



State of Wisconsin
GOVERNOR'S STATE TRAILS COUNCIL

Meeting Agenda
Thursday, April 26, 2018
10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Public Participation
North Shore Concession Stand
Devils Lake State Park

TIME	PRESENTER	ITEMS & TYPE
10:00 a.m.	Bryan Much, Chair	Welcome and introductions
10:04 a.m.	State Trails Council Members	Agenda review/repair and approval of November meeting minutes
10:10 a.m.	Bryan Much	Chair report, Sturgeon Bay, Applicant Status
10:15 a.m.	Bryan Much/State Trails Council Members	Application Reviews and Recommendations
10:30 a.m.	Bryan Much/State Trails Council Members	Report from ad hoc on council structure
10:40 a.m.	Cameron Bump, Bobbi Winebar	DNR report
11:10 a.m.	Doug Johnson	Update from Doug Johnson regarding committee work about user groups
11:30 a.m.	N/A	Lunch
12:00 p.m.	Marty Krueger, Jeff Wright, Brian Simmert, Matt Stieve	Great Sauk Trail Project Information Brief
1:00 p.m.	Steve Schmelzer, Dana White-Quam	Trail opportunities at Devil's Lake/region
1:45 p.m.	Cathy Cooper	Pine River Trail
2:15 p.m.	State Trails Council Members	User group reports/highlights/discussion
2:45 p.m.	Public	Public comment
2:55 p.m.	State Trails Council Members	Nominate future agenda topics
3:00 p.m.		Adjourn



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Meeting Minutes

April 26, 2018

Public Participation

North Shore Concession Stand
Devils Lake State Park

10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

State Trails Council Members present

Bryan Much, off-highway motorcycle representative (member of *Wisconsin Off-Highway Motorcycle Association (WOHMA)*) [STC Chair]
Ken Neitzke, hiking representative (member of the *Ice Age Trail Alliance*) [STC Vice Chair]
Doug Johnson, snowmobiling representative (member of *Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs (AWSC)*) [STC Secretary]
Mike Repyak [for John Siegert], off-road bicycling representative (member of *Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin*)
Luana Schneider, 4-wheel drive vehicles representative (member of *Wisconsin 4-Wheel Drive Association*)
Kricket Jewett, equestrian representative (member of *Wisconsin Horse Council*)
Randy Harden, ATV/UTV representative (member of *Wisconsin ATV-UTV Association (WATVA)*)
Leif Hubbard, *Wisconsin Department of Transportation* [non-voting]

State Trails Council Members not in attendance

Ben Popp, cross-country skiing representative (Executive Director of American Birkebeiner)
Skip Maletzke, tourism/business representative [non-voting]

Invited speakers

Bobbi Winebar (DNR)
Cameron Bump (DNR)
Marty Krueger, Jeff Wright, Brian Simmert (Great Sauk Trail Project)
Dana White-Quam (DNR)
Cathy Cooper (Pine River Trail)

Others present

Hank Wozniel
Bob Fasick (Department of Transportation)

WI DNR Staff present

Kathryn Gehrke



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10:00 A.M. – Welcome and introductions

- Much called the meeting to order. Council members and guests introduced themselves.

10:04 A.M. – Agenda review/repair and approval of January meeting minutes

- Ken N. – Fix vice chair and president on first page, lineout “Ken email” on page 2
- Doug moved to approve the minutes. Luana seconded. Motion passed.

10:04 A.M. – Chair report

- Sturgeon bay for next meeting
 - August 3
- Applicant status
 - No updates on previous applications. Some to review today.

10:15 A.M. – Application Reviews and Recommendations

- Two applications to make a recommendation about.
 - Water Trails and Road Biking applicants reviewed. One concerned about sufficient communication links to user group with the biking applicant.
 - Luana make motion to recommend both applicants. Randy seconds. Motion passed.
- Bryan - return to agenda review and repair – 1030 item, lineout
- Randy – Discussion about making determination if changes are required with primary user groups represented by the council. The council reviews this biennially.
 - Doug – ROA could play an important part in making user group decision
 - Randy – need DNR help to see what is viable / identify uses / see what is emerging.
 - Bryan – SCORP and ROA can both help identify what we should add a designated seat. What is significant that we missed? Fat bikes are emerging but mnt bike user group can cover fat bikes
 - Further discussion on what user groups should be added/removed. No recommendations.

