

Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee Meeting

April 25, 2019

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 JUNE 27, 2019



Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee Meeting

April 25, 2019

Northland Arboretum
14250 Conservation Drive
Brainerd, MN 56401

Updates and Announcements:

Next Meeting: June 27, 2019

Meeting Host: Department of Natural Resources

Location: TBD

Committee Actions Required:

- Staff members must submit the approved February minutes to LCC for posting on the PTLAC website
- Katherine Bloom O'Connell will complete a written social media policy for an Instagram account through PTLAC
- Katherine Bloom O'Connell will contact the previous owner of the PTLAC Instagram to shut down the old account
- May Yang will inquire about recruiting CCMI field crews for volunteers to staff the State Fair Event
- Committee members and liaisons will discuss changing the dates of future meetings at the next meeting on Thursday, June 27th
- Liaisons and staff will confirm a meeting location for the next meeting on June 27th (DNR Host)

Minutes

Members:

Bob Bierscheid, Cecily Harris, Les Ollila, Louise Segreto, Matthew Lindaman, May Yang, Nancy Hanson, Pete Royer, Pat Stieg, Wayne Sames, Margot Imdieke-Cross, Tim Mitchell, Kathy Bergen, Katherine Bloom O'Connell, Randy Sorensen, and Chris Crutchfield (absent), Poppy Potter (absent).

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

Guests: Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commissioners: Bryan Pike, Rick Anderson, Peg Furshong, and Northland Arboretum Staff, Vicki Foss

Staff: Arielle Courtney, Margaret Krueger

Welcome:

Bob opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the Northland Arboretum in Brainerd. All members and guests introduced themselves briefly. The arboretum staff members introduced themselves and discussed the educational and conservation accomplishments of the Northland Arboretum. The Arboretum manages over 500 acres within the cities of Brainerd and Baxter. The foundation began with the closure of a 40-acre landfill, which now serves as a major prairie restoration project for the non-profit.

The April 25th Agenda was approved.

The February 28th Minutes were approved.

Agency Updates: DNR, GMRPTC, Met Council

DNR Updates: Erika Rivers

Legislative Session:

Erika provided a legislative update, detailing the challenges posed by current budget language from the senate cutting Parks and Trails funding by \$10 million (as of 4/25/19).

- Proposed Legacy bill will continue on for now with a 40/40/20 split across agencies
- There is an amendment proposed for the Legacy bill that is intended to more clearly define sources of traditional funding and supplement vs. supplant; however, the language is a bit confusing and so the Legacy liaisons are working to offer some new language and/or remove the amendment
- DNR has requested water recreation fee increases
- DNR has requested ski pass fee increases
- No Child Left Inside is a proposal that would provide \$500K grant program that will allocate money from the general fund for nonprofits that deliver outdoor programs to children
- Outdoor Recreation Office establishment language is included in the House omnibus bill; DNR is not supportive of the proposed structure and organization within Explore Minnesota, although the general goal of better coordinating across sectors to advance outdoor recreation is positive
- Another bill is proposed to launch an ATV system strategic planning process

I Can! Rotunda:

- Commissioner Strommen is promoting a “School’s Out, Camp Out” event on June 8th (National Get Outdoors Day), with the challenge of filling every campsite in the state park system

Partnership Consultant Position:

- Arielle Courtney has accepted this position and began on April 12th, 2019

GMRPTC Updates: Renee Mattson

Legislative Session:

- Fiscal year 2021 funding application process has begun
- Greater Minnesota Funding Bill: \$900K biennium request has not received hearing in the house and is not scheduled for one as of 4/25/19
 - If the request does not go through, funds that could be directed to grants will instead be used for operating expenses, as has been the case since the inception of the Commission
 - Educating the legislators on the importance of Greater Minnesota’s operational funding needs outside of the Legacy fund continues to be a major priority

Work Plan Initiatives:

- Mapping project of all mountain bike trails in Districts 1 and 2 (Northern MN) has become a major priority
- Mountain Bike Trail Guidelines document/handbook: This document will be available to the public and will be used for future contractors and projects with GMRPTC

Mountain Bike Summit on May 30

- Mountain biking systems have been identified as a major priority for outdoor recreation initiatives
- Mountain Bike Summit will take place in Chisholm on May 30th, hosted by the IRRRB

Met Council Updates: Emmett Mullin

Legislative Session:

Emmett discussed more details about the Legacy amendment proposed.

