

December 3rd, 2015 3:00 PM EST
Indiana Government Center- South
402 W. Washington St., Conference Room 12
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Attendance

Board Members Present:

All-Terrain Vehicle Users- Paul Puckett (proxy)
Bicyclists- Jessica Hall
Environmental Groups- Kevin Hardie
Equestrians- Yvette Rollins
Four Wheel Drive Users- Ryan Sweany
Health/Higher Education- Joan Cook
Hikers- Tim Calahan
Mountain Bikers- Jeff Fetterer
Off-Road Motorcyclists- Roy Garrett (proxy)
Parks & Recreation Agencies- Melody Jones
Pedestrians- Pat Martin
Snowmobilers- Len Neisler

Trail Support Groups- Mario Vian (proxy)
Users with Disabilities- David Meihls
Water Trail Users- Joe Rozsahegyi

DNR Staff:

Bale Brier- Outdoor Recreation
Bob Bronson- Outdoor Recreation
Amy Marisavljevic- Outdoor Recreation

Guests:

Frank Merritt- Hoosier Mountain Bike Association
Erica Penna- Friends of the White River

Meeting Minutes

Welcome

Vice Chair Jeff Fetterer welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 3:11 PM. He announced Chair Yvette Rollins will join them shortly.

Introductions

All Trails Advisory Board (TAB) members and guests introduced themselves. Neil McCammack gave his proxy to Paul Puckett, Rick Dorfmeier gave his to Roy Garrett, and Angie Pool gave hers to Mario Vian.

Approval of the Agenda

Fetterer asked for a motion to approve the agenda unless there were any changes. Kevin Hardie requested to follow up with the proposed Mounds Greenway presentation from last meeting. Amy Marisavljevic said it could be addressed under "Old Business." Melody Jones made a motion to approve the agenda and Joe Rozsahegyi seconded. Motion passed.

Review and Approval of September 3rd, 2015 Minutes

Fetterer asked if TAB members had a chance to review the minutes and asked for any changes. No changes were suggested. Fetterer asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Hardie made a motion and Pat Martin seconded. Motion passed.

DNR Report

Grant Updates & Deadlines

Marisavljevic reported that congressional leaders have generally agreed to a long-term transportation bill, Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) that would cost \$281 billion for five years. The bill would designate \$85 million for the Recreational Trails Program (RTP), which keeps it at its current funding level. The House and Senate are expected to vote on the bill soon. If passed and signed by President Obama, funds would be restored for this upcoming year. Applications for new RTP grants are due to the Division of Outdoor Recreation (DOR) by May 1.

Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF) expired on September 30. Marisavljevic reported that there is support in Congress to restore it, although there is still discussion on reform. If restored, LWCF grant applications are due to the DOR by June 1. Marisavljevic encouraged the TAB to continue to watch for news regarding RTP or LWCF legislation.

Martin inquired how much LWCF money Indiana normally received and the maximum grant amount. Bob Bronson responded that Indiana got \$837,000 last year. It's a 50-50 grant with a \$200,000 maximum. Martin asked Bronson about how much funding was left in the Bicentennial Nature Trust (BNT), which is used to acquire public land. Bronson stated that all the funding has been designated and six projects were tabled. However, with new money or projects reverting, there's a chance those six projects might get funded as well. Nineteen of the funded projects are trail projects. Bronson also explained that Heritage Trust and RTP had also been used in conjunction with some of these BNT projects. Heritage Trust can be used for trails, trailheads or nature parks. If interested in any of these grants, contact DOR.

Trails Plan & SCORP Update

The State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), which will include a new Trails Plan chapter, is in the final edit and layout phase. Marisavljevic stated a final version will be published very soon. She will notify the TAB when it's available online. A number of paper and CD copies will also be available. Thanks to everyone who took surveys and provided feedback.

Trail Guideline Updates

Marisavljevic reported the DOR has received survey results from trail stakeholders. The results will be used by the DOR to write the Trail Guidelines by March 30. Jones asked for clarification on what the guidelines will address. Marisavljevic stated they include ten items such as right of way, utilities, enforcement, and maintenance. Jones commented Indiana had no clear model for safe trail crossings. She hopes a statewide organization will attempt to provide state and regional uniformity with a focus on education in the future. Marisavljevic suggested speaking with the INDOT State Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator for guidance.

Assistant Property Managers

Marisavljevic reported Jude Hays is now the Assistant Property Manager at Interlake SRA. Tom Lahay will start on December 20 as the Redbird SRA Assistant Property Manager. They will now be overseeing daily operations at the properties. She encouraged anyone who works closely with these properties doing trail work, special events, etc., to introduce themselves.

Old Business

TAB Membership Terms, Nominations, & Appointments

Marisavljevic again reminded the TAB that the terms of the representatives for All-Terrain Vehicle Users, Equestrians, Four-Wheel Drive Users, Pedestrians, and Snowmobilers will expire February 28, 2016. Nominations for the new terms will be accepted through December 31. Members interested in re-applying, nominating someone, or passing along the information should do so soon.

