

Next Generation “Strengthening Our Niche” Work-Group Meeting Notes of November 2, 2009

Present

Will Andresen, Tom Bergman, Annette Burchell, Morgan Grasso, Linda Jindrich, Kelly Klein, Brad Kusz, Gemma Lamb, Jim Rouse, Sue Rouse, Charlie Supercynski

Introduction

Annette Burchell, new chair of the Strengthening Our Niche Work-group, opened the meeting, welcomed two new members to the work-group (Morgan Grasso and Linda Jindrich) and explained that the work-group is focusing on two purposes: 1) create a vision (map) for a two-county trail system to be used to begin discussion and action towards the development of the regional trail system; and 2) enhance awareness of the economic importance of strengthening the niche to local decision makers to encourage their support of project activities. Will Andresen also explained the background and purpose of the over-all “Next Generation Initiative” to the new members.

Trail Mapping Sub-Committee Report

There was no formal report from the trail mapping sub-committee as they haven’t met since the last meeting. The group discussed the advantages and disadvantages of the railroad corridor option and the Old US-2 option. The advantages of using a railroad grade are: easy to moderate terrain, trails and bridges already exist, easily accessible, and provides easy connectivity between adjacent counties.

The advantage of developing a trail along old US2 was greater short-term success of getting land usage easements.

Having the trail be as visible as possible from major highways at various stretches of the trail would be a natural selling point of the trail to attract visitors/potential future trail users.

Charlie Supercynski suggested the development of two trails: 1) a non-motorized recreational trail and 2) a heritage trail in the same area that links important historical sites, but is accessible by automobiles.

Action Items:

1. Brad Kusz and Jim Rouse to contact other trail committee members, John Garske and Jim Maki, and continue working on trail map, including land ownership information. Results to be presented at next meeting.
2. Learn about other trail development efforts (e.g., non-motorized trail development efforts of DNR, North Country Trail, MDOT, etc.).

3. Seek involvement and guidance from DNR. Morgan Grasso to work with Dick Swanson to get DNR nonmotorized trail procurement representative to be contacted and invited to a future SON meeting.

Publicity Sub-Committee

No meetings held in recent months. Will stressed how important it is to have each community/county/government entity involved to pass a resolution accepting this concept, and incorporate the idea into the communities' / counties' regional comprehensive plans, Parks & Recreation Plans, etc. for future grant seeking opportunities.

Action Items:

Will Andresen to contact committee chair, Melanie Fullman, to organize a publicity meeting. Goals of the meeting are to:

- a. Prepare a presentation format that any publicity member could use to make a public presentation, and
- b. Determine a publicity representative to present to the Ironwood Township Planning Commission meeting on Thurs, Nov 19 at 6pm.

Niche Group Overview

Will Andresen explained that the Beautiful Northwoods Group has asked the NGI work-groups to come to a meeting in December to discuss way in which the BNG can be of assistance. Suggestions made by the work-group include helping to fund any necessary title search for the railroad corridor trail and providing feedback regarding the proposed publicity presentation script.

This item will also be on the next agenda for further discussion.

Next Meeting Date

Monday, December 7, 12:00 Noon, Board Room of the Iron County Courthouse