

U.S. 23 - Huron Shores Heritage Route Management Council Meeting
Thursday, October 14, 2010
MINUTES

Chair Marlena MacNeill called the meeting to order at 10:12 am at the East Tawas City Hall in East Tawas.

Present: Marlena MacNeill, Alcona County; Helen Pasakarnis, East Tawas, TIFA; Dan Mullen, MI DNRE; Sandy Sokolak, USFS; Pat Shiflet, Coastal Coalition; Belle Flora, Coastal Coalition; Trish Schmidt, Iosco BOC; Heidi Dewald, Michigan Sunrise Tours; Brian Wagner, Presque Isle County, Rogers City; Greg Sundin, City of Alpena; Anne Belanger, Presque Isle County; Denise Cline, NEMCOG; David Langhorst, MDOT; Pat Killingbeck, Arenac/Au Gres; Don Seal, Saginaw-Chippewa Tribe; Sue Stein, Arenac County, Standish Depot; Rick Deuell, NEMCOG; Sarah Waters, TBNMS, Alpena.

Amendment to By-Laws

D. Cline reported that two tribal representatives are added to the by-laws. T. Schmidt moved to accept amended by-laws. Seconded by B. Flora. Motion carried.

Huron Blueways/Greenways

Report by R. Deuell, NEMCOG. Greenways is a pathway system established in the mid-1990s to promote recreational activities along the corridor. Blueways promotes recreational activities such as kayaking along the Huron coastline. R. Deuell is working to expand natural resources identification and information along the route and is also working with LIAA to build a new website. This site when complete will interface with www.us23heritageroute.org site. The route was inventoried with help from East Central Kayakers to get detail information about shoreline conditions. R. Deuell will coordinate hosting events related to kayaking and bicycling to promote Blueways/Greenways planned for next summer (2011).

County Task: To help identify natural resources along the route and to keep track of the number of hours involved to be counted as in-kind contribution for funding requests.

“Quiet Waters Symposium” in Lansing on March 5, 2011. See link <http://quietwatersymposium.org/> for more information and registration. R. Deuell requested promotional material to have on hand during symposium to promote heritage routes and consider manning a booth at this event. More photos are requested. Please email kayaking and bicycling photos to Rick Deuell at rldeuell@nemcog.org.

Website

D. Cline updated council on Heritage Route, provided website usage stats, and reported on some of the features of the site. The Pure Michigan campaign appears to have helped to promote the website. In searching for the site, however, there is confusion with the defunct, www.heritageroute.com. The domain name has been recently renewed for this website keeping it alive. It was felt that the old site will be pushed down in the browsing hierarchy as the new site gains in hits and we can accomplish that by promoting and saturating the www.us23heritageroute.org site more strongly through cross marketing and expanded promotional efforts.

Discussion amongst council about the name references ...i.e. boat launch, marinas, boat ramps, etc. Need to identify one reference name descriptor to better identify search. Include “comment section” within site. LIAA can make minor revisions to design element of the site.

County Task: need to identify 2-3 primary people who will be responsible to edit and maintain county information. Currently, there are 64 editors too many. Event listings are weak within website. Need to have one person from each county list key events and update.

D. Langhorst noted that the history of the US 23 Heritage Route needs to be included. Ideas shared: blog capabilities, with interactive comments from tourists who travel the route, historical reference to old Indian trail, logging industry,

auto industry, and current day usage. Future additions might include educational components, kiosks, and virtual tour of route. Recommend to refer to Management Plan which includes history, natural resources, and non-business related points of interest.

Noted: US 23 Heritage Route is non-regulatory, but carries clout. Discussion by council to consider that each county recommend the US 23 Management Plan be adopted into the County's recreational plan.

County Task: Review the US 23 Hwy Management Plan and strategize to have the Plan adopted into their County's Recreational Plan. Also update County Commissioners on status of the US 23 Heritage Route Management Council on a regular basis.

Heritage Route Funding Update: Currently, the Heritage Route funding has not been approved by the State. Federal highways and the State need to match funding in order to move forward with Heritage Route program. Update to follow shortly.

MDOT: Pete Hanses has retired. An Interim Coordinator is in place for Heritage Routes in Michigan. Scott Thayer was promoted to oversee MDOT's transportation service centers in the northern region of Michigan. Kevin Schaedig is now the point person at the Alpena TSC for the US 23 Heritage Route.

