

**2012-2017 Michigan Tourism Strategic Plan
Product Development (PD) Committee Meeting
Baffin Island Room, Crystal Mountain Resort Conference Centre
10am – 4pm, August 20 2015**

Agenda

~ lunch will be served c. 12pm ~

1. Welcome and Introductions – All
2. Review of October 1 2014 Meeting Notes – All
3. Update from January 15, March 22 and June 5 Travel Commission Meetings – Travel Commissioner Mike Busley
4. Review of March 22 Annual MTSP Meeting – Chris MacInnes and Sarah Nicholls
5. Fall 2015 MTSP Summit – Mon Nov 9 9:30am – 2pm – (East) Lansing – Sarah Nicholls
6. Updates from Other MTSP Committees – Sarah Nicholls
7. Objective One: Support the improvement and increased awareness of the quality, connectivity and diversity of tourist transportation options into and throughout the state.
 - a. Failure of Proposition One – All
8. Objective Two: Support the establishment and showcasing of Michigan as a state with a diverse, extensive and high quality network of motorized, non-motorized and water-based routes and trails.
 - a. Update on Pure Michigan Trails legislation – Paul Yauk and Nancy Krupiarz
 - b. Update on Iron Belle Trail/Regional Coordination Meetings – Paul Yauk, Nancy Krupiarz and Sarah Nicholls
 - c. Update on Michigan Bicycle and Horse Tourism Marketing Plans – Sarah Nicholls
 - d. Links to Michigan’s Water Strategy Report – Sarah Nicholls
 - e. Review of Marquette Trails Reports – All
 - i. Trails As Tourism Attractions: Best Practices From Marquette
 - ii. A Survey of Iron Ore Heritage Trail Users

9. Objective Four: Increase access to capital for travel-related businesses.
 - a. 2015 Tourism Investment Forum @ Governor's Conference – cancellation thereof
 - b. 2015 Tourism Investment Forum – PD Committee to Organize?
10. Updating of Michigan Tourism Competitiveness Index – Sarah Nicholls
11. Updates from Committee Members – PD-Related News From Your Organization – All
12. Next Steps and Next Meeting

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Meeting Notes

In attendance: Mike Busley (Co-Chair), Chris MacInnes (Co-Chair), Nancy Krupiarz, Michelle Plawecki, Claire Stevens, Paul Yauk, Sarah Nicholls, Meghan Woods. Guests present for portions of the meeting: Brian Lawson, Director of Public Relations, and Jim MacInnes, Chairman and CEO, both of Crystal Mountain.

Absent: Debbie Alexander, Gordon Mackay, Larry Schuler, AJ Singh.

Welcome and Introductions – Two new members were welcomed to the committee: Claire Stevens, Strategic Alignment and Outreach Specialist, Michigan Department of Transportation (replaces Bobbi Welke, now retired from MDOT) and Paul Yauk, State Trails Coordinator, Parks and Recreation Division, Michigan Department of Natural Resources (replaces Jim Radabaugh, now retired from MDNR).

Review of October 1 2014 Meeting Notes – Notes reviewed and approved, no changes or additions made.

Update from January 15, March 22 and June 5 Travel Commission Meetings –

The January 15 meeting (in East Lansing) was preceded by a joint meeting with the Natural Resources Commission's Marketing, Partnership, Youth and Outreach Advisory Committee, an idea suggested by then newest Travel Commissioner John Madigan (Pictured Rocks Cruises). The main four agenda items at this joint meeting related to: (i) DNR customer data, priorities and marketing goals; (ii) Pure Michigan direction, goals and priorities; (iii) Pure Michigan/DNR partnerships; and (iv) the MTSP. It is anticipated that this joint meeting will become an annual occurrence. The regular TC meeting was the first attended by then-new Travel Michigan VP David West.

The March 22 meeting (Amway Grand Plaza, Grand Rapids) included discussion of TC opinions re. Proposition 1; while the TC did not publicly endorse Prop. 1, it is highly supportive of any/all transportation infrastructure improvements. Presentation by David West featured some 2014 visitation data, ideas about how to evolve the campaign (e.g., how to appeal to millennials), and an update on the website redevelopment process/RFP.