10:40 A.M. – DNR Report, Cameron Bump & Bobbi Winebar

- Bobbi – Recreation Trails application deadline is next Tuesday May 1. \$200,000 cap year
 - Input on ‘trails on road’ – have had calls asking if we fund trails on roads
 - Many are to connect two trails and need to cross roads
 - Ken – have a lot of road segments of trail, main cost is signage. In case of bike lanes or bike trails might need to involve city where rec trail is signage and city pays for road lines
 - Leif & Bob – safety is major issue DOT sees. Try to make sure it’s out of the clear zone, look for corridor sharing, big issue of trails crossing driveways especially ATVs and snowmobiles
 - Bryan – difficult to develop rigid rule when there are many environmental factors
 - Randy – I don’t know if we can provide direction, it may need to be case by case
 - Bobbi – stewardship will not pay for anything on the road just signage so that gives us direction, we can continue to do case by case basis for rec trail grants



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- Measurement can be mileage, number of users/user groups, connectivity to other regions
 - Bryan – is this a big obstacle?
 - Bobbi - Not too bad, 2-3 calls per year. This discussion gives me decent guidance
 - Average about 100 applications per year; rec trails is a federally funded program. State and federal funds can be matched up to 50% and can RTP be matched with LAWCON
 - Applicants are not always government entities but normally, sometimes Friends Groups apply, that have to be an incorporated nonprofit and have statement in bylaws that their main focus is promoting recreation. Rec trails money can carry over from year to year within a 7-year time frame.
 - Funded 47 projects last year
- Cameron – ROA update
- Department is using ROA to help plan for recreation and trail usage – purpose to identify existing recreation opportunities, needs, gaps. Create opportunities closer to where people live. Create resource for property planners to utilize.
 - Stakeholder group was made, Bryan represented STC, lots of trail users including bear hunters, trappers, bird watching etc.
 - 8 regions were used, same regions that have been used in the past few SCORPs
 - Considering how far people are willing to travel for an experience
 - Bryan – need to have opportunities proximate to where people live not just expect people will travel to the north
 - Cameron – top need identified in south has been off-road/ATV use
 - Mike – there are not a lot of mtn bike opportunities on state land up north. Need to improve and modernize trails down south and improve/make trails up north
 - Bryan – Mike, need to write out your situation and submit to DNR planners if you are knowledgeable on this issue.
 - Cameron – did not factor private land into the ROA
 - Doug – population map we were shown in SCORP meeting really show where opportunities should be available
 - Cameron – key factor may be the private opportunity; the department cannot meet all the identified needs from ROA
 - Mike – biggest factor for private sector is insurance
 - Bryan – lots of opportunities are being picked up by counties but let's not lose sight of the dept mission to help create opportunities, and let's not lose sight of creating these near where population segments live.
 - Cameron – not only did we get responses from people living in Wisconsin, we got Nebraska, Georgia etc. --- please note this is not scientific.
 - ROA next step
 - We are identifying properties that may need to meet some of these high opportunities, but we are giving our planners some room for adjusting
 - Bryan – there are some small groups that are underserved.
 - Cameron – right, that is why this was not a vote



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- Luana – the others that were listed for 4wd were put into ATV and motorized recreation. ATVs and motorcycles are always mentioned and not 4wd, do not want 4wd to be forgotten. Would like 4wd to be listed and not just “etc”.
 - Also, will the comments ever be available for public
- Cameron – planning through ecological landscapes. We are engaging in these landscapes with public meetings, master planning process will
- Cameron – quick updates
 - Master planning NE/Southern. Planning needs to be done by 2024 by ecological landscapes
 - Capital budget is currently underway
 - Demand-based pricing
 - OutWiGo – statewide marketing campaign kickoff May 17 at Mirror Lake
 - Meeting with trail partnerships
- Doug – I was recently present at SCORP meeting representing the council, rough timetable was given and should be done by end of the year. Goal/hope is SCORP will be more usable for county

