

Pennsylvania Trails Advisory Committee Meeting
Zoom Meeting
March 16, 2021
1:30pm – 3:30pm
Final Meeting Minutes

PTAC Members present:

Bob Amelio – Persons with Disabilities
Anil Dham – Members at Large
Elizabeth Fager – Water Trail Users
Chris Firme- Hiking
Donna Iannone – Members at Large
Michael Kuhn – Mountain Biking
Jim Laird – Off-Hwy Motorcycling
Frank Maguire – Members at Large
Courtney Mahronich Vita – Members at Large

Pamela Marlow – Members at Large
Lydia Martin – Walking
Penny Mason – Four-Wheel Driving
Miica Patterson – Members at Large
Joe Perry – ATV Riding
Ron Steffey – Members at Large
Gwen Wills – Horseback Riding
Owen Worozbyt - Bicycling

PTAC Members not present:

David Sauders – Members at Large
Tom Kase – Cross-Country Skiing
Cindy Barrick – Snowmobiling

Others in Attendance:

Mark Bitner, PennDOT
Jackie Koons-Felion, PennDOT
Carol Grayshaw, WeConservePA

DCNR staff:

Cindy Adams Dunn	Troy Withers	Jake Newton
Leslie Sarvis	Olivia Braun	Tyler Semder
Alex MacDonald	Matthew Crosbie	Adam Mattis
Diane Kripas	Jean Lynch	Paul Zeph
Tom Ford	Paula Devore	Tom Hanes
Lauren Imgrund		

Call to Order

Lydia Martin, Chair, presided over the meeting

1:35 PM Lydia called the meeting to order and a motion was made by Gwen Wills and seconded by Joe Perry to approve the December 16th meeting minutes with no changes. Motion was passed unanimously.

Welcome and Opening Remarks – DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn

1:35pm – Secretary Dunn thanked everyone for their service on the committee and welcomed the new members. She also commented on the following:

- The Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan and new Statewide Strategic Trails Plan that DCNR is starting to implement.
- DCNR has recently updated the goal to have a trail within 10 minutes of all Pennsylvanians.
- Congratulations to the 2021 Trail of the Year winner, the D&H Rail-Trail and the Rail Trail Council of Northeast Pennsylvania.
- She expects that we will continue to see an increase in outdoor recreation and trail use in 2021 and beyond. Thanks for helping to maintain and protect trails, as well as to educate new trail users on proper usage and etiquette.

Introduction of New Members – Lydia Martin

1:50pm – Each new member introduced themselves and gave a brief overview of their experience with trails. Leslie Sarvis gave a brief introduction of Cindy Barrick since she could not attend the meeting.

Overview of 2020-2024 Trails Strategic Plan – Alex MacDonald, DCNR

2:00pm – Alex presented the newly released Land and Water Trail Network Strategic Plan, companion document to the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. A copy of his presentation is attached. His presentation included the following points.

- Reviewed the public input that went into the plans development
 - Over 12,000 responses
 - Two Surveys targeting trail communities
 - PTAC Regional Forum and outreach to user groups
 - Direct Input from the PTAC
- The final report includes 7 Recommendations and 40 Action Steps.
 - Recommendations include closing priority trail gaps, cultivating partnerships, coordinate funding programs, connecting communities and their assets, maintaining, improving and promoting PA land and water trails.
- A review of the Priority Trail Gaps map and the Top 10 Trail Gaps information
- An overview of how PTAC feedback impacted the update and development of the Trail Plan

Questions/Comments:

- Joe Perry asked about Recommendation #4, Action Step b (“Using The Trust for Public Land findings, develop strategies to address trail access needs in underserved communities”) and Alex explained that the motorized data was removed from the Trust for Public Land’s information so that it did not skew the results.

- Gwen Wills mentioned the PA Game Commission policy noted on page 31, item F. She explained she's been working on that with the PGC for years and offered to help anyone interested in working on that element. She explained that a PGC policy was created around 2005 and could be improved upon with regard to equestrian users on State Game Lands.
- Donna Iannone asked about connecting the Regional Trail Networks (slide 10) statewide. Alex explained that this is the goal and those are used as models for other regions of the state to expand their networks and connectivity.