The June 5 meeting (The Henry Ford, Dearborn) included an update on the website redevelopment process/RFP and announcement of three new TM positions (web manager, content manager, PR coordinator). Annual TC leadership transitions were also voted on:

new Chair = Christian Øverland (The Henry Ford) and new Vice Chair = Stephen Kircher (Boyne).

Resignation of David West and announcement of Dave Lorenz as VP of Travel Michigan occurred in June.

Two new TC members were announced on August 19: Charles Burns, of Novi, and Sammie Lukaskiewicz, of Jackson (http://www.michigan.gov/snyder/0,4668,7-277-57577_57657_59871-362774--,00.html).

Burns is general manager of the Chevrolet Detroit Belle Isle Grand Prix. Previously, he served as director of security for the IndyCar Series and the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. Burns is the treasurer of the Detroit Metro Convention Visitors Bureau Board, where he also serves on the executive committee. He sits on the boards of MotorCities National Heritage Area and Challenge Detroit. He replaces Susan Sherer.

Lukaskiewicz is senior director of communications at the Michigan International Speedway where she oversees the integrated marketing communications team responsible for public relations, media relations, advertising, marketing, consumer marketing, promotions, and social media. Lukaskiewicz is on the board of directors of Brooklyn Irish Hills Chamber of Commerce and is a member of the Automotive Press Association. She earned a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Texas and a master's degree in management and leadership from Webster University. She replaces Roger Curtis.

TC members Mike Busley and Jon Nuun were also reappointed.

The next TC meeting will take place on September 24th at Grand Hotel.

Review of March 22 Annual MTSP Meeting – The second annual meeting of all implementation committees took place immediately following the March 22 Travel Commission meeting. This meeting was open to all industry members and provided the annual opportunity for committee Co-Chairs to present their (i) progress in the prior year and (ii) plans for the coming year. Attendance in 2014 (when the meeting was placed on the Tuesday afternoon of the conference, following the closing luncheon) was ~ 100; attendance this year was ~ 35, with especially low TM participation. Room size, layout and location were also not ideal. After discussion of how to increase attendance at this meeting, suggested by Sarah to organize a ½ day MTSP Summit in the autumn, without the distraction of the conference, in a central location such as Lansing (for all committee members + any interested industry members); Travel Commission discussed and approved this idea at their June meeting.

Fall 2015 MTSP Summit – Will take place Mon Nov 9:30am–2pm in (East) Lansing. It is hoped that all members of all eight committees will attend; also open to any other interested industry members. Each committee will have c. 30 minutes for presentation and audience question/discussion. This date will represent the approximate half-way mark in MTSP implementation.

Updates from Other MTSP Committees –

Collaboration, Cooperation and Partnerships (CCP): Is focusing on ways in which to (i) help under-promoted niche activities better connect with Travel Michigan and the broader tourism industry, and (ii) connect with industry segments that may not see themselves as tourism industry members but that CCP believes to be important to the industry, e.g., gas stations, convenience stores. As a result of (ii), Sarah and Meghan wrote an article that just appeared in the Small Business Association of Michigan's (SBAM's) *Focus Magazine* (Nicholls, S., and Woods, M. (2015). "Why Tourism Matter to You and Your Business." *Focus*, 12(1), September/October, 18-19); Sarah also recorded a radio segment with SBAM VP of Communications Mike Rogers that is airing on Michigan Business Network (on the same topic). Sarah will also present on the MTSP during a panel session at the Michigan Association of Counties meeting in September.

Funding: The MI Tourism Plan Fund balance is about \$50k. The committee would like a list of possible projects for funding from each committee by early November. Funding for the Pure Michigan campaign is projected to increase by \$4 million – to \$33 million – in 2015-16.

Promotion, Marketing and Communications (PMC): The committee is finalizing the implications/recommendations of the MSU international student survey at its September 9 meeting. The Michigan Bicycle and Equestrian Tourism Forums/Marketing Plans are discussed below.