11:45 A.M. – Lunch

12:20 P.M. – Great Sauk Trail Project Information Brief

- Marty Krueger (board member and president of Great Sauk Trail commission) Brian Simmert (planner) Jeff Wright (friend's group president)
- Marty Krueger
 - Sauk City & Prairie Du Sac wanted to develop/maintain and connect two rec trails that have not been touched in 2 decades
 - Needed to convince governor to buy rail corridor for \$40 million
 - Established goal of trail commission at first meeting to develop ‘world class recreation trail’
 - Connection to Dane county trail city, across Wisconsin River, through prairies, to Devil's Lake
- Brian Simmert
 - 3 units
 - Dane County unit – trail on other side of river, sometime Dane county will take over and develop
 - Sauk County unit – fully built, paved
 - Badger unit – currently building, paved sometime this fall
 - Official logo for Great Sauk Trail – meant to be memorable
 - More than recreation, use as tourism/economic development, place people would want to come, quality of life
 - Businesses are reacting to trail and turning their doors to be facing the trail
 - Real estate prices go up by being in a community that has a trail
 - Including amenities to trail so it isn't just a place where you get on your bike and go
 - Public art
 - Benches



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- Mile markers
- Interpretive signage
- Application available to access more information
- No opposition to the trail, community wanted it
- Planning began in July 2014 – grant awarded may 2015 – spring 2017 trail design and engineering – June 2017 groundbreaking – October 2017 ribbon cutting
- Throughout planning we wanted to have a theme or identity – world class is that identity and it is displayed though:
 - Logo
 - Interpretive signage
 - Artwork
- Section that will go through Devil's Lake will be through DNR master planning
- Baraboo/Reedsburg Segment
 - Planning combined due to wanting to start right away
- Highway commission is doing construction
- Removed railroad was given to rail commission and DOT to split, tried to recycle as many ties as possible/have people pick them up
 - Cost money to get rid of ties but made money to sell steel – probably will come out even
- 2.75 inches asphalt,
 - settled on paving trail for many reasons, one being trail maintained by county
- Jeff Wright
 - Assistant superintendent of Sauk County school district & president of Friends of the Great Sauk Trail
 - See this as an opportunity for people to see Sauk County as a place to live and make their home
 - School district has been growing 10 students a year on average and last year grew 65 – not all due to trail but many may be
 - Current target to raise 1,000,000 and at 800,000 – in 10 months
 - Community has been wanting this for a long time
 - Thoughtful pieces of art companies and families could put on trail for donations
- Funding (Marty)
 - 1.2 million for segment 1 (over 5 miles)
 - Counties each paid \$200,000 for shared partners
 - 400,000 from stewardship
 - Rest Friends made
 - Upped fundraising so they could get into Badger (segment 2) so it wasn't just community trail
 - 400,000 raised....etc
 - More stewardship/DNR help
 - Bryan - Price of bridge?
 - \$950,000 to remove bridge
 - WSOR & DOT & Rail Transit Commission split cost of removal
- Marty - Connection to 400 trail would ultimately connect it to the Mississippi



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- Brian - Possible connection to Baraboo River – paddle downstream and peddle upstream

1:33 P.M. – Trail opportunities at Devil's Lake/region

- DNR segment of Great Sauk Trail
 - 1982 master plan for Devil's Lake did call for a bike plan
 - Do not have to go through master plan process to get this path build – just need money
 - Once Sauk Rec. segment complete there will be a portion near hallways road
 - 3 options for routes into Devil's Lake
 - Alt 1 – parallel to railroad is most consistent to master plan and least impact, shortest route (slightly over 2 miles) – however might be more wet due to runoff from bluff – leaning towards this route
 - Alt 2 – longest, share some with ice age
 - Alt 3 – share some with county, issues with safety – might eliminate this option
 - DNR does not have funding set aside for this, could be \$700,000 – \$1,000,000
 - Getting from south shore to north trail is going to be the most difficult
 - Parallel to tracks 1.4 miles – not much room
 - South shore road about 25% grade --- not easy option
 - Ho-Chuck nation, fisheries, wetlands all will need to be involved