Trail Topics for 2021 – Lydia Martin and PTAC Committee Members

2:30pm - Lydia started the discussion with a slide presentation explaining that each year PTAC chooses 3-4 focus topics for the year. *A copy of the slides are attached.* She introduced the topics that the leadership were suggesting for 2021.

- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice
- Trail Crossings**
- Trail Maintenance (in coordination with the Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory Committee)

Lydia then opened the discussion to other PTAC members to suggest any other topics that they would like to consider for 2021. Many topics were suggested by members and they were grouped into the follow 4 overarching categories.

NOTE: A full list of the categories and related topics that were discussed during the meeting are attached.

- Trail etiquette for new users
- Economic impacts of trails on local communities
- Communication
- Allowing the use of ATVs for accessibility on State Game Lands (PA Game Commission lands)

To ensure that all members have a chance to vote on the 2021 focus topics, DCNR staff will create and distribute an online survey that will be sent out to members. Based on those results, the focus topics for 2021 topics will be established. DCNR staff and PTAC leadership will use this information to establish the sub-committee structure.

** It should be noted that after the meeting, the PTAC officers suggested removing the Trail Crossings topic to allow the committee to focus on the advancement of the other suggested topics. Trail Crossings was subsequently removed from the list of topics and is not included on the survey for PTAC members.

New Business – Lydia Martin

No new business was presented.

A motion was made by Joe Perry to adjourn the meeting and Frank Maguire seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 3:30pm.

Pennsylvania Trails Advisory Committee
Thursday, June 17, 2021
1:30pm - 3:30pm
Zoom Meeting
DRAFT
Meeting Minutes

PTAC Members present:

Bob Amelio – Persons with Disabilities	Cindy Barrack – Snowmobiling
Anil Dham – Members at Large	Elizabeth Fager – Water Trail Users
Chris Firme – Hiking	Donna Iannone – Members at Large
Jim Laird – Off-Highway Motorcycling	Frank Maguire – Members at Large
Pamila Marlowe – Members at Large	Penny Mason – Four-Wheel Driving
Miica Patterson – Members at Large	Joe Perry – ATV Riding
David Saunders – Members at Large	Ron Steffey – Members at Large
Gwen Wills – Horseback riding	Owen Worozbyt - Bicycling
Courtney Mahronich Vita – Members at Large	

PTAC Members not present:

Tom Kase – Cross-Country Skiing	Michael Kuhn – Mountain Biking
Lydia Martin - Walking	

Others in Attendance:

Carol Grayshaw – WeConservePA	Hilary Hirtle – WeConservePA
Roy Gothie, PennDOT	Liz Krug - PSSA

DCNR staff:

Leslie Sarvis	Diane Kripas
Olivia Braun	Tyler Semder
Tom Ford	Lauren Imgrund
Matt Crosbie	Emily Hendrickson
Chris Novak	Tom Hanes
Paul Zeph	Paula DeVore

Call to Order

Ron Steffey, Vice Chair presided over the meeting

Ron called the meeting to order and a motion was made by Joe Perry and seconded by Gwen Wills to approve the March 16, 2021 meeting minutes with no changes. Motion was passed unanimously.

Welcome and Opening Remarks – Tom Ford, Director, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation

Tom welcomed the members to the meeting and commented on the following:

- Thanks to PTAC members for reviewing the Round 27 grant applications.

- 2021 Greenways and Trails Summit in Erie, PA is coming up in September and will be an in-person event. DCNR is pleased to cover the registration fees and hotel fees for members who wish to attend.
- 2021 Trail of the Year celebration for the D & H Rail-Trail will be held September 1st to help kick off Trails Month.
- Requested any ideas, activities or events that members may have or know of that could help promote Trails Month.

Lauren Imgrund, DCNR Deputy Secretary for Conservation and Technical Services, expressed her appreciation for being part of the meeting today. She looked forward to hearing PTAC member's input and thoughts today.

Subcommittee Updates:

Each subcommittee lead would have approximately 4 mins to update the PTAC then the other subcommittee members could chime in. The last 5 minutes are for the full committee to ask questions or provide comments.

