

Lake Vermilion Trail Steering Committee
Meeting #7 Notes
9/7/16 – US Forest Service LaCroix Ranger Station

Attendees

Carol Booth – *Wakemup Village Resident, Cook*

Gregory Dostert – *Breitung Township*

Josh Gillson – *Lake Vermilion Resort Assn.*

Eric Hanson – *Pehrson's Lodge*

Russell Habermann – *Arrowhead Regional Development Commission (ARDC)*

Tom Holmes, *National Park Service (NPS)*

Tim Johnson – *State Farm*

Paul Knuti – *Embarrass Township*

Holly Larson – *National Park Service (NPS)*

Steve Lotz – *Vermilion Lake Township*

Sue Wolfe – *Owens Township*

1. Updates

- a. Planning Assistance from Russell & Holly: The Arrowhead Regional Development Commission (ARDC) is currently developing a proposal to the Lake Vermilion Resort Association (LVRA) to request expanding the current contract to include additional dollars for planning assistance. ARDC has included the Lake Vermilion Trail into its Regional Transportation Advisory Council (RTAC) work plan for 2017, but this only includes minimal technical assistance. The contract expansion would allow ARDC to be present at meetings and offer more intensive assistance to the implementation process. Holly's renewal has been accepted by the National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program; she will continue to provide assistance through September 2017.
- b. Conference Call on Land Acquisition: The conference call will tentatively take place on September 14, 2016, at 10 a.m.
 - i. Russell will develop an overview of ARDC's work to date and present the information and ARDC's contract expansion request to the LVRA during their October 5 meeting.
 - ii. Holly will confirm the date for the land acquisition training and send out an email to officially announce the details of the learning opportunity.

2. Master Plan Revision

- a. Action Steps to Complete by Spring 2017: Russell noted that master plan updates needed to meet standards set forth by the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission (GMRPTC) most notably include trail ownership/management, development plan, acquisition plan, ecological/land resources plan, programming plan, and outreach/marketing plan. Background information (i.e. demographics) will also need to be collected, but ARDC and NPS

would assist with compiling these resources. The Steering Committee voiced that the following studies and documents could provide background data for the Plan: the Cities of Cook and Tower Comprehensive Plans, and Greenwood Township's Comprehensive Plan (in process), and the Mesabi Trail economic study. The LVRA Economic Impact Study could also offer important insight. For health data, see County data, County and City comprehensive plans, the recent Bridge to Health survey, and the SHIP office for northern St. Louis County. Include data on retirees and benefits to retirees. Carol, Josh and Eric are willing to serve on a Master Plan subcommittee. Ask Tyler and Sidra to assist the subcommittee as well.

- b. Detailed Timeline: Russell explained that the master plan revisions would ideally be completed by March 2017, but the master plan is not due by any specific date. To hit this target, the following timeline would loosely be held: between September and November 2016, the Steering Committee would provide input during its meetings; in December 2016, a draft of the complete plan would be introduced for committee review; and between January and February 2017, a public review meeting and review period would be held. For this to happen, the management structure would also need to be solidified by March 2017 as well. If plan completion is delayed, it is anticipated that the GMRPTC will review master plans in June 2017, and the first opportunity to apply for project funds are likely to be due in late summer 2017. The Master Plan should be completed before the 2017 Commission review. If the contract expansion isn't completed, ARDC would not be able to assist with this task.

3. Communication/Public Relations

- a. Promotion at Summer Festivals: 500 trail pamphlets were printed; they were made available at Northwoods Friends of the Arts (NWFA), Lake Vermilion resorts (20 pamphlets each), area farmers markets, and the Tower DNR headquarters throughout the summer. Tiffany Fondie from the LVRA has extra pamphlets.
- b. Fall Promotion Opportunities: The Steering Committee noted potential outreach opportunities at "COOK"TOBERFEST (weekend before Halloween), the Lion's Yard Sale, Haunted Laser Tag, and the Outdoor Trade Show.
- c. Brochure: See 3a above. Additional funding opportunities (i.e. round-up programs) can help create a greater push to build trail awareness in the coming year.
- d. Website: A website where the public could be directed to learn about the Trail should be created. The Steering Committee discussed potential local consultants that could be hired to create a site.
 - i. Carol Booth will check with Tiffany to see how many extra trail brochures are available.
 - ii. Tom will update the brochure insert to specify that any donations to the trail made through the City of Tower are tax-deductible. Sue Wolfe will create a tabletop display for Cook-toberfest.

- iii. Sue will drop off brochures to the Ely Folk School.
- iv. Steering Committee members will research potential consultants to develop a trail website. Carol will call for a cost estimate. Sue, Carol, and Eric have names of website developers.

4. Joint Powers Agreement (JPA)

- a. Review 1st Draft: Holly provided a draft outline of potential points to include in the joint powers agreement. Present members of the Steering Committee reviewed the outline and offered suggestions to clarify points relating to listed entities in the agreement, representatives that would serve on the board, and the population number that will guide annual due rates. Insurance options were also discussed. The Minnesota Association of Townships and League of Minnesota Cities insurance options should be researched.
- b. Agreement Review Process: Holly stated that the League of Minnesota Cities will provide a legal review of the document if a member City requests it. The Minnesota Association of Townships does not offer legal review. The Committee discussed a strategy for presenting the proposed JPA to all potential members of the proposed joint powers board. The Committee's tentative governmental review order is as follows:
 - Revise the PowerPoint presentation
 - Start with Cook, Tower, and Bois Forte in Nov/Dec
 - County review
 - Breitung and Owens Townships in Dec/Jan
 - Beatty, Greenwood, Vermilion Lake Townships
- c. The committee also discussed what information will be needed to present to the local government boards with the JPA review. The committee wants cost estimates for trail development and trail management and maintenance; a list of benefits; insurance information and fiscal agency information to present to the Councils/Boards.
 - i. Dusty will talk to Linda Keith regarding insurance costs and options.
 - ii. Holly will write a full draft of the joint powers agreement, to be reviewed at the October meeting.
 - iii. Russell will send the PowerPoint presentation about the Trail to Carol, Sue, Josh, and Dusty.
 - iv. Josh will talk to Tom Rukavina about County review of the JPA.
 - v. Carol, Sue and Josh will give the presentation to Cook.
 - vi. Dusty will give the presentation to Tower.

5. Fundraising

- a. Updates: There are no updates to share.
- b. Ideas for Local Matching Funds/Action Plan:
 - LVRA (Need to show progress, timeframe for development, probability for success)

- Grants (IRRRB Community Development, the Northland Foundation, US Steel Foundation)
- Ask letter and information package (Josh and Russell drafted a letter)
- Round-up programs (Natural Harvest Co-op and Lake Country Power)
- Sell t-shirts and sweatshirts
- Cans in local businesses for change. Credit Union will match a percentage of change donations
- State Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP)
- “Seasonal recreation” classification on taxes (Could get a mailing list from the County and ask for donations)
- Crowdsourcing (Kickstarter, GoFundMe, connect to future website)
- Regional Sustainable Development Partnership, U of M (Potential funds for planning, ask for \$7500 for Master Plan?)
 - i. Russell will provide Carol with the contact information for the regional SHIP coordinator, Annie Harala.
 - ii. Carol will contact SHIP, the Credit Union, and the round-up programs.
 - iii. Josh will follow up on the “ask” letter.

NEXT MEETING: WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5TH, 1 pm – 3 pm, at the Tower DNR Headquarters