Scenic Byways Designation:

Tabled at this time until additional information, such as the history of the route is included in the grant narrative.

Promotions:

The promotional venture with the MDNRE RV Tour held over Labor Day weekend was a success. The tour promoted the Recreational Passport program, but afforded an opportunity for county councils to promote the Heritage Route, as well. A banner was purchased to help promote the Heritage Route/website. Cost was \$135. Discussion on how expenses can be cost-shared for the banner. The banner is currently being stored at the Cheboygan Chamber of Commerce and is available for all to use at festivals and other events to promote route.

US23 Heritage Route and signage plan meeting was held in Lansing to address continuity of signage throughout all heritage routes and to create branding. Public feedback on five design options was not favorable. D. Langhorst will contact Patty O'Donnell and provide update as to when the signage committee will reconvene to address universal sign design options for all Heritage routes in Michigan.

D. Cline to follow up with copyright information for the US 23 Heritage Route logo design. Estimate \$300 for copyright registration.

County Reports:

Alcona: Has not met, but has plans to meet to follow up on today's Council meeting. The Harrisville State Park path improvement extended the City of Harrisville's non-motorized trail to the south and the plan is still alive to extend the trail from the City of Harrisville north to the Sturgeon Point lighthouse.

Arenac: Established website for Depot Days to help promote event. Bike path in Arenac along US 23 is complete. It is a 2.5 mile route that is a key asset to the community.

Iosco: The committee is working on establishing as a non-profit 501c3 to help raise funds to support initiatives on behalf of the county's portion of the heritage route. The Park and Recreation department has adopted the HR Management Plan as part of their recreational plan. (Note: This may be something all counties should consider doing.)

Alpena: Lee Shirey has moved from county. Greg Sundin will work with their county committee to determine new leadership and Management Council representatives.

Presque Isle: Need to infuse new committee members and leadership role within county committee.

Cheboygan: No representative present at Management Council to report. M. McNeil will contact S. Schnell and Kim Pappas (Cheboygan Chamber Director) in order to determine representatives.

Coastal Coalition Report:

B. Flora reported that each county had significant increase in hits to their respective websites due to Pure Michigan campaign (Summer and Fall) to date. (see handout). Sunrise Coast as an area had a 167% increase in clicks compared to 2009. Grand Rapids and Lansing, (two target markets), are #1 and #3 respectively as top visiting cities to the page. The Sunrise Coast Coastal Coalition group will be meeting in the next couple of weeks to review reports and strategize for the 2011 campaign with Pure Michigan. The Sunrise Coast is a featured destination on the Travel Michigan website for fall.

DNRE Report:

The Recreational Passport launched October 1st. Perks Program is designed for local businesses. For example: When you register with Recreational Passport and show your registration card at select businesses, you get a % discount. Local Perks Providers will be listed on the MDNRE page at the Michigan.gov site.

County Task: Promote the Perks Program to Chambers and local businesses and it does not cost the business anything to be part of the program. Visit www.michigan.gov for more information through DNRE.

DNRE is currently in the process of restructuring. Currently promoting backcountry camping in Negwegon State Park.

USFS

Experienced an increase in usage of Huron-Manistee National Forest for the summer season. Midwest Magazine photographers covered the inland tour from West Branch to Gaylord for the 2012 magazine edition.

Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary Report

S. Waters reported that the numbers are just coming in from the summer and they are looking about the same as last year. TBNMS will celebrate their 10th anniversary on Friday, October 29th at 6:30pm at TBNMS. Invite cards were passed out to Council.

Miscellaneous:

It was stated that there are 4 remaining boxes of Heritage Route brochures that were not delivered to Welcome Center. D. Langhorst will see that the remaining boxes are delivered since the Welcome Centers are now under the supervision of MDOT.

Belle Flora moved that a formal request from EMCOG be made to have Arenac and Iosco Counties be served by NEMCOG in order to maintain standardization of Heritage Route services. Heidi Dewald seconded motion. Motion carried.

Trish Schmidt will make request to EMCOG.

Next meeting scheduled for December 9th in Cheboygan. Location to be determined.

Motion to adjourn at 12:20pm

Respectfully submitted ,
Anne Belanger
Vice Chair