

OFF-ROAD VEHICLE (ORV) TRAILS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
Holiday-Inn Lansing West
7501 West Saginaw Highway
Lansing, Michigan
February 7, 2007

Chairman Ranney called the meeting of the Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) Trails Advisory Board to order at 6:28 p.m. on Wednesday February 7, 2007, in Lansing, Michigan.

Members Present:

Dick Ranney, Chair
Glenn Moll, Vice Chair
Jason Dinsmore
Larry Harrington
Sheriff Scott Strait
John Bernard

Members Absent:

Peter Wyckoff

Department of Natural Resources (Department) Staff Present:

Steve DeBrabander, Forest, Mineral, and Fire Management (FMFM), Lansing
Steve Kubisiak, FMFM, Lansing
Richard Kennedy, FMFM, Lansing
Joseph Taylor, FMFM, Lansing
Sgt. Brad Smith, Law Enforcement Division, Gladwin
Pete Lundborg, Parks and Recreation, Mears

USDA Forest Service Staff Present:

Carol Boll, Huron-Manistee National Forest, Cadillac

Chairman Ranney asked for a moment of silence in memory of Michael R. Burlingham who was killed in a plane crash the day after Christmas. Mike was past President of the Cycle Conservation Club of Michigan and former Chairman of the ORV Trails Advisory Board.

MINUTES

Acknowledged Minutes of the November 8, 2006, ORV Trails Advisory Board Meeting.

Mr. Dinsmore made a motion, supported by Mr. Harrington, to accept the minutes of the November 8 2006, Off-Road Vehicle Trails Advisory Board Meeting. Motion unanimously carried.

Chairman Ranney announced beginning at the next meeting opportunity for public comment will be offered at both the beginning and end of the meeting. The comment period at the beginning of the meeting should be agenda specific and directed to the Chairman and will follow the public appearance guidelines set in the rules of procedure for the Board.

OLD BUSINESS

ORV Plan Update – **Mr. Steve DeBrabander, FMFM**, reported the public comment period has been extended three times since November 2006. Staff is currently reviewing comments received from the Michigan Motorized Recreation Council on January 18, 2007, and public comments received at the January Natural Resources Commission (NRC) meeting. The plan will be placed on the February NRC meeting agenda for information and will be available for action at the April meeting.

ORV Budget Report – **Mr. Joe Taylor, FMFM**, distributed a handout and reviewed ORV program revenues and expenditures for budget fiscal year 10/01/05-09/30/06. He reported total revenues of \$3.2 million, expenditures of 4.6 million, noting a difference of \$1.3 million. He reported a current fund balance of approximately \$6.0 million. He stated the fire program is supporting ORV program field operations and the Department will be seeking a supplemental appropriation from the ORV fund to cover these expenses.

Mr. Taylor reported approximately \$193,000 in revenues were collected in the ORV Safety Education Fund with total expenditures of approximately \$206,000, noting a difference of approximately \$12,000.

Discussion ensued regarding the ORV fund balance, the funding formula, future trail expansion, fees, revenues, expenditures and the need for a long-range financial plan to support the ORV program.

Mr. Harrington made a motion, supported by Mr. Dinsmore, to establish a sub-committee to develop a financial plan for the long-term management and operation of the Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) Program. Motion unanimously carried.

2007 ORV Grants Update – **Steve Kubisiak, FMFM**, reported ORV trail grants have been approved by the Resource Deputy and the State Administrative Board. Grant agreements have been mailed to 20 of the 23 sponsors. Agreements will be mailed to the remaining sponsors once all required eligibility documentation is received by the Department. He noted the Department is working with several local sponsors in the Upper Peninsula to fill in some gaps as a result of a club withdrawing their application.

Safety Education Update – Tabled until May.

ORV Title Statistics – **Dick Ranney** reported that on January 31, 2007 there was a total of 345,927 ORVs titled in Michigan based on statistics obtained from the Michigan Secretary of State. Break down by vehicle type: 4-wheeled 260,282, 3-wheeled 2,514, 2-wheeled 80,273, multi-wheeled 2,222, tracked 8, air 68. The title statistics do not include ORVs supplied through some Asian manufacturers sold over the internet, sporting good or farm supply stores. He believes the actual number of ORVs in Michigan could be double. He noted many ORVs are used solely on private land and do not pay into the ORV program. **Mr. Ranney** suggested consideration of an ORV registration program. He does not believe trail riders should bare the whole financial burden for ORV law enforcement and safety education.

Mr. Kubisiak reported a total number of 187,610 ORV licenses have been sold as of February 1, 2007. He noted ORV license sales have remained stable over the past three years.

