

March 7, 2019 3:00 PM EST
Salamonie Interpretive and Nature Center
3691 New Holland Road
Andrews, IN 46702

Attendance

Board Members Present:

ATV Users- Tim Garrett
Bicyclists- Greg Midgley
Equestrians- Yvette Rollins
Four Wheel Drive Users- Ben York (proxy)
Hikers- Terry Fletcher
Mountain Bikers- Jeff Fetterer
Off-Road Motorcyclists- Rayce Guthrie
Pedestrians- Pat Martin
Water Trail Users- Margaret Easton
Health/Higher Education- Pete Fritz
Snowmobilers- Len Neisler
Trails Support Groups- Angie Pool
Environmental Groups- Kevin Hardie
Users with Disabilities- David Meihls

Board Members Not Present:

Parks & Recreation Agencies- Travis Tranbarger

DNR Staff:

Allen Hurst- Outdoor Recreation
Amy Marisavljevic- Outdoor Recreation

Guests:

David Rollins
Jay Jackson

Meeting Minutes

Welcome & Introductions

Chair Pat Martin welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 3:08 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. Ryan Sweany gave his proxy to Ben York.

Approval of the Agenda

Martin called for approval of the agenda. Kevin Hardie clarified that the meeting locations for the June and September were switched on the on the agenda. Rayce Guthrie motioned to approve the agenda and Kevin Hardie seconded. Motion passed.

Review and Approval of December 6, 2018 minutes

Terry Fletcher noted a minor typo with his last name in his user report. Yvette Rollins noted that in the equestrian report that the trail in the Deam Wilderness was not a new trail, but a re-route. Len Neisler motioned to accept the minutes with the suggested changes and Tim Garrett seconded. Motion passed.

DNR Report

Legislative Report

Amy Marisavljevic presented both state and federal legislation that may affect trails or outdoor recreation here in Indiana. She noted Senate Bill 220, which simply addresses a

technicality about the wording in a landowner liability law, is moving forward in the Indiana legislature. It stipulates that landowners would now be exempt from liability for trail users exiting the trail, not just entering.

Marisavljevic then brought up House Bill 1236 which addresses e-bikes and a bicycle passing law. The bill, which has passed the Indiana House, combined both a three foot safe passing law for motorists overtaking bicyclists as well as classifying e-bikes into three separate categories. The e-bike language mirrors laws already on the book in other neighboring states and would stipulate what type of cycling infrastructure they would be permitted on. She also noted all of Indiana's neighboring states currently have a safe passing law in place.

Lastly, she brought up that a federal bill had been introduced that would permanently reauthorize Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), which is a grant program that the DNR administers to acquire and develop public outdoor recreation properties. There has also been talk of taking a larger percentage of the funds collected from oil and gas royalties to more fully fund LWCF. The bill, which is a part of a greater omnibus natural resources bill, has already passed the House and Senate and is waiting on the President's signature.

Grant Updates

Marisavljevic reminded the TAB that the Recreation Trails Program (RTP) grant applications are due May 1 and LWCF applications are due June 1. Potential applicants should contact Bob Bronson for more information. She then announced the new Next Level Trails grant program saw overwhelming interest with 82 applicants in the first round, which was split between regional and local projects. The first round applicants alone had requests totaling around \$144 million with only \$25 million in state funding available this round and \$90 million for the life of the program. Round one is currently in the review process and will later be evaluated by a multi-state agency rating committee before awarding \$20 million for regional and \$5 million for local projects.

Jeff Fetterer stated Hoosier Mountain Bike Association (HMBA) had applied for NLT and asked the TAB if any of their respective organizations applied. Angie Pool replied that she, on behalf of the Cardinal Greenway, did not apply in round one due to the tight timeframe to compile their extensive application materials, but plans to apply in the second round. Marisavljevic noted that she anticipates the second round will occur later in 2019.

Redbird State Recreation Area (SRA)

Marisavljevic noted that the pre-construction meeting for Redbird State Recreation Area (SRA) was held at the end of February. During the meeting it was determined that construction would begin on March 4 and the property will close to the public beginning March 11. The closure will not only allow for the paving of trail 0 and several new parking areas, but also the construction of new trail and repair of several miles of existing trail. Redbird SRA should re-open in early summer as long as the weather is cooperative. Garrett asked who the contractor was for the project. Allen Hurst replied it was Kerns, a

company who has done previous construction work on the property. Ben York inquired if there were any volunteer opportunities. Marisavljevic responded that the DNR welcomed volunteers during the closure and interested groups should contact Carman Jackson, Redbird SRA property manager, about volunteer opportunities.

