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# GITCHI-GAMI TRAIL ASSOCIATION

September 14, 2017, 10:00am  
Minnesota DNR Parks & Trails Offices – Conference Room  
1568 County Hwy 2, Two Harbors, MN 55616



\*meeting notes and documents will be posted at: [www.ardc.org/ggta](http://www.ardc.org/ggta)

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## MEETING SUMMARY

1. **Welcome/Introductions:** Meeting called to order at 10:10am. In attendance: Tom Peterson (President), Bruce Martinson (Vice President), Chad Pierson (Treasurer), Dan Cruikshank (Board), Mark Rudningen (MnDNR), Lisa Austin (MnDOT), Tracy Gilsvik (Lake County – SHIP)

## COMMITTEE BUSINESS

1. **President/Vice President's Report** – Tom Peterson shared his thoughts about the Eckbeck rest stop on Annual Ride Day and mentioned that there is a big difference between the first riders to pull up and the last. Bruce Martinson mentioned that work was progressing at the Caribou River Wayside—more will be included about this in the Trail Coordinator's Report.
2. **Executive Director's Report**
  - Annual Ride wrap up
    - 142 riders
    - Post rider survey results –Find a matrix with survey responses attached
    - Ticket drawing for painting—took place following this meeting at Spokengear/Cedar Coffee Company. Live video of the winning ticket was posted to our Facebook page. Scott Pollino was the winner of the painting. **UPDATE:** The raffle sales were \$635, which can be considered as additional ride income on the treasury report.
    - Photos (Mark R., Andy H., Paul Sundberg) – An album of ride day photos was posted to our facebook page here: [https://www.facebook.com/pg/GitcheeGamiTrailAssociation/photos/?tab=album&album\\_id=1367370186645477](https://www.facebook.com/pg/GitcheeGamiTrailAssociation/photos/?tab=album&album_id=1367370186645477)
    - We purchased a photo from Paul Sundberg for \$100 and have traded an in-kind Business Sponsorship for the remaining 20+ photos he provided us. Mr. Sundberg said we may use a photo he took during the event on a rack card or other publications, with a photo credit to Paul Sundberg Photography.
    - Campsite for MnRovers – We successfully held a group camp spot at Gooseberry for our 2018 annual ride. We will work with the Rovers and Gooseberry Park staff to permit the Rovers to reserve this site. We may want to evaluate if we would like to reserve 2 group sites for the 2019 ride and permit some riders to camp the night before the ride.
    - Trailer- ride coordinators brought up an idea to do some investigation on how much it would cost to purchase a trailer that was long enough and wide enough to contain our tents, tables, water jugs, and Rubbermaid bins that are used for the ride. This could help the ride directors to prepare items for the ride in advance (distribute snacks per rest station, wash containers, etc) if the trailer was accessible and all our items were together. Treasurer Chad Pierson said he would make some calls about prices.
    - Bike Your Park Day – September 30, 2017 – We have organized a casual group ride on National Bike Your Park Day. Those interested in joining will arrive at the Gooseberry Trailhead for a group photo at 10am. Adventure

Cycling Association provided us with a poster and a pound of coffee beans for signing up for the ride. Michelle Pierson will grind the coffee and bring a thermos to share with any riders at the event. Riders are welcome to do a park-to-park ride, or ride whatever distance they prefer. Michelle and Chad Pierson coordinated the event and will be riding with their family to Iona's Beach and back.

○ Bonding and LCCMR updates-

- Bonding – we submitted an application to be included with Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota's bonding request with \$3.2M as part of four projects:

1) \$1.5M is being sought to complete a segment of Gitchi-Gami State Trail from the current terminus at Ski Hill Road into the town center of Lutsen. This 1.55 mile segment of trail was recently awarded partial funding via a Federal Transportation Alternatives program grant. This project has vast amount of support from residents, businesses, and local governments. Not only will this segment provide access for residents of/visitors to Lutsen with connections to Temperance River State Park, it will also serve as a true transportation alternative to many individuals in the workforce in the Lutsen area.