Ron Steffey: Maintenance

- Want to try to make maintenance more manageable; how can they make it easier?
- Want to work with others such as CNRAC ad hoc committee, WeConservePA and other subcommittees.
- Create a trail manager toolbox such as BMPs. Find out what BMPs work and which one do not.
- Next step will be to meet with CNRAC, WeConservePA and other PTAC subcommittee leads before September meeting.
- Comments/Questions:
 - Cindy Barrick: suggested that maintenance be considered by user group. Maybe user groups would use appreciate tailored suggestions and BMPs. PSSA is currently discussing this on snowmobiles trails.

Frank Maguire: Trail Etiquette

- Focus on new trail users and how best to communicate and outreach to them. Consider including multiple languages on signage.
- Introduce the idea that trails area a public good which are open to and welcome everyone but that there's a responsibility for them too. Provide "Do's and Don'ts".
- Develop a library of universal graphics, signage, pictograms, etc.
- Ensuring that the message fits with the time we are in. Need to evolve as the times change.
- Comments/Questions:
 - Anil Dham: Stressed the importance of the Leave No Trace, Pack it in and pack it out principals

Miica Patterson: Communications

- Main goal is to communicate to the general public about PA trails and the work of the other subcommittees
- Wants to work with the other subcommittees to ensure consistent communication.
- Trail of the Month: Highlight a trail each month rotating through different regions of the state
- Comments/Questions
 - Leslie Sarvis: Suggested that the committee meet with WeConservePa to explore using the Greenways and Trails website rather than ExplorePATrails. She explained that DCNR is trying to steer users to that Greenways and Trails website now.

- Ron Steffey: suggested the subcommittee leads meet to discuss this further and then involve other members.
- Cindy Barrack: Suggested that Trail of the Month could be chosen depending on the season. Such as snowmobile trails during winter.
- Courtney Mahronich Vita: Suggested highlighting the volunteers to show appreciation.

Owen Worozbyt: Economic Impacts of Trails

- Expressed the importance of showing the value of trails to local leaders so they understand the value they provide to local economies. Investments in trails create economic opportunities to/around communities. Wants to include all trails, not just hiking.
- Create a concise, one-page document to provide to legislators and local leaders to sell the idea of maintenance. Funding easier to get for building a trail than to maintain it.
- Want to compile data from recent studies and encourage trail groups to apply for funding to complete them
- Comments/Questions:
 - Frank Maguire: Encourage trail groups to track current and annual investments, including in-kind match, volunteer efforts, etc. as all of this would be important data to capture
 - Cindy Barrack: Think outside the immediate needs. Unfortunately, most of DCNR's grant funds can't be used for maintenance, only trail building. PRT (and ATV and Snow) can go to maintenance, but equipment can't be purchased with PRT now.
 - Joe Perry: Suggested trying to get maintenance funds from Polaris or Yamaha. In their best interest to ensure that there are usable trails. Maybe some of the other manufacturers of things we use (such as bicycles) could be a sponsor, enhance, advertise trail use.
 - Frank Maguire: Agrees with Joe however has found that most of these grants are for new construction. The "ribbon cutting" effect.

Review of updated Greenwaysandtrails.org - Hilary Hirtle, WeConservePA

- Shared her screen to walk PTAC members through the new website.
- Highlights included a page with featured articles, an overview of how to submit projects or photos, lists of workshops and trainings and resources to find a trail or a local group/organization.
- Comments/Questions:
 - Ron Steffey and Miica Patterson expressed an interest in meeting with Hilary to talk about how subcommittee can utilize the website.

2021 Trails Month - Chris Novak, DCNR Director of Communications

Chris gave a brief PowerPoint presentation which discussed the following bullet points. A copy of her presentation is attached.