Old Business

Marisavljevic announced a new appointment and re-appointments to the TAB. Pete Fritz was appointed to take over for Kate Riordan and represent Health and Higher Education. Fritz's term will be for the remaining two years. The reappointments included Garrett, Martin, Neisler, Rollins, and Sweany, which will all be effective for three years.

New Business

Officer Elections

Marisavljevic briefly explained the roles and responsibilities of chair and vice chair before calling for nominations. Hardie nominated Martin for president and Garrett seconded. Martin accepted the nomination.

Martin nominated Fetterer for vice president and Rollins seconded. Fetterer said he'd be willing, but would also like to nominate Terry Fletcher for vice president which Martin seconded. Fletcher accepted the nomination. Neisler made a motion to elect Martin for president and Fletcher as vice-president. Garrett seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

State Snowmobile Trail Program Overview

Hurst started by thanking the efforts of the snowmobile clubs, the champions of the snowmobile program. The snowmobile trail program is funded mostly by snowmobile registrations, which is \$30 for three years. The DNR is steward of the monies and uses them to provide the clubs with the equipment they will need to create and maintain the snowmobile trails as well as funds to lease the land on which the trails reside. In addition to administrating the program, Hurst noted the DNR also helps with general promotion and outreach.

Snowmobile season is Dec 1 – Mar 31 and trails open up generally when 4" or more of snow are on the ground to minimize any impact. Hurst then discussed the multitudinous responsibilities of the clubs undertake to ensure the trails, including leasing private land, dealing with landowner relations, getting insurance, trail construction, trail maintenance, grooming, and publicizing when the trails are open and closed. The State Snowmobile Trails include Buffalo Run, Miami, Heritage, and Salamonie.

Fletcher asked how many registered snowmobiles are in Indiana and Hurst replied that as of Oct 2018 there were around 9,300 registered snowmobiles. Garrett inquired how that number compared to off-road registrations, to which Marisavljevic answered that the number of ORV registrations is around 50,000.

Other Business

Rollins suggested another outdoor recreation outreach event, similar to the Hoosier Outdoor Experience. She believed the TAB could host a smaller version to get the public interested in trail-based recreation. The topic was discussed at length with a multitude of opinions, ideas, examples, experiences, and concerns. Ultimately, Marisavljevic encouraged the group to table the conversation until next meeting. She is attending a DNR hosted R3 conference, which is a national effort to deal with the declining numbers recreation like hunting and fishing. She hopes to bring back what she learns about outreach strategies to the conversation.

User Group Reports

ATVs– Garrett stated that he is excited about the Redbird SRA construction project and the possibilities it should provide. Garrett then noted that more and more counties are leaning towards adopting policies which are allowing off-road vehicles to use public roads. Hurst noted that in the past few months he has updated two counties which both now allow side by sides use while still outlawing 4 wheelers or dirt bikes. Lastly, Garrett brought up working with tourism in the past trying to get monies for advertising Hall-O-Wheelin', which brings in more participants and benefits the community.

Bicyclists– Midgley reported on three prominent trail projects that are an interest to bicyclists. First, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) publicly announced the Great American Rail-Trail (GART). The national trail will span the country and use Cardinal Greenway for its gateway into Indiana. In May, RTC will announce further trails to connect gaps including figuring out the route through Richmond.

Midgley then reported that the completion of two longstanding trail gaps will start construction in the year. The Pennsy Trail will connect the gap between Irvington to Cumberland resulting in a 21 continuous mile trail along the National Road Heritage Trail. Additionally, INDOT will help connect a gap between Terre Haute and West Terre Haute a boardwalk-style trail on piling next to the mile-long US 150 causeway near the Wabash River using Congestion and Air Quality Mitigation (CMAQ) funds.

Environmental Groups– Hardie announced that April 20 is Earth Day. The Earth Day Indiana Festival will be held at White River State Park and includes several vendors, events, and a 5k. Hardie noted that a 'vision plan' will be published for the 58 mile stretch of the White River Corridor through Hamilton and Marion Counties this summer. Lastly Hardie noted more interest from arts & cultural institutions in the trail community and how they interact with trails. He encouraged the group keep an eye out for possible partnerships with the arts community.