- There is a need to take a closer look at some of the definitions of “supplement vs. supplant,” “traditional sources of funding,” and other details in the bill and amendment
- Met Council has met with staff and Representative Green to discuss amendment
- Question: Can Gov. Walz line item veto the amendment?

Bill proposed around using Legacy dollars for natural resource conservation

- Language would require 50 percent of Legacy dollars to be used for natural resource conservation projects (For example, DNR currently spends 20% on this area)
- Language includes development of a board of scientists to oversee use of Legacy dollars for natural resource conservation

Newly Appointed Met Council Commissioners:

- Met Council Regional Parks and Open Space Commission has a new set of commissioners
- Cecily Harris (from our group) was appointed to the commission to represent Washington County and surrounding area

Research:

Planning for regional parks visitor survey 2020:

- Streetlight Data has been identified as a major research priority and this data is available via the MNDOT system
- If this effort is successful for regional parks, then this data set could potentially be shared with all statewide parks and trails systems
- Visitor studies are expensive but give researchers key demographic and satisfaction data that help drive improvements within the regional parks

Overview of Agencies’ Inclusion Efforts

The theme of today’s PTLAC meeting is around inclusion: how we define it within our outdoor spaces, what agencies are doing to advance inclusion work, and what this group can do to keep it a priority.

Opening Discussion:

Emmett kicked off the discussion by asking the group “what is inclusion?” The following comments are ideas shared by the group.

What Inclusion means:

- Creating welcoming space
- Being whole as a community
- Focusing on all abilities, all the time
- Knocking down socioeconomic walls

- Universal/accessible design of facilities
- Ensuring equal ability to experience parks and trails systems
- Authentically integrating marginalized communities into decision making processes

Understanding Barriers to Inclusion Efforts:

- Continuing to understand barriers overtime
- Who is missing?
- What about overuse of the parks system as we get more visitors?
 - How to balance this issue?
 - Is this a barrier?
- Listening is key
- Environmental education can be a tool to overcome certain barriers
 - E.g., Educating public about reality of bugs, ticks and other aspects of outdoor living
- Concerns about lack of staff cultural competency
- Lack of inclusion on institutional level in parks and trails
 - Parks systems are often not culturally accessible/inclusive for marginalized communities
- Socioeconomic barriers:
 - Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs: People who are struggling to pay rent and eat are not concerned or interested in figuring out how to get to a park or trails
 - Do we have a role here?
 - Regardless, it is an important consideration and mindset to understand parks and open space is primarily a "leisure time" activity that is higher up in the grand scheme of needs

How do we know we are improving on "becoming more inclusive?"

- Defining qualitative and quantitative metrics
 - Community outreach and advice
 - Relationship building
 - Power sharing: Share in decision making processes
- Metrics are hard for big issues like this and may not always be appropriate
- Must authentically integrate marginalized communities on a regular basis in many different ways, not just when you "need input"

Individual Actions to Improve Inclusion Efforts:

- Check individual privilege/bias and acknowledge it
- Learn what makes various outreach efforts effective/ineffective
- Listen and do not project experience on others
- Make space for other voices
- Reshaping personal perspectives and learning about other's perspectives
- Accept change
- Be open minded: Don't assume
- Be prepared to step outside of personal comfort zone
- Learn history of inclusion
- Invite others beyond those in the Natural Resources fields to table
 - Education, public health, local business, housing
- Remember: you can't *be* what you can't *see*
 - "It is good to be seen"