- Trails Outreach – Trails Month (started in 2018), placed TV/radio ads, planned events (hikes, paddles, etc.), social media posts to increase clicks to trail info on websites.
- Creation of a monthly theme such as lesser known trails, volunteers, trail gaps, etc.
- 2021 Trails Month Theme: Health and Outdoors. Will feature the Walk with a Doc – Advancing Wellness through Nature.
 - Will be announced in August. Mentioned Trail of the Year.
 - #TrailTuesday posts weekly for all types of trails - ATV, water trails, not just on State Lands.
- Requested feedback on what the PTAC thinks would be good ideas for events and ways to promote
- Comments/Questions:

- David Saunders: Is it too late to consider something that would encourage diverse and/or vulnerable communities to use trails.
- Chris Novak: Mel, a new staff member is working on Outreach. He will do some posts during the month about that particular topic. That could also be a potential theme for next year.
- Jim Laird: Invited everyone for an inclusive ATV ride at Rock Run on July 10th. Will send an email to everyone with the invitation.

Introduction to DCNR's DEI Work - Emily Hendrickson, DCNR DEI Coordinator

Emily gave a brief PowerPoint presentation which discussed the following bullet points. A copy of her presentation is attached.

- Want to create definitions for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and work with the advisory committees to help grow the collaboration.
- Provided visual for Equality vs. Equity. Discussed why this is so important.
- Emily is focused on 3 main goals of DEI Outreach
 - Create external DEI Committee
 - Embed DEI into existing councils
 - Create a Next Gen Council
- Comments/Questions:
 - Ron Steffey: Would like to see this discussion point at each meeting.
 - David Saunders: Proud of Emily for all the work she's done. Encouraged her to keep up the good work.
 - Jim Laird: The motorized recreation venture that he represents is one of the most inclusive. Asked how do Emily sees motorized recreation playing into the vision? Also attending the Quakertown Skate Park grand opening. Thanks to DCNR staff that had anything to do with that park that's opening.
 - Emily Hendrickson: Allow for hunters to use ATVs to get into the woods but not totally familiar with the program. Motorized recreation in urban areas is something to consider addressing.

Adjourn – Ron Steffey

- Motion to adjourn: Donna Iannone
- Second: Frank Maguire
- All were in favor

Pennsylvania Trails Advisory Committee
Tuesday, December 21, 2021
1:30pm - 3:30pm
Zoom Meeting
DRAFT
Meeting Minutes

PTAC Members present:

Bob Amelio – Persons with Disabilities
Cindy Barrack – Snowmobiling
Anil Dham – Members at Large
Brett Hollern (alternate for Frank Maguire) –
Members at Large
Donna Iannone – Members at Large
Michael Kuhn – Mountain Biking
Jim Laird – Off-Highway Motorcycling
Courtney Mahronich Vita – Members at Large

Pamila Marlowe – Members at Large
Lydia Martin - Walking
Penny Mason – Four-Wheel Driving
Miica Patterson – Members at Large
Joe Perry – ATV Riding
David Saunders – Members at Large
Ron Steffey – Members at Large
Gwen Wills – Horseback riding
Owen Worozbyt - Bicycling

PTAC Members not present:

Liz Fager – Water Trail Users
Chris Firme - Hiking
Tom Kase – Cross-Country Skiing

Others in Attendance:

Carol Grayshaw – WeConservePA
Roy Gothie, PennDOT
Justin Cambric – PennDOT
Ronnique Bishop - FHWA

DCNR staff:

Leslie Sarvis
Diane Kripas
Tyler Semder
Tom Ford
Lauren Imgrund
Jean Lynch

Trish Newdeck
Nicole Faraguna
Shea Zwerver
Jake Newton
Paul Zeph
Paula DeVore

Call to Order

Lydia Martin, Chair, called the meeting to order and roll call was taken.

A motion was made by Anil Dham and seconded by Joe Perry to approve the June 17, 2021 meeting minutes with no changes. Motion was passed unanimously.

Welcome and Opening Remarks – Lauren Imgrund, Deputy Secretary for Conservation & Technical Services

Lauren welcomed the members to the meeting and commented on the following:

