

March 5, 2020 3:00 PM EST

Switchyard Park Pavilion

1611 S Rogers St.

Bloomington, IN 47403

Attendance

Board Members Present:

ATV Users- Tim Garrett

Bicyclists- Greg Midgley

Equestrians- Yvette Rollins

Environmental Groups- Jenny Blake

Four Wheel Drive Users- Ryan Sweany

Health/Higher Education- Pete Fritz

Hikers- Terry Fletcher

Mountain Bikers- Rich Moore

Off-Road Motorcyclists- Rayce Guthrie

Parks & Recreation Agencies- Travis Tranbarger

Pedestrians- Pat Martin

Trails Support Groups- Angie Pool

Users with Disabilities- Zully JF Alvarado

Water Trail Users- Margaret Easton

Board Members Not Present:

Snowmobilers- Len Neisler

DNR Staff:

Allen Hurst- Outdoor Recreation

Amy Marisavljevic- Outdoor Recreation

Carman Jackson- Outdoor Recreation

Guests:

Jay Jackson- ABATE

Jeff Smallwood- Hendricks Co. Trails Development
Association

John Bawcum- Panhandle Pathway

Laura Underhill- National Park Service

Michael Mencarini- National Park Service

Natalie Burgos- National Park Service

Meeting Minutes

Welcome & Introductions

Chair Pat Martin welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 3:26 PM EST. He thanked everyone in attendance for coming and initiated introductions. All Trails Advisory Board (TAB) members, Department of Natural Resources (DNR) staff, and guests introduced themselves.

Amy Marisavljevic announced the 2020 appointments. Angie Pool and Terry Fletcher were re-appointed to their respective positions of Trail Support Groups and Hikers. Jenny Blake is the newly appointed member representing Environmental Groups, Rich Moore for Mountain Bikers, and Zully JF Alvarado for Users with Disabilities.

Approval of the Agenda

Martin called for approval of the agenda. Margaret Easton motioned to approve the agenda and Rayce Guthrie seconded. Motion passed.

Review and Approval of December 5, 2019 minutes

Easton noted a spelling error with Dan Valleskey's last name. Martin then asked for a motion to accept the minutes with corrections. Tim Garrett motioned, and Pool seconded. Motion passed.

DNR Report

Marisavljevic announced that Todd Blevins, from the grants team, had moved onto a new position outside the Indiana DNR, noting the Division of Outdoor Recreation is now down two employees. The Division hopes to hire new staff later spring or summer. Furthermore, the DNR Director, Cameron Clark, is retiring at the end of March. No replacement has been announced yet, but she will notify the board of any announcements.

Marisavljevic stated that she cannot share a timeline right now in regards to the announcement of the second round Next Level Trails (NLT) awardees as well as the third round three application dates. Both announcements should occur around the same time. The third round of NLT will have \$35 million available, including \$25 million for regional projects and \$10 million for local projects. The DNR received two applications, from Tipton and Fort Wayne, for Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grants. RTP applications were due this year on March 1. More information on those projects will be presented at the June TAB meeting.

ORV State Properties

Carman Jackson reported that Redbird State Recreation Area (SRA) continues to work on developing a new gatehouse/office building. The new building will replace a 20-year-old 'tollhouse' that is currently used and will largely be similar in design to office at Interlake SRA. She announced that due to waiting on approvals, the time period for construction would fall into the Indiana Bat season. As a result, construction on the project cannot begin until fall.

Interlake SRA is seeing lots of traffic and is already in full season. Later this year, the property will begin the process of adding a new shelter, new vault toilets, and having some additional road work done. Jackson noted that both properties are having staffing issues with the state wage scale, making it more difficult to maintain the ORV trails. RTP monies currently are going towards some new trail equipment purchases that help sustain the trails at the properties.

Marisavljevic added that Interlake SRA has a new air pump station as of December that is available for patrons to utilize and has already proved quite popular. Jackson added that Redbird SRA will also have one when the new office building is built.

