

Next Generation “Strengthening Our Niche” Work-Group Meeting Notes of April 6, 2009

Present

Will Andresen, Bonnie Banaszak, Tom Bergman, Chris Botkin, Melanie Fullman, John Garske, Lisa Heberling, Holly Jennings, Kelly Klein, Gemma Lamb, Jim Maki, Kim Mattson, Serena Mershon-Lohkamp, Lily Palmer, Donna Reinerio, Gayla Salmi, Toni Sendra, Charlie Supercynski, Dick Swanson

Introduction

Will Andresen introduced the “Next Generation” initiative to the new people in the group and explained that the “Strengthening Our Niche” work-group will be 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.

The purpose of today’s meeting will be to begin work on the first purpose. Initially, the concept is to connect Wakefield to Montreal. Mercer is also working on their own regional trail system along with the Town of Sherman, Lac du Flambeau and Manitowish Waters. Eventually, both trail systems could be connected.

Andresen explained that the former work-group leader Clyde Eilo has resigned due to back surgery and that the group needs a new leader, perhaps two co-leaders (preferably with one from Iron County and one from Gogebic County). This matter will be brought up again at the next meeting.

Trail System Vision

Discussion followed regarding the possible trail route with spurs into each community. Consensus was to map out the existing trails to form the primary route, with each community connecting their own trail systems to this route. The railroad grade connecting Wakefield to Ironwood was considered. Charlie Supercynski suggested that the trail also connect with historic heritage routes. Donna Reinerio suggested connecting with area waterfalls. Considerable discussion followed regarding various trail routes, spurs and places of interest.

Next Steps

Each community representative will map out existing trails, proposed trails and points of interest to be connected to the regional trail system and send them to Jim Maki who will put them all on one map for review at the next meeting:

- John Garske, Jim Maki, Melanie Fullman and Dick Swanson will confirm the legal status of the railroad-rights-of-way between Wakefield and Ironwood, plus points of interest in Wakefield and Bessemer
- Kim Mattson and Gayla Salmi will do Ironwood Township
- Gemma Lambe and Lily Palmer will do the City of Ironwood
- Kelly Klein will do Hurley and Montreal
- Bonnie Banaszak, Toni Sendra and Lisa Heberling will do Mercer

It was also suggested that a narrative for each community be prepared, including information on the sites of interest, current status and challenges faced.

Next Meeting

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