

## Minutes of the Brushy Creek Trails Advisory Board Meeting, October 20, 2009

Board members present for the Brushy Creek Trails Advisory Board meeting included Ron Jacobson, Mike Tinkham, Deb Lewis, Linda Jenny, Chad Kelchen, and Kevin Szcodronski. Not present were Pat Reed, Kelly Keller, Beth Aswegan, and Donna Christensen. Others in attendance included Greg Van Fosson, Steve Bell, Erin Ford, Amber O'Neill, Terry Lewis, Dan Campidilli, Lori Lange, Dave Davison, and Sonya Bailey.

Kevin S. welcomed everyone and introductions were made around the room. Minutes of the last meeting were read with a correction made to the line that stated "this fall there will be a place on the election ballot to raise Iowa sales tax by 1%". Rather, this should state "in the fall of 2010 there will be an election ballot vote to dedicate 3/8 of 1% of the next sales tax increase toward natural resources". Minutes will be amended and officially approved at the next meeting.

Kevin S. gave an update on the state of the DNR budget. This past fiscal year we were given a 15% budget cut and now that is being followed by another 10% cut. Of the DNR bureaus, Parks and Forestry are hurt the most by general fund cuts because we rely most heavily on that funding. Good news is that our camping revenue was up by over \$600,000 from last year, so that helps soften the blow. And by the end of the year there will be 10 open positions left vacant. So far there will be no lay offs or furloughs for employees, but once again the summer staff will be extremely minimal and things just will not look as nice.

Deb Lewis asked what effect Honey Creek State Park Resort had on the budget. Kevin S. explained that the resort is operated by a private company. Due to the rough economy, the resort has only been able to meet operating costs and not been able to make bond payments yet.

Chad reported on camping for the year at Brushy. Our camping numbers were up. For the April to September time period we have surpassed 2008 by \$11,000. Unfortunately, October has had a very poor turnout due to cold and rainy weather and we are about \$6000 short of last year's total.

Trail discussion was next on the agenda. Chad gave an overview of the 4:00 tour. Chad Kelchen, Amber O'Neill, Mike Tinkham, Erin Ford, Deb Lewis, Donna Christensen, and Sonya Bailey participated in a tour of the property to the southwest of the South Day Use Area. We walked the area looking for a suitable route for a trail to connect with the existing one along the river. Finding an area that is not too steep to hold a sustainable trail is the problem. Once at the bottom there won't be much problem creating a trail other than periodic flooding that will occur in the area. This is something we can explore further and keep in mind for the future when staff and funding is more plentiful.

This summer we had two emergency project workers funded through Iowa Workforce Development. They helped rehabilitate many trail areas affected by the 2008 flood as well as repairing boundary fences damaged by the flood. Their biggest project was on the trail behind the south campground east of the lagoons. An actively eroding gully alongside the trail full of junk was cleaned out and stabilized with tile and a retaining wall. Chad said because of the limited staff this summer, other routine trail maintenance has been deferred and will really start causing problems next summer especially on the clay hill and the south campground trail head. A section of the lake trail along the east boat ramp road is prepped and ready to be rocked but the rain continues to cause delays. And the last unfinished section is still awaiting terrace construction.

The new wagon trail route has been open since mid-August. Dan Campidilli represented the group and wanted to thank park staff for their work. The signs and mowing were great and they had a very enjoyable 4 hour wagon trip.

Prior to this meeting, park staff and supervisors came up with a preliminary list of options to deal with the complaints about not having immediate access to the all-weather trail from the south campground.

- 1) Camp in the North Campground (current option)
- 2) Trailer horses to the North Day Use Area (current option)
- 3) Rock a trail from a south trail head out of the south campground around to the D-46 bridge at which point riders can continue to ride Brushy Creek Road north to the all-weather trail

- 4) a. Option #3 plus continuing a rock trail through the picnic area and prairie areas to meet up with the all-weather trail. This option includes rocking a portion of trail contained within the Brushy Creek State Preserve.
  - b. If rocking the trail at the edge of the preserve is not allowed, a second option would be to put a trail alongside the hill portion of Brushy Creek Road to the west to meet up with the current all-weather trail.
- 5) Secure an easement with the private landowner and put a rock trail heading west from the south campground parking lot, put an at-grade trail crossing on D-46 to state ground and then hook onto the "yellow trail" which will lead north to the all-weather trail.
- 6) Put a culvert under the road directly across from the south campground and rock a trail to the east from there.
- 7) Option #6 but rock a trail heading west.
- 8) Do not hook up with current all-weather trail at all; create a separate south only route. This would include Option #3 but then riders would take the gravel Brushy Creek Road south to the parking lot and from there a trail back to the South campground would be rockered.

These options are presented with no regard to cost, logistics, or practicality. As was mentioned at the last meeting, a TAB subcommittee should be formed to look at the options in greater detail along with park staff. Pat Reed and Donna Christensen have already expressed interest in being a part of this and Linda Jenny also volunteered to be involved with the committee. A public meeting would need to be held on this topic sometime next summer. Chad has been in contact with the state preserves advisory board about whether rocking a section of trail in the preserve would even be a possibility. Their October meeting agenda was very full, but they would welcome a discussion at the January meeting.

For reference, using FEMA figures, it would cost approximately \$50,000/mile to haul and put rock in place. Some of these plans would require more specialized infrastructure, archeological surveys and other specialty work that would increase the cost significantly.

Kevin S. brought up the fact that once riders get in and out of the South camp they have already ridden a few miles and how many people actually want to ride the entire lake trail that may take 5-6 hours from the south campground? Ron Jacobson proposed maybe rocking the "yellow trail" north of D-46 and making a loop out of it for a short riding option.

Linda Jenny and Lori Lange expressed concern about the destruction and ugliness that would occur with attempting to widen and rock a trail behind the south campground. Another concern is the fact that many people still do not like the idea of having rock trails at all. After much discussion Mike Tinkham proposed a vote that the idea of rocking a trail out of the south campground be tabled for now because there is no funding available for such a project in the immediate future and why not finish one project (the lake trail) before starting another one. Linda Jenny seconded the motion and everyone was in favor.

Linda Jenny showed the group a \$4 day pass that she was required to have on her person to use the trails in Wisconsin. Many states incorporate some type of trail user-fee to offset trail maintenance costs.

At 7:25 Linda motioned to adjourn the meeting and Ron seconded.