

Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee Meeting October 22nd, 2020

MINUTES PROVIDE A RECORD OF MINNESOTA'S PARKS AND TRAILS LEGACY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS. THESE MINUTES HAVE BEEN APPROVED AND WERE REVIEWED ON DEC. 3rd, 2020.



Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee Meeting

Thursday, October 22nd

10:00 AM-2:00 PM

Greater Minnesota Regional Parks & Trails Commission Host
WebEx

Updates and Announcements

Next Meeting: December 3rd, 10:00 AM-2:00 PM

Meeting Host: Department of Natural Resources

Meeting Location: WebEx

Action Items

- Staff will post the approved July 23rd meeting minutes onto the PTLAC Website
- Gratia Joice will continue to follow up with PTLAC on the Outdoor Recreation Task Force public feedback period

Minutes

Members: Andrea Christoffer (absent), Cecily Harris (absent), Heather Stirratt, Jim Shoberg, Jon Oyanagi, Les Ollila, Louise Segreto (absent), Margot Imdieke-Cross, Matthew Lindaman, May Yang, Pat Stieg, Pete Royer, Poppy Potter, Randy Sorensen, Sumbal Mahmud (absent), Tim Mitchell.

Liaisons: Emmett Mullin, Erika Rivers, Laura Preus, Renee Mattson, Tom Ryan (absent)

Staff: Gratia Joice & Margaret Krueger

Introductions and Welcome

May Yang opened the meeting and led introductions. A special thanks to everyone that was able to attend today's virtual meeting.

Today's meeting agenda was approved with no conflicts of interest identified between members & staff.

The July 23rd PTLAC Meeting Minutes were approved by group consensus.

Connecting People to the Outdoors: Discussing Racial Equity in Parks & Trails

Agency Update on Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Metropolitan Council:

Emmett Mullin began by introducing the Metropolitan Council's focus on Equity, Diversity & Inclusion.

- **Question:** How do we increase equitable use, and reduce any barriers to participation at all agency levels?
1. **Planning & Convening:**
 - a. The role of the Metropolitan Council is to convene groups with shared interests & systems, especially amongst the 10 Implementing Agencies & partnering organizations

- b. The Met Council has developed a set of tools for the parks & trails Master Planning process & implementation, known as the Equity Analysis Requirement, which outlines three critical questions for implementing agencies:
 - i. Who are those underserved communities that you are trying to reach?
 - ii. What are you learning from those groups based on your authentic outreach & lived experiences?
 - iii. Based on what you're learning, what are you proposing to do?
2. **Funding:**
 - a. Equity Grant Program: 2020-2021 will have 1.4 Million in interest earnings & over \$600,000 in regional bonds that will be used to develop programs for outreach & education.
3. **Research:**
 - a. Youth in Parks Research: efforts to reach out to young people of color is still ongoing
 - b. 2014 research on barriers for communities of color
 - c. 5-Year Visitor's Study will include park level information for statistical relevance, as well as visitor demographics, barriers, and interests

Questions & Comments from Members:

- The Parks Ambassador, Amanda Lovelee also plays a major role in this work
- The Connecting People & the Outdoors Pillar is regularly a focus of the strategies listed above, in the effort to keep reaching out to new regional parks users
- 5.0 million in the recent bonding bill was awarded to the Met Council, which will be used to expand these strategies

Department of Natural Resources:

Erika Rivers began by describing the overall focus of the DNR's efforts on Equity, Diversity & Inclusion, which focuses on three main areas:

- Staff Level
 - *How do we create a system that is rich in multicultural competence?*
- System Level
 - *How do we ensure that our policies, practices, procedures, and facilities are equitable & inclusive?*
- Visitor Level
 - *How do we ensure that our units and services are welcoming for all people? How do we work toward visitorship that reflects Minnesota's new & emerging demographics?*

Pieces of the Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion "Puzzle"

- Diamond Inclusivity Assessment
- Equity Action Plan
- Intercultural Development Inventory
- Multicultural Media Relations

- I Can! Skill Building Programs
- Multicultural Customer Service Training
- Partnership Development & Management Toolbox
- Targeted Engagement & Events
- Staff Recruitment & Hiring

Equity Strategic Action Plan:

- We make adequate financial investments to achieve clear & measureable DEI goals
- We work with organizations & institutions that have connections to diverse cultural communities to meet mutual goals
- We provide organizational resources to our workforce to help build a more effective cross-cultural network

Questions & Comments from Members:

- What were the findings from The Diamond Inclusivity Assessment & what is the process for updates?
 - Results indicated that as a division, Parks and Trails can improve on financial investments, social capital, and human development
 - The results from the gap analysis by dimension also allowed those three areas to be targeted for improvement by the Strategic Equity Action Plan
 - Division Leadership will continue to update the goals from these models of collecting data in two year increments

Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission:

Renee Mattson moved the discussion along by describing the important role GMRPTC plays in advancing regionally designated parks' and trails' DEI efforts.