Public Policy and Government Support (PPGS): Recently met with Resources & Environment co-chairs to discuss common issues, especially re. potential for collaboration between MTSP implementation committees and the Sustaining Michigan's Water Heritage effort. Sarah met with Jon Allan, Director of the Office of the Great Lakes, last week to begin these discussions; topics of potential collaboration/concern as identified by him include microbeads, potential for Great Lakes cruises, water trails.

Research and Technical Assistance: Unfortunately the county-level data promised by David West will not be available after all. RTA will therefore need to readdress this issue, which was one of the primary desires identified by the CVBs in a survey of their research needs conducted in 2013.

Resources and Environment (RE): In addition to water issues (per PPGS summary, above), RE is also in the process of developing (i) a zero waste toolkit for the organisers of festivals and events, and (ii) a resource stewardship award, for presentation at the Governor's Conference.

Service Excellence (SE): Continues to conceptualize a "Pure Michigan Promise" service training program. Also of relevance – Dave Lorenz is considering adopting/developing a "China Ready" training program.

Objective One: Support the improvement and increased awareness of the quality, connectivity and diversity of tourist transportation options into and throughout the state –

Roads: With the failure of Prop. 1, road funding remains an unsolved issue. These article appeared on mlive on August 18: “Road funding talks rev up in Michigan House” http://www.mlive.com/lansing-news/index.ssf/2015/08/road_funding_talks_rev_up_in_m.html and “Michigan road funding bills go to conference committee as Snyder, leaders seek deal” http://www.mlive.com/lansing-news/index.ssf/2015/08/michigan_road_funding_bills_go.html

Airports: Discussion of desirability of/opportunities to better showcase Michigan at our airports – to create a sense of place – especially in the international arrivals area at DTW. Canadian airports identified as model examples. Michelle noted that DTW has a new electronic message board at the entrance to the domestic baggage claim area, this was installed in time to welcome visitors to Detroit for ASAE in August.

Side discussion of importance of food and drink in Michigan’s tourism product offerings.

Objective Two: Support the establishment and showcasing of Michigan as a state with a diverse, extensive and high quality network of motorized, non-motorized and water-based routes and trails –

Trails update: The May 2015 Michigan Trails Update was distributed in the meeting packet, Paul also provided copies of the July 2015 Recreation Fact Sheet. Both contain information regarding recent trail improvements and other investments, the Iron Belle Trail, the standardized statewide trail data effort, and trail-related events (both documents are appended to these notes).

Michigan Bicycle and Equestrian Tourism Forums/Marketing Plans: The final version of the Michigan Bicycle Tourism Marketing Plan was presented to the industry during the March 23 MTSP breakout session at the Governor’s Conference. A companion marketing plan template has also been developed, to allow other niches to replicate the process via which the bicycle plan was developed. The committee is currently working to develop a similar plan for the equestrian tourism segment.

Marquette Trails Reports: “Trails As Tourism Attractions: Best Practices From Marquette” report reviewed, committee members to send edits/adds to Sarah by end of day Thurs Aug 27. Meghan presented a summary of her class project “A Survey of Iron Ore Heritage Trail Users;” this will be distributed as an accompaniment to the best practices document. Nancy will send Sarah the summary of MSU trail user studies that she has, to be appended to the nest practices report. Once complete, these documents will be distributed to the Travel Commission, MTSP implementation committee members, CVBs, and park/recreation agencies.

Objective Four: Increase access to capital for travel-related businesses – The proposed Tourism Investment Forum, scheduled to be held on the Tuesday afternoon of

the 2015 Governor's Conference, was cancelled due to lack of sufficient registrations. Suggested that perhaps this objective has become somewhat less important – relative to the other objectives – in light of the improving economy. Agreed by those present to deprioritize this item for the time being.

