

Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee Meeting

July 22, 2021

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 DECEMBER 2, 2021.



Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee Meeting

Thursday, July 22nd

9:00 AM-2:00 PM

Bertram Chain of Lakes Regional Park

9910 Briarwood Ave NE, Monticello, MN 55362

Updates and Announcements:

Next Meeting: October 21st, 2021

Meeting Host: Department of Natural Resources

Meeting Location: TBD

Action Items:

- DNR Staff will post the approved meeting minutes on the LCC Website.
- DNR staff will continue to follow up with PTLAC members on volunteering for the MN state fair

Minutes

Members: Alysa Delgado, Andrea Christoffer, Cathy Jordan, Cecily Harris (absent), 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: Marc Mattice, Lars Erdahl, and Margaret Krueger

Jon Oyanagi opened the meeting and led the introductions. Marc Mattice introduced himself and described some of the features of Bertram Chain of Lakes, and the surrounding Wright County regional parks systems. Thank you to the staff at Bertram Chain of Lakes Regional Park for hosting today's meeting.

The June 24th PTLAC Meeting Minutes have been approved.

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

State Fair Updates

- The Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee Members will be hosting a day at the MN State Fair, on **Tuesday, August 31st**.
- PTLAC members will be asked to volunteer that day, in two-hour shifts from 9:00 AM-6:00 PM.
- Social distancing protocol will be implemented at the MN State Fair, and volunteers will be behind a counter, to allow for proper distancing
- Members will have access to clear masks, for those that are hearing impaired
- DNR staff will continue to follow up with PTLAC members on this volunteer opportunity

Subcommittee Breakout Sessions

The PTLAC Subcommittees and workgroups continued the next portion of this meeting by holding small group discussions. The reports of these small group meetings is captured in these minutes below.

Guided Site Tour- Marc Mattice

Marc Mattice hosted a guided site tour at the end of the PTLAC meeting. Bertram Chain of Lakes has received a significant amount of Legacy funding for improvements to campgrounds, bathroom facilities, and visitor centers. Bertram Chain of Lakes is a regional park in Wright County, and provides many community members with great recreational opportunities. A special thanks to Marc and his staff at Bertram Chain of Lakes for their hospitality!

Pillar Highlight: Connecting People to the Outdoors

Greater Minnesota Parks and Trails Commission: Brad Harrington

- Brad began by describing the various programs in Wright County Regional Parks systems, which seek to connect people to the outdoors through various partnerships and outdoor recreational programming
- Partners of this program include:
 - Prairie Woods ELC
 - Outward Bound
 - Wilderness Inquiry
- Deliverables included:
 - 15 programs per county over the contract
 - Marketing of developed programs
- Schools in the park programming
 - Develop a “seed” for future stewards of parks systems
 - 11 schools participated in the program, and covered topics such as mammals, pond ecology, forest ecology, native American cultural education, orienteering, outdoor survival
- Program highlights:
 - Participant feedback was very positive for the Schools in the Park programs
 - The voyager Canoe program has reached a total of 700 participants, helping many learn how to paddle in a canoe.
 - One very popular event was the Full Moon Canoe event
 - Rock climbing is a very popular feature of Quarry Park
 - Cross Country ski instruction for over 83 people in two programs
- Promotion of Parks
 - Programs took place in over 12 regional parks, 6 of which were regionally designated in GMRPTC’s system
- Program summary
 - 45 total programs available to the public
 - 5 marketing events
 - 4242 program participants
 - Program ran from 2017-2018 and ultimately the contract was extended through June 30th, 2019
 - Overall, this program has offered many new and unique opportunities for both Wright County and Stearns County
 - Future programming will include outreach to latinx communities, partnering with service providers, and continuing to seek county-level support for this program

- Questions:
 - How are these programs affected by COVID-19?
 - These programs saw lowered participant numbers, and the Schools in the Parks programs did not take place during COVID-19
 - During lockdown, parks and trails staff promote outdoor recreation activities through social media, and reached nearly 300-400 people daily with their posts
 - Currently, Wright County is working on creating an online database, so that these promotional opportunities can be utilized again in the future
 - How will this program be funded in future years?
 - This grant has been completed, and continues to operate on Wright County's funding

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources: Erika Rivers

- Erika Rivers began by describing the nature of funding the Connecting People to the Outdoors Pillar, which makes up between 25-30% of the DNR's Parks and Trails budget
- The DNR has outdoor recreation skill building programming, known as I Can Camp!, which has over 60% of BIPOC participants
- The Naturalist Corps program places young students in professional positions with state parks and trails naturalists, and seeks to reach marginalized communities in Minnesota
- The DNR completed various focus group studies, asking visitors what is the main barrier to participating in outdoor recreation, especially for BIPOC individuals
 - The study found that the majority of BIPOC visitors were fearful of being lost, and that signage and wayfinding should be receiving more investments
 - Parks and Trails staff developed a framework known as "visitor journey" to holistically examine their experience in wayfinding at state parks
- Goals
 - creating a welcoming environment so people feel welcome and safe in Minnesota's State Parks and Trails
 - A number of evaluations indicate that these new signage systems are helping people feel welcome and secure
- Consistent designs: colors, fonts, design, etc.
 - Consistent designs will save time and costs
- Improved roadside wayfinding
 - Directional signs
 - Facility identification signs
 - Retro-reflective signs improve night-time visibility
 - Material is graffiti resistant, and lasts between 10-15 years
- Reduced number of roadside rule signs
 - Reduced serial rule signs on the side of the road
 - Plain-language rule statements with icons improve readability
 - Research found that visitors simply didn't remember roadside rule signs, and often missed signage off the road, so the focus has shifted to better improve the location of these signs
- Improved orientation