Proposed Mounds Greenway Follow Up

Hardie stated Tim Maloney, of the Hoosier Environmental Council (HEC), wrote a follow up letter thanking the TAB for hearing their presentation on the Mounds Greenway proposal. He also mentioned that the HEC has recently commissioned an economic, health, and environmental study. In the letter, Maloney encouraged the TAB to recommend to DNR Director Clark that the DNR support the study, in particular make available technical resources and staff assistance that would help in the completion of a thorough study. After some discussion, Rollins asked for a motion to write a recommendation letter. Hardie made a motion, David Meihls seconded. Motion passed. Marisavljevic will work with Rollins on the letter.

New Business

Meeting Format

Marisavljevic notified members they could change the format of the meetings if they would like. Fetterer also commented that if anyone had something they'd like discussed to contact Marisavljevic to add it to the agenda.

2016 Meetings

Rollins suggested planning 2016 meeting locations and topics. Meihls volunteered to tentatively host the March 3 meeting at Lilly Nature Center and Celery Bog in West Lafayette. The site has received RTP funds. Hardie suggested South Bend for June and White River State Park for December. Marisavljevic reminded all members that they are eligible for travel reimbursement, which can include overnight accommodations if necessary.

Other Business

Rollins announced she will not run again for Chair in 2016 and encouraged members to think about who they will nominate. Officer elections will be held at the March 3 meeting.

Frank Merritt, Vice President of Hoosier Mountain Bike Association (HMBA), informed TAB of their continued discussions with DNR and State Parks about the new user fee set to take effect in 2016. HMBA has communicated their concerns with DNR, in particular that none of the money raised from the fees would go to a dedicated fund for mountain bike trails or infrastructure. This differs from the "pay-to-play" models of the vehicle registration system for motorized recreation as well as the horse and trail fees at Hoosier National Forest. Rollins stated the current proposal is the same as the existing DNR bridle tag system. Merritt clarified that HMBA does not speak for all mountain bikers or all IMBA chapters in Indiana. He also wanted to address any miscommunication other user groups may have heard. Merritt stated that HMBA is not entirely opposed to a fee, just the policy in its current state. He hopes HMBA and the DNR can work through their concerns regarding the new fee soon and continue to be great partners in the future.

Merritt, Fetterer, and Rollins all also mentioned working with the local and state officials to get more funding for public trails and parks. Better funding would most likely allow any fees to directly benefit users in the future.

Rozsahegyi inquired if there was any interest to do an event to replace the Quiet Sports Expo at the Boat Sport and Travel Show. Marisavljevic stated that any organization is welcome to participate in the Hoosier Outdoor Experience. She requested he pass along contact information for those who might be interested. Rollins mentioned she will follow up on any news from the Boat, Sport and Travel Show.

Rollins informed the TAB that she has personally reached out to DNR Division of Forestry following their unveiling of a new strategic plan. In particular, she voiced her concerns about the lack of oversight of logging in trail areas. Tim Callahan concurred that he has also noticed this in a number of locations across the state and would like to see it remedied as well. He also disagreed with the finding that primitive camping was in low demand as stated in the plan.

User Group Reports

All –Terrain Vehicles- Puckett reported that Trail Riders of America held a successful trail work day at Redbird SRA with cooperation from the DNR on November 14. The work day improved safety on the trail.

Bicyclists – Jessica Hall reminded everyone that Bicycle Indiana (BI) is teaming up with Health by Design to put on a combined Bike/Walk Summit next year. BI is currently working on the 2016 Resource Guide. If you have any events or other resources, please let her know. BI will again try to get a safe passing law passed when the legislature convenes. Finally, she mentioned that three US Bicycle Routes in Indiana were designated this fall. Vian commented they are US Bicycle Route #35, #36, and #50. In addition to providing a safe route to cycle, the designated routes may bring more bike tourism to Indiana. Marisavljevic added that all three routes have off-road sections that feature trails and greenways.

Environmental Groups – Hardie mentioned that the Southwestway Park visit today was relevant because it will receive native tree planting via a mitigation project soon. Friends of the White River recently reached an agreement with the Army Corp. of Engineers and the City of Indianapolis on the mitigation project in response to the new levy along the White River in northern Indianapolis. Mitigation efforts include a new public access site off Kessler Blvd. on the White River and a renovation of an existing site near the Monon Trail on the White River. It will also include native tree plantings at Town Run Park, Southwestway Park, and Eagle Creek Park.

Equestrians – Rollins stated the Indiana Trail Rider Association (ITRA) spent four days at Brown County State Park (BCSP) and a weekend at O'Bannon State Park doing trail maintenance. ITRA also held a fundraiser at Deam Lake this fall to raise money for their horse trail maintenance fund. ITRA is also working on the construction of a new modern horse camp at Versailles State Park. The design of the camp has been approved by DNR and work can now begin. The camp is being funded through a grant. Rollins hopes it will be open by spring. Additionally, ITRA is hoping to help acquire some land to help connect existing DNR trails. The Hoosier Backcountry Horsemen just finalized their work schedule for 2016 in the Hoosier

National Forest, which features six workdays. The Hoosier Horse Fair and Expo will be the first weekend in April at the Indiana State Fairgrounds.