Legislation

Allen Hurst reported on relevant state and federal legislation to the TAB. Indiana House Bill 1099 addresses low-head dams in the state. The bill would establish a roster of low-head dams that create a hazardous flow and attribute each dam with ownership. If ownership could not be found, it would be listed as 'unknown.' The bill will require privately owned dams to be insured for a minimum of \$1,000,000. The bill also establishes a system for warning signs and requires compliance, with exceptions. Lastly, any non-authorized activity is prevented within 50ft of signed low-head dams. The bill had passed both the state house and senate and will likely soon be signed into law.

Indiana House Bill 1385 is the DNR omnibus bill so it includes many things. Particularly trail related, it helps clarify trail language in law. It also will change the definition of ‘watercraft’ to no longer include manually powered water vessels. The bill appears to be moving forward.

Federal bill HR 5797, the RTP Full Funding Act of 2020, seeks to amend Title 23 of the US Code and would require a study to determine the best available estimate of the total amount of ORV fuel taxes. Hurst noted that ORV numbers have steadily increased over the years, but the amount of RTP monies had not adjusted to reflect this. The bill would require the number to be researched a minimum of once every five years, and to adjust RTP funding accordingly.

Lastly, Hurst noted a new federal active transportation bill that was just introduced. Marisavljevic added that the new bill was introduced in the Senate and appears to be bipartisan. It could be a supplement to the FAST Act and include additional funds for trails, bicycling, and pedestrian infrastructure.

Old Business

No old business.

New Business

Officer Elections

Marisavljevic announced it was time to elect new officers for the year. She explained the two positions are Chair and Vice Chair as well as what their responsibilities include. Martin nominated Easton for Vice Chair, and Tim Garrett seconded. Martin then nominated Terry Fletcher for Chair. Easton and Pool seconded simultaneously. No other nominations were made. Garrett motioned to elect Easton for the position of Vice Chair and Fletcher for Chair. Pool seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Trail Update from Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department

Dave Williams of Bloomington Park and Recreation gave a wonderful and informative tour of Switchyard Park before the meeting. Having covered his report during the tour, the meeting moved onto the National Parks Service presentation.

National Park Service’s Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program Overview

Laura Underhill introduced herself as the RTCA contact from the Michigan field office and Mike Mencarini, the RTCA staffer out of the Chicago, Illinois field office. She also mentioned that Andrea Ireland works out of the Ohio field office. Together they will assist Indiana on any future RTCA projects since Rory Robinson, Indiana’s long time assigned RTCA staffer, retired last year.

Mencarini presented an overview of the RTCA program. The Midwest region have 10 staff over 13 states. The major service relevant to the TAB is to help communities and organizations figure out ways to get people outside and providing technical assistance to them in creating new opportunities or infrastructure. Underhill discussed a few examples of what RTCA offers, including: conceptual level designs, cost estimations, helping with grants, partnership development, and strategic planning. This year, she noted the RTCA

has had three consultations in Indiana. She shared a map of previous projects and consultations all over the state of Indiana. Underhill added that Purdue will soon get a NPS Legacy Fellow that will be designated to Indiana for landscape architecture projects, like creating project conceptual designs and renderings.

Mencarini noted a current project they are working on that is creating partnerships between the Navy's Great Lakes Military Base and Indiana Dunes National Park. Underhill stated the RTCA will have a call for projects in June. There are no fees or match required to apply for their technical assistance grant.

Underhill then introduced Natalie Burgos, a NPS fellow specializing in urban ecology. Burgos' work is split in two areas. Half the time she supports Mencarini in Chicago helping to incorporate wildlife conservation into projects. The other half she supports three partners in Chicago helping them with research, studies, public outreach, and hands-on restoration. Underhill closed by welcoming further discussion on potential projects and consultations after the meeting.

2020 Meeting Locations

Marisavljevic asked members if anyone would like to host one of the next three meetings in June, September, or December. She also asked for suggestions or ideas. Garrett noted that Sullivan would not be ready to host this year, as previously recommended, as a new hotel/community building would not be complete in time. After a little discussion on new projects across the state, the following recommendations were agreed to:

June – Indianapolis area

September – Clarksville, IN

December – South Bend, IN

User Group Reports

ATVs

Garrett noted winter is a slower time of the year for ATV users, and there was little to report. The Redbird SRA road construction has been well received since its completion last year. He noted Vigo County had now opened up their county roads to ORV use.

