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# GITCHI-GAMI TRAIL ASSOCIATION

July 13, 2017, 10:00am

Tettegouche State Park Visitors Center – Conference Room  
5702 MN-61 – Silver Bay, MN 55614

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## 1. Welcome & Introductions

- a. In attendance: Tom Peterson (President), Bruce Martinson (Vice-President), Chad Pierson (Treasurer), Bill Blank (Board Member), Dan Cruikshank (Board Member), Anne McKinsey (Board Member), Pete Walsh (Lake County Commissioner), Chris Swanson (Mayor, Two Harbors), Mark Rudningen (Trail Coordinator, MnDNR), Lisa Austin (MnDOT D#1), Michelle Pierson (Executive Director)

## COMMITTEE BUSINESS

1. MnDOT Presentation – Lisa Austin, representing MnDOT District 1 attended our meeting and gave updates on two projects: MnDOT's Two Harbors/Highway 61 Corridor Bike Planning with StanTec, and MnDOT's District 1 Area Bicycle Plan. Ms. Austin is interested in garnering public input regarding these plans, and provided these notes:
  - The GGTA is happy to have MnDOT/Stantec at their ride on Aug. 19. I will plan to be there. They suggested setting up at a rest area instead of registration so people are more likely to take a break at talk to us. At registration people just want to get on the road. I think that is a great idea.
  - They will send me more comments after the meeting. I think the concept of writing comments about each segment is good. I think the maps are a little small. I think the locals will care less about the US BR 41 route. Maybe there is a 3<sup>rd</sup> horizontal board that shows a really big map of just Two Harbors.
  - Should we have more "cons" in the considerations? Like the route south of the cemetery – "more costly", "hard to get permission to build here"
  - They asked about an online way to comment and said they would push that out to their contact list, fb and social media.
  - Mark from DNR confirmed that the legislation says the GGTA starts on the East side of Two Harbors, so whatever we put through Two Harbors will connect to GGTA, but will not be part of GGTA.
  - GGTA is very interested to have a route through Two Harbors that connects to their trail.
  - The Mayor was super supportive and said he would do whatever he could to help.
  - There was a lot of discussion about the need for a safe crossing on the east side of town to connect the two segments of trail on the north and south side of TH 61. They were very focused on a tunnel.
  - There were quite a few questions about bridge and shoulders near Betty's Pies. I know that is out of scope of this project, but they still wanted to know about it and hoped MnDOT was adding bike facilities to this project.
  - The County Commissioner from Lake County reminded everyone why the county did not support US BR 41 on highway 61. He is supportive of the trail, but was disappointed that the alternate route Lake County recommended to use until the trail was built is not part of US BR 41.

**Action Items:** The GGTA will formulate an official recommendation for the Two Harbors route option and pass the recommendation at our September board meeting. This can be written in a memo and sent to MnDOT and the planning team working on this project. Mayor Swanson also

mentioned that the City of Two Harbors could look at formalizing a recommendation in the form of a letter or resolution.

**Update:** In subsequent communications with Lisa Austin based on the conversation at this meeting, Lisa Austin recommended that the GGTA board members look over MnDOT's USBR41 page and maps and offer any recommended changes. Recommendations on our end could include adding signage to alert motorists that the Hwy 61 shoulders are a bike way where we do not yet have trail. Additionally, language could be added to both the landing page, and the 'About' tab to really call attention to the fact that there are places where there are narrow shoulders. The GGTA board offered a lot of input during the designation planning and knowing that many serious cyclists completing the route would be on touring bicycles, we did not recommend the alternate routes be used as the official routes. The GGTA was supportive of MnDOT's efforts to include alternate routes on the maps as long as gravel portions were really well displayed. Should the GGTA wish to revise our position on this, we could call for MnDOT to make the alternate routes more obvious.

**Action Items:**

- a) Review the information and maps on USBR41 here: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/bike/usbr41/>
- b) Respond to this email with any suggestions.
- c) We can add this as an agenda item for the September meeting and draft a memo highlighting any recommendations.

**MnDOT Action Items:** Would it be possible for MnDOT to provide ARDC with more accurate shoulder width data? ARDC is willing to work to develop a more accurate shoulder width map that could be beneficial to our trail riders, and USBR41 riders. The shoulder width map was recently updated on our website, but we understand it still marks some areas as being wider than they may actually be.

## 2. President/Vice President's Report

- 2018 Bonding Legislative Request Process – The GGTA will continue to work with Judy Erickson, and via the Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota to prepare a bonding ask. It has been noted that the lawsuit between the Governor and the Legislature will delay the usual timeline for this ask. A discussion about past bonding asks and the role of the GGTA/MnDNR was held. Mr. Kent Skaar sent current allocated monies update email and suggested the DNR may not be focusing on trail advancement in the next bonding cycle. M. Pierson will forward the email from Kent Skaar to the board to provide background. The GGTA will prepare a worksheet for the PTC by August 18<sup>th</sup>. At this time our ask includes:
  - \$1.5M for Ski Hill Road to Lutsen Town Center
  - \$300,000 for design/engineering from Silver Bay to Tettegouche
  - \$300,000 for design/engineering from Cutface Creek Wayside to Cascade River State Park
  - Should we include an ask for Tofte?
  - Should we include an ask for Two Harbors to Flood Bay?
  - Silver Creek Bridge – we need to check in with DNR and DOT about when this project will occur, and where DNR thinks the trail will most likely align as it travels towards Silver Creek (inland or lakeside). This could present an opportunity for bonding request.