1:45 P.M. – Pine River Trail (Cathy Cooper)

- Richland county has about 15 miles trail running from Lone Rock to Richland Center
- Dedicated in 1997, governor Thompson was first person to ride trail
 - Hiking, biking, snowmobile in winter
- Limestone, 15 bridges (have all been re-decked since built)
- Since it was a XXX grant we cannot charge use fee
 - State snowmobile trail (\$300 mile)
 - Not state bike trail
 - Maintained by county
 - Paying \$2100 for mowing 13 miles
- Just put out bidding for grading and compacting
- Option for other usage to get funding
 - Started public hearing for possible ATV use (\$600 mile)
- Dana – selling trail pass rule has been changed so you can now charge for pass
 - Could also apply to be a state trail
- Community does still want trail
 - Being used by southwest partners
- 17,000-18,000 people in county
- Kids could use trail to get to school instead of unsafe hwy roads

2:15 P.M. – User group reports/highlights

- Randy (ATV/UTV)
 - Eastern regional recreation team for forest service
 - Nicolet forest lots of campgrounds and boat landings now have approved funding
- Ken (Ice Age Trail)
 - Ice Age Trail Alliance is celebrating 60-year anniversary



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- 2,081 volunteers logged in 79,197 hours which equates to \$1.92 million in volunteer labor
- 3rd of national scenic trails for number of volunteers
- Appalachian Trail reached out for help in encouraging volunteers
- Doug (Snowmobile)
 - Nothing to add from report
- Kricket (Equestrian)
 - Economic impact report came back and is in report
 - Midwest horse fair about 50,000 attendees
 - Share trail safely information is being pushed
 - National organization just developed chapter in Wisconsin
 - ELD mandate for driving truck (federal mandate)
 - Looking at how to work through, as I cannot just pull over with livestock for 10 hours
 - Leif – trying to get more truck stops to alleviate this issue
- Luana (4WD)
 - Forgot to address in her report that at the Master planning in Rhinelander last year the issue as to how to deal with 4wd vehicles that are not licenses. It was decided to address the licensed vehicles at this point in time and deal with the unlicensed vehicles later on. This same concept is being considered for the potential sticker program.
- Randy (ATV/UTV)
 - Club members go through training and monitor/patrol trails
- Mike (off road bikes)
 - Capitol off road pathfinders (CORP) in Dane County extending to Sauk County
 - White Mound County Park is adding in mtn biking
 - Expansion to trails at CamRock
 - Planning on MTB trails at Brigham (Dane) County park with connections into Blue Mounds
 - IMBA international nonprofit, 30th anniversary. Trail care crew turned into trail solutions - sustainable trail consulting firm. Work from feasibility to building. 18 chapters of IMBA in WI (CORBA, CAMBA, CORP, CWOCC, etc) Wausau is becoming primer destination
 - E-MTB's are 'new' user of bike group, IMBA supports class 1 e-bikes on non-motorized trails
 - Walton Family Foundation has become a strong big funding source for IMBA and trail projects
 - Educational programming/sessions on how to develop trail systems – Trails Labs in Bentonville, AR
 - Community Accelerator Grants – Looking give out 1 million in planning services within next year
- Leif (DOT)
 - No updates
- Bob (DOT)
 - Told to limit travel, could we make phone connection?
 - Bryan - yes we could make



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2:52 P.M. – Public comment

- UWSP student – human dimensions' course, assess nature of meeting and how it relates to user groups
 - Bryan explains structure of meeting and members

2:59 P.M. – Future agenda topics

- Sturgeon Bay
 - Looking for trail presenters, some are already arranged for.
- If you'd like to nominate topic for one of the meetings, contact Bryan

3:01 P.M. – Adjourn

- Motion to adjourn by Doug. Seconded by Randy. All approved. Meeting adjourned.

Appendix – User Group Reports (submitted before meeting by Council Members)

STC User Group Reports –

Cross-Country Ski

In general, it was a great winter for skiing!!! Many areas south of Hwy 29 had very poor snow conditions, however, conversely, the northern regions of the state had good snow...in fact many still do! The ski community in general had a strong year and will look to use the momentum to grow support, funding and access. Additionally, the USA won its first every Olympic gold medal in xc-skiing and that brought great energy to the community.