Bicyclists

Midgley reported on the many new bicycle trail connections in the works, some of which are applying for NLT funds. Reported projects include the Pennsy Trail, Vandalia Trail, National Road Heritage Trail, Pleasant Run, and Fall Creek Trail. He also mentioned two critical bridge projects including the CMAQ funded boardwalk over the Wabash connecting Terre Haute to West Terre Haute and the Monon Trail Bridge over SR 32. Marisavljevic added the extension of the Cultural Trail in Indianapolis. Fletcher noted the widening of the Monon Trail and bridge over 38th St. as other upcoming key projects.

Environmental Groups

Blake defined what a cooperative invasive species manager area (CISMA) was, and how many entities are working on combating invasive species in Indiana. She announced that from March 15 through May 15 there would be a 30-county initiative, dubbed 'Weed Wrangle', in Indiana that aims to remove invasive species with the hope to later install native plants.

Equestrians

Rollins reported that the Indiana Trail Riders Association's first cleanup of the year will be at Brown County State Park during the last weekend in April. The Hoosier Back Country Horsemen's first cleanup is scheduled at Hoosier National Forest.

They have been working year-round helping with trail re-routes or clearing away widow-makers. They are using their new trail equipment, which has proved useful in helping maintain the trails. Rollins will be leading volunteers in Greene-Sullivan State Forest on National Trails Day, and will take as many volunteers as she can get. Lastly, she noted concerns with the news that Story, Indiana is for sale. She is concerned what will happen to the town and trails, as they are key part of the equestrian culture in Brown County.

Four Wheel Drive Users

Ryan Sweany joked that it is currently repair season, so not a lot to report. He noted that the 40-year anniversary for the Indiana Four Wheel Drive Association (IFWDA), and their annual conference will be held at Clifty Falls on March 20. IFWDA plans to bring in some more members, as well as looking for more volunteer projects they could take on.

Health/Higher Education

Fritz reported that an Indiana State Department of Health's (ISDH) Bike/Pedestrian Plan grant program received eight applications. Of those eight, they were able to fund the following: Gary, Greensburg, Tippecanoe Co., and Dubois Co. Their tactical urbanization grant program also saw eight projects apply, and are currently reviewing applications. Four such demonstration projects were funded last year.

The multiagency workgroup promoting safe, active transportation is conducting a survey, trying to identifying opportunities and challenges to bicycling and walking to destinations. The workgroup is also completing a statewide bike/pedestrian crash analysis. Fritz added that pedestrian deaths are increasing, so this analysis should help shine light on both the problems and problem areas. The workgroup are also giving a presentations around the state at various functions, and that he will speak at the Purdue Road School happening in early March. Finally, Fritz announced ISDH is looking into park prescription programs, where local doctors will prescribe walking at local and state parks.

Marisavljevic added that the 'hands-free' legislation to prevent drivers being on their phones should help alleviate some of the bike/ped crashes. Alvarado inquired how that law addresses the needs of the disabled. No one knew the bill well enough to answer.

Hikers

Fletcher reported that the Hoosier Hiker Council (HHC) has trail work every third Saturday, and they are looking for volunteers. HHC is also planning another hiking trail at Cagles Mill Lake. Fletcher then announced a few events including: the 25th anniversary of Run with the Foxes on May 16 at Morgan Monroe State Forest, Owen Putnam State Forest 50k forest run on March 21, and the Indiana Trail 100 on April 25 at Chain O' Lakes.

Mountain Biker – No Report.

Off-Road Motorcyclists

Guthrie announced the first race in the state at the Badlands had an excellent turnout. ABATE's Dirt Bike School has 27 classes scheduled this year, a new high. ABATE has a grant from RTP education money to purchase 9 new dirt bikes to expand the classes.

Guthrie reported on a resolution before the Indiana Legislature that asks that the Hoosier National Forest consider responsible motorized use within its borders. Jay Jackson added the resolution had passed both the state house and senate. Guthrie said that HNF is an outlier in restricted motorized use, whereas most National Forests allow it.

