

## Next Generation “Strengthening Our Niche” Work-Group Meeting Notes of July 13, 2009

### Present

Bonnie Bauaszak, Tom Bergman, Steve Frank, Melanie Fullman, John Garske, Kelly Klein, Kim Mattson, Serena Mershon-Lohkamp, Lily Palmer, Dan Peterson, Toni Sendra, Charles Superczynski, Dick Swanson, Anna Tingstad

### Lunch and Introductions

- Thank you to John Garske of Coleman Engineering for lunch

### Regional Trail Mapping

- Garske and Serena Mershon reported that the trail concept was well received by the several municipalities and organizations that were present at the US 2 Access Management Meeting on June 10. Even though the route being sought is not along US 2, this meeting was used as an opportunity to present the concept, gauge reactions, and gather potential resources for the future.
- Discussion regarding the general route of the trail was revisited with the following key outcomes:
  - Our initial focus will be to develop a bike-friendly route that follows Hwy 77 (WI) and Old US 2 (MI)
  - Non-motorized development of the old RR grades remains a goal, but is more likely a ‘second phase’ focus due to current logistics; we should continue to discuss this as a goal so other entities are aware of our continued interest (especially since the DNR is considering the northern RR grade for nonmotorized only use)
  - The trail is to be for nonmotorized use only; sharing of trails with motorized recreational vehicles may be offered as a ‘compromise’ in the future, but in reality this is never a compromise as silent sport users avoid shared trails
  - Wildlakes.org has proposed using a section of Old US 2 as part of their trail loop and connecting this route from Watersmeet to Wakefield. A representative was unavailable for our meeting, but Melanie Fullman indicated there are some pretty big gaps in the proposed route between towns at this point and new trail development might be the only option.
- Steve Frank gave a brief overview of his findings regarding federal and state Scenic Byway status (*Wisconsin*: <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/travel/scenic/byways.htm>; *Michigan*: [http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,1607,7-151-9621\\_11041\\_11209---,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,1607,7-151-9621_11041_11209---,00.html); *Federal*: <http://www.bywaysonline.org/nominations/>)
  - Federal status depends on State status

- In both states, the highway must be a state or federal road; Hwy 77 clearly qualifies in WI, but Old US 2 is questionable at best in MI (state has given up ownership to local governments)
- Obtaining Scenic or Heritage status is a tedious, lengthy process that requires a mile-by-mile inventory of the assets and is thus a major undertaking (but a worthy one given the eventual benefits of signage, advertising, etc). It was suggested that a historical/heritage inventory needs to be professionally done as such information has been sought by other groups in the area as well.
- Iron County, MI has already developed the “Iron Ore Heritage Trail” as a multi-use trail (<http://www.ironoreheritage.com/final/index.php>); a very good potential resource

### **Strengthening the Niche to Local Decision Makers and the Public**

- Serena Mershon summarized a few key points that may be relevant to our group from “Fostering Sustainable Behavior: Community Based Social Marketing”
  - A few ‘behavior change tools’ that have shown to be highly successful (and thus we should consider using when discussing the trail with others, both formally and informally) include using initial small/’trivial’ commitments to lay the groundwork for larger commitments later, fostering social norms (a relatively small number of people with a very visible message can seem like a larger percentage of the population than they are, thus fostering conformity to the ‘norm’), and developing an effective message, which often means emphasizing what is being lost by not taking action instead of what could be gained by taking action
  - In developing the framework for promoting the trail, we should first identify the barriers – don’t assume we know them. To do this we need to tell people about the idea, then listen to their comments, asking clarifying questions but avoiding any sort of persuasion tactics so they are more likely to tell their honest opinions
- A handout of potential links for bicycle stats, along with some stats about economic benefits was given out. Such info will be useful in educating people, but will not do the job of persuasion for us.
- John Garske reported that John Siira presented our concept to the Wakefield Planning Commission and they unanimously agreed to send us a letter of support.
- Melanie Fullman asked for support to include the Heritage Trail concept as part of her update at the next Township Supervisors meeting
- John Garske suggested we give a map of the proposed route to the Friends of the MMHP to include at their Festival Ironwood booth

- Senate Bill 254 H-1, Section 399 of the transportation bill adopts 'complete street polices' (<http://www.michigancompletestreets.org/>). This language would require our local decision makers to consider our proposal as a way to receive state dollars.
- The League of Michigan Bicyclists has a strong lobbying effort in Lansing and we need to keep them updated on efforts in our area.

### **Action Points and Next Steps**

- ➔ A subcommittee will meet to plan community meetings in an effort to gather input from the public to serve as a foundation for refining our concept and our promotion strategy. If you would like to serve on this subcommittee, please contact Serena Mershon-Lohkamp.
- ➔ Kim Mattson will contact WUPPDR as a potential resource for the heritage inventory; other individuals are encouraged to seek out potential funding opportunities for this as well.
- ➔ A representative from the Fat Tire bicycling group will be invited to the next meeting.

### **Next Meeting**

- Monday, Aug 3, 12 noon, Board Room of the Iron County Courthouse