- **Eau Claire Area Ski Trails:**
 - Youth Ski Groups flourished with good snow and plenty of cold. Tower Ridge was a great place to ski this year.
- **Lakeland/Minocqua Area:**
 - The area had good skiing most of the year and is hopeful the good year drives more sales for passes and future support of grooming and facility improvements
- **Hayward Area**
 - American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation turned out an amazing event for Birkie 2018. After a huge disappointment in 2017, over 13,000 skiers turned out to ski Birkie week. Ranging in age from 3-83, there was something for everyone.
 - Skiing continues as of April 13 on the Birkie Trail. There has been 131 days of continuously groomed trail on the Birkie Trail!
 - Spooner Rails on Trails program had over 180 7-8th graders on skis and another 90 5th graders on Nordic Rocks skis. The program held a 2 races and grew their HS/MS team to over 20 with nearly 75 kids in the k-5th grade programs



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- **Rhineland Area**
 - Rhineland's Northwoods Nordic SC had a great year with good skiing in the area, hosted a large citizen/HS event and looks to expand in 2018. ..
- **Milwaukee Area**
 - Friends of Lapham Peak is undertaking an expanded role in snowmaking next year and hope to continue to expand. With a poor snow year in Milwaukee, it was the only reliable skiing most of the 2017-18 year.
- **Madison**
 - Elver Park snowmaking was a huge success for the winter and was the only skiable snow in the area for most of the winter.
 - Will host a JNQ sprint and ski- cross race in 2018
- **Central Cross-Country Skiing (Regional Governing Body under US Ski & Snowboard)**
 - Hosted 3 days of regional meetings in Eau Claire for all the regional, state and local clubs to discuss the state of XC skiing, what is going well and what needs work. Additionally, the schedule of races was created for the Wisconsin HS Ski league, along with the Central JNQ schedule, the CXC Youth Cup, CXC College Cup and the CXC Marathon Cup.

Submitted by: Ben Popp

Equestrians

Last year the WHC contracted the American Horse Council for a break out from their national survey for Wisconsin. Below are some preliminary numbers pulled from the survey-

- The total horse population in Wisconsin during 2016 is estimated to be 150,325.
- In Wisconsin, the horse industry directly contributes over \$723 million to the state's economy, along with 19,181 jobs.
- From those direct effects, the horse industry's contribution ripples out into other sectors of the economy—results in an estimate of the total contribution of the horse industry to the Wisconsin economy of \$1.286 billion.
- Nationally there are 7.2 million horses, along with the spending by horse enthusiasts in their pursuit of horse events and recreation, directly contributes over \$50 billion to America's Gross Domestic Product
- Nearly 239,000 Wisconsin households trail ride The vast majority of trail riders—87%—utilize public land
- **32%** of AHC survey respondents who trail ride in Wisconsin are from out of state.

Gov Dodge State Park is working on moving and building a new equine campground near the “day ride” parking. Plans have been developed for a proposed layout. The WHC Foundation has pledged <\$60,000 to the project. There will be a fund-raising kick off with the Poker Ride planned for June 3rd.



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Back Country Horseman of Wisconsin is working on getting their charter set. The mission of this national organization is-

1. To perpetuate the common-sense use and enjoyment of horses in America's back country and wilderness.
2. To work to ensure that public lands remain open to recreational stock use.
3. To assist the various government and private agencies in their maintenance and management of said resource.
4. To educate, encourage and solicit active participation in the wise use of the back-country resource by horsemen and the general public commensurate with our heritage.
5. To foster and encourage the formation of new state Back Country Horsemen's organizations.

The Midwest Horse Fair was held April 20 -22 and is the largest 3-day horse fair in America. 300 clinics, seminars, and educational events are presented by some of the top horse professionals from around the country. More than 500 commercial exhibitors offer shopping opportunities and hundreds of horses make it the equine event with something for everyone! The past 2 years attendance has been over 60,000!

Trail Grants were awarded to 10 projects around the state for a total of \$15,000 (with a 50% match requirement) for trail improvements.

