

# MN Outdoor Recreation Task Force September Meeting

## Notes

Date: 09/21/2020

Location: Webex

### Attendance

#### Task Force Members:

Lynnea Atlas-Ingebretson, JR Burke, Elliot Christensen, Megan Christianson, Katy Friesz, Matt Gruhn, Aaron Hautala, Breanne Hegg, Joe Henry, Greg Lais, Perry May, Molly Sajady, Asha Shoffner, Steve Voltz

#### Agency Staff:

John Edman (Explore Minnesota), Randolph Briley (DNR), Gratia Joice (DNR), Leann Kispert (Explore Minnesota), Andrew Korsberg (DNR), Madison McGovern (CCMI/DNR), Laura Preus (DNR), Erika Rivers (DNR)

### Meeting Notes

During this meeting, task force work groups shared out draft recommendations developed over the last month.

#### Draft Recommendations

##### *Coordination Work Group*

Vision statement: Work together to create a strong, sustainable outdoor recreation community that delivers inclusivity, enhances diversity, builds MN's economy, and reduces conflict.

1. **Bring together outdoor recreation stakeholders throughout Minnesota around a shared plan to build community, drive relationships, and facilitate a unified understanding of outdoor recreation.**
  - a. Convene stakeholders annually.
  - b. Include Black, Indigenous, Latinx and other communities of color, LGBTQI, people with disabilities, and people with low economic status.
  - c. Share and make clear the "Plan" the State of Minnesota is currently implementing.
    - i. When more of Minnesota knows the plan, be open to adjusting the plan based on the feedback of a greater response from Minnesota

- d. Measure and share benefits of coordinating at annual event.
- 2. **Promote and facilitate a culture of “Welcoming Everyone Outdoors.”**
  - a. Identify and state the values of how we will all treat each other, when we are outside together
  - b. Minnesota has world-class outdoor resources and should build on these assets, to create a welcoming culture that ensures the safety of everyone, and encourages inclusivity, togetherness, and stewardship. Minnesota will be a destination because of our inclusive outdoor culture, not just to experience the beauty of our outdoor resources.
  - c. Recognize the health and wellness benefits and align with Minnesota Department of Health and health care providers.
  - d. Create guidelines, training plans, and promotions around Minnesota’s culture of “Welcoming Everyone Outdoors.”
- 3. **Create an office of OREC that can coordinate, create, design, implement, and deliver upon these goals**
  - a. Fund and staff this office appropriately prioritizing Minnesota residents first.
    - i. Inform Minnesota residents about the outdoor opportunities available to them.
    - ii. This Office should continue to ask what Minnesota residents feel they are missing in going outside and then, evolve, adapt, grow opportunities to do so.
    - iii. The OREC Office should promote Minnesota’s outdoor benefits to broader world.
  - b. The OREC office should focus on building real relationships/unity amongst the varied and different outdoor recreation groups within Minnesota.
  - c. Create and maintain a database of outdoor recreation stakeholders.
  - d. Track outdoor recreation trends and use patterns.
- Discussion
  - Seems to focus on Minnesota first
    - When creating something, there is natural collaboration with groups and people outside boundaries and borders to get best ideas, so there would be out of state collaboration too.
    - Also easy to forget people who live in Minnesota and do not know what resources and opportunities they have in their backyard.
      - Residents can become the best ambassadors of preservation and promotion.
    - Not necessarily Minnesota first, but ensuring residents have an obstacle-free path to outdoor recreation.
  - Are efforts duplicative to Explore Minnesota and DNR?
    - May be some aspects that overlap, but especially speaking to point number 2, there is still work to do in accessibility, inclusion, and creating a culture of outdoors to promote and draw in visitors.
  - View the outdoor culture aspect as a change to quality of life.
  - How would an OREC office be staffed and funded?
    - No specific discussions, but generally would want an OREC office.
    - May be best to look at whole of recommendations before determining organizational structure of the office.

## *Promotion and Public Awareness*

Vision Statement: Distinguish and hone a cohesive, modern, and widely-heard voice for the outdoors in Minnesota.

1. Unite MN's fractured outdoor community & industry by promoting shared dialogue on challenges and opportunities and identifying new ways to promote a bigger outdoor experience together in MN.
  2. Develop cohesive messaging + form a cohesive voice.
  3. New mediums: Media appropriate to reach target audiences.
  4. Apps & mobile-first strategies for maps, brochures, and collateral.
  5. Establish new narratives for MN outdoors.
  6. Develop outreach to new groups.
  7. Work for perceptual parity of outdoors (compared to other interests)
  8. Eliminate overlap and inefficiencies within state agencies.
  9. Increased funding to properly staff or achieve goals.
  10. Establish a working group or office for outdoor-rec.
- Discussion
    - Point number 1 would be a good way to approach the second recommendation from the Coordination group.
    - Challenge to bring together public institutions and private citizens and companies.
    - Point 7- look at budgeting for outdoor recreation in the legislature—if the community is united, there will be a stronger voice in St. Paul advocating.

## *Stewardship and Conservation*

Vision Statement: We need to, as a state, take greater responsibility in preserving and maintaining our many great natural outdoor resources for our future generations because this is the only Minnesota they will have.

or

To educate, promote, encourage the Minnesota value of taking care of our great MN outdoors, so that it will continue to provide the outdoor experiences, that heal us, comfort us, feed us, challenge us, excite us, and amaze us.