- Sign consistency
- Modular system uses headings
- Images and symbols help communicate
- Font sizes and colors to improve plain language, and meet accessibility goals
- Improving Trail Wayfinding
- Reduced sign clutter
 - Signage reduced clutter, uses full color images, and organizes images

Metropolitan Council: Emmett Mullin

- Emmett Mullin began by describing the Parks Ambassador Programs in the Met Council's 10 implementing agency park systems
- The Metropolitan Council and most park implementing agencies have initiated Parks Ambassador Programs, in an effort to connect people to the outdoors
- The purpose of these programs is to reach out to communities of color, and other under-represented groups to "Bring the Regional Parks System to the people."
- Carver County
 - Recreation and volunteer specialist position
 - Outreach programming encouraging use among low and moderate income visitors, including scholarships.
- Dakota County
 - Outreach and engagement coordinator- focused on increasing use and developing relationships
 - Marketing and communications
- Ramsey County:
 - Community engagement shows overwhelming desire for programming
 - Program specialist position focused on:
 - Outreach to community organizations
 - Casa Esperanza
 - Partnership with Ramsey County Juvenile Justice
 - System-wide programming and focused efforts at Tamarack Nature Center

Subcommittee Updates

Benchmarks

- This subcommittee has finalized their set of proposed measurements
- Agencies will continue to implement these measurements into their reporting process, with the goal of completing this new reporting method by the end of 2023
- This subcommittee will also produce a summary or letter, which can be used to communicate the accomplishments and goals going forward
- This will be published as an annual report
- By the next PTLAC meeting this subcommittee will have an outline of the annual report, which will be approved by the PTLAC
- The primary audience of this annual report will be the state legislators, with appropriate representation from PTLAC members themselves
- This can be a vehicle for publishing the many simple, but impactful stories of Legacy Funding

- The ultimate goal of this annual report is to extend the Legacy Funding beyond 2034

Communications:

- The communications subcommittee will continue to interface with the Benchmarks and Statewide Trails workgroup

Governance:

- This subcommittee is focusing on developing racial equity tools for the PTLAC, and respective parks and trails implementing agencies
- This includes potentially adjusting PTLAC meeting times to be more accessible for volunteers
- Developing bylaws to adjust meeting times, and stagger membership terms
- This subcommittee is using a method known as “awake, to woke, to work” to examine issues of racial equity within the PTLAC and Implementing Parks and Trails systems in Minnesota
- Developing a pipeline of successors, and encouraging members of the communities to apply to the PTLAC
- Developing relationships with the BIPOC community members, and recruiting new members with broad resources and connections

Inclusion:

- The Inclusion Subcommittee will be hosting a number of panelists to better understand the perspectives of marginalized communities
- Research will also focus on “truth testing”, to determine if these panel discussion questions accurately represent the issues of many marginalized communities
- Addressing concerns of safety for all communities, specifically concerns of drowning is something that this subcommittee can research
 - Focusing on programming hosted by implementing agencies to improve outdoor recreation skills in marginalized communities

Statewide Trails:

- The Statewide Trails workgroup’s goal is to explore, discuss, and develop a big vision of a statewide trail system in Minnesota
- The workgroup has been developing a map of proposed search corridors for this development project
- The goal is that these trails reach the three main biomes of Minnesota
- This workgroup has drafted a communications plan, in an effort to address frequently asked questions, both internally within the Implementing Agencies, and externally within the public community
- This workgroup will further refine their map and communications plans by the December PTLAC meeting

Final Updates

- Streetlight Data updates:
 - The Met Council has hired a data scientist, who will begin the process of statistically verifying location-based cell phone data

- This project will help all implementing agencies to better understand visitor based data in Minnesota's Parks systems
- Legislative Updates:
 - The 40-40-20 split was approved by state legislators
 - Due to COVID-19, and potential shutdowns, the overall revenue of the Legacy fund has decreased
- Margaret Krueger has announced that she will be transitioning out of her role as Legacy Outreach Specialist, effective on August 4th, 2021
 - Thank you to all of those that have supported Margaret in her role with the Legacy Program
- Action Items:
 - DNR Staff will post the approved meeting minutes on the LCC Website.
 - DNR staff will continue to follow up with PTLAC members on volunteering for the MN state fair

The meeting was adjourned.