- The role of GMRPTC is to provide parks and trails within the regionally designated system with the tools & resources needed to accomplish work towards Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion
- Recently, Jon Oyanagi gave a presentation to GMRPTC's Commissioners to identify gaps in understanding and needs for improvement within each system
- Survey information from this meeting is being collected to move the learning process forward, and ultimately provide leadership & staff at parks & trails systems with the resources to do this work
- The GMRPTC has set aside \$250,000 in funding for grant applications that specifically target Connecting People to the Outdoors & DEI efforts

Open Discussion: How do members want to engage in DEI & Connecting People to the Outdoors?

- Jon Oyanagi began by describing the GMRPTC's Commissioner's meeting- which presented a similar question at today's meeting: *How can we address the gaps in knowledge & awareness in a group where everyone is in different places in their journey towards racial equity?*
- This was the intention of the PTLAC's pre-meeting topical survey, which revealed large gaps in experiences, awareness & understanding.

PTLAC Topical Survey Results:

1. What insights, lived experiences, understandings, conversations, or formalized trainings have you had that explore the general topic of racial diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice?
 - a. Initial results indicate a wide range in experiences, knowledge, & cultural competency between members
 - b. The journey towards racial equity is a deeply personal journey, and members should feel safe to have these complex conversations both personally & professionally
 - c. Our own biases shape how we approach this work, and we have to have courage to dive in & make mistakes in learning about racial equity
2. What goals do you have in discussing this topic with Implementing Agencies as PTLAC members?
 - a. These results were interesting, and provides good information & actionable items that Implementing Agencies can act on
 - b. It can be challenging to know where to start with this topic, & agencies & institutions are likely struggling with this challenge of how do we listen, learn & act in a meaningful way.
 - c. Often this work requires processes to slow things down, to account for gaps & needed actions
 - d. The DNR for example, has had to devote much resources to complete the goals outlined in the Strategic Equity Action Plan
 - i. This was challenging in that it required staff time & resources to take these actionable items & goals
3. What information is helpful to learn more about racial equity? *Examples can include: implicit bias training, cultural competency training, micro-aggression training, education on white supremacy, identity & stereotype threats, direct hands on participation/ connections with diverse communities, inter-agency informational sharing.*
 - a. How can PTLAC members be here to be an advisory group—what is it that will help propel agency work?
 - b. Assessments of this committee & cultural competency training might be useful to answer that question listed above
 - c. Overall, the focus of these comments are on measurements and effectiveness of the DEI strategies discussed
 - d. How does PTLAC want to measure equity?
 - e. As State & Regional parks are facility based operations, all three systems have relied on Legacy Funds since its availability for Taking Care of What We Have
 - i. Systems are now starting to shift to focus more on Connecting People to the Outdoors, and the dimension this pillar promotes for more diverse, inclusive, and equitable systems
 - ii. “If you Build It, They Will Come” is simply not true in this application
 - If you build “it”—what does “it” mean? We assume buildings & other capitol, but if you turn “it” into a community, especially an inclusive community, perhaps this can be changed

- f. There have been many conversations at the local level on social media- which indicate that it is highly important to promote a dialogue and keep lines of communication open, not just form measurements qualitatively & quantitatively

Outdoor Recreation Task Force Update:

Gratia Joice continued the discussion by providing some information on how other Agencies are working to achieve goals similar to Connecting People to the Outdoors. She began by describing the information & updates on the Minnesota Outdoor Recreation Task Force, which is in partnership between Explore Minnesota and the Department of Natural Resources.

- 20 people serve on the Task Force & represent a diverse array of outdoor recreation interests from across the state of Minnesota
- This group is working on providing a suite of recommendations on how to improve & expand outdoor recreation through a variety of lenses
 - Topics include: access, coordination, economic development, promotion and public awareness, and stewardship and conservation.
- The group is currently in the process of finalizing their list of recommendations, and would like to gather public feedback before finalizing
- The public engagement opportunities will likely be posted by mid-November, and there will be a number of ways to participate in this process, which Gratia Joice will follow up on when it becomes available

How do PTLAC Members Want to Stay Engaged & Connected?

The following is a summary of the open discussion on member engagement moving forward.