Equestrians– Rollins announced Indiana Trail Riders Association (ITRA) would host a cleanup with lots of tree cutting on April 26 and 27. She then reminded the group that there are campground host spots still available for those interested. Get Outdoors Day is June 15 and will be in Bloomington this year. National Trails Day will be June 1 and ITRA along with Hoosier Backcountry Horsemen will be hosting a public trail workday at Greene-Sullivan State Forest. She encouraged groups to reach out to each other and

team up. Rollins reported that the organization have moved away from weekend only volunteering and now will host a recurring weekday volunteering which will happen on the 4th Thursday each month. Rollins noted that Backcountry Riders of America now allow volunteer work to be done on state properties which should lead to a major improvement. Midgley inquired if Rollins had ridden the Salamonie area. She replied she had and that GF has provided a previous grant for trail signage.

Four Wheel Drive Users – Ben York announced three different events upcoming in the off-roading world. First is the Turkey Run Road Rally. Second, the Badlands is having a private land ride which will provide a unique opportunity to drivers. Lastly, ‘Wheeling 4 A Cause’ will be in June at Interlake SRA.

Health/Higher Education – Fritz began by giving a bit more information about HB 1236 which was the e-bike and bike passing law which originated from the bicycle trails task force. He noted they were originally two separate bills which were merged and subsequently passed the House. It now moves on to the Senate. Midgley asked if insurance would be necessary for e-bikes. Marisavljevic explained the rules behind each class of e-bike and stated insurance was not required.

Fritz also reported that INDOT is working on an active transportation report, which is focus on walking and biking around the state. The consultants for the report will also include a trail cost analysis tool to estimate the cost of construction on trails. Lastly, Fritz noted there is a multi-agency state workgroup working on advancing bicycle and pedestrian projects.

Hikers– Fletcher announced the Hoosier Hikers Council (HHC) have completed a new shelter on the Tecumseh Trail. HHC completed the Bluffs of Beaver Bend Trail and held their dedication in April. They started to construct a new trail at Cagles Mill Lake in February.

Fletcher promoted the HHC adopt-a-trail program, which has been ongoing for years. Finally, Fletcher announced three separate races around the state in the upcoming months. Chain of Lakes has the Indiana Trail 100 in April. Indiana Trail Running Association has a 50k on March 23 at Own-Putnam State Forest. HHC will host a half marathon on May 18 called ‘Run with the Foxes’ in Morgan-Monroe State Forest.

Mountain Biker – Fetterer announced HMBA applied for a \$200,000 NLT grant for several trails in Brown County State Park. Currently, they are constructing Weed Patch, a much needed intermediate trail. Fetterer reported HMBA held its annual meeting last month and it was well attended.

Saturday will be Death March, a gravel road race in Hoosier National Forest. Lastly, Fetterer noted the focus on the Indianapolis Eagle Creek Park area. They are trying to bring awareness that HMBA is willing to build the trails for free as opposed to spending six million dollars if they would be open to mountain bikers in addition to hikers.

Off-Road Motorcyclists– Guthrie started by reporting that last month’s Motorcycle Expo in Indianapolis was very busy. At the expo, ABATE sponsored a round table discussion which had 44 user groups showing up. Guthrie noted that Super Cross Weekend in Lucas Oil Stadium will be next month, one of the largest off-road motorcycle events in the state. That event will be aired live on TV.

Guthrie announced ABATE’s Dirt Bike School start date is April 20. York asked how much the school costs. Guthrie answered it is \$75 for youth and \$100 for an adult, adding all the certified instructors volunteer their time to teach these schools. Guthrie reported he wrote up a guide to public areas and race tracks one can ride at which is available to everyone. Guthrie informed the group about the Adventure Ride in Lawrence County. It is a trivia ride that’s spans 120 miles on paved and gravel roads. Lawrence County Recreational Park is providing free camping with entry.

Guthrie expressed disappointment with the exclusion of motorized trails from the NLT grant program. Marisavljevic noted this decision is above the DNR and further explained the state monies are limited due to their transportation origins. Finally, Guthrie noted the 2019 Indiana Recreation Guide does not include off-roading, except for listings of Redbird and Interlake SRA. His sentiment is that off-roading is under-represented in statewide promotional materials despite its growing popularity.

