

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

Present

Will Andresen, Chris Botkin, Annette Burchell, Lisa Heberling, Char Herron-Jordan, Holly Jennings, Kelly Klein, Gemma Lamb, Jim Maki, Kim Mattson, Gayla Salmi

Overview

Will Andresen explained what some of the other “next generation” work-groups are working on as related to the niche. The “Promoting Our Strengths” work-group coordinated a meeting with four of the area chambers to develop a strategy to promote the niche and other local strengths. The “Retaining Our Students” group hopes to work with the area schools, local governmental agencies, clubs and organizations to engage our young people in the outdoor-nature based recreation niche.

Identification of Work-group Action Priorities

The group reviewed the suggestions on ways to strengthen the niche from the previous meeting: 1) Promote the niche and the importance of the niche to local decision-makers to encourage their support for physical improvements such as trails and parks; 2) Enhance awareness by local service workers of assets of our niche; 3) Link all of the communities in the two-county area with a regional trail system, that would allow multi-use non-motorized uses such as walking, biking, skiing and snow-shoeing; and 4) Support the North Country Trail project.

The group decided to focus its efforts on two initial purposes: 1) Work with the two counties, cities and other entities to map a proposed two-county trail system to be used to begin discussion and action towards the development of the regional trail system; and 2) enhance the awareness of the economic importance of strengthening the niche to local decision makers to encourage their support of project activities.

Next Steps

We will focus the next meeting on creating a vision/plan for a regional community trail system and invite local leaders who have been involved in creating trails in their community. Jim to invite Dick Bolen. Char to invite Charlie Supercynski. Will to invite Dick Swanson and John Siira. All members will seek out individuals who may be interested in this effort and invite them to participate in the next meeting.

Jim will also bring a regional base map to the next meeting.

Next Meeting

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