- How can we increase education & awareness of visitors on Legacy Funding?
- Having a perspective on Legacy Funding & which pillars are being focused on in a consistent format at a summary level so that members & Implementing Agencies can better understand how to relate this information to legislators & the public
- Members, law makers, and citizens often get this information in a snapshot, which isn't always comprehensive, and doesn't necessarily "tell the full story"
- Continuing to dive into the work of the Subcommittee Meetings allows for increased engagement from members, and has increased during the virtual meetings due to COVID-19
- Making sure that Subcommittee & Workgroup meetings are spread out more consistently would be helpful for time management's sake
- Using ice breakers, and teambuilding activities at the beginning of meetings would also be highly beneficial
- The use of polling & breakout rooms during the virtual meetings might be something that can increase interaction & participation during meetings

Funding Workgroup Updates:

Laura Preus began by delivering the latest updates from the Funding Workgroup, which has been tasked with coming up with a consensus recommendation on the funding split between the three Parks and Trails Legacy Fund Implementing Agencies. At this time, the Funding Workgroup has ended all negotiations, and has not been able to complete a consensus recommendation. Leadership from each Implementing Agency has recently met, and will be submitting a final funding split recommendation to

Governor Tim Walz's office. Once this recommendation is made public, the PTLAC will be notified immediately.

Subcommittee Updates

Laura Preus began by outlining the overall role & goals of PTLAC Subcommittees & Workgroups. Subcommittees serve in a standing role on the PTLAC, and Workgroups can be formed for temporary needs. These Subcommittees & Workgroups have the opportunity to more heavily engage with this work in smaller settings.

Inclusion Subcommittee Updates:

- The Subcommittee has met three times, and thanks to all the staff & members for their attendance & facilitation
- The conversations have centered around finding common ground around members & their role, and the goals & initiative of this group
- The Subcommittee is currently working on compiling useful information on agency-level inclusion efforts, and sharing that information between these groups & stakeholders
- "Inclusion" does not just focus on racial inclusion, but encompasses people with disabilities
- There are many deep seeded social aspects of inclusion for people with disabilities, and this has been an ongoing topic of the Subcommittee's meetings

Statewide Trails Workgroup:

- Pete Royer & Les Ollila shared a drafted purpose statement outlining the recent work of this workgroup.
- **Purpose Statement:** The Minnesota Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee proposes to create a border to border recreational trail connecting the State's natural resources, historic, cultural and scenic attributes. We wish to establish a trail that connects north to south and east to west across the state of Minnesota, utilizing existing trails and corridors and connecting communities.
- The intention is for this purpose statement to get approved by the PTLAC & the Implementing Agencies, to make a public declaration
- This project demonstrates that all three implementing agencies can work across state & regional systems to complete a unified system
- Next steps & questions: How do we promote this & complete collective wayfinding across all three systems?
- This Subcommittee will continue to meet during November to further the plans for this project

Benchmarks Subcommittee Updates:

- The Benchmarks Subcommittee has been able to meet twice since the last PTLAC meeting in July
- We started the conversations by refreshing new members on the work completed by this Subcommittee in 2017
- This work will help agencies agree to a standardized approach to project reporting & measurements, which would be submitted & implemented by agencies for the next reporting cycle
- This Subcommittee will schedule a meeting for November to finalize these Benchmarks

Communications Subcommittee Updates:

- The Communications Subcommittee has met twice since the last PTLAC Meeting
- The major areas of work this Subcommittee is focusing on:
 - Social Media Communications (Facebook & Instagram)
 - Public Outreach (public events, pop-ups, etc.)
 - Inter-Subcommittee Communication & Support
 - This subcommittee needs to listen to other subcommittees to more effectively tell the Legacy Story from all subcommittees

Governance Subcommittee Updates:

- Subcommittee members have been examining the PTLAC's governance documents through a racial equity lens
- Members will continue to complete more review of subcommittee structures & frameworks in which to dismantle instances of racism
- Examining the PTLAC Charter is a major piece of this work for the Governance Subcommittee

Final Updates:

New Membership Applications:

- New Membership Applications are now being accepted, and are due by November 21st, 2020.
- There are currently 8 total spots open, 4 of which are up for reappointment, and 4 of which will be new appointees
- Staff will follow up with members that are up for reappointment & need to re-apply

PTLAC Chair & Co-Chair Positions are Open for 2021

- The Chair & Co-Chair positions are open for election, and will serve for two years starting in 2021
- The positions of PTLAC Chair & Co-Chair will be elected by PTLAC member vote at the upcoming December 3rd, 2020 PTLAC Meeting
- Members that are interested in these positions should reach out to Gratia Joice & Margret Krueger, or their respective Legacy Liaisons

Legacy Consultant Position:

- The Legacy Consultant is undergoing the hiring & onboarding process and hiring decisions have been finalized
- The Consultant will begin onboarding hopefully in time for the December 3rd PTLAC meeting

Pop-up Kits

- Recently the contract for fabricating Legacy Funded Pop-up Kits has been closed out and completed
- These final kits will be used at state & regional parks to continue to educate, celebrate & listen to those served by years of Parks and Trails Legacy Funding
- These exhibits are portable, and unstaffed, and will be used safely following COVID-19 guidelines
- Margaret Krueger will follow up soon with photos of the exhibits

The meeting was adjourned.