- LCCMR Tour – July 19<sup>th</sup> - The GGTA board members requested that Michelle Pierson attend the tour event at Palisade Head to serve as a representative.

**Update:** The LCCMR tour group arrived just on time at Palisade Head. Presenters included Jason Peterson who spoke about Tettegouche, Denny Caneff from the SHTA, Kevin Johnson, who gave a nice spectrum of the GGST's history and discussed DNR's proposal for the ENRTF funds. The DNR included two Gitchi projects, the first a \$2M ask for Through Tofte, the second for the \$300,000 in engineering funds to connect Silver Bay to Tettegouche. The tour was a nice opportunity to discuss the trail and trail advancement. It looks like proposals will be discussed and allocations finalized in October 2017. Find the LCCMR process schedule here:  
<http://www.lccmr.leg.mn/calendar/calendar-index.html>

- Annual Ride – Annual ride preparations continue to go well. There are 40+ people preregistered at this time. Ride brochures have been distributed across the state and at our kiosks. Posters have been hung on all kiosks. The event has been added to many online calendars. Mayor Jay A. DeCoux will be representing Fireweed Bike Coop and serving as bike mechanic support on our ride day. Michelle will be interviewed about the ride on KTHW on August 3<sup>rd</sup>. WTIP has exchanged memberships with us and will be reading on-air messages about the ride. Ride tshirts have been ordered. Artwork by Adam Swanson has been dropped off to prepare for raffle. Ride committee has decided to sell 300, \$5 dollar raffle tickets. Drawing to be held when raffle tickets have all sold. Raffle sales will begin on the ride date. If tickets remain after the ride, we will make tickets available for purchase via email and do a 'Facebook live video' when selecting the winning ticket. Selling 300 tickets permits folks to buy multiple tickets, but still know their odds. Should all tickets sell, we would recoup \$1,500. This is about double what we paid to the artist. At that point we can discuss the option to purchase more rights to the image for printing 'generic' long-sleeve tees, sweatshirts, and t-shirts. Board members and immediate family members will not be able to purchase tickets. Find a final mock-up of the image with ride text attached to these minutes.

**Action items:** Bill or Rod, would either of you contact WTIP about a potential interview about the ride? Michelle will send out a press release about the ride will be sent out on August 1<sup>st</sup> to all newspapers, radio stations, and tv stations on the shore.

### 3. Executive Director's Report

- Organized much of the t-shirt preparations for annual ride
- Will be interviewed on KTHW on August 3<sup>rd</sup>
- Has participated in the TH/61 bike route planning process on behalf of the GGTA
- Has answered many trail elevation questions sent via the website's email feature lately – board desires that ARDC look to develop a print elevation map of the existing trail segments in the near future
- Developed Facebook event for Annual Ride. Will continue to promote the ride.

### 4. Treasurer's Report

- Find a copy of the Treasurer's report attached
- Bike Swap update—the Spokengear Yard Sale event was a fun, all-day event, that garnered the GGTA some good will from the City of Two Harbors with our winning bid for the bicycles that were in City Hall's basement. The GGTA received a check for \$1000 from Spokengear as our portion of the consignment portion of sales that went to support local area bike groups. Thanks, Spokengear!

## 5. Trail Coordinator's Report

- A rain event in the Tofte area required some attention to a major culvert near Cobblestone Creek. MnDNR did a temporary repair, and will work with DOT on a permanent vis
- Mark Rudningen reports that MnDNR has offered lots of support with mowing from Gooseberry to Beaver Bay, which helps with long-term preservation of the trail.
- Crack sealing will be happening from Gooseberry towards Beaver Bay
- One bike accident on the Split Rock segment – cyclist was an experienced rider who was going too fast
- Ulland Bros. to begin the West Road project on Monday, July 17<sup>th</sup>. **Update:** This project has gotten a good start. Board members Bill Blank and former board member Gary Brumberg have been keeping tabs on construction. Updates will be posted on Facebook regarding progress. It is likely we will need to plan a different route for our 37 milers for the Annual Ride date.
- Thoresons anticipate the work on the Temperance River State Park segment of trail will be done by the end of July. **Update:** Bill Blank and Mark Rudningen have both checked on this project. Bill notes the trail may re-open on Friday. Bill will send photos to Michelle and we will post an update on Facebook.

## 6. Publicity/Communications Officer Report

- We are still actively hoping to fill this board role. Do you know someone who would be a great fit? Please let Michelle know if so.

## 7. Other Business

**NEXT MEETING:** Date: September 14, 2017, 10am Location: (TBD)