

# **Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee Meeting June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

MINUTES PROVIDE A RECORD OF MINNESOTA'S PARKS AND TRAILS LEGACY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS. THESE MINUTES HAVE BEEN APPROVED ON July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021.



## Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee Meeting

Thursday, June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021

10:00 AM-2:00 PM

Metropolitan Council Host

WebEx

### Updates and Announcements:

**Next Meeting:** July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021 10:00 AM-2:00 PM

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

**Meeting Location:** WebEx

### Action Items:

- DNR Staff will post the approved minutes from April 22<sup>nd</sup> onto the PTLAC Website
- Margaret Krueger and Lars Erdahl will follow up directly with each Subcommittee to schedule additional meetings before July 22<sup>nd</sup>
- Lars Erdahl will follow up on the status of the next PTLAC meeting on July 22<sup>nd</sup>, and will communicate the decision about an in-person meeting by the end of the day, **Friday, July 2<sup>nd</sup>**.
- Laura Preus and Lars Erdahl will continue to follow up on the details of the MN State Fair as it relates to Legacy participation

## Minutes

**Members:** Alys Delgado, Andrea Christoffer, Cathy Jordan, Cecily Harris, Dan Trudeau, Dolf Moon, Heather Stirratt, Janice Erickson, Jim Shoberg, Jon Oyanagi, Les Ollila, Margot Imdieke-Cross (absent), Matthew Lindaman, May Yang, Randy Sorensen, Steve Dubbs, Sumbal Mahmud

**Liaisons:** Emmett Mullin, Erika Rivers, Laura Preus, Renee Mattson, Rick Anderson

**Staff:** Lars Erdahl, and Margaret Krueger

Jon Oyanagi opened the meeting and led the introductions. A special welcome to our newest Metropolitan Council appointee, Dan Trudeau. Welcome, Dan!

**The April 22<sup>nd</sup> PTLAC Meeting Minutes have been approved.**

DNR Staff will post the approved meeting minutes on the LCC Website.

### Introductions & Ice Breaker Activity:

In an effort to continue learning and connecting with each other in a virtual world, Jon Oyanagi led a brief “ice breaker” activity, and everyone shared their favorite parks. Thank you all for participating.

### Legislative Updates

Renee Mattson shared some recent news regarding state legislation.

- The Legacy bill has been approved, and the remaining Omnibus Bill is expected to be passed in both the House and Senate shortly.
- Regarding the funding split in the current Legacy Bill, the funding allocations will remain the same: 40% goes to DNR, 40% to Met Council, and 20% to GMRPTC.
- The Coordination Among Partners Fund (<1% for PTLAC-related work) will also remain in effect.

- DNR Staff and Legacy Liaisons will continue to communicate any important legislative updates as needed.

## Sharing 2022/2023 Legacy Investments: Taking Care of What We Have

### Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission: Renee Mattson

Renee Mattson began by describing the current granting opportunities available to GMRPTC parks and trails systems. Currently the Commissioners have recommended 10 projects for Legacy grant funding:

- Olmsted County Oxbow Park and Zollman Zoo
- Goodhue County Byllesby Park
- Otter Tail County Perham to Pelican Rapids Regional Trail
- Mesabi trail
- Lake County Mountain Bike Trails
- Gull Lake Trail
- Moorhead River Corridor Trail
- Chisago County Sunrise Prairie Trail
- Wright County Connecting People with the Outdoors
- Luverne Loop & Blue Mounds Trail
- Winona Bluffs Traverse

Out of all of these projects, two focused on Taking Care of What We Have: the Mesabi Trail, and Sandstone Robinson Park.

- The Mesabi Trail has been granted \$300,000 with a match of \$300,000
- 2.5 mile segment will be resurfaced from Tower to the Soudan Underground Mine State Park
- This segment is one built 25 years ago and is at the end of its useful life.
- The trail sees more than 220,000 users per year and spans a length of 126 miles of a planned 155 mile system.
- Sandstone Robinson is designated as a Special Feature Park, which has a very unique climbing wall in its sandstone quarry.
- The current Legacy grant of \$321,750, with a match of \$37,500 will replace restroom facilities and picnic shelters
- Previous projects have included replacement of bridges on the Cannon Valley Trail
- Some improvements include: additional trail rehabilitation, shower facilities, and improvements on hiking/biking trails

### Questions & Discussion:

- How much are the user fees for the Mesabi Trail
  - Day pass is 5 dollars, and an annual pass is 15 dollars

### Department of Natural Resources: Erika Rivers

Erika Rivers led a brief presentation on the DNR's current programs, which are funded by the Taking Care of What We Have Pillar. The Built Infrastructure program receives about 75% of the available funding, and the Natural Resource program receives about 25% of the Taking Care Funds.

