

**Sunrise Coastal Trail
Oscoda to Alpena
Trail Planning Process**

**October 3, 2019
Two Go-To Meetings
9:00-10:00 a.m. and 1:30-3:30 p.m.**

Meeting Notes

9:00-10:00 meeting

Emily Meyerson, the facilitator on the project, thanked everyone for calling in and participating. She explained that the low response to the on-site meeting, an idea came to have two go to meetings to try and get more participation via video conference. She then asked everyone to introduce themselves.

Those present at the 9:00 meeting : Those present at the : Marlena MacNeill, Alcona Township; Heather Huffstutler, Huron Pines; Eric Ostrander, DNR-Harrisville and Negwegon State Parks; Joe Gentry, Thunder Bay Trails Association; Greg Kinser and Amy Swanston, DNR Trails; Cody Stevens, DNR Forest Resources Division; Steve Schnell, NEMCOG and Emily Meyerson, NEMCOG Facilitator.

Emily first asked if there were any questions on the materials provided via email and website before looking at the actual route. Amy Swainston just let everyone know that VanEtten Lake State Forest Campground could be utilized as a trailhead.

Emily talked about some factors that influence trail locations include:

Costs to build:

1. Construction limitations (wetlands, steep slopes, drainage) which increase costs
2. Long term cost to maintain a facility.
3. Acquisition costs. Road right of way is typically free while purchasing easements for the trail take time and money. Using the railroad grade may be possible with the acquisition of an easement but know the going rate is about \$12' a lineal foot.

Trail Experience:

1. Does the trail go to where trail users want to go? i.e. transportation
2. Is it a good experience with low stress with destinations along it? i.e. recreation
3. Does it feel safe?

Emily explained there is no right answers but that at times higher cost should not eliminate an option, if the experience it worth it. In addition, looking at different types of trail facilities (on road versus off) may be beneficial to balance the costs of high cost segments.

The map that was provided showed the areas of potential higher construction costs, destinations, good trail experience and bad trail experience. It was explained the PTH meant Potential Trailhead and this becomes important because one of the main funding entities requires a trailhead for each built section of trail. Therefore, knowing where existing PTH are located helps with future phasing of trail development. The map was on the screen so everyone could see these areas and we proceeded to review trail route options from south to north.

Oscoda to Greenbush

It was explained that the southern end terminus would be the Iosco Exploration Trailhead at Mill Street or the future AuSable Township Trailhead next to the Township Hall. The section from the Township Hall to the County Road 41 at the end of the business district needs more specific local attention so for our purposes today we will look at routes starting at US-23 and Country Road 41 intersection. The options include either side of US-23, west side of Cedar Lake Road and along the active railroad right of way. Emily stated she looked at West Cedar Lake Road and with the driveways and limited right of way that option was eliminated as well as the east side of Cedar Lake Road due to the high number of driveways.

East Side of US-23

Pros: close to Lake Huron and people want to be near the lake, beautiful open viewshed, MDOT park, many homes nearby to utilize it; road right of way is wide enough for a separate trail.

Cons: Multiple Driveways, safety concerns

West Side of US-23

Due to the high number of driveways on the west side thoughts that using the shoulders in this area may be better (on road facility). In general, the west side of US-23 in this section was NOT preferred of the East Side for a separate trail.

Cedar Lake Road

Pros: Large property owner, the golf course, so there is a potential to get the trail off the road. Less road traffic than US-23 if an on-road facility.

Cons: Limited right of way (66') would need to get easements OR have an on-road facility.

Railroad Corridor

Pros: Most safe option with limited crossings; provide the best separated trail facility; takes you places you can't see on the road for a unique experience.

Cons: It is away from the Lake, may be more costly due to acquisition, may be not as scenic.

Greenbush to Harrisville

Emily explained in this area the railroad crossed to the east side of US-23. In this section both sides of US-23 and Railroad right of way were considered for options. In one section the highway is higher up than the railroad corridor which stays basically adjacent to the lake.

US-23

Pros: Road right-of-way

Cons: Higher cost due to steep slopes; hills may limit users

Railroad corridor

Pros: Flatter terrain for lower cost to develop and more people to utilize it due to flatter topography; great scenic views that you can't see from the road; more easily ties into the existing State Park trail in Harrisville.

Cons: Acquisition costs; potential neighbor concerns

Notes: Eric Ostrander explained that the State Park property goes south to the west side of Lake Huron Shore Drive, so that could be utilized. It was also suggested that the trail could potentially come off the railroad corridor at Springport and use Lake Huron shore Drive as a shared road into the park trail.

Harrisville to Black River Harbor

Routes to be consider are US-23, railroad corridor and some use of local road in Harrisville and along Lake Shore Drive.

