

**DRAFT MINUTES
OFF-ROAD VEHICLE (ORV) TRAILS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
Holiday-Inn Lansing West
7501 West Saginaw Highway
Lansing, Michigan
May 7, 2008**

Chairman Ranney called the meeting of the Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) Trails Advisory Board to order at 6:40 p.m. on Wednesday May 7, 2008, in Lansing, Michigan.

Members Present:

Dick Ranney, Chair
Glenn Moll, Vice Chair
Amy Spray
Larry Harrington
Sheriff Scott Strait
Peter Wyckoff

Members Absent

John Bernard

Department of Natural Resources (Department) Staff Present:

James Radabaugh, Forest, Mineral, and Fire Management (FMFM), Lansing
Steve DeBrabander, FMFM, Lansing
Richard Kennedy, FMFM, Lansing
Steve Kubisiak, FMFM, Lansing
Al Bavarskas, Law Enforcement Division (LED), Lansing
Creig Grey, LED, Roscommon
Pete Lundberg, Parks and Recreation Division, Mears

USDA Forest Service Staff Present:

Rose Ingram, Huron Manistee National Forest, Cadillac

Welcome/Introductions

Board members, staff and audience introduced themselves.

MINUTES

Acknowledged Minutes of the February 6, 2008, ORV Trails Advisory Board Meeting.

Mr. Moll made a motion, supported by Mr. Wyckoff, to accept the minutes of the February 6, 2008, Off-Road Vehicle Trails Advisory Board Meeting, as written. Motion unanimously carried.

The following items were added to the agenda under new business: Tree maintenance equipment, and ORV title statistics.

OLD BUSINESS

ORV Plan Update – **Steve DeBrabander** reported the initial draft Management Plan for ORV use in Michigan was presented to the board at their February meeting. The board's comments as well as public comments taken during the initial public comment period were taken into consideration. Revisions were included in the draft management plan that was presented to the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) at their April meeting for information. The management plan is scheduled to be approved by the Director at the May 8, 2008 NRC meeting. **Mr. DeBrabander** thanked the board and the public for their input throughout the planning process.

Motorcycle Trail Director's Order – **Mr. DeBrabander** reported the draft Land Use Order of the Director (LUOD) was provided to the NRC for information at their April meeting. The LUOD is scheduled to be approved by the Director at the May 8, 2008 NRC meeting.

Trail Expansion Update – **Mr. DeBrabander** reported a conference call with trail program staff will be scheduled soon to initiate and strategize a review process for the trail proposals submitted to the Department from the Michigan Motorized Recreation Council (MMRC). He noted the trail proposals are received on an ongoing basis and the Department is developing an electronic trail proposal data base.

Steve Kubisiak reported the USDA Forest Service is working on several trail proposals. A final decision is pending on a proposed 27 mile ATV trail in Alcona County. He noted this trail is identified as the one of MMRC's high priorities. The Ottawa National Forest is taking public comment on 60 miles of proposed ATV route connectors that would connect the Pioneer ORV trail to State ORV trails and local communities. Public meetings are scheduled for Tuesday, May 6, Thursday, May 8, and Wednesday, May 14. The public comment period is open until May 21, 2008. For more information contact Lisa Klaus, Public Affairs Officer 906-932-1330 x 328.

Rose Ingram added that a final decision is expected in early summer on a 5 mile ATV connector from Bull Gap to Lupton.

Mr. Kubisiak noted that once the trails are approved through the Forest Service process they would need to go through the Department's trail proposal process in order to be designated as part of the States designated ORV system.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Luce County ORV Damage – **Glenn Moll** distributed and discussed a newspaper article concerning a court case involving ORV trespass on private lands. Three individuals were charged with operating an ORV in a prohibited area and trespassing. Damages in the amount of \$22, 071 were awarded to the private land owner.

NEW BUSINESS

Trail Maintenance Equipment – **Lewis Shuler** reported he attended a trail builder's seminar in Reno Nevada. He distributed some literature on several pieces of trail maintenance equipment to the board and discussed their limitations. **Mr. Shuler** believes the equipment would not meet the needs of Michigan's trail system. He concluded the trail grading equipment currently in use is about as good as it is going to get. **Mr. Ranney** asked if it would be possible to have a demonstration of the equipment provided in the literature.

ORV Title Statistics – **Dick Ranney** distributed a handout and reported as of March 26, 2008, Michigan Secretary of State (SOS) reported 358,525 titled ORV's in Michigan. In April of 2008, the Michigan Snowmobile Association reported 350,217 registered snowmobiles. Not included in the ORV data was SOS plated vehicles such as trucks or dual sport motorcycles, equipped to travel both, on the highway and off highway. No records are obtainable as to how many vehicles may be both plated and have an ORV Trail Permit applied. Nor is there any data on imports sold via the inter-net and perhaps never titled with Secretary of State. With all data considered, it is reasonable to say, total number of ORV's in Michigan now top the 400,000 mark, providing Michigan substantial economic benefit and added recreational opportunity.