Trails School with Trail Design Specialist is set for May 16 – 19 at Magnolia Bluff County Park near Evansville. We currently have one spot remaining of the 14 available. Interest has been especially good this year –with many expressing interest, but not able to make the dates.

The Trails Committee has begun a big promotion on “Share the Trails Safely” the Midwest Horse Fair promoted how our users can help with trail interactions. Over 100 newspapers were targeted with an article on how tips to all users on sharing the trails.

Submitted by: Cricket Jewett

ATV/UTV

The Wisconsin ATV UTV Association recently held its annual meeting, educational workshops, awards banquet and trail ambassador re-certification training over the weekend of April 6th through the 8th in Rothschild.

Friday's afternoon session included a certification course for trail patrol ambassadors that included an overview on the Next Generation of the Trail Ambassador program being tested in 2018 with the goal of rolling out the newest version in 2019.



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Topics were presented by various WI DNR representatives including overviews on the ATV UTV grant program, law enforcement regarding new signing statutes among other new laws plus explaining the reorganization of warden force and duties, as well as an update on the ROA process.

Tim Vetter from the US Forest Service also shared information on challenges our federal land managers are facing and how the public can be involved.

Regional meetings will be taking place through the summer months, assuming winter ever exits Wisconsin. These settings are where the WATVA leadership team goes to various regions of the state discussing challenges and successes that apply on a more regional setting.

More Trail Ambassador training's will be taking place around the state in 2018, refocusing and ramping the program the program back up now that safety enhancement program is restored.

New UTV registrations continue to outpace the number of new ATV registrations though overall, there are still considerably more ATVs than UTVs. The new growth however, remains on the UTV side.

More and more communities across Wisconsin are applying for additional or new road routes versus trail miles, a trend that may be linked to the changing demographic of the typical UTV owner.

Submitted by: Randy Harden

Snowmobile

It was a good season for most of our northern counties. Snowmobile trails officially closed statewide at the end of March. In spite of record, or near record, snow in many areas in April trails remained closed. Easements for the snowmobile trails on private property generally expire on the last day of March.

The annual "Celebrate Wisconsin Snowmobiling" event was held in Eagle River last February. It was a resounding success. Next year's event will be held in Minocqua.

AWSC Spring Convention was held in Green Bay.

Our "Trail Maintenance Bill" was signed into law increasing trail maintenance funding and eliminating the sunset clause on the trail pass program.

The AWSC has recently become involved in promoting a program to enhance snowmobile tourism developed by the American Council of Snowmobile Associations (ACSA). This program is designed to help state associations recognize communities and businesses that realize how important snowmobilers are to their existence. ACSA has made the program guide available on their website under the title "Snowmobile Friendly Community". The Wisconsin DNR has also made the program guide available on their website. The AWSC is working on developing Wisconsin specific information for our own communities.

We (the STC) have discussed "Trail Friendly Communities" in the past. WATVA has recently developed a program to recognize businesses and communities friendly to their pursuits.



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Snowmobile clubs are working diligently to recover their trail marking signs, in spite of heavy snows. Farmers are anxiously awaiting the opportunity to return to their fields and the snowmobile club volunteers responsible for marking the trails don't want to be the cause of any delays. Trail grooming equipment is being put away and clubs are preparing for their annual Landowner Appreciation Events.

THINK SNOW!

Submitted by: Douglas Johnson

Four-Wheel Drive

Wisconsin Four Wheel Drive Association (W4WDA) and the Wisconsin Off Highway Vehicle Association (WOHVA) had their combined convention on April 14. This was another good convention with the two associations working closely together for a unified voice. One of the big issues recognized at this meeting was how to get the "virtual social media clubs" involved and also take responsibility for their actions.

In regard to the Recreation Opportunity Analysis the Four Wheel Drive Community (4WDC) is in the process of responding to the final draft. The hopes are this will be a step to having 4WD trails with various levels of challenge being developed on public lands.

We wish to thank Cameron Bump for his major efforts in very unseasonal stormy conditions to present to those attending the convention an explanation of findings in regard to the ROA and also explaining the master planning process coming up for the regions.

