

Next Generation “Strengthening Our Niche” Work-Group Meeting Notes of January 10, 2011

Present

Will Andresen, Annette Burchell, Merritt Bussiere, Melanie Fullman, Gemma Lamb, Jim Rouse, Charlie Supercynski

Priority Setting and Action Planning

Annette Burchell summarized the priority setting from the last meeting, explaining how the top five priorities were established. Merritt Bussiere facilitated a discussion to draft an action plan for each of the five identified priorities:

Priority 1: Support/Energize the Iron County side of the project

Intended outcome:

Establish map-able route for Iron County side of project

Project drivers:

Will Andresen, Jim Rouse, Kelly Klein and Tom Bergman

Basic next steps:

1. Inventory trails and recreational/historic sites
2. Develop basic options for trail route and map
3. Go to representatives from Hurley and Montreal to discuss proposed routes/ideas

Resources and partners:

- Cities of Hurley and Montreal
- Iron County Forestry and Parks Committee
- Iron County GIS Coordinator
- Tim Fitzgerald (Wisconsin DNR Forester)
- Coleman Engineering (mapping assistance)
- City of Ironwood (coordination of train trestle)

Project Completion:

August 28, 2011

Priority 2: Support the Railroad Grade Technical Working Group

Merritt provided an update on this priority, stating that the Michigan DNR is now taking the lead on this effort and that the technical working group is now serving in a support

capacity to the state. Therefore, the group agreed not to create an action plan for this priority at this time.

Priority 3: Create a map of existing and proposed trails in the region

Intended outcome:

Short Term: Create a composite map for each county

Long Term: Combine the two county maps into one regional map

Project drivers:

Will Andresen, Melanie Fullman, Kelly Klein and Tom Chase

Basic next steps:

Iron County:

1. Pull together separate maps and review for accuracy
2. Hold a “trail mix” meeting to be sure all trails and user groups are included
3. Work with GIS coordinator to combine the maps
4. Identify funding sources to publish map

Gogebic County:

1. Hold “trail mix” meeting to be sure all trails and user groups are included
2. Coordinate with US Forest Service on recently approved grant to fund the design and layout of county-wide map
3. Identify funding sources to publish map

Resources and partners:

Iron County:

- Iron County Development Zone Council,
- Iron County GIS Coordinator
- Iron County Board

Gogebic County:

- Convention and Visitors' Bureau
- Gogebic County
- US Forest Service
- Gogebic County Resource Advisory Committee

Project Completion:

Short Term, County-wide maps: July 1, 2011

Long Term, Regional map: July 1, 2012

Priority 4: Create a mountain bike trail Mecca in the area

Intended outcome:

Short Term: Official recognition by the International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA), signage and maintenance of mountain bike trails, hold regional mountain bike race, map of two-county mountain bike system, conduct economic impact analysis of silent sports

Long Term: Develop and implement marketing plan

Project drivers:

Brad Kusz, Bob Burchell, Eric Fitting, Dick Swanson, Gay Gheller, Kelly Klein, Merritt Bussiere

Basic next steps:

1. Establish mountain bike group
2. Show IMBA that we're serious
3. Increase awareness about silent sports possibilities – bus trip?
4. Identify emerging advocates
5. Foster relationships with interested winter ski resorts

Resources and partners:

- IMBA
- Fat Tire Club
- Park/Recreation Committees (both counties)
- Tim Maki (Gogebic County Forester)
- Joe Vairus (Iron County Forester)
- Tim Fitzgerald
- Ski resorts

Project Completion:

Contact IMBA: February 1, 2011

Economic Impact Study: September 1, 2011

Share economic impact study with elected officials/chambers of commerce, etc:
January 1, 2012

Priority 5: Create a regional identification for cross-country skiing

Intended outcome:

Short Term: Highway signage, conduct economic impact study (including snow-shoeing), create regional map of winter outdoor recreational opportunities (electronic and hard copies), engage county boards and mapping departments

Long Term: Create a “skiing community”, build ski trails into planning process, develop and implement marketing plan

Project drivers:

Tim Fitzgerald, Ken Hazel, Paulette Niemi

Basic next steps:

1. Create awareness regarding cross-country skiing opportunities – bus trip?
2. Create group to work on creation of winter map
3. Reach out and incorporate silent sports into schools
4. Seek cooperation from chambers and CVB
5. Incorporate highway signage (e.g. Michigan Highway 2 upgrade and Montreal/Uller trails)
6. Fully engage project drivers in this effort

Resources and partners:

- Grand View Hospital
- Health departments (both counties)
- World Winter Cities Organization

Project Completion:

Economic Impact Study: September 1, 2011

Share economic impact study with elected officials/chambers of commerce, etc:
January 1, 2012

Create county maps: August, 2011

Create regional map: August, 2012

Next Steps

Before the next meeting, the identified (potential) “project drivers” will be contacted to see if they are interested in becoming involved and to begin working on their efforts prior to the next meeting. Will to contact “project drivers” for priorities 1 and 5, Melanie will contact those for priority 3 and Annette will contact those for priority 4.

Next Meeting Date

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