

## TRAILS TASK FORCE

May 8, 2019

AMENDED

**Committee Members Present:** Deb Root (Chair), C. Clark, D. Decker, W. Dibble, K. Dirlam, G. Hanchett, B. Harris

**Others Present:** C. Knapp, B. Perkins, B. Riehle, M. Washer

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m. by Trails Task Force Chair Debra Root.

### **Purpose of Task Force**

Committee Chair Root stated that this task force is not something that will be in existence forever. It will last approximately one year and will then fall under a committee of jurisdiction, ideally Planning & Economic Development.

Mr. Dirlam stated that historically, the County Legislature has not been supportive of recreation and trails. Mr. Dirlam thanked those that are showing an interest, stating that we can now make something happen, and it's great to see all of these things coming to life.

Committee Chair Root stated that she would like the task force to come up with a mission statement, adding that the Comprehensive Plan currently has some included as well. Mr. Dirlam indicated they are still adding more and some pieces that come out of the task force meetings will make their way to the plan as well. The task force briefly discussed their mission statement and decided on the following:

*“To foster the development of a County-wide trail system that includes motorized and non-motorized trails while striving to ensure that the trails and natural areas we share are sustainable and accessible for all to enjoy for generations to come.”*

Ms. Root indicated that she would like the task force to first identify the different trail systems they want to focus on, and then ask those specific groups to attend a meeting and provide an overview of their activities, what it is they want to accomplish, how far along they are in their progress, etc. This will help the task force identify how they can help and how they fit together. Ms. Root laid out the following tentative timeline for the task force:

- In May and June, the task force will meet with the various trail groups.
- In July and August, the task force will look at all of the information they gathered and decide how they can incorporate it into a County-wide trail system.
- In September, when the overview is complete, the task force will invite the groups back and present their plan and ask for input.
- In October, the task force will give a final presentation to the Planning & Economic Development Committee as well as the Board.
- In November, Ms. Root hopes to have an accepted plan that can be included in the Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Hanchett asked if this tentative plan fits in with the Comprehensive Plan timeline. Mr. Dirlam stated, no, the way the Comprehensive Plan is set up, they would need to follow the amendment process in order to add something in. Mr. Dirlam noted that the plan currently has enough included that supports what the task force is hoping to accomplish.

Legislator Dibble suggested the Department of Environmental Conservation is a good place to start and noted that there are about 60,000 acres of state land that is forest and wildlife

management areas that need to be incorporated and focused on for non-motorized recreation. Legislator Dibble added that of the Saddle Dusters, 20 percent focus on the trails, and the remaining 80 percent primarily focus on gaming.

Ms. Root briefly discussed mountain biking and the various things she learned while at a recent conference. Mr. Dirlam stated that if they want to get into mountain biking in the County, they are going to need trained, knowledgeable people who know how the sport works. Ms. Hanchett asked if Swain still has a mountain biking group. Mr. Dirlam indicated that Swain is not currently advertising for any summer events. Legislator Harris noted that there is a mountain biking group located in Rochester, NY, and Ms. Root suggested they invite that group to a meeting and see if our area is a place they would want to come to.

Mr. Dirlam stated their biggest challenges are policy related. They know the trail connections are needed; however, they don't want one group trampling on another group, and the task force needs to be cognizant of that as they go through this process. Mr. Dirlam continued that they want to make sure people can come and enjoy themselves; not come and be aggravated by another group. Mr. Dirlam suggested they outline area designations to each group as well as which trail connections are shared so that everyone is aware of which trail system they may cross into. Ms. Root stated they also need to talk to neighboring counties, noting that Cattaraugus County has expressed interest in linking their trails to Allegany County's. Ms. Root added that they also need to look at Pennsylvania as she is aware of a lot of people that cross the state line for recreation. Dr. Clark stated the real impact is linking with outside areas and making the trail system big.

### **Present Situation of Trails in the County**

Mr. Dirlam distributed a packet that details the existing trails in the County, the trails owner/contact, what recreation is permitted on the trails, as well as annual events that are held on them. Mr. Dirlam also distributed maps that detail the present condition of County trails. Mr. Dirlam pointed out the old railroad beds stating they could be connections and utility transmission right-of-ways. Mr. Dirlam continued that if they could make a deal with the relevant utility that ATVs could run on them, they could become super highways. Legislator Harris asked if there are any similar agreements utilities have made. Mr. Dirlam indicated he has heard they do it, but has not tracked any down.

Legislator Dibble distributed a grant that he wrote in 1993 regarding the proposed River Trail that would provide travelers along three major New York State Highways (State Route 19, State Route 417, and State Route 248-A) access to pedestrian, bicycle, canoe, and other modes of transportation as well as myriad recreational and aesthetic pleasures along the River Trail.