A coalition of various main 4WD groups in Wisconsin have been meeting to work on establishing legislation for 4WD—hopefully this time we can get something going.

No further update on a 4WD Park.

There are some significant events for the public occurring. This includes the Fun on the Farm on June 15-17 at Fontenac Farms hosted by W4WDA. Also, the Northwoods Jeep Jamboree on July 12-14 held at Mole Lake. Also, the Great Northern Trail Ride will be held August 3-5 at Apple Valley hosted by WOHVA.

Several clubs are doing training programs/clinics to show new and more seasoned 4WD enthusiasts how to use and drive their vehicle and use accessories in a proper and environmental manner.

In the FWDC there are different groups continuing to work on various private properties for trails. Some of these are becoming very successful!!

Submitted by: Luana Schneider

Hiking

Winter Hiking conditions in the southern half of the state have been excellent due to little or no snow cover. Whereas in the northern half of the state there has been more than enough snow for snowshoeing.



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Hiking trails throughout the southern portions of the state experienced regular use with some areas such as the Southern Kettle Moraine received very heavy hiking use.

The North Country Trail Association has reported that despite the heavy snow this past winter, hikers were still heading out on the trail. There are some NCT sections in the Chequamegon National Forest that have seen so much snowshoe and hiking traffic that the trail is solid enough to hike without snowshoes.

2018 brings two major anniversaries to the hiking community. The Ice Age Trail Alliance is celebrating 60 years of its commitment to the Ice Age National Scenic Trail, creating, supporting and protecting a thousand-mile footpath tracing Ice Age formations across Wisconsin.

The National Trails System will be celebrating 50 years. The National Trails System is the network of scenic, historic, and recreation trails created by the National Trails System Act of 1968. These trails provide for outdoor recreation needs, promote the enjoyment, appreciation, and preservation of open-air, outdoor areas and historic resources, and encourage public access and citizen involvement. <https://www.nps.gov/nts/>

The Ice Age Trail Alliance held its annual membership meeting April 12-15 at the Blue Harbor Resort in Sheboygan with over 300 members attending. The weekend included hikes on the Ice Age Trail, presentations on backpacking, trip planning, Leave No Trace, Chapter Leadership Summit, National Park Service Awards presentation for volunteers, and the Ice Age Trail Alliance awards for volunteers. In 2017, more than 2,081 volunteers logged in 79,197 hours which equates to \$1.92 million in volunteer labor. The Appalachian National Scenic Trail has reached out the Ice Age Trail Alliance for help in organizing their volunteers. This is quite the compliment for the Ice Age Trail Alliance. The Ice Age Trail Alliance has scheduled (5) MCS trail building events around the state for this coming hiking season.

The North Country Trail is holding their annual Trailfest Celebration April 25-29 in Hocking Hills, Ohio. The Annual Celebration is a time for unique hiking experiences, seeing old NCT friends, and making new friends from across 7 states and beyond. For 2018, the NCTA is joining with the Buckeye Trail Association for Trail Fest Celebration like no other in the beautiful Hocking Hills area. In Wisconsin, NCTA is working towards obtaining approval for trail passage on DNR land in the River Banks Protection Area as well as continuing trail work on the Banana Belt trail relocation within Bayfield county forest and 3 mile of new trail along the Potato River in Iron County within the Iron County Forest. NCTA has several hikes scheduled throughout the hiking season. Facebook and Meetup have become their social media communication tool of choice.

Submitted by: Ken Neitzke

Off-highway motorcycles

Riding off-highway motorcycles on frozen waters is over for the season. Ice riding is popular with individuals and as part of numerous organized events. Soon trail and dual sport riding opportunities will be available in the state again. With the summer riding season comes a series of organized events that use a combination of public and private roads, trails, and land to put together an event riding course. In the near term, riders have dual sport riding events available in Wabeno in Forest



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County and near Ellsworth in the NW part of the state. Riders will also be navigating loops on more primitive roads using GPS guided ride information. The single track motorcycle trail project in Vilas County continues to evolve with the first riding loop predicted to be open in August. Additional loops will be constructed in the following years.

Submitted by: Bryan Much