



State of Delaware
Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control
Delaware Division of Parks and Recreation
89 Kings Highway
Dover, Delaware 19901

Council on Greenways & Trails

October 14, 2016
9:30 am to 12:00
Location: Dover Public Library, Dover, DE

Welcome & Introductions

Charlie Emerson, Council Chairman, called the meeting to order. He invited members and visitors to introduce themselves and identify their group affiliation.

June Meeting Minutes

Charlie Emerson asked if there are any changes, additions or deletions to the June 10th meeting minutes. Hearing none, he called for a motion to approve the minutes for the June 10, 2016 Council meeting. John Martin made a motion to approve the minutes; Scott Blaier seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Old Business

Honoring Wendel Cassel – Ray Bivens spoke of the challenges to the Division of Parks & Recreation in naming facilities for Delawareans. [The Division has received many requests of this type in recent months.] He said he received a letter from PA State Parks which made the decision to rename the PA portion of the Boundary Trail for Wendel. Ray in turn made a decision to follow suite, renaming the DE Boundary Trail the Wendel Cassel Trail.

New Business

Delaware Park Explorer – Susan Moerschel briefly called the Council's attention to her Park Resource Office team responsibilities. Among those activities include tracking all public park properties managed and outdoor recreational facilities – referred to as the Outdoor Recreation Inventory (ORI). Actions enumerated in the 2013-18 SCORP and other initiatives [health assessments and kids in nature] outline actions calling for the ORI data to be available on line. Last year we began to develop a web tool to implement the SCORP Action on this issue.

Mike Krumrine summarized the Park Finder – the working name for web tool development. We have been collecting ORI data for decades. Digital shape files define properties [parks] in the ORI and relational information [park facilities]. This data is the foundation for Park Finder; only sites open for general public use will be exhibited in the Park Finder.

Park Finder is a searchable database – searches by park or trail name, type of facility, by city, county, how do I get to the park. We have a very expensive inventory of trails with information on trail width, surfacing, and permitted use. About 30-40 folks are testing the web tool, working through the kinks and bugs of information delivery.

Mike opened a live demonstration of the web tool exhibiting its robust nature. While we have had all the pieces for the web tool, product development is supported of the State Dept of Information Technology. Mike Townshend at DTI is on the team developing the tool.

Next steps include naming this tool and advertising its availability. Susan is working with Nemours and Sussex Outdoors, the earliest supporters, on a strategy to launch the tool.

Trail Updates

New Castle Industrial Track Trail – Jeff Niezgoda, Assistant Director, DelDOT Planning, provided an update on the final trail segment which will link the DuPont Environmental Education Center with the City of New Castle. The remaining 1.25 mile segment - DEEC through the Peterson Urban Wildlife Area and across the Christina River - will cost \$18.5M. Trail components include 2800 feet of boardwalk, 400 foot bridge, and approximately 2300 feet paved surface. Construction will begin in November. Completion is expected in summer 2018.

Tri-Valley Trail, Possum Hill Area in White Clay Creek State Park – David Bartoo reported the following: Phase 1 construction was bid; bids will be opened on October 27th in Dover. The Division has targeted a November 21 start date. The Possum Hill Area will be closed during construction. Once contractor has been selected the Division will know how the construction will be staged and how the schedule will affect Possum Hill's use.

Sen. Sokola stated Possum Hill is important area for trail usage. He conveyed that it is important for Possum Hill to be open for use. Senator Sokola said the whole park unit [Possum Hill] should not be closed during construction. The contractor must be open and transparent with the construction process as area closure will have a great affect on public use.

Matt Chesser said when we have met with the selected contractor, the Division will know more about the construction schedule and steps in construction that affect Possum Hill.

MChesser also said Phase 2 [1.0 miles] will be built in pieces; the trail will be built first followed by a separate contract for the bridge.

Georgetown-Lewes-Cape Trail - David Bartoo updated the Council that a recent meeting of resource specialists was held; they are collaborating with the Division to determine the trail alignment. David oriented the Council to the easternmost leg of an evolving trail – the Georgetown to Lewes to Cape Henlopen Trail. Topographic, wetland, boundary and utility data was collected and be used to inform that final trail alignment. Based on data assembled at this point in time, the Project Team prefers an alignment north of the rail alignment. This will have greater potential for use and potentially lower environmental impacts. This project segment is approximately 1.25 miles long. Next steps are field review.