Legislator Dibble also distributed a map of the historic Turnpike Road that he would like to become a Tourist Trail, also known as "T.T." Legislator Dibble provided the following email to be included in the minutes:

*"My thought was that the T.T is different than driving routes that are circle routes in the County for looking at the scenery, scenic vistas, and the Fall colors, etc. The T.T - Tourist Trail is a vehicle driving route that parallels I-86. The thought is to get tourists and people traversing across the County on I-86 to take the County Roads that parallel I-86. Some travelers and people on vacation like to take a slower pace highway, look at the scenery, perhaps stop at historic sites, etc. For example, getting off at exit 28 in Cuba, you have the opportunity to visit the 1627 Oil Spring Park, the historic Village of Cuba including the Cuba Cheese Shop, Main Street in Friendship with good food at Miller and Brandes, plus the Friendship Hardware Store. You could*

*pass by the Friendship Cottage Cheese plant, the historic Episcopal Church in Belvidere that Phillip Church was involved with, the future Crossroads stop, the historic Village of Angelica traffic circle, the court and its churches, the County Fairgrounds with the PS&N RR car display, the Amish Community, rolling countryside, and great hills. You can visit the new glass museum on the Alfred University Campus, etc. Those traveling West have the same opportunity as above but in the reverse order. Signage can be added in the future. After your trip across Historic Allegany County, just jump back on the Interstate and continue on your way.”*

### **Groups and Contacts**

The task force identified the following trails as their primary focus as they move forward:

- Blueway Trails
- Snowmobile Trails
- Equestrian Trails
- Greenway Trails
- ATV Trails
- Hiking Trails

The task force briefly discussed established organizations related to the trails as well as contacts they can reach out to for future meetings. Mr. Dirlam reiterated that the task force has to make sure they bring in the DEC and suggested they be the first to attend a meeting. Legislator Dibble indicated the DEC appreciates planning ahead and knowing in advance who will maintain the trails. Ms. Hanchett asked if the DEC maintains any portions that are on their property. Legislator Dibble stated they want people to adopt it, similar to the “Adopt a Highway” program. Ms. Root stated at a recent meeting, a presenter indicated that their county budgeted \$7,500 per mile for maintenance on their trails.

Legislator Decker stated that along with Cattaraugus County and Pennsylvania, there are other groups out there that are looking to establish trails and groups, particularly one in Wayne County that wants to put a UTV group together. Legislator Decker continued that while our borders don’t touch, there is a county in-between, and we could possibly make connections county to county and state to state. Ms. Hanchett added that there are a lot of opportunities for this to grow big.

Mr. Dirlam stated they also need to think about restrooms as well. Currently, if you’re on a trail and need to use a facility, we have nothing to offer. Ms. Hanchett referenced a recent hiking trip she took, and stated there are rules for hiking. You don’t have to put privies out there; however, they are most welcome.

Ms. Root stated at her recent conference, the key note speaker talked about diversity on the trails and how there isn’t a lot of it. Ms. Root referenced how diverse the Alfred Colleges are now, and suggested they look into creating an outbound group that could bring these kids in. Mr. Dirlam stated that there are also a lot of people that may not know how to do the specific sport, and he suggested offering a small course that teaches them how to do mountain biking, etc. Ms. Hanchett stated that the DEC had a very successful program that brought in kids and families for camping, and they provided the tent and supplies which allowed for those who may not have adequate supplies to enjoy the activity.

### **Funding**

Ms. Root stated that while doing some research, she found that the Hatfield-McCoy Trails received a \$1.2 million Appalachian Regional Commission grant that was to be used specifically for marketing, noting that \$25,000 of those funds were for Facebook digital marketing. Dr. Clark indicated that Appalachian Regional Commission grants down south are very different. Ms. Root added that because our County is so fragmented, it would be hard to have any grant money come our way, but is hopeful it is something we can work towards.

### **STOP/DWI – Youth Bureau**

STOP-DWI and Youth Bureau Director Brian Perkins stated he attended the meeting because at some point he is thinking about how to tie in bicycle safety as well as STOP-DWI. Mr. Perkins continued that currently, bicycle safety is geared toward kids, but there is no reason it can't include adults as well. Legislator Decker thanked Mr. Perkins and stated it was a good idea to have those things in mind.

### **Future Meetings**

The task force briefly discussed when future meetings could be held, and the following was scheduled:

- Wednesday, May 15, at 10:30 a.m.in the Legislative Chambers

### **Adjournment**

Committee Chair Root adjourned the meeting at 3:20 p.m.