#### *Legacy Plan for Natural Resources:*

- Reserve existing high quality natural areas and water resources
- Restore natural communities that have been degraded
- Reconstruct natural communities lost due to a variety of human land use and development activities
- Legacy Funds have accelerated PAT ability to implement plan strategies:
  - About 20% increase in natural resource reconstruction areas
  - Over 130% increase in acres of invasive species managed
  - Over 25% increase in prescribed burn acres
- The “Big Three” in 2022-2023
  - 11,400 acres of prescribed fire conducted
  - 560 acres of prairie, forest, and wetland reconstructed
  - 20,000 acres of invasive species to be managed
- Legacy Funds Helping Rare Species:
  - Reintroducing MN threatened Pugnose Shiner to Glacial Lakes State Park
  - Monitoring habitat management for MN threatened Timber Rattlesnake
  - Joint project with MN Zoo to reintroduce federally threatened, Dakota Skipper to Western MN
- Other special management Projects:
  - Biological surveys: inventorying native plant communities and wildlife
  - MN Bison Conservation Herd
  - Restoring/protecting natural resources from visitors

#### *State Trail Bridge Infrastructure*

- PAT administers 405 bridges, 290 are located on state trail corridors
- Each is subject to formal inspection on a cycle based upon the “Overall Condition Index” (OCI)
  - User and employee safety are the primary concern of the bridge inspection program
  - Inspection cycle ranges from annually to once every five years
- OCI weighs heavily into the prioritization of bridges for rehabilitation or replacement.
- Prioritized based upon formal inspections
- All are structurally safe for public use
- Legacy Funding totals about \$750K per year to supplement other funding sources
- 2-3 replacements per year
- Alborn Pengilly Railroad Trail
  - Coons Creek Bridge rates at fair condition
  - Former railroad structure constructed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century
  - Specific replacement structure type will be determined by hydraulic assessment
  - The estimated cost: \$260k total
- Taconite State Trail
  - East Two River Bridge (poor condition)
  - Existing structure constructed by DNR in 2005
  - Replacement bridge proposed to be steel materials
  - Estimated replacement cost: \$425K
- Other bridge replacements:

- Alborn-Pengilly Trail, Skunk Creek - \$130K
- CJ Ramstad State Trail, Knife River West Branch - \$160-200K
- CJ Ramstad State Trail, East Branch Big 39 Creek - \$250K

#### Metropolitan Council: Emmett Mullin

Emmett Mullin continued the discussion by describing the current projects in the Metro systems that focus on Taking Care of What We Have at the Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park.

- Located on the Mississippi River in the City of Coon Rapids
- Across the dam from Three Rivers Park District's Mississippi River Gateway Regional Park
- 446 acre year-round destination
- Cross-country skiing, picnicking, fishing, walking, bicycling and more!
- Natural Infrastructure Improvements:
  - Culvert replacement and redesign in partnership with Coon Creek Watershed District
    - Improved fish and wildlife habitat
    - Improved erosion and sediment control
  - Built Infrastructure Improvements
    - Over 3000 feet of trail within the park to be reclaimed and repaved

#### Subcommittee Breakout Sessions

The Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee continued the next portion of this meeting by dividing into breakout discussions, and they will report back on the content of these discussions after the break this afternoon.

#### Virtual Tour of Mississippi Gateway Regional Park:

Boe Carlson continued the next portion of this meeting by describing the wonderful features of the Mississippi Gateway Regional Park, and shared a short video/virtual tour of the park.

- The Mississippi Gateway Regional Park offers many recreational opportunities, and the plan for future investments is extensive, totaling about \$34 Million
- This master plan was developed in coordination with many community based events, and pop-up engagements, in an effort to meet community needs
  - The major theme of this park offers unique experiences directly with the Mississippi River, and this park serves as a "gateway" to the Mississippi
  - This park represents an opportunity to provide the public with many services and opportunities
  - This facility will have equipment rental for public park visitors
- Parks staff conduct nature camps directly within the community, with the hope that visitors will have the opportunity to visit the park itself
- The Mississippi Gateway Regional Park is part of the National Scenic Riverway, and receives about \$3 million in federal funding, in addition to the current Legacy Funding it receives
- Brooklyn Park is also providing \$4.5 million in funding for the park's improvements
- This park also receives additional funding through the federal department of transportation.
- Finally, about \$5 million in state bonding will be available for this park
- Increasing the accessibility of trail infrastructure, and canoe launches will be a major priority for these funds

- Overall the increase in visitation, and positive response from the community have indicated this park is highly valued within the Metro's system of parks and trails.