Jay Jackson noted that motorized recreation funds all the RTP projects through the taxes in fuel. He expressed frustration when motorized gets left out when both motorized and non-motorized projects are funded from motorized users

Carman Jackson noted Indiana is in a prime location to connect a lot of off-road trail between neighboring states. She pointed to the Hatfield McCoy trail, a 1,500-mile off-roading trail, that drives a lot of economy in the areas it connects to.

Parks & Recreation Agencies – No report.

Pedestrians

Martin cautioned about poison hemlock on our public lands. He highlighted that its flowers look like carrots, and that it should be avoided because it can cause second degree burns. He mentioned the great mitigation and encapsulation efforts of Switchyard Park. Lastly, he reported he personally logged 1,465 miles walking and running in the last 12 months, which averaged out to about 4 miles a day.

Snowmobiles – No report.

Trails Support Groups

Pool reported that she and other Greenways Foundation (GF) board members attended the launch of Indiana Trails Caucus today at the Statehouse. The new bi-partisan caucus will focus on advocating for trail friendly legislation, including funding. Pool emphasized trail maintenance for existing trails will also be considered when discussion new funding.

The Indiana Trails Caucus will have a planning meeting in August to get ready for the 2021 Legislative Session and be working closely with the GF.

She announced the GF luncheon will be April 16 and Governor Holcomb will be a speaker. Both registrations and nominations are open for the event, and the links can be found on their website.

Pool announced the Cardinal Greenway (CG) will host Cardinal Summer events, which include the National Trails Day 5k on June 6, the Great Greenways Tour on July 25, and Walk Indiana on September 12. She noted that phase two of the Kitselman Trailhead, which includes a trail bridge project over the White River, at the site of CG and the White River Greenway was underway. Pool also has an upcoming conference call between the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, the DNR, and several local trail managers to discuss the Great American Rail Trail (GART) in Indiana. CG is part of the GART route and was named Indiana's Gateway Trail. Lastly, she noted that the CG plans to apply for a NLT grant in round three.

Users with Disabilities

Alvarado announced that March was disability awareness month. The month should raise awareness and consideration on how all activities can include user with disabilities.

She reported over the past few years there has been a push to ensure paddling is more accessible. Northwest Indiana Paddling Association (NWIPA) have been active ensuring principles of universal design are followed early on in the planning process. NWIPA is working with local communities to add more kayak launches. She noted that funding opportunities are available for adaptive equipment in case of impassability.

Lastly, she commended Bloomington on Switchyard Park and their use of orange and lime green colors as this is good for people that are visually impaired. She did have some accessibility concerns with some of the playground equipment and their use of stairs.

Water Trail Users

Easton reported on the founding of the Indiana Paddle Sports Alliance (IPA). The organization just filed their Articles of Incorporation with the Indiana Secretary of State, has obtained a website, and will file for 501c3 status from the IRS. They also will have a collaborative meeting with the DNR and NPS on April 17. Easton noted that they have a lot of diverse representation within IPA, but still are looking to get more members from southern Indiana.

She announced that Friends of the St. Joe will have their annual banquet. Easton reported a low-head dam was removed in Elkhart on Elkhart River improving the river for paddlers. Additionally, a low-head dam on the Eel River recently fell apart, which has fully opened up the Eel River. She is seeing great use of water trails for fundraisers, like a local library wanting to use the river for an upcoming fundraising event.

Easton then presented DNR with a couple photos of an access site in disrepair. Marisavljevic replied they would share these with DNR Division of Fish in Wildlife, who often is the access site managers, about the site in question. Lastly, Easton reported further removal of log jams of the Little Calumet River, noting the significance as the section of river had not been paddled in over 60 years.

Announcements

Bike, Walk, Place Conference- Aug 4-7 in Indianapolis, IN

Mid-American Trails & Greenways (MATAG) Conference- Aug 30-Sep 2 in Grand Rapids, MI

2020 Meeting Dates

June 4, 2020

September 3, 2020

December 3, 2020

Adjournment

Martin asked for a motion to adjourn. Garrett made a motion and Alvarado seconded. Motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 5:03 PM.