2) \$600,000 is sought to conduct design and engineering for a 7 mile segment of trail connecting the city of Silver Bay to Tettegouche State Park. With engineering completed, and firm cost estimates in hand, the DNR and GGTA will be greatly served to apply for grants for this important segment of trail. This segment would extend the longest segment of GGST to near 25 miles of trail, connecting three of the most visited state parks in Minnesota, a Scientific and Natural Area, several State Waysides, and two communities.

3) \$500,000 is sought to accommodate the Gitchi-Gami State Trail on a new bridge that MnDOT intends to install in 2020 on Highway 61 over Silver Creek. The bridge will replace a current culvert, and DOT is looking for DNR financial support for the extra costs for widening and lengthening the bridge to accommodate the proposed trail in this area. DNR will be responsible for the extra costs for widening and lengthening the bridge to accommodate the proposed trail. This will form an important connection to the already constructed, and very popular, Silver Creek Tunnel segment of trail.

4) \$600,000 is sought to conduct design and engineering for a 4 mile segment of trail connecting Cutface Creek State Wayside to Cascade River State Park. With engineering completed, the DNR will be in a good position to seek funding options to build out this important segment of trail. When completed, this segment will connect the residents of/visitors to the city of Grand Marais to a state park, through a very scenic route through state lands and through several beautiful State Waysides.

We have sent this information on to Judy Erickson also. Judy will keep us informed if the Senate will be doing a bonding bill tour and will work on our behalf to include us if one occurs. The House will not be focusing on a tour at this time.

- LCCMR – From Judy Erickson: The LCCMR project containing funding for the GGT has moved forward with overwhelming support by the Commission. It had 12 of 14 votes. This simply means it goes to the hearing stage, with the allocation phase to follow in October. Judy will keep us posted if it is requested we find someone to give testimony for our projects in front of the Commission.

- Cook County Chamber Annual Gala—October 24/25—Both Senator Bakk and Representative Ecklund will be attending. Judy Erickson has carved out time for a GGT update presentation to occur at 3:00pm on October 24<sup>th</sup> at either Ski Hill Road or Cutface Creek Wayside. She has requested that Michelle Pierson attend, and board members are welcome to attend, as well. More info on this to come.
- Minnesota Scenic Byways Annual Conference – Stakeholders from MnDOT, RDCs, and Scenic Byway stakeholders will convene for their annual conference on October 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>. Michelle Pierson has been asked to present to this gathering a 1/2 presentation called: Gitch-Gami State Trail: Lessons Learned.
- Website inquiries- there have been many questions coming through the website. Michelle Pierson will work with Sandy at 2 Dogs to switch around who is on the receiving end of website emails. Pierson attempts to respond to questions quickly. Often questions come in about biking on the shoulders of Hwy 61. Charlie Moore(ARDC) and Lisa Austin (MnDOT) will be driving the entire length of 61 from Two Harbors to the border to collect accurate shoulder width data. They will be stopping a vehicle, using a rolling measure tape, recording shoulder width, shoulder condition data in an online collector application. This information can assist us with refining our shoulder width map for the website.
- Give MN preparations – Minnesota’s Give to the Max Day will be held on Thursday, November 16<sup>th</sup>. Michelle Pierson will work to update our profile and try to encourage our facebook followers and membership email list to consider a contribution during this campaign.

### 3. Treasurer’s Report –

- Treasurer Chad Pierson distributed a Treasurer’s Report (find attached) which shows that with our 142 riders this year, our ride budget is in the black. One thing to consider is that raffle ticket contributions were not added to this Treasurer’s Report and thus it could be noted that an additional \$635 was taken in. Pierson noted he would include an updated sidebar with the Annual Ride Report at our next meeting.
- It was noted that the board had approved a \$1000 contribution to MnDNR to assist with new wayfinding signage that will help riders and visitors to the North Shore find and access Twin Points/Iona’s Beach which also serves as a trailhead. Pierson wrote a check out to MnDNR following the meeting. Additional wayfinding signs may call more attention to the fact that the GGT exists and will hopefully draw more users.
- MnTrails Magazine contacted us about a \$100 ad under a ‘Save The Date’ spot. UPDATE: Several board members have approved, and M. Pierson will contact Jan at MnTrails to know we will place that ad