### Subcommittee Updates:

#### Benchmarks:

- The Benchmarks Subcommittee has finalized the proposed measurements and shared outcomes.
- Today's discussions focused on the overall communications goals and plan for releasing this information.
- Renee Mattson shared a brief mock-up or visual representation of these shared measurements, which will continue to be refined and finalized by this subcommittee.
- Being very clear about the targeted audiences is a big goal of this communications plan.
- Overall, this subcommittee will continue to refine and finalize the project plan and begin drafting a communications plan.
- The process of completing this work has taken a significant amount of time, and the work of this subcommittee is highly significant for Implementing Agencies- thank you!

#### Governance:

- The Governance Subcommittee is currently reviewing the PTLAC Charter, specifically in regards to the process for appointing members whose predecessors have resigned.
- The next Governance meeting will be Monday, July 12<sup>th</sup>, at 12:00 PM-1:00 PM
- This subcommittee will also begin reviewing the charter through a racial equity lens, using a model known as Awake, to Woke, to Work.

#### Inclusion:

- The Inclusion Subcommittee is currently working on the following strategies to host a series of panel discussions with the PTLAC, in an effort to understand the barriers to outdoor recreation that many marginalized communities experience
- Approach: For each of the next 5 PTLAC meetings, we invite one of the Minnesota diversity councils to send 3 people each to the PTLAC (one each of avid outdoors person; infrequent user; nonuser).
- One hour panel and discussion. (30 min panel; 30 min Q&A/discussion)
  - Focused questions for panelists prior to meeting. Develop a few prompt questions (have the subcommittee input on them), for example:
    - What is your relationship to Minnesota's outdoor world?
    - What are the main reasons you go outdoors?
    - What are the main barriers preventing you from spending more time outdoors?
    - In what ways do you feel welcome/not welcome in public outdoor spaces and programs? How have you experienced the impact of policies or treatment that makes you feel unwelcome?
    - What are the top 1-2 things you think outdoor recreation agencies could do to make a meaningful difference in making the outdoors more welcoming to you and others like you?
    - Take active notes from each session to compile recommendations over the year of meetings.

- Prepare a report that describes the “most significant stories” about how people feel welcome/not welcome in public outdoor spaces and provides 10 good ideas, and recommendations for follow up action.
- The PTLAC is a very important voice, and provides knowledge and advice on the progress towards the goals outlined in the 25-year plan, and this would be a useful way to spend time for future PTLAC meetings
- These panel discussions should also include formal surveying beyond the three perspectives outlined above

#### Statewide Trails Workgroup:

- After the last PTLAC meeting, the Statewide Trails Workgroup received constructive feedback, and the workgroup is in the process of refining their proposed map of search corridors
- The workgroup is also focused on defining a communications plan, and interfacing with other trail groups (friends groups, national trail planning groups, MN Bike Association, MNDOT etc.)
- This workgroup will proceed with gathering more contacts and developing a communications plan
- The progress on this project would not be possible without the time and dedication from the workgroup members themselves- thank you!

#### Final Updates:

##### Streetlight Data Updates:

- Raven McNight has begun the onboarding process as the new data scientist for Streetlight Data, which collects anonymous cell phone data to determine park visitation levels

##### State Fair Updates:

- The DNR will be hosting a small booth at the MN State Fair, and there may be potential for participation with Legacy Partners on one day, specifics TBD
- This would not be a large scale event in comparison to past years, and the DNR theater space will be occupied by different partners this year.
- Laura Preus and Lars Erdahl will continue to follow up on the details of the MN State Fair as it relates to Legacy participation

##### Next Meeting Details:

- The next meeting is **July 22<sup>nd</sup>** from **10:00 AM-2:00 PM**
- **Meeting Host:** Greater Minnesota Parks and Trails Commission
- **Meeting Location:** Location will be finalized and announced by July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021

**The meeting was adjourned.**