It was noted that there is a bike route on local streets through City of Harrisville which could be utilized or the railroad corridor. It was pointed out just north of the city there is a large wet area along the railroad.

US-23

Pros: Road right of way

Cons: Lots of topography would increase costs to develop; potentially less users due to the topography; away from the local destinations.

Railroad Corridor

Pros: goes to the destinations, safe routing

Cons: A lot of wetlands increase the costs to build trail; costs to acquire railroad easement

Lakeshore Drive

Pros: Low traffic, goes to destinations, very scenic, flat

Cons: On road bike facility due to limited right of way, not as safe as a separate trail

Notes: The main area of concern is this section is getting from Harrisville to Lakeshore Drive as a separate trail is needed for safety; it could be railroad corridor but there are a lot of wetlands. Options considered were using railroad for part and then the highway for part of this section. All agreed the use of the former depot would make a great trailhead.

Black River Harbor to Ossineke

The route options in this area include US-23 and Black River Harbor Road, Railroad Corridor, or potentially utilizing state land (Negwegon State Park and State Forest). It was explained that Negwegon's Management Plan limits building trails in most of the park but there are some exiting and proposed trails that might be able to be utilized.

Eric explained that bike use is currently prohibited on the trails so there would have to be a change on that land use order. Cody explained that the road is very sandy and not an alternative. He added that there is a dune/swale complex which is sensitive in nature and should be avoided if possible. He wondered if there was a way to cut through the state land back to the highway at some point.

US-23

Pros: Road Right of way

Cons: Topography increases costs to build and maintain, may limit users due to the grades, doesn't go to Negwegon State Park which is a unique destination.

Railroad Corridor

Pros: Safest alternative, goes to destinations including Negwegon and Ossineke State Forest Campground

Cons: Sensitive environmental issues, wetlands increase cost to develop, increase cost to purchase easement

State Lands

Pros: Public land, goes to the destinations, unique trail experience

Cons: Changes to the management plan would be needed on the State Park property. Due to the sensitive dune/swale complex it may limit approval of a trail on State Forest Land.

Heather added she would want to do as little as possible in the dune/swale areas.

Ossineke to Alpena

This area US-23 was considered as well as the Railroad corridor. The Railroad crosses the highway again (therefore away from the lake)

US-23

Pros: near the lake, Squaw Bay is a destination, other destinations (Partridge Point and the 45th parallel park), where the people are (higher use), connects directly to the Alpena Bi-Path.

Cons: All the driveways, safety concerns, questions of right of way width in this section, high cost to develop in Squaw Bay.

Railroad Corridor

Pros: safest alternative

Cons: Away from the lake, creates a similar experience as other rail-trails in Alpena, doesn't go to destinations or residential areas, costs to acquire easement.

1:30-2:20 Meeting

Those Present at the 1:30 meeting: Adam Pohl, City of Alpena; Larry Clark, Alpena South Committee, Heather Huffstutler, Huron Pines; Greg Kinser, Paige Perry and Amy Swainston, DNR Trails; Cody Stevens, DNR Forest Resources Division; Steve Schnell, NEMCOG and Emily Meyerson, NEMCOG Facilitator.

Due to only having three addition people from this morning, after introductions Emily briefly went through the meeting purpose, development costs, trail experience and the map itself. She then said we would go through the corridor this time from North to South focusing on the segment between Alpena and Black River Harbor.

Alpena to Ossineke

Larry explained that they have a wetland permit to extend the Alpena Bi-Path 1.15 miles to S. Partridge Point Road and the proposed 45th Parallel Park at that location.

Larry also added that most of US-23 is on Great Lake Bottom Land so there would be a need for a boardwalk to get through this area

US-23

Pros: Connection to Bi-path, scenic/showcase area, unique experience, connect to proposed parks, connect to many homes

Cons: Driveways/safety, there may be limited road right-of-way, cost to develop in Squaw Bay

Railroad Corridor

Pros: Safety

Cons: Not unique in the area (rural backcountry experience), away from destinations.

Notes: Larry suggested a possibility would be to connect the 45th Parallel park across to the railroad corridor. He believed it was possible near the private campground with a few easements and then onto State Forest Land near Piper Road.

On the rest of the segments a summary of what was discussed at the earlier meeting today was provided.

Additional input included: Negwegon is a show case of natural beauty versus US-23 and that Lakeshore Drive is much more scenic than US-23.

In wrap up it was asked that Paige Perry, DNR Trail Specialist for Gaylord Region, Blake Gingrich, Ossineke State Forest Campground manager and Tom Barnes, Grayling Forest Manager be added to the email list.

Emily thanked everyone for coming and that she would follow back up with next steps.