The Greenways Foundation (GF) will be working with Indiana University's Eppley Institute to do a new trail user count study. There will be 15 trails that will be counted in the survey. The Monon Trail will again be counted to compare data collected in 2006. If you have suggestions for other trails to survey, please contact the GF. The GF Luncheon will be held at the Hyatt Regency in Indianapolis in February 16. All TAB members are invited.

Four-Wheel-Drive Users – Ryan Sweany reported successful Toys-for-Tots events were held at both Redbird and Interlake SRA. Brier commented that 400 vehicles attended the Interlake SRA event. Sweany will send video of the event to Marisavljevic to send out. Another Toys-for-Tots event will be held at the Badlands this month. Sweany was appointed to Environmental Director for the Indiana Four-Wheel Drive Association (IFWDA) for 2016 and will continue to be the contact for DNR matters. Sweany mentioned the IFWDA was recently contacted about a potential opportunity for an off-roading park in Northern Indiana. Finally, Sweany inquired about the Hoosier Outdoor Experience in 2016. Marisavljevic said she did not know any details yet, but would pass along news as soon as she heard.

Health/ Higher Education- No report.

Hikers- Calahan noted that the Division of Forestry will now be overseeing the Knobstone Trail starting next year. Calahan asked Brier about the details of the transfer including personnel, resources, website, and the new map. Calahan also inquired about the opening of the Deam Lake trailhead. Brier responded that the move was for more efficient use of DNR assets and the maps were not yet finished, but should be completed by spring. Calahan should contact the Division of Forestry with specific questions; most questions should be directed to the property, with bigger issues and concerns about policies to Division management. Calahan mentioned he would again like to see the DNR work better with willing volunteer groups. Fetterer suggested that hiking groups might find success similar to the mountain bikers by organizing their own trail workdays and coordinating with the property manager.

Mountain Bikers – Fetterer announced the HMBA's Brown County Epic in October had over 600 participants and raised over \$30,000 for mountain bike trails. Hassmer Fest was held in Versailles State Park in September and had about 300 participants. The event raised funds for new trails on the other side of the park and a new bridge to go over the river. Fetterer reported that trail building continues in Yellowwood State Forest. Additionally, the last section of the Bobcat Bowl Trail in BCSP is being completed. Merritt added that he expects the trail work schedule to accelerate for HMBA next year.

Off-Road Motorcyclists – Garrett stated that off-road motorcycling continues to be popular in Indiana, particularly racing. The Black Coal Enduro, a national race series, again came to Interlake SRA this year. There is a new national caliber motor-cross track in Crawfordsville. ABATE continues to train more off-road instructors at Lawrence County Recreational Park, including Rick Dorfmeier. ABATE will again be at the Boat, Sport and Travel Show this winter.

Parks and Recreation Agencies- Jones reported that Westfield has paved the Monon Trail to 191st St. and land acquisition is underway to get it 216th St. A ribbon cutting was held recently at the new fitness stations on the Monon at 169th St., which includes a specific accessible-only station. Westfield secured a transportation enhancement grant to develop a bike/pedestrian bridge over State Route 32 for 2018. The Midland Trace will be completed to Noblesville this spring. With the cooperation of Boone and Madison counties, the Midland Trace will improve connectivity and become a regional trail system. Westfield is also currently working on four other trail projects and Grand Junction Park in downtown Westfield. 1.2 million people have visited Grand Park so far this year. The park has been open for less than two years.

Pedestrians- No report

Snowmobilers- Len Neisler reported that snowmobilers in Indiana are eagerly awaiting snow.

Trail Support Groups- Vian stated that IndianaTrails.com continues to be updated and is a heavily used resource for trail information in the state. Indiana Trails Fund has completed the first five miles of the Milwaukee Trail in Bedford and will be working on the next five in 2016. The crushed stone trail along the old railbed includes three water features, 17 bridges, deep limestone ravines, and connects to historic downtown Bedford.

Users with Disabilities- No report

Water Trail Users- Rozsahegyi reported that Michigan City opened their accessible canoe launch on Trail Creek this October. It's Indiana's first accessible launch; two more are planned for northwest Indiana. Paddlers hope to get these new accessible launches in the Indianapolis area as well. He announced the Kankakee River will be designated Indiana's first National Water Trail soon. He hopes this will lead to other rivers, such as the Wabash and White Rivers, in Indiana being designated. The Little Calumet River has received funding to add three new public access sites. Rozsahegyi announced he will be training some DNR staff in 2016 on safe canoeing and kayaking practices for leading group paddles. Finally, he mentioned there is a large interest in developing a white water park in central Indiana, similar to the one in South Bend. More research will be done in 2016 to explore the idea.

Announcements

National Trails Day –June 4, 2016

2016 Meeting Dates

March 3, 2016- Lilly Nature Center, West Lafayette

June 23, 2016 -South Bend

September 1, 2016- TBD

December 1, 2016- Indianapolis

Adjournment- Rollins called for a motion for adjournment. Jones made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Fetterer seconded. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 5:41 PM.