Parks & Recreation Agencies – No report.

Pedestrians – Martin reported that Bloomington was named a Bicycle Friendly Gold Community, the only one in Indiana. Martin stated that the Bloomington City Council is working on a scooter survey. The council is seeking to harden out scooter regulations, to license the scooters, and to hopefully get access to the GPS data that could be useful for the city.

Martin reported that the Bloomington area MPO saw lots of applications for multi-use pathway projects as well as safety projects that included downtime curb ramp renovations. Martin then announced Bloomington is working on ADA transition plan, which INDOT is planning to use for a statewide ADA transition plan. Bloomington is also updating there transportation plan, which is very focused on bike/pedestrian needs. Lastly, he noted Switchyard Park is under construction and should be open this fall.

Snowmobiles – Neisler informed the TAB about the American Recreation Access Program which is asking for more transparency with the RTP program and the formula used to fund the program. He notes that while off-roading is booming the funding has remained unchanged for decades. Neisler stated that the Coalition for Recreation Trails (CRT) next month is beginning nominations for their awards. Applicants must be grant projects funded through RTP in the last few years. More information is available on CRT’s website. Finally, Neisler reported the Indiana Snowmobile Association's Ride-In was held in Michigan in January was well attended.

Trails Support Groups – Pool announced Cardinal Greenway was inducted into the RTC’s Rail-Trail Hall of Fame. She thanked all the TAB members who voted. RTC has also named Cardinal Greenway as a Gateway Trail for their GART. Pool relayed her experience and gratitude for being involved with the NLT stakeholder meetings. Although she’s very excited for new trail development funds, maintenance funding is still a priority for her and the GF. Pool reported GF are looking into cost analysis on the maintenance of trails.

Pool announced the yearly GF Annual Luncheon be from 11:30-1:30 on April 11. DNR Director Cameron Clark will be the guest speaker and will talk about the Next Level Trails program. Registration is \$85.00. She noted you can get on the GF website to nominate candidates for a multitude of trail award categories. Nominations are due March 15. Lastly, Pool relayed that the Greenways Foundation is having a Strategic Retreat the upcoming Saturday to outlay goals and plans. Rollins, who also serves on the Foundations grants committee, added that their normally hand out \$10,000 in grants yearly, but has been upped to \$20,000 this year. The GF grants can be used for match by NLT applicants.

Users with Disabilities – Meihls stated that INDOT is requiring all municipalities, including those with less than 50 employees, to have an ADA transition plan and a title 6 plan in 2019. Certain grants and funding will be unavailable to municipalities without a plan. The cost of the plans is a concern for many communities. Meihls is trying to assist by possibly grouping communities together.

Meihls announced March is National Disability Month, which is a good time to talk if leaders are doing their due diligence on accessibility. Bloomington and Indianapolis have a lot of events planned for the month. Meihls encouraged those interested to attend.

Water Trail Users – Easton also expressed disappointment on water trails being excluded from NLT. She followed up announcing that Friends of St. Joseph River and South Bend are hosting a St. Joseph River cleanup called ‘Surrender the Booty.’ She then expressed concern with some water trail users consuming lots of alcohol, giving the entire user group a bad reputation. Particularly she mentioned a section of Pine River in Michigan notorious for its’ partying ways. They had initially banned alcohol on that stretch, but after enough complaints Michigan has since rescinded that ban.

Announcements

Opening Day for Trails – April 13, 2019

International Trails Symposium – April 28-May 1, 2019 (Syracuse, NY)

National Trails Day – June 1, 2019

2019 Meeting Dates

June 27, 2019 – Evansville, IN

September 5, 2019 – Muncie, IN

December 5, 2019 – Pokagon State Park

Marisavljevic polled the board as to if they should spend Wednesday night in Evansville prior to the meeting on Thursday June 27 and the board agreed. Marisavljevic suggested to have off-road trail tours at Interlake SRA as the Wednesday afternoon activity and the TAB was receptive. Neisler noted he may have leave early due to travel and time zone change.

Adjournment

Martin thanked everyone for attending. He then called for a motion to adjourn. Fetterer made a motion and Midgley seconded. Motion passed and meeting adjourned at 5:13 PM ET.

