uniting the outdoor community

Legacy funding is not for daily operations or maintenance. It is also affected by inflation, changing organization expectations, system growth, and variable project costs.

- *Coordinate with Partners* pillar – MN Great Outdoors website, research and planning
- *Acquire Land and Create Opportunities* pillar – Connect trails, develop infrastructure and capital project design and construction phases.
- *Take Care of What We Have* pillar– Complete building restorations, maintain sustainable trail maintenance, natural resource restorations and invasive species management.
- *Connecting People with Nature* pillar – primary focus of today’s presentation.
- Interpretive projects and marketing receives Legacy funds to *connect people with nature*.
  - The pandemic forced many program closures. Park staff found other ways of connecting people to nature. Interpretive specialists hosted virtual events, and school visiting activities. Other Legacy funded projects are candlelight self-guided trails, and virtual “story time”.
  - The “I Can!” program teaches and builds outdoor skills in people to encourage them to get outside.
- Lack of awareness or information prevents people from visiting parks and trails. Goal is to diversify the visitor base to represent the population of the state. Incorporate more diverse images of people recreating within communities to change the narrative, making the outdoors comfortable and less intimidating... so that all people can picture themselves in nature.
  - Use outreach to connect with people to make their marketing culturally relevant.
  - Produced an “I Can Camp!” commercial with the first woman in a hijab in a DNR advertisement.

- Assemble two newsletters with trip ideas, trail promotion, and stories to show representation.
- Legacy funded Library pass programs launched in June 2021. Currently 71 libraries in this program where Minnesota State Park passes can be checked out.
  - Library systems in low income communities were chosen to host this program.
  - First 6 months had 1,500 check outs
  - 95% would check out a pass again, 98% would visit a state park again.
  - Plan to add more pass programs to libraries
  - Program will continue until 2025
  - How is the impact of this program on parks and trails measured?

**Guiding Questions...**

- How can we better connect the library pass to the people who need it most?
- What is our long-term intention for the library program?
- What collaborative opportunities might we leverage to advance health/well-being of park & trails statewide? Where should we focus?
- How do we promote hidden gems while helping manage users' expectations? What are challenges for cross-promotion of trails/water trails? Do we need education/awareness?
- What are most important outreach needs for the coming years? Consider impact of pandemic and socioeconomic situation of target audiences
- Who are key potential partners to help further our work to diversify our visitor use?

**Member feedback and advice:**

- Place a similar program in health facilities.
  - Have explored potential, original idea came from a Health Partners worker, but were having difficulties carrying it out.
- Impressed by how much effort that the DNR is doing for representation
- Communities have different wants and needs, have to be creative and flexible in what we provide.
- Represent seniors, and people with disabilities in media.
- Market the 'hidden gems' to dissipate heavy visitation
- Cross promotion, i.e. hunters and nature viewers depend on each other.
- What are the other barriers that we need to overcome? Accessing equipment; bikes, fishing rods, etc.

**Break for Lunch**

---

**Parks and Trails Legacy Partner Agency Update**

---

(Ann Pierce, Emmett Mullin, Lars Erdahl, Renee Mattson)

Liaisons share the presentation that they gave at the February 23, 2022 House Legacy Finance

Committee hearing.

- Review the 25 year plan and the four pillars, discussing the impact of Covid-19 on its progress.
  - Park visitation increased during the pandemic, but might see decreasing numbers this season.
- Examines Greater Minnesota System Development with 67 parks and trails, many of them benefiting from Legacy funds as well as having art pieces and interpretive/interactive amenities.

**Connect People and the Outdoors:**

- Library pass program, multicultural marketing, and interpretive exhibits along with I Can!... are Legacy funded programs under this pillar

**Take Care of What We Have:**

- New shower building at temperance river, trail maintenance of Glacial Lake trail

**Acquire Land, Create Opportunities:**

- Construction of Shipwreck Creek Campground at Split Rock Light House State Park

**Coordinate Among Partners:**

- At the half way point of the Land and Legacy amendment (2009-2034), would not have gotten this far without the partnerships that we made.
- Regional Parks have been heavily used in the past couple years.
  - Using Legacy funds for intro experience events, like the Nordic Opener at Elm Creek.
- Desires for a seamless collaboration between the three organizations

**Questions and feedback:**

- Must continue regular investment into parks and trails to keep them safe and enjoyable.
- Was there a question into the need for more or less funding?
  - We have been very clear with how we use our funds.
- Communication is vital to complete these projects, there was an increase in collaboration between the Arts and Culture section and PAT during the pandemic.
- How are we reaching a diverse audience?
- How much does it take to run individual parks? And how much money do they bring in? Should we focus on parks that bring in money?
  - Money is a factor in conservation, and there is some trouble bringing in funding for some beautiful less-known places.
- Are there going to be price increases with inflation?
  - We are continuing to focus on helping low income folks.
- What are the impacts of climate change on our parks?
  - We are receiving climate change funding from the government.
  - Campground flooding and stressed plants are examples of climate change effecting our parks.
- Should we focus our climate change funding on preventative or restorative projects?

**Minnesota Great Outdoors Website Update ([mn.gov/greatoutdoors](https://mn.gov/greatoutdoors))**

---

(Lars Erdahl)

- Minnesota Great Outdoors is a cooperative project between DNR, MRPT, and Met Council.
  - Reviews the functions, and amenities of the site.
  - Filters can be used to search for specific opportunities in parks and trails.
  - The site shows parks and trails of regional significance, and eligible to/have receive

- legacy funding.
- Site is currently going through an infrastructure update. Starting a discussion to reexamine the site to determine how to improve the features and be more appealing.
- Desires for more promotion, to get the public aware of the site.

**Feedback and questions:**

- How is the site updated?
  - Coordinate with site partners to keep it updated. There are links that lead to partners sites for more information on a park.
- How is data measured?
  - Use data taken from Streetlight to measure park and trail usage.
  - Data will be gathered and analyzed throughout this year.
- Topographic/elevation map layers to the site, and location/satellite underlays, would be helpful features.
- Add an art filter, people can search which parks have art pieces in them. For another way that we can keep track of the art in our parks.
- Addition of cultural significant aspects to the site.
- Look into other map resources like the National Park app, for examples and ideas.
- The site is a great resource and could benefit from more marketing.
- The goal is to coordinate and integrate with existing websites, not compete with them.

## Updates

---

(Liaisons, others)

- It is a Bonding year, Legislative session goes until May which leaves time to discuss funding and create a budget proposal.
- Greater MN received the money that was held back during the pandemic and with it they granted twenty grant applications in whole or in part and set some money aside for small grants.
- Met Council and DNR must follow State policies and guidelines, but are having conversations on returning to in-person work -- all agree that it is much better to have in-person meetings
- Determining if the next meeting is in-person depends on all of the agencies policies.
- New PTLAC appointees will finish orientation before the next meeting.
- Action Items:
  - Any other committee feedback can still be submitted between meetings.
  - Spend time on Minnesota Great Outdoors website and come up with comments, thoughts, or ideas that would contribute to improving the site.

**The meeting was adjourned.**