- Thank you for your service in another challenging pandemic year. Even though all of the PTAC meetings were virtual, the committee was able to accomplish several goals:
 - establish topics of interest and are actively moving those topics forward;
 - reviewed nearly 75 trail grant applications and provided valuable feedback to DCNR;
 - continuing to explore ways to advance DEI topics and issues;
 - engaged in e-bikes discussions with our policy office;
 - discussing and voting on the 2022 Trail of the Year today.
- The Greenways & Trails Summit was back to an in-person conference, and it was a great success. It was wonderful to connect and network with almost 200 trail partners in Erie. Nearly half of the PTAC members were able to attend, and several were also presenters. Thank you to those who helped with the planning and coordinating of this event. A special thank you to WeConservePA for spear-heading the conference and making it happen.
- With the passing of the federal Infrastructure bill, the Recreational Trails program is secure for another 5 years. In addition, nearly 70% more funding was authorized in the bill for the Transportation Alternatives program, and new opportunities for active transportation will be created through the bill.
- Thank you to the outgoing members: Jim Laird (Off-Highway Motorcycling), Tom Kase (cross-country skiing) and Frank Maguire.
- Thank you also to Diane Kripas, DCNR division chief, who is retiring, and today is her last day.

Subcommittee Updates:

Ron Steffey – The Maintenance Subcommittee held a meeting in the summer and started defining different meanings of trails. They will concentrate more in 2022 on definitions to be consistent with PennDOT so that more consistent words and phrases can cut back on confusion.

Brett Hollern– The Trail Etiquette Subcommittee had a meeting after the Erie Summit and talked about collecting etiquette signage for all types and user groups. They want the shared information to be inclusive for all trail users. They are developing a Trail Etiquette Google Forms survey to help be better prepared for etiquette concerns.

Lydia Martin – A PTAC folder in the Google Drive has been set up for all of the subcommittees to share documents and ideas with each other. Brett will share the link to Google Drive for all committee members to use.

Micca Patterson – The Communications subcommittee hasn't met in a while so not much to report, but they have talked about highlighting a trail of the month and connecting with WeConservePA to do this. The committee will connect in the new year. Micca asked about getting the notes from the meeting of the subcommittee chairs in September.

Owen Worozbyt – The Economic Impact Subcommittee met in the summer and talked about getting a list of all the different economic impact studies together. Jim Laird's firm has list of economic impact studies that he's happy to share with the committee.

2022 Trail of the Year Top Three Nominations Discussion

- Leslie Sarvis reviewed the process for nominations that were submitted as well as the process for the sub-group to review and score the nominations.
- Leslie gave a brief summary of each of the top three nominations: Butler Freeport Community Trail, Delaware State Park Canal Towpath and the Westmoreland Heritage Trail.

- The committee discussed the fact that the Delaware State Park Canal Towpath is a section of the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor, and whether the Towpath nomination could be considered for the Trail of the Year award on its own. The committee voted to accept all three nominations (Motion: Ron Steffey, 2nd: Own Worozbyt) with one opposed vote.

2022 Trail Gap Data

Alex MacDonald, DCNR, reported that DCNR is working with Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC) to develop a tool to show trail gap data. They will be reaching out to trail managers in 2022 asking them to submit a form with basic information about their trail, they'll have access to the new tool. Trail groups will be able to access the tool and help manage projects using this tool. This will help give a robust data set to help DCNR determine where the gaps are. Plus, this will help determine the Top 10 trail gaps.

There were questions from the committee: Will the other gaps (not just top 10) have details? Can they color-code the trails to show usage types? Can the tool help track easements? Alex said that they will look into these comments and suggestions. The tool has this potential to track easements, but we want to be careful about what will be public and what is private. They will need to confirm what data can be shown according to Sunshine laws.

Additional Business

Carol Grayshaw – WeConservePA has extended the deadline for proposals to host the 2025 Greenways & Trails Summit. The new deadline is March 17, 2022.

Lydia asked if anyone wanted to share highlights from Greenways & Trails Summit in Erie. Ron enjoyed seeing people in person and reiterated that trail people are a network. Courtney heard people remarking about how beautiful Erie was and great location for the conference. Carol mentioned that the outdoor reception was particularly nice for people to enjoy networking. David was impressed with the city and all the work that went into the summit, which included a DEI track, and the efforts for trails in general. He's happy to be on the committee and enjoyed the summit.

Farewell to outgoing members

Lydia Martin thanked the outgoing committee members for their service. Jim Laird commented on his time served on the committee and encouraged the motorized and non-motorized communities to continue working together for the benefit of all trail users.

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn: Joe Perry

Second: Courtney Mahronich Vita

Meeting adjourned at 3:00pm.