STAFF REPORTS

USDA Forest Service – **Rose Ingram, Huron-Manistee National Forest** reported Kent T. Connaughton has been appointed as the new Region 9 Forester in Milwaukee. Charles J. Andrina District Ranger will be retiring at the end of May. A replacement has not been named at this time. Ms Ingram distributed Motor Vehicle Use Maps (MVUM) for the Huron side of the Huron-Manistee National Forest. Motor Vehicle Use Maps for the Manistee side will be available in 2009.

Forest, Mineral and Fire Management – **Steve DeBrabander** reported he attended the National Association of OHV Program Managers (NAOPM) and National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOHVCC) annual conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico. He said this was his first meeting and it was good to get the land managers and user groups together. There was lots of good dialog and interesting to compare how other states are managing motorized recreation. **Mr. Ranney** reported the Cycle Conservation Club of Michigan was recognized as club of the year at the conference.

Mr. DeBrabander reported once the ORV management plan is approved he will proceed with scheduling the first long range ORV financial planning workgroup meeting. Mr. Ranney will provide the Department contact information for a representative of the Michigan Motorcycle Dealers Association.

Mr. Kubisiak reported it is the Department's goal to have the new ORV maps posted on the web by Memorial Day weekend. A contract has been awarded to improve the Ambrose Lake State Forest Campground. The Department is completing a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a motorized trail economic and program management assessment. The project is expected to begin this summer.

Mr. Radabaugh reported the legislature has restored funding for the campground program and all 145 state forest campgrounds will be open this year. He reported the Bill Nicholls trail will be temporarily closed due to a washout. An engineering review is underway. A press release went out today.

Law Enforcement – **Creig Grey** reported LED is incorporating the recommendations of the strategy task force into their work plans. They are prioritizing locations based on resource damage reports and will focus groups efforts and air patrols in areas of concern on state owned lands.

Al Bavarskas reviewed the list of ORV safety education grants. He is working on the instructor manual and LED is considering combining training for ORV, snowmobile and marine safety. **Mr. Ranney** suggested there is a need for a training academy for instructors.

Sheriff Straight expressed concern with the local ORV law enforcement grants because patrols are limited to designated trails only. He believes there should be more flexibility and patrols should not be limited to designated trails. He also believes part time deputies should be eligible to enforce the ORV

law, similar to the marine safety and snowmobile local enforcement grant programs. This will require a change in the law.

PUBLIC APPEARANCE

Thomas Dunn, AMA District 14 and Lansing Motorcycle Club reported over 60 people attended their Arbor Day tree planting event in Kalkaska. The event was a success, six thousand trees were planted. Over the past four years over 40,000 trees have been planted. He thanked Chief Boyd for attending the event and Department staff for preparing a press release. He announced there will be another tree planting event the following week near Mesick.

Lewis Shuler, Cycle Conservation Club of Michigan announced they are ready for their 40th anniversary tour and will have club members available at trailheads during the three major holidays to pass out water and information. He thanked the Department for increasing maintenance grant amounts, but noted high fuel cost is making it hard to attract volunteers and they are finding lots of trees down along the trails. **Mr. Shuler** expressed concern with grant language regarding trail safety. He voiced concern because his organization is not eligible to receive safety training grant assistance.

Mike Olmstead thanked the Department for issuing an event permit for the Jeep Jamboree on Drummond Island. He is working with local Department staff on some route designation proposals on Drummond Island.

Pat Brower, Great Lakes Four Wheel Drive Association reported his organization held their 10th annual Darth Day forest clean-up on the Manistee National Forest. Volunteers picked-up over 650 tires and 150 cubic yards of trash. **Ms. Ingram** noted that District Ranger Les Russell was very impressed and thanked the Great Lakes Four Wheel Drive Association. **Mr. Brower** offered to assist the Department in providing safety training for full size truck operators.

Sheriff Strait made a motion, supported by Mr. Wyckoff, to adjourn. Motion unanimously carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Next Meeting:

August 6, 2008 Lansing Holiday Inn West

Public Present

Melissa Preston, ATV Off-Road Club of Michigan

Lewis Shuler, Cycle Conservation Club (CCC)

Thomas Dunn, AMA District 14/LMC

Mike Olmstead, Jeep Jamboree USA, Great Lakes Four Wheel Drive Association

Paul Hittie, Great Lakes Four Wheel Drive Association

Pat Brower, Great Lakes Four Wheel Drive Association