Objective Three: Enhance the visitor's in-state travel experience –

Given discussion of objective four referenced above, decided to revisit prior discussions of accessibility/ mobility-related issues (see meeting notes from Jan 31 2014 meeting, attended by Cindy Burkhour from the Access Recreation Group, for more details). Two key aspects previously identified are: (i) improving levels of access (i.e., infrastructural change) and (ii) promoting what the state already offers in terms of accessible travel/tourism resources/programs. Another prior idea is the establishment of an award recognizing good practice in this area. The Resources & Environment committee is also developing an award relating to stewardship – would be nice to tie those two together, i.e., brand them as MTSP awards. Minimum requirements that committee would need to address re. award include:

- A name for the award
- A judging panel/committee (the members of the PD committee?) (would need a policy for how to deal with applications from organizations with which committee members are affiliated)
- A list of categories and criteria
- Design for and production of the award
- A timeline
- An application form/process
- A pre- and post- awards marketing/PR plan

Reprioritization of Objectives – Agreed to be as follows: (i) obj. 2 trails; (ii) obj. 1 transportation; (iii) obj. 3 visitor experience; (iv) obj. 4 access to credit.

Next Meeting – Mike, Chris and Sarah will meet before the Nov 9 Summit.

Michigan Trails Update 2015

www.michigan.gov/dnrtrails

May 15, 2015

Introduction

With more than 12,000 miles of trails and waterways, Michigan has come to embrace and advance its position as the nation's Trails State. In recent years, Michigan has enacted many significant trail-related legislative actions, projects and plans. The following summary of current and upcoming initiatives strongly demonstrate Michigan's commitment to trail excellence.

State Trails Implementation Plan

Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is following the guidance of the 2014 State Trails Implementation Plan, which lays out a 5-year plan to sustain Michigan's title as the Trail State. This plan is based on the priorities identified by the Michigan Trails Advisory Council (MTAC) in its 2013 Michigan Comprehensive Trails Plan. Goals of the State Trails Plan include:

- Protect natural and cultural resources
- Ensure sustainable recreational use and enjoyment
- Enable strong natural resource based economies
- Improve and build relationships and partnerships
- Foster effective business practices and good government

State Trail investments

Iron Belle Trail: \$250,000 from Michigan's General Fund was designated for Michigan's Iron Belle Trail. Communities along either route of the trail can apply for acquisition, planning & development funds from this source, and Parks & Recreation Division will review the applications in early June, with the goal of distributing funds across the state. The Division is also working closely with a fundraiser to seek private Iron Belle funding from Michigan foundations and sponsors.

The Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund has awarded more than \$190 million in State and local trail projects since its inception in 1984, including \$31.5 million to benefit communities along the Iron Belle Trail to date. In the 2015 grant cycle, 18 applications seeking \$4,144,300 were received for the trail, and these will be evaluated over the summer, with recommended awards being announced in December.

Nonmotorized trails: In 2014, Michigan DNR invested in more than **80 miles of State Rail-Trail** improvements, with plans to invest in 120 additional miles. This included **7 projects**, with **budgets totaling \$13,500,000**.

Equestrian trails: The DNR has more than 500 miles of equestrian trail and is working with the Equine Subcommittee of the MTAC to add and enhance access opportunities. This committee, along with the DNR, is finishing up a \$210,000 grant to upgrade trails and campgrounds in many areas for equestrian use.

- The DNR has also submitted \$2,000,000 NRTF grant application for the acquisition of 325 acres of Camp Innisfree, a former Girl Scout camp in Livingston County with equestrian trails and a lake. This camp is located within two miles of two state parks with equestrian trails (Brighton Recreation Area and Lakelands Trail State Park), and the DNR hopes that acquisition of Camp Innisfree will be a southern Michigan equestrian destination and will provide an equestrian trail connection between the parks to expand the equestrian trail network.
- The DNR is currently reviewing a proposal for approximately 23 miles of designated equestrian trails in Montmorency County, near Lewiston.
- Big Oaks State Forest Equestrian Campground (Montmorency County) is scheduled to open before July 1, as soon as picket posts are installed. The DNR is also completing improvements to the day use trailer parking lot at this site.
- A new State Forest Campground in Ontonagon County with existing equestrian and ORV trails will be developed in 2015 and open in 2016.

Water trails: Michigan is devoting time and resources to developing the Lake Michigan Water Trail, working in partnership with Wisconsin, Indiana, Illinois and the National Park service on this effort.

Department of Environmental Quality Coastal Zone Management Planning grants have been awarded for the inland waterway and other regions of Lake Michigan based on Governor Snyder's Regional Prosperity Initiative.