- How will conservation be funded in the future?
  - Ensure DNR is resourced appropriately, honor Legacy funds, and take advantage of opportunities within agencies.
- Draft recommendations should be adapted and used to help develop policies and procedures in Minnesota.

- Policies and procedures should be in place to ensure that the best interest of our environment is included in the framework of different facets.
- We should be more proactive because our children’s future should not be so freely gambled with for profits or short term gains.

## *Access*

Vision Statement: Partner with Black, Indigenous and People of Color; people with disabilities; people with low income; and LGBTQ community cross-sector leaders to co-create Minnesota’s sustainable outdoor recreation ecosystem, to realize market potential and prioritize equitable access, safety and joy for all.

- Intent of the vision statement is to lead with people.
1. Create bi-partisan, independent, representative, and inclusive coordinating entity to facilitate cross-sector collaboration to advance outdoor recreation and equity in Minnesota.
  2. Co-create plans, remove barriers and improve cultural relevance with those who have been disproportionately excluded from outdoor recreational experiences, such as individuals with disabilities; Black, Indigenous and People of Color; individuals with lower financial resources or education, and LGBTQ communities.
  3. Invest in outdoor infrastructure, such as increasing boat ramps, campground modernization and wifi connectivity, and outdoor accessibility.
  4. Increase diversity, equity, and inclusion regarding hiring and retention practices in both private and public outdoor recreation sectors.
  5. Develop sliding scale fees for outdoor recreation activities and park access. In addition, develop low cost transportation options for local, regional, and state parks.
  6. Encourage private sector to recognize the market potential of underrepresented audiences (BIPOC, people with disabilities, LGBTQ communities) and approach with an asset-based lens.
  7. Specify barriers that exist to outdoor access and enjoyment. For example, regardless of cost, lack of culturally and gender-relevant outdoor equipment and apparel can be a barrier (e.g. heated gloves sized for men or unisex vs. women; women’s outdoor apparel sized smaller or not accounting for different body shapes; limited availability of women’s bicycle seats; etc.)
- Discussion
    - More transparency in permitting and licensing of outdoor activities

## *Economic Development*

Vision Statement: Unite and invest in Minnesota’s resources to drive a world-class outdoor economy that facilitates universal and equitable access, promotion, awareness, stewardship & conservation.

1. **Bring together the outdoor recreation stakeholders and resources to collaborate on behalf of our shared parks, forests, trails, transportation corridors, and destinations.**
  - a. Build/strengthen/grow public-private partnerships
  - b. Ensure all of Minnesota’s varied geographies and landscapes are positioned as equal tenants within Minnesota’s brand:

- i. Urban
    - ii. Rural
    - iii. Forests
    - iv. Prairie / grassland
    - v. Waters
    - vi. Restorative / Reclaimed (e.g. mining)
  - c. Share resources, wisdom, best practices — merge silos of content
  - d. Seek to see the unseen, hear the unheard, always question status quo
2. **Lean out, simplify, make effective the system of both information creation and information sharing that is intended for the consumption of Minnesota residents.**
- a. Create a pathway to get government communication out of government circles, make this communication mainstream content any Minnesota resident can find without having to google it.
  - b. Create powerful metrics of every dollar spent on the outdoors equals X for both Minnesota residents (primary goal) and Minnesota businesses (secondary goal).
  - c. Create a path where economic development within Minnesota's outdoors has the ability to economic impact our residents as well as our businesses.
  - d. Make better know the plan (SCORP) Minnesota outdoors is being created from, position and reference the plan, as decisions are being made, ongoing.
  - e. Refresh communication tools (digital) to speak the language of the 21<sup>st</sup> century mobile customer. (An app for Minnesota's outdoors, all your maps, all your regulations, all your permits ((purchasable through the app)).
3. **Establish communication partners to distribute Minnesota's positioning statement/brand to the unique/niche/target audiences outside of Minnesota.**
- i. Do more with less through communication partnership creation
    - 1. Local, Regional, State, National, International
4. **An office of OR exists that can coordinate, create, design, implement, and deliver upon these goals**
- a. Fund and staff this office appropriately prioritizing Minnesota residents first.
  - b. Build real relationships/unity amongst the varied and different outdoor recreation groups and industry within Minnesota.
  - c. Seek to understand and deploy economic development tools and investments where the outcome/end product has the ability to first build the economy of all of Minnesota's residents first, and business and industry second.

## Next Steps

- Between September and October meetings, small group will meet to collate and finalize draft recommendations before October meeting.
  - Each task force member will indicate their top 3 recommendations to assist small group.

## Public Engagement Update

- General discussion of recommendations

- Public invitation to join an online session explaining recommendations and opening up for public comments and feedback.
- Small group opportunities
  - Task force members proactively reach out to groups with similar interests (10-15 people) and discuss finer points of recommendations.
- Survey with link to be shared in networks to review and provide feedback on recommendations

## **Review of Timeline**

- Between now and October 21st: small group works to collate and refine all draft recommendations
- October 21st meeting: finalize draft recommendations
- October-November: public engagement
- November-December: finalize recommendations
- December: submit final recommendations to DNR and Explore Minnesota

## **Next Meeting**

The next official task force meeting is scheduled for October 21<sup>st</sup>.