- Brochures do not represent the reality of parks systems demographics; can be misleading

Met Council Inclusion Efforts: Emmett Mullin

- Focus on equity versus equality
 - Connecting people to opportunity: housing, transportation, races, ethnicities, incomes, and abilities
 - Region is stronger when equity is prioritized
- Regional Parks Policy Plan: Strengthening Equitable Use
 - Planning Strategies
 - Community engagement
 - Secondary facilities for diverse needs
 - Special recreation features to include bridging facility concept
 - Funding Strategies
 - Equity toolkit
 - Equity Grant Program Pilot
 - Convening Strategies
 - Parks ambassador program
- Implementing Agency Equity Work:
 - Ambassador programs focus on key communities
 - Dakota County: Visitor survey emphasis on equity
 - Redevelopment of recreational facilities to meet ADA standards
 - Mississippi Gateway Regional Park & Indian Mounds Regional Park have prioritized the redevelopment of their facilities to comply with ADA and cultural equity standards
- Visits to the regional parks systems: 58 Million visits in 2017
- Majority of the regional parks systems reside within suburban areas
- Visitors in the regional parks systems are mostly college educated, high income, white individuals under 55 years' old
- Final next steps:
 - Major cultural disparities on our trails
 - Why? How do we create belonging and build programs so that all feel welcomed within the regional parks systems?
 - Partnership ideas: Traffic gardens; bike parks; bike rodeo's; group rides

DNR Parks and Trails Inclusion Efforts: Erika Rivers

- Why do we need to focus on equity in state parks and trails? Quality of life is better when people engage in outdoor recreation
- Diamond Inclusivity Assessment
 - Assesses cultural competency through eight main categories: Build Environment, Cultural Capital, Financial Investment, Human Development, Natural Environment, Political Capital, Social Capital, Spiritual Capital
 - Five Step Process:
 - Preparation and Communication
 - Survey Administration and Reports
 - Respondent Focus Groups
 - Gap Analysis Workshop
 - Equity Action Plan

- Equity Action Plan: Direct outcome from Diamond Inclusivity Assessment
- Make adequate financial investments to achieve clear and measurable diversity and inclusion goals
- Work with organizations and institutions that have connections to diverse cultural communities to meet mutual goals
- Provide organizational resources to our workforce to help build effective cross cultural networks
- Multicultural Customer Service Training
 - All staff, statewide unit-level training
- Outreach and Events:
 - Targeted engagement and events
 - 125th anniversary multi-cultural events
 - Outreach Events: Cinco de mayo, Monarch Festival
 - St. Croix Valley “Park Rx”
 - Urban outreach: REI adventure station
 - Multicultural Media Relationships
 - Multicultural media days
 - Focus on relationship building
- Conclusions:
 - Change doesn’t happen overnight
 - Creating community means building trust, careful listening, taking risks and making mistakes
 - Respect: Recognize what is yours to share, and what is *not*
 - Once systematic bias has been seen, you cannot *un-see* it

GMRPTC Inclusion Efforts

- “If you build it, they don’t always come”
 - Need to focus on programming and partnerships to make sure people are using parks and trails
- DEI is something Greater MN wants to focus on more now that the organization has become more established, and is considering how to do so in the future through partnerships initially
- Partnership with the Prairie Environmental Learning Center has led to direct youth engagement and programming
 - Health and behavioral benefits for young children through this opportunity
 - Programs such as these should be a part of the evaluation/reporting process in an effort to incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion
 - These types of programs make significant progress in educating and exposing young children to the outdoors
- Short write-ups on projects with good diversity, equity, and inclusion examples could potentially be used to persuade legislators to support and fund these programs
- Example: Duluth Parks & Rec 2008 budget cuts
 - Partner organizations stepped up to provide new opportunities for programming
 - Mayor ultimately rededicated source funding for children’s programming in the parks systems

Discussion: What should we focus our efforts on for inclusion?