The DNR is currently investing time and resources in conjunction with federal and local partners to develop Management Plans for the Au Sable River Trail and the Grand River Trail from Grand Rapids to Portland. These plans will outline the best management practices for access points, signage and marketing of this valuable resource. A well-managed water trail adds value to the public's water trail experiences and benefits wildlife and environmental conditions in general. In addition to creating opportunities for recreation, each new water trail promotes public attention to opportunities for local stream and watershed restoration.

Michigan is also home 2 federally-designated water trails: The Huron River National Water Trail in southeast Michigan and the Island Loop National Water Trail on the Black River in Port Huron. Michigan is the first state to have 2 nationally designated water trails.

Snowmobile: Michigan DNR is working on maintenance standards and exploring equipment funding strategies to replace the aging fleet of 170 snowmobile trail grooming machines. Another priority this year has been on working with existing partners (snowmobile clubs) to reroute trails where private leases were lost due to changing land owners or other local issues.

A snowmobile trail connector is also being established between North Central State Trail and North Western State Trail (Topinabee to Pellston). This route has been a priority for many years and will be developed with the partnership of the University of Michigan.

ORV: the recent license fee increase is helping to fund the following projects:

- **Development of a new ORV signage plan** which will improve trail information on trails direction and allowable use, and which is expected to be implemented next year.
- **Infrastructure improvements**, including replacing bridges and culverts, contracting and granting grading to trail sponsors. Infrastructure needs are currently being inventoried and prioritized.
- **Approval and funding of new ORV trail proposals.** The DNR receives new proposals on a monthly basis, and continually reviews proposals to expand the current trail network. Many

new ORV routes have been approved and opened in the western U.P., and trail connectors have also been approved for the Lower Peninsula, providing access to businesses and services.

- **Improvements to Silver Lake State Park**, including entry system, ORV infrastructure improvements and parking lot improvements to reduce wait times and offset the heavy demand.
- **New ORV scramble area in Oakland County**. As our first County/PRD partnership, the DNR is dedicating funds to acquire and develop an Adventure Park in Southeast Michigan: "Groveland Oaks." This new highly-demanded recreational resource in southeast Michigan has been a priority for the ORV community since 1975.
- Michigan DNR is considering **increasing payment to trail sponsors** for maintenance of the trails. This amount has not been increased in many years, and doing so would align the payment amounts with actual costs of trail maintenance.

Fred Meijer Clinton-Ionia-Shiawassee Trail

On April 18, 2015, the 41.3-mile Fred Meijer Clinton-Ionia-Shiawassee Trail was dedicated. This trail connects the central Michigan communities of Ionia, Muir, Pewamo, Fowler St. Johns Ovid and Owosso. The trail will be part of the Midwest Regional Rail-Trail Network, joining on the western end with the Fred Meijer Grand River Valley Trail (Ionia to Lowell), the Fred Meijer Flat River Valley Trail (Lowell to Greenville), and the Fred Meijer Hartland Trail (Greenville to Edmore to Alma) for a total of 125 miles of trail. When complete, this trail corridor will be the longest in Michigan and the fifth-longest in the United States.

Michigan's Iron Belle Trail

In November 2012, under direction from Gov. Snyder, several state agencies began planning for a 2,000-mile non-motorized trail from Belle Isle Park to Ironwood. In 2015, as trail fundraising, acquisition and development picks up, Michigan is inviting communities and individual to celebrate the trail's inaugural year through hosting and participating in trail events all summer.

The trail, which is the longest ever to be designated by a state government, features distinct hiking and bicycling routes to best serve each user group's needs, desires and expectations. The two routes also allow users to experience more of Michigan's vibrant cultural, historic and natural resources. Users can now explore the two routes in detail with the interactive trail map: <http://www.midnr.com/Publications/pdfs/ArcGISOnline/ironBelleWebApp/index.html>.

One of the strongest elements of this trail is its capitalization upon existing infrastructure and partnerships at the state, federal and local level. The hiking and bicycling route utilize trails that are embedded within and beloved by communities, meaning that a support system is already in place. By uniting these communities in a common effort to provide health, social, transportation, recreation and economic benefits, the statewide trail will be even stronger than the sum of its parts. In addition, Michigan's Iron Belle Trail will raise awareness and interest in trails all over Michigan, creating an even greater destination potential for Michigan's efforts at being The Trail State.

