

Lake Vermilion Trail Steering Committee
Meeting #5 Notes
4/13/16 – Tower Civic Center

Attendees

Glenn Bergerson – *Beatty Township*
Carol Booth – *Wakemup Village Resident, Cook*
Joan Broten – *Office Manager, Minnesota DNR Parks & Trails, Tower City Council*
Greg Dostert – *Breitung Township*
Josh Gillson – *Lake Vermilion Resort Association*
Russell Habermann – *Arrowhead Regional Development Commission*
Eric Hanson – *Pehrson Lodge, Lake Vermilion Resort Association*
Cathi Hiveley – *Beatty Township*
Linda Keith – *Clerk, City of Tower*
Holly Larson – *National Park Service*
Steve Lotz – *Vermilion Lake Township*
Caroline Owens – *Ely Resident*
Bev Peterson – *Greenwood Township*
Lee Peterson – *Greenwood Township*
Ron Potter – *Trail Enthusiast*
Elizabeth Storm – *City of Cook, Cook City Council*
Sue Wolfe – *Owens Township*

1. General Updates/Comments from Committee Members
 - a. Carol Booth noted that she contacted the Iron Range Partnership for Sustainability (IRPS) to inquire about their willingness to serve as an interim fiscal agent for the Lake Vermilion Trail. She noted that discussion surrounding this possibility will be discussed later in the meeting.

2. Regional Significance Designation
 - a. Regional Significance Application Update: Russell Habermann reminded committee members that the regional designation application for the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission was sent out to the steering committee for review on April 6. The draft application was reviewed previously by Carol Booth, Holly Larson, and Caroline Owens. He noted that he received one review so far, and noted that additional revisions on the draft application should be sent to him by April 13. He will start compiling the final application on April 14. In general, committee members voiced an interest in including cultural, natural, and geological interpretation in addition to historical interpretation along the trail; public health and the number of resorts in the application was also addressed.
 - b. Application Sponsors, Letters of Support, Photos: Russell noted that he currently has 10 letters of support on file, with one letter from St. Louis County pending. He received photos from Carol Booth and Lee Peterson so far, but invites more

pictures to be submitted to him by April 20. Holly Larson noted that she spoke to the cities of Cook and Tower, who have both agreed to serve as co-applicants for the application. The City of Tower has already submitted its resolution; the City of Cook will meet on April 28 and will provide a resolution as soon as possible.

- i. Russell will send out a list of all letters of support authors.
- ii. Committee members with pictures will send Russell pictures of the Lake Vermilion area to accompany the application by April 20.
- iii. Russell will set up and send out a poll for committee members to vote on the pictures which should be included with the application.
- iv. Russell will revise the application and set it up for submission on April 29.

3. Communication/Public Relations

- a. Logo Contest: Carol Booth has worked with Northwoods Friends of the Arts and the steering committee to produce a final draft application and rules for the logo contest. Sue Wolfe suggested that the application should clarify what text should be included on the sign. The committee noted that "Lake Vermilion Trail" should be on the logo, which Carol will make sure to include in the contest rules. She has also secured runner-up prizes from area businesses, but has not heard back from Bois Forte, where she submitted an application for a \$500 cash prize. The committee agreed that a \$500 cash prize is a good first place prize. Carol will work to launch the contest soon, and the logo submissions will be due June 15.
- b. MN Public Radio Meeting: The event in Hibbing will take place on 4/13 and will highlight the future of industry on the Iron Range. Carol asked if the Lake Vermilion Trail should be a part of the night. Committee members noted that it seems too early to be spreading the word widely about the trail, since landowners have not been approached yet.

4. Management Structure/Political Support

- a. Mesabi Trail/Railroad Authority: Holly and Russell met with the Mesabi Trail work group on 4/12, gave a brief presentation about the Lake Vermilion Trail, and requested that the Mesabi Trail add a 5-mile spur to Bois Forte from Tower. While the Railroad Authority Board will make the ultimate decision, the work group was excited about the idea of the trail and encouraged Holly and Russell to talk with Bob Manzoline and the Railroad Authority Board about the potential of adding this spur trail.
- b. Joint Powers Board without Taxing Authority: Holly led a discussion regarding the possibility of setting up a Joint Powers Agreement, what information is needed before a decision could be made, and what parameters might be acceptable in order for townships and cities to consider working together as members of a future board. The committee discussed the purpose, duties, board structure, management, costs, insurance and liability, method of dispersing funds, and terms of agreement for a possible Joint Powers Agreement proposal to present to Cities and Townships in the Lake Vermilion Area. The discussion will continue at the next committee meeting.

- i. Holly will contact Linda and Theresa re: liability options.
- ii. The committee mentioned asking for advice from the League of Minnesota Cities.
- iii. Other information needed: Better cost estimates for trail development and maintenance, and a list of benefits.

5. Fundraising

- a. Fiscal Agent: Carol has approached the Iron Range Partnership for Sustainability (IRPS) to inquire about the possibility of IRPS acting as an interim fiscal agent for the Lake Vermilion Trail; she has drafted a letter to request this partnership. The committee asked if there is a cost associated with IRPS acting as an interim fiscal agent. If so, Linda Keith offered the possibility of the City of Tower acting as a fiscal agent, which they already do for community gardens in the City.
 - i. Carol will contact IRPS and see if there are costs associated with their assistance. The committee will revisit the issue if there is a fee.
 - ii. Subcommittee: Linda, Carol and Josh. Josh will identify businesses from which to request start-up funding, and draft a request letter. He has worked with local businesses recently on the Governor's Fishing Opener.

6. Trail Development: West End

- a. Progress: Carol Booth outlined work that the subcommittee performed since the last meeting, exploring the feasibility of the route along the ridgeline and connecting to the Wakemup Hill Overlook area. Some suggestions from the subcommittee include routing to the south of Camp Vermilion, the possibility to share private roads, parking off of Highway 24, and skirting the north edge of the "gravel pit" area.
 - i. Holly will organize a conference call to go over strategies to approach landowners about utilizing private land for the trail corridor.

7. Trail Development: East End

- a. Progress: Steve Lotz outlined progress that the east subcommittee has made. He noted that he spoke to Minnesota Power, and that the powerline on the south side of Highway 169 is behind the houses on private land. The power company has an easement, and clearance between the powerline and the ground is of greatest concern for the power company. Minnesota Power has accepted trail easements in the past. The section near the dam where the river is close to the highway will be a difficult area to fit a trail. A question of safety in crossing Highway 169 was brought up, since it will not be at a controlled intersection; Linda Keith noted that locating the crossing away from the Y-Store intersection is a safety measure in itself, and they put the crossing where trail users would have substantial sight lines for visibility as they cross the road.
 - i. Holly will contact MnDOT regarding Highway 169 crossing.

NEXT MEETING: WEDNESDAY, MAY 24TH, 9 am – 12 am, at Greenwood Town Hall