Legacy Advisory Committee's Role in Inclusion:

- LAC must hold all three agencies accountable and provide guidance to three agencies
- LAC must establish expectations and questions for all three agencies
- Three agencies have an opportunity to contract together and collaborate on various inclusion and equity efforts

Bike Trail Collaborations:

- Bikes are used as a means of legitimate transportation and recreation
- Public Programming:
 - How to Build a Bike
 - Bikes for Kids
 - Partnership Bike Rides
- Bike fleets exist and can be used to accommodate more events on trails; Regions Hospital and several other organizations have access to this equipment

Public Outreach

Grant Programming:

- Potential to incorporate DEI criterion in grant evaluations to grow incentives for new projects and programming

Improving Inclusion, Equity and Accessibility for the Public:

- Signage improvements:
 - Wayfinding signs are unclear and not easily accessible
 - Gender neutral signage should become the standard
- Fishing pier improvements:
 - Most piers are inaccessible
 - Must follow minimum federal ADA accessibility standards
- Testimonials:
 - YouTube testimonials could potentially be used to educate users, funders, and other members of the public on the Legacy Amendment
 - Establish an interviewer for the relevant program/project to get testimonials

The agenda was modified to briefly discuss each subcommittee's current working projects; the allotted time for work planning was removed from the meeting's agenda.

Subcommittee Work Plan Updates:

Communications Subcommittee:

PTLAC Instagram Account:

- PTLAC Instagram account has been approved
- Katherine Bloom O'Connell will write and establish a social media policy for an Instagram account through PTLAC
- Must close out the old account, and contact the previous owner to eliminate any confusion

Pop-up Toolkit:

- Materials used to educate members of the public about Legacy funding

- Estimated Cost: \$300 per kit

Funding Subcommittee:

- Currently the committee is working to discuss the current legislative concerns
- The PTLAC would be represented in the funding discussion

Inclusions Subcommittee:

- Collaboration across all three agencies is needed
 - Informational sharing regarding various DEI projects, programs, and surveying the DNR was accomplished at today's meeting
 - This information could potentially be used to shape the Inclusion Subcommittee's future work plans

Benchmarks Subcommittee:

- Significant progress in establishing a work plan was made at the last meeting
- Members will be reporting back to their group shortly
- For further details on the Benchmark Subcommittee's work plan, refer to the February 28th 2019 Meeting Minutes

Statewide Trails Work Group:

- The group discussed how they can work together to develop recommendations for how the three agencies could work together to develop a vision for a statewide trail (probably non-motorized use)
- Other ideas discussed included unique branding and signage (e.g., north country trail), where the route should go, etc.

Other Updates:

State Fair Event:

- Request for Proposal (RFP) contracts are still in progress, and will be completed by June 1st 2019
 - MOD has been contracted again for design and fabrication of the exhibit
 - The Project Manager contract is still posted
- Improvements/Modifications:
 - New map that includes a more comprehensive overview of legacy funded projects
 - Improve giveaways
 - May Yang will look into recruiting CCMI field crews for volunteers to staff the event

MN Great Outdoors:

- For questions and updates, contact Stefanie Stearns (DNR) at stefanie.stearns@state.mn.us

Park Rx America:

- Minnesota State Parks are now available in the [Park Rx America website](#)
- Met Council is working on identifying how to get data into the website
- DNR working with MRPA to figure out how to get more local park and rec data into website
- Also trying to figure out easiest way to leverage MN Great Outdoors data for ease of integration
- May 7 event on Park Rx America with Dr. Robert Zarr put on by Minneapolis Parks Foundation

Upcoming Meetings:

- June 27th DNR Host: (June 6th meeting rescheduled)
 - Location will be determined shortly
- July 25th GMRPTC Host:
 - Location: Northland Regional Sports Park, 8257 MN-89, Bemidji, MN 56601

Bob Bierscheid adjourned the meeting.