### 4. Trail Coordinator’s Report

- West Road- At the time of the meeting, the West Road project was nearing paving. Curb and gutter had been installed. Mark R. passed around photos. On 9/15 the trail portion of the pavement project was laid. As of 9/26/17, the West Road itself had not been paved as there are 9 ‘soft spots’ that need some dry weather in order to permit paving. Mark Rudningen will keep us informed about the project as it nears completion.
- Beaver River Bridge/Wayside tie-in- Mark Rudningen spoke with his MnDOT contacts about the project. It is on schedule and anticipated to be completed by the October 31 deadline. There are plans to tie the existing trail to the bridge, and from the east end of the bridge to the West Road terminus. Mark passed around two drawings of the project, find them attached.
- Ribbon Cutting Event – Mark R. gave a project update to the Beaver Bay Township board who asked about a ribbon cutting. With the Beaver River Bridge project having an October 31<sup>st</sup> wrap up date, the thought is to wait until May 2018 to hold this event

to celebrate a project that provides a true link to communities and shared state assets. The GGTA plans to be involved with planning this event as more is known.

- Temperance River Project – everything is now complete and DNR and GGTA have both been hearing good things from riders.
- Caribou Falls Wayside – although no actual trail will be laid during this Wayside redesign/construction project, the DNR will be included a bike rack and the trail line has been drawn into plans for a future connection.
- RFPs were returned for the design/engineering project from Grand Marais to Cut Face. MnDNR hired SRF as the consultant to do the engineering. They were the low bidder at \$500,000. A consultant (Carve Co.) was hired to do the Tofte engineering from current east terminus to just past the Fisherman’s Museum for \$110,000.
- A culvert that was corrupted by a large rain event will be replaced near Cobblestone Cottages. The new culvert will be 44’ long galvanized, about twice as big as it is now, with a 53” width, 34” height (as memory serves Mark. R). This should be a positive manner to mitigate for large rain events in the future.

#### **5. Publicity/Communications Officer Report**

- Still seeking an officer to fill this role – do you know someone great for this role? M. Pierson would be happy to speak with anyone about the basic responsibilities for this board role.
- Seeking ideas for Fall Newsletter – Would like to get Fall Newsletters in the mail the first few days of November to give folks a heads up about GiveMN/Give To The Max Day
- Rack Card- we have a template and new photos. Some changes to the template will be required to demonstrate closing the gap in trail in Beaver Bay.

#### **6. Other Business – none offered**

#### **7. GGTA Meeting Adjourned: 11:30am**

#### **8. MnDOT Presentation – 11:30am**

- MnDOT District 1 Area Bicycle Plan – Lisa Austin, MnDOT attended our meeting. Before launching into a conversation about the MnDOT District 1 Area Bike Plan, she gave a couple updates:
  - MnDOT is expecting to do a mill & overlay project on Highway 61 from Two Harbors to the Silver Creek Tunnel. This project is scheduled for summer 2018. It is not a reconstruction project, and MnDOT does not have plans for building any trail, but we can anticipate positive changes to the shoulder.
  - Bruce Martinson noted that in areas where MnDOT has improved Hwy 61 and shoulders, that in areas where there is paved shoulder and gravel, when the tar/gravel mix is laid, it stays put better, resulting in less gravel on the shoulder which can greatly benefit cyclists.
- MnDOT D1 Bike Plan presentation- Lisa Austin presented a series of maps and asked for input about regional connections. She also provided a platform for GGTA board members and others in attendance to offer alternate routes off of Hwy 61 in consideration of USBR41.
- GGTA website: it was also noted that the GGTA website could be amended to include a USBR41 tab, or a link on the ‘Riding the Shore’ tab to provide USBR41/The North Star Route riders some alternatives to riding on the Hwy 61 shoulders in Lake County (especially between the tunnels) and in the Lutsen area.
- Was noted the GGTA supports MnDOT not using rumble strips. Discussion of ‘mumble strips’.
- GGTA would also support additional signage on Hwy 61 to alert motorists of the presence of cyclists. Suggestions like this could be made to the MnDOT traffic safety engineer.

- Bikepacking on the shore: It was noted that perhaps the GGTA could include information about National Forest/State Park/Private camping options on the USBR41 route for folks interested in bikepacking.

**NEXT MEETING:** Date: November 9, 2017, 10am      Location: (TBD)