

## **Next Generation “Strengthening Our Niche” Work-Group Meeting Notes of November 8, 2010**

### **Present**

Will Andresen, Tom Bergman, Annette Burchell, Merritt Bussiere, Char Jordan, John Garske, Brad Kusz, Gemma Lamb, Lily Palmer, Jim Rouse, Sue Rouse, Dick Swanson

### **Regional Trail System**

Will Andresen distributed information regarding the purpose for the creation of the SON workgroup, that we are working to build on our “nature-based outdoor recreation niche” in order to attract more young people to the community in order to reverse the community’s decades-long population decline. He also indicated that the group’s primary goal of creating a mapped vision for a regional non-motorized trail system and promoting the vision to the community has been largely concluded. The mapped vision is complete and every single municipality along the proposed route (plus several other groups) have adopted resolutions of support for the trail.

The question is where do we go from here? Do we continue as a group? Do we define a new project? Do we continue to support the regional trail system? Will suggested creating two work-groups, one focusing on the Iron County segment of the trail and one focusing on the Gogebic County section – and that the two groups meet together on a regular basis, but not monthly, basis.

John Garske suggested that the group stay active to help with the hands-on work of researching ownership of the railroad grade, or helping to create a powerpoint presentation for local communities to request funding to hire an attorney for the legal work, or to help conduct the community “event” that is being planned to showcase the range’s nature-based outdoor recreation niche. Lily Palmer suggested that the group could work to bring all of the existing trail groups together to better coordinate and/or map the trails in the community. Jim Rouse mentioned the work that is being done in Bessemer and how there are a number of spurs and bridges that could be incorporated into the regional trail system. Will brought up the joint resolution passed by both Hurley and Ironwood to create a riverside trail system and brought up the need to improve the train trestle between the two cities to make it safe for non-motorized usage.

In summary, the following ideas were suggested for the SON group moving forward:

- Create two sub-groups – by Iron County and Gogebic County
- Assist the Railroad Grade Acquisition Group with their efforts
- Create a powerpoint presentation to present to local governments to help fund attorney’s fees for the railroad acquisition
- Help to create the community “event” to promote the area
- Coordinate existing trail groups
- Create a map of existing/proposed trails

- Work with local communities to encourage them to build their own trail systems connecting to the regional spine
- Work on the proposed riverside trail system between Hurley and Ironwood
- Work on the train trestle connecting the two counties

Merritt Bussiere agreed to facilitate a discussion at the next meeting to prioritize these ideas and to create an action plan for the work-group.

### **Next Meeting Date**

Monday, December 6, 12:00 Noon, Board Room of the Iron County Courthouse