NEW BUSINESS

Annual Election of Officers – **Mr. Moll** opened nominations for Chairperson. **Mr. Dinsmore** nominated Dick Ranney with his acceptance, **second by Sheriff Strait**. **Mr. Moll** called for nominations three more times. No more nominations received.

Mr. Harrington moved to close nominations, second by Mr. Dinsmore. Motion unanimously carried to re-elect Mr. Ranney Chairperson.

Chairman Ranney opened nominations for Vice-Chairperson. **Chairman Ranney** nominated Mr. Moll with his acceptance. **Seconded by Mr. Dinsmore.** **Chairman Ranney** called for nominations three more times. No more nominations received.

Motion unanimously carried to re-elect Mr. Moll Vice-Chairperson.

Committee Reports – **Chairman Ranney** reported he attended a travel management workshop sponsored by the National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council in Grayling on February 1-4. He thanked the Department, Forest Service, and trail riding enthusiasts for attending. He took comments from the audience.

Sheriff Strait asked the Department to investigate the possibility of law enforcement agencies receiving non-expiring trail permits for the snowmobile and ORV enforcement programs. Staff will investigate and report back to the board.

Chairman Ranney reported he will be holding two meetings later this spring in the Northern Lower Peninsula with trail advocacy groups to begin mapping potential trails. One meeting will be held on the east side of the state and the other one on the west side. Individuals wishing to attend may contact Mr. Ranney by email at dranne1@charter.net.

Jason Dinsmore stated a 600 acre parcel of land located in Commerce Township has been identified by the Department for disposal. He asked if this site has potential to be developed for an ORV scramble area. **Mr. DeBrabander** stated development of the parcel for that type of use would require a grass roots effort, local support, and partnerships with local governments. He noted potential funding issues because the parcel was purchased with Fish and Game Funds and he will report back to the board.

STAFF REPORTS

Silver Lake State Park – **Pete Lundborg, Parks and Recreation Division**, reported the biggest change at Silver Lake this season will occur outside the park. Beginning this year Michigan towing laws will be more actively enforced. Tow ropes and snap-straps will no longer be allowed as in the past. The vehicle or trailer must be connected to the towing vehicle by suitable hard-tow device with safety chains. The Oceana Sheriffs Department and Michigan State Police have prepared a flyer explaining the towing laws and will be available at the park. Additionally this year, the Silver Lake Dunes Area Chamber of Commerce developed a dune safety awareness program available on their website at www.dunesafety.com. He noted Silver Lake State Park was featured in an article in Jeep magazine and the ORV area will receive drain field upgrades and building improvements thanks to the ORV grant program. **Mr. Lundborg** reported racing vehicles developed for competition in western states and Mexico are now commonly seen at Silver Lake. He stated that given the size of the ORV area it has brought safety to the forefront and has initiated discussions of a possible maximum speed limit for the dunes in the future.

Forest, Mineral and Fire Management – **Steve DeBrabander** reported the Department is under budget reductions and have been asked to reduce expenses were ever possible and reduce meetings and travel by fifty percent. He noted that by eliminating the microphones, white board and coffee for this meeting there was a cost saving of over \$280 dollars. He stated the program has also been asked to look at cheaper meeting locations and apologized for the inconvenience and thanked the board for their understanding.

PUBLIC APPEARANCE

Pat Brower asked how long the public comment will remain open on the ORV plan. He thinks one time ORV licensing for law enforcement officers is a good idea and noted the need for volunteers.

Ernie Brooks noted tough economic times and referenced an article about Silver Lake State Park in a national off-road publication. He thinks it is good publicity and will draw out-of-state enthusiasts. He believes it is important to link trails together. He inquired about a fence along the Leota trail that he believes to be a safety hazard. Staff will investigate and get back to him via email.

Paul Mulder, Great Lakes Four Wheel Drive acknowledged the Silver Lake Area Chamber of Commerce for developing a safety awareness program and thinks it is a good idea. He attended a Snowmobile Advisory Committee meeting and reported local clubs will be taking over grooming on trails formerly groomed by the Department. He is disappointed the snowmobile program is facing many of the same issues as the ORV program and thinks the groups need to work together.

Mr. Dinsmore made a motion to adjourn, supported by Mr. Moll. Motion unanimously carried.
Meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Next Meeting:

May 9, 2007 Lansing Holiday Inn (Tentative)

Public Present

Sue Thrushman, ATV Off-Road Club of MI
Paul Mulder, GLFWDA
Lewis Shuler, Cycle Conservation Club (CCC)
Thomas Dunn, AMA District 14/LMC
Ernie Brooks
Jim Kunath
Don Craig, MMDA
Dan LaValley, CCC/BOG