Statewide Trail Information Database

Michigan continues to invest in trails and set goals to enhance the statewide trail network. One major initiative currently underway is a collaboration with partners to develop a comprehensive database of standardized statewide trail data (local, regional and state trails). This will also include information about amenities such as parking, camping, and water sources to better serve trail users. The information in this database will be available publicly for trail users, businesses and public agencies to use. This will enable third parties to develop applications for mobile devices. GPS-enabled applications are a priority need for Michigan trail users.

Additional upcoming goals and initiatives include:

- Creating 10 “Experience” Trails
- Designating “Trail Towns” to help communities maximize value of area trails
- Developing and installing signage that informs and directs trail users to adjoining towns, businesses and points of interests

Trail Events

Each year since 2013, when Gov. Rick Snyder proclaimed the last week in September as Michigan Trails Week, the state invites communities, recreation authorities and individuals to participate by hosting or attending trail events, advocating for trails, and simply exploring trails in their own way.

Michigan also participates in and promotes larger trail initiatives such as: National Public Lands Day, which takes place on the last day of Michigan Trails Week, and National Trails Day. Noteworthy trail dates for 2015 include:

- **National Trails Day** - June 6
- **National Public Lands Day** - September 27
- **Michigan Trails Week** - September 20-27
- **North Country Trail Day** - September 2

Summary

Through these initiatives and more, Michigan has demonstrated a strong commitment to sustaining its position as the Trail State, and not only to the title but to the meaning behind it. The state has placed and continues to place a priority upon maintaining existing trails, providing new trails, and finding new ways to connect people through trail use.

2015 Recreation Trails Fact Sheet

July 29, 2015

NON-MOTORIZED TRAILS

Equestrian trails:

- 500 miles of trails
- Improvements
 - Pigeon River State Forest additions, 25 new trail connections planned in cooperation with the Equestrian groups. 13 are approved to move forward, 12 are under review.
- 23 added miles planned for Lewiston area.
- Big Oak Campground renovated and re-opened.
- Re-opened State Forest Campgrounds for equestrians in 2014/2015.
- New State Forest Campground - Ontonagon County - for equestrians and ORV access to trail system to open in 2016.
- GIS mapping program in progress for equestrian trails. Pilot Pontiac Lake Recreation Area.

Water trails:

Best Trails Contest:

A contest was launched through “crowd sourcing” to identify the best water trails in Michigan. Outcome to date is 506 submittals, currently Blue Ways of St. Clair has the most votes followed by Au Sable River (write in).

Grand River Water Trail:

- Inventory of Public Land along river completed
- Partner meeting underway (Federal and Local) to develop a concept plan for Jackson to Grand Rapids including branding

Lake Michigan Water Trail:

- We are collaborating with Wisconsin, Indiana, Illinois and the National Park Service (NPS) to develop a plan.
- Collaborating with Province of Ontario on a Lake Superior Water Trail

Identifying Water Trails:

The NPS certifies trails to meet national standards.

Next Steps

- Complete an inventory
- Collaborate with local providers to assist with certifications
- Collaborate to brand and market to the public

Linear trails:

Fred Meijer Clinton-Ionia-Shiawassee Trail:

- 41.3 Mile trail dedicated April 18, 2015.
- Part of Midwest Regional Rail – Trail Network of 125 miles. When completed will be longest in Michigan and 5th longest in the nation.

Fred Meijer White Pine Trail:

- Will seek to complete paving 11 miles of the remaining 40 miles by partnering with MDOT.
- Robust public interest

William Field-Hart Montague Trail State Park:

- The 22 mile trail project will widen from 8 to 12 feet, to be completed by September, 2015

Van Buren Trail State Park, Trail Connection to South Haven:

- A 2.5 mile connection to South Haven to be completed by October 2015

Iron Belle Trail:

- DNR awarded nearly \$250,000 on the Iron Belle Trail, includes 16 grantees and 15 counties
- Fund raising plan in progress with partners
- Inaugural Hike National Trail Day held June 6, 2015, 2,100 Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts hiked a combined 21,000 miles along the hiking corridor state wide.

