

## **Next Generation “Strengthening Our Niche” Work-Group Meeting Notes of September 13, 2010**

### **Present**

Will Andresen, Tom Bergman, Annette Burchell, Melanie Fullman, Morgan Grasso, Kelly Klein, Brad Kusz, Gemma Lamb, Jim Mildren, Lily Palmer, Jim Rouse, Sue Rouse

### **Regional Trail System**

Annette Burchell distributed an updated list of resolutions of support that have been received from local units of government and organizations in support of the regional trail system. A total of 34 resolutions or letters of support have been received from across the two-county area.

Annette indicated that Ron Yesney from the Michigan DNR will be conducting an internal review of trail priorities the week of September 20<sup>th</sup>. It was indicated that a demonstration of support for the proposed regional trail would be important prior to this internal review. The goal is for the state to acquire both of the railroad rights-of-way to accommodate both motorized and non-motorized recreational and transportation options.

The work-group agreed to forward the resolutions and letters of support, along with a cover-letter, to Ron. The work-group will also send an e-mail message to all “Strengthening Our Niche” work-group members to individually send letters of support to Ron Yesney.

Melanie Fullman has met with Gordy Koski from the Gogebic Range Trail Authority and they identified “best route” and alternative routes East of Bessemer and North to the Wolverine ski trails. She will present these options at the next meeting.

Lily Palmer indicated that John Garske has been pulling together the title work on the railroad grade and will present this information at the next meeting.

Annette has been in touch with the people involved with the Negaunee-Ishpeming regional trail system. They have indicated a willingness to assist us with our efforts and have invited us to visit their trails and attend a board meeting. Annette is hoping to schedule a visit with them later in the fall.

Brad Kusz informed the group that a representative from the International Mountain Biking Association will be making a presentation on the economic impact of trails on Wednesday night, September 15, 6:00 PM in room B-22 of the college. All committee members are encouraged to attend this important and relevant presentation.

Jim Rouse indicated that the community of Bessemer has already held a meeting on creating a local trail system that would connect with the regional spine and that the City of Bessemer is prepared to start the process of grant writing for the trail system. Jim also indicated that he will be conducting a tour of the Soo Line on Saturday, September

18<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 behind the BP station in Bessemer for people to learn more about the proposed trail – rain date is September 25<sup>th</sup>.

Will Andresen indicated that the Town of Mercer has applied for a large grant that would create a trail system connecting their downtown to the Town of Manitowish Waters and ultimately to the Boulder Junction trails. He also indicated that the Cities of Hurley and Ironwood have passed joint resolutions to create a community trail system centered on the Montreal River, which would connect directly with the regional spine.

The primary focus of the “Strengthening Our Niche” workgroup was the development of a mapped vision for a regional trail system and creating community support for the concept. This has been accomplished.

Moving forward, the group agreed to continue to build local support for the on-going efforts of the regional trail system. Action items include:

- 1) Submit press release regarding the successful acquisition of 34 resolutions and letters of support from the two county area – Melanie Fullman will submit an article to the Globe
- 2) Send copies of the acquired resolutions of support to the Michigan DNR for the acquisition of the two railroad grades
- 3) Request committee members and others to send letters of support to the Michigan DNR for the acquisition of the two railroad grades
- 4) Consider creating an “event” in which we can promote the successful efforts of this work-group
- 5) Create a brochure that would display the regional trail system, explain how it relates to the “Next Generation Initiative” and promote the economic impact of trails – to be used in public presentations, information booths, etc.

### **Next Meeting Date**

Monday, October 4, 12:00 Noon, Board Room of the Iron County Courthouse