

Next Generation “Strengthening Our Niche” Work-Group Meeting Notes of April 26, 2010

Present

Will Andresen, Tom Bergman, Annette Burchell, Sam Davey, Melanie Fullman, John Garske, Diane Johnson, Paul Johnson, Kelly Klein, Brad Kusz, Kim Mattson, Jim Mildren, Gemma Lamb, Jim Rouse, Sue Rouse, Terri Triggiano, Gayla Salmi, Charlie Supercynski, Dick Swanson

Regional Trail System

Annette Burchell explained that this is one of four work-groups of the Gogebic Range Next Generation Initiative. The purpose of this group is to strengthen the community's nature-based outdoor recreation niche through the development of a non-motorized regional trail system connecting Montreal, Wisconsin with Wakefield, Michigan.

Melanie Fullman updated the group on progress since the last meeting. She indicated that she has met with representatives of the Gogebic Range Trail Authority and that they are supporting us in our efforts and helping us in various ways with the route planning. The Gogebic County Board and the City of Bessemer have both passed the resolution of support for the regional trail system and the vehicular mining heritage route. The City of Ironwood and Ironwood Township will be considering passage of the same resolution tonight.

John Garske said that Ron Yesney from the Michigan DNR is in support of the regional trail system and will be writing a letter of support, which will be a big help in grant-writing. John suggested that we invite Ron back in the near future so he can help us with our next steps.

Discussion followed regarding the proper sequencing of the next steps, including title work, land acquisition, development and grant writing. John will contact attorney Steve Tinti to request a cost estimate for the title work. The group will continue to focus on obtaining resolutions of support from all of the governmental units along the trail system

John also mentioned that Ironwood Township is proceeding with a grant application for a trail that will connect to the regional trail. The SON group agreed to write a letter of support for the township's grant application.

Jim Mildren from the Gogebic County Transit Authority told the group that he fully supports the regional trail project. In fact, he is starting an annual region-wide bike ride to build public awareness to biking, biking safety and the regional trail system. Along with Hobby Wheel and the Western UP Convention and Visitor's Bureau, he will be holding the first “Go Ride ‘R’ Range Ride” – or GRRRR! – on Sunday, May 23rd, 1:00 PM, starting at Norrie Park and travelling to Bessemer and back. This will be an annual event, with different starting and ending points every year.

Jim also informed the group of an upcoming “Training Wheels: On-Road Bicycle Facility Design Training” program to be held in Houghton on June 15. Jim will be attending, and others are invited to apply for this training as well.

Annette shared with the group that the current Secretary of Transportation is proposing a national bike system, which we may be able to work with. She had recently e-mailed a radio clip of his comments to the group.

Next Meeting Date

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