State Pathways:

Way finding improvement: The Department is updating the mapping of state pathways and campgrounds to create a consistent message for the public.

Mountain Bike trails:

- May 16, 2015 Ribbon cutting of a new nearly 15 mile mountain bike trail with Mountain Bike Association.
- Waterloo Recreation Area - Mountain Bike Proposal –Working with trail advocates developing a state of the art single track mountain bike trail in this popular southern Michigan recreation area.

MOTORIZED TRAILS

Snowmobile trails:

Northern Michigan Trail Connector:

- A snowmobile trail connector is being established between North Central State Trail and North Western State Trail (Topinabee to Pellston route). This will be developed in partnership with the University of Michigan and the local snowmobile club.
- Coordinating with MDOT on extending the Betsy Valley Trail over the Manistee River in Mesick.

ORV trails:

Expand the ORV trail network:

- ORV trail network currently contains more than 3,800 miles of trails.
- As of April 2015, 202 new miles of trail have been approved and an additional 273 miles are under active review.

State Park ORV Access:

- 5 State Parks now allow ORV's to camp and access neighboring ORV trails.

Infrastructure improvements:

- There are 23 ORV improvement projects planned for 2016 using new fee funding.
- Reinventing access process to Silver Lake State Park ORV area, including entry system, ORV infrastructure improvements and parking lot improvements to reduce wait times and manage the heavy user demand.

A new ORV scramble area in Oakland County:

- In the first County/PRD partnership, the DNR is dedicating funds to acquire and develop an Adventure Park in Southeast Michigan: "Groveland Oaks." This much sought-after recreational resource in southeast Michigan has been a priority for the ORV community since 1975, and will feature a diverse terrain for ORVs to climb and explore.

DNR/MDOT Collaboration:

- Collaboration with the Michigan Department of Transportation has established 12 pilot routes at locations in the Upper Peninsula to allow ORVs to travel on the right of way, including some shoulders of state highways. This collaboration has created a broader, interconnected ORV trail system in the U.P.

Upcoming ORV Events:

Land of Lakes to Bond Falls ORV Dedication Trail Ride:

- A 30 mile ORV/multi-use trail dedication to be held August 22, 2015.

Trek the Mighty Mack:

- This ORV ride will cross the Mackinaw Bridge from the south and include 600 ORV's and over 1,000 participants, to be held October 3, 2015.

Trail Staffing Resource Reorganization

To enhance efficiency and customer service, Parks and Recreation Division is implementing a new staffing structure to coordinate the trail program and implement the adopted state trail plan.

This new structure will assign staff by region, with a Lansing-based statewide trail coordinator managing the southern Lower Peninsula and also supervising a Northern Lower Peninsula trails coordinator and an Upper Peninsula trails coordinator. There will also be a greater emphasis, consistent with the budget, on non-motorized trail programs.

The goals of this reorganization effort include attaining greater consistency with trail programs, improving focus and coordination among trail staff, creating and implementing better and more consistent trail standards and providing better customer service.

Summary

Through these initiatives and more, Michigan has demonstrated a strong commitment to sustaining its position as the Trails State -- not only to the title but to the meaning behind it.

The DNR knows that trails of all types play an important role in driving regional economies, and creating the quality of life in Michigan we know will attract and retain talent. The state continues to place a priority on maintaining existing trails, providing new trails and finding new ways to connect people through trail use.

ORV Licenses:

- ORV licenses are up 6.5% through June over 2014 with a rate increase, while the trail use sticker is up 22.9%.
- The ORV license increased from \$16.25 to \$26.25 in March 2014 and the trail use sticker was established at \$10.

Snowmobile Permits:

Snowmobile permits are down 2.5% from June last year.

Belle Isle Attendance:

- Belle Isle attendance increased over 50% with 286,890 visitors for the month of June, 2014 to 430,417 visitors in June, 2015.
- Total attendance for the year is nearly 2.3 million visitors for the last 12 months.