Upcoming State Park Trail Plan review with stakeholders – David Bartoo reported the following:

- Killens Pond State Park Trail Plan - stakeholders identified; expecting responses from stakeholders to set up first meeting date;
- White Clay Creek State Park Trail Plan – revisit plan for update – first meeting of stakeholders expected in coming winter;
- Cape Henlopen State Park Trail Plan – stakeholders identified, first meeting of stakeholders expected in Spring 2017; and
- Holts Landing State Park Trail Plan – stakeholders reviewed concept plan, provided input.

Continuing Business

Trail Bond Bill Funds Fiscal Report Susan Moerschel briefed the Council on funding and active project status for DNREC's Trail & Pathway Bond Bill (Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)) funded projects. The document looks at recently completed projects, those in progress, and looks forward to future projects. All projects – sponsored by State Parks and Fish & Wildlife - outlined in the Trail & Pathway Bond Bill spreadsheet. This spreadsheet is set up by fiscal year beginning FY12. The Council receives this report at every meeting; it reflects funds spent and earmarked for trail

projects. Susan outlined several projects on the financial document in State Parks and at Bayshore sites.

Delaware Land & Water Conservation Trust Fund – Bob Ehemann provided an update on the investment management of the Delaware Land & Water Conservation Trust Fund. In July 2015, the \$50M Trust was privately invested equally among three companies. Since inception, the Trust has grown 2%. If the Trust value remains above the initial investment, a grant cycle will launch in the spring of 2017. The future distribution of funds will be one pot of money and not divided equally for parks and trails project. Therefore, the project ranking criteria will need to be reevaluated.

Federal Recreational Trails Program – David Bartoo provided an overview of three RTP approved projects covering many projects. All RTP projects require National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) evaluation. Several maintenance and rehabilitation trail projects have received NEPA approval and may proceed. NEPA documentation is being assembled for other trail projects.

Recreational Trail User Update

Hiking - Gary Kirk reported the following:

- Judge Morris multiflora rose & garlic mustard pulling. This summer there has been an ongoing Thursday morning volunteer group working in Judge Morris to pull multiflora rose, garlic mustard, and other invasive species. A lot of work has been completed.
- Newark Mason Dixon Trail Monthly & Continual Trail Improvement. Trail has been kept open all summer. This is the first time an active coordinated effort has been made to do this. It also will interesting to see if it is easier next season. The trail has had several sections realigned to move it away from bank edge where the creek has widened. A new bridge has been added to provide safe crossing of a deep ditch. Their also plans to do some other realignment of the trail to get it out of other wet areas. We hope to get in during the winter and cut or pull multiflora rose. One problem exists is that some of the trail currently goes across private land. The bridge needs to be relocated on this land. We have talked to the city and asked them to contact the owner and provide a release of liability for the trail so this trail improvement can continue.
- Hike Across Delaware (HAD) - Saturday, November 5th the WTC will have their 22 Hike Across Delaware. This will be the first HAD that includes Chesapeake City and the completed Mike Castle Trail. We hope it will be completed. Senator Coons' office called and asked about the event.
- Competition for Mike Castle Trail use. This trail has become so successful in that it has attracted many users, including several special events. This I am sure will cause conflicts. It would be good to have a coordinator for group activities for the trail and some type of website posting of these activities. We have been doing the HAD for 22 years using the trails/dirt road through this area and never had any conflicts. This year on the same day as the HAD is a half marathon also starting in Delaware City. Also, the WTC scheduled a picnic for this past Sunday at Lums Pond State Park. As part of this picnic there was to be a bike ride, two hikes and kayaking. The bike ride was going to include the Mike Castle Trail. However, due to becoming aware of a 15 K road race that was to occur from Delaware City end of the trail and to prevent conflicts our the bike route had to be altered at the last moment. But then the rain came and we cancelled the bike ride.

Announcements

- The next Council meeting will be held in January 2017. Stay tuned for details.
- An event will be held October 19th in Lewes to open the Lewes Trail – the first segment in the Georgetown-Lewes-Cape Trail.

- On November 2nd at 2pm, a groundbreaking for the final segment of the New Castle Industrial Trail will be held at the DuPont Env. Education Center.

Adjourn

John Martin made a motion to adjourn. Gary Kirk seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Attendees:

Council Members

Charlie Emerson, Chair
John Martin
Gary Kirk
Jean Rapley

Legislative Members

Senator David Sokola

Agency Members

Raymond Bivens, Division of Parks & Recreation, DNREC representative
Betsy Gant, Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs representative
Scott Blaier, Department of Agriculture

Division of Parks & Recreation

Susan Moerschel
David Bartoo
Bob Ehemann
Mike Krumrine
Matthew Chesser

Guests

Jeff Niezgoda
Thomas "Chip" Kneavel

Approved on 4-6-2017