

Alabama Trails Commission and Advisory Board Joint Meeting
Alabama Center for Commerce
Montgomery, Alabama
April 2, 2015

ATC Attendees

Debbie Quinn, Chair
Jeff Pruitt
Grey Brennen
Josh Jones
Rebecca Fulks
Greg Lein
Phillip West

ATCAB Attendees

Nisa Miranda
Brian Rushing
Steve Timms
Frank Chirico
Ike Lyon
Jim Felder
Jason Dockery
Rob Grant
Richard Martin
Brandon Glover
Shannon Weaver (proxy for Dr. William Puckett)
Steve Newton
Cheryl Morgan
Evan Cruise

Debbie Quinn called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. and Commission and Advisory Board had introductions.

Richard Martin described how he became involved in bike trails, canoe trails and rail trails. He stated that the next Joint meeting will be held in Elkmont in August. The Rails to Trails Conservancy have been invited to this meeting.

American Trails

Debbie Quinn stated that Terri Collins was nominated for Trail Advocate. She also stated that she nominated Chewacla State Park and Coldwater Mountain for an award but has not been informed of the results on this nomination.

Commission Members

Debbie stated that the Commission members will need to complete the Statement of Economic Interest; however the Advisory Board does not have to complete. She also stated that Board members can be reimbursed for travel to the meetings. Debbie stated that members would like some form of Government ID to receive state rates at hotels. The ADECA website was also discussed.

The Minutes to the December 4, 2014, Joint meeting were presented and approved with the contingency of the date being added at the top of the minutes.

Committees

Cheryl Morgan discussed Committee goals and objectives. The Committees are Research and Education, Policy and Advocacy, Executive, and two Ad Hoc Committees, Foundation and Technical Assistance.

Executive Committee

Debbie Quinn stated that HB 144 went to Committee on April 1, 2015 and received a favorable report. The Bill should go to the full House in the next week or two. The Bill would change the tenure from two (2) years to (4) years and also be able to serve two (2) terms. It also adds additional people to the Advisory Board. (Power Companies, Land and Trust and Underserved User groups) The Bill also allows the Alabama Trails Commission to change from ADECA to another agency. Tripp Pittman and Cam Ward will carry the Bill in the Senate.

Policy and Advocacy

Cheryl Morgan stated that the initial goals are raising awareness to the public, trails, complete streets, safe routes to schools and understanding policy changes, increase community engagement, identify and build coalitions, and matrix of economic impact to build awareness. There is a meeting scheduled in April. Frank Chirico questioned if there was representation from the law enforcement community. He feels this would be helpful.

Research and Education

In the absence of Wayde Morse, Cheryl Morgan gave the report. She stated that the Committee is making progress in looking at the best practices. They are also looking at obesity and health. Additional people are still needed on this committee. Also, the committee discussed a point person on grants that reinforce the activities of the commission.

Communications and Outreach

Josh Jones stated that they working on marketing technology. They have set realistic attainable goals. They are looking at social media and how people can share images, how to collaborate to find good images of where people want to go, hash tag search for keywords and hash tags to promotes our trails system to create awareness. The goal is to create awareness, conversation and passion.

It was stated that the Alabama Trail Conference facebook page needs to change its' name.

Executive Committee

Debbie stated that the Annual Report was given to the Legislature on April 1, 2015. Debbie will email the report to the Board.

Communications and Outreach

Brian Rushing stated that the website is very close to going live. (ALRecTrails.org) He stated that it loads more easily with a more of a modern look. Some functional issues are being repaired now. The focus is to connect people to trails by type; connecting people to locally owned and operated outfitters and lodging. The next phase will be trail maps. They are currently uploading static maps and linking to other sites to specific trails. Currently they are working with Scott Stewart on the rollout. The ADECA trails will be on the site. We are providing information on the trails that we have funded. USET enters the information into the website. Currently they are looking at 3 - 4 weeks before the website is open. There will be the top 50 trails on the site when it is completed. The top 50 trails were determined by poling user groups.

Ad Hoc-Foundation Committee

The By-Laws changes were discussed. It will be set up like a bank board. Different areas will have their own advisory board. Jeff Pruitt made a motion to approve and seconded by Phillip West. The motion carried.

The members of the Ad Hoc Committee are Bruce Reed, Merrill Stewart, R. B. Walker, Mim Gaines, and Tom Cosby.

Greg Lein reported that the Conservation fund in geoleaders from Springer Mountain Georgia to Flagg Mountain in Alabama conservation fund has been able to secure some key properties. It was questioned the territorial feelings about terminus being in Georgia. Some say that the Appalachian actually begin and end in Alabama. Also, it was stated that Weogufga could be a state park again.

Technical Assistant Committee

The members of this committee are Jim Felder, Richard Martin, Brian Rushing, Cheryl Morgan, Rob Grant and Phillip West. This committee would like to build a catalog of sources for communities, a survey tool for existing trails, develop methodologies on how people can access all of this information. They would like to be proactive-getting started and reactive-addressing road blocks that may occur.

Jim's ABC's of getting started –frequently asked questions:

Brian Rushing:

- a) Who else has done a trail like yours?
- b) Inventory and catalog trails
- c) Local examples of best practices

Richard Martin:

- a) Local and National advocacy groups

Rob Grant:

- a) Funding mechanisms
- b) Grant writing

Phillip West:

- a) People who are experts in trails

Cheryl Morgan:

- a) Legal
- b) Real estate
- c) Pro Bono help
- d) Fee based help

This Committee will meet in April.

Munson Foundation Grant

There will be a 1 ½ day meeting with access on trails. The Foundation received a \$15,000 grant; however \$40,000 is needed. Looking at grant funding from RTP.

Conservation and Recreational Leadership Summit

Brian Rushing stated that they would like to meet in June for a ½ day workshop. He stated that there is no statewide strategy for recreational infrastructure, address physical gaps, local need, and public demand. It would be helpful to have a tool that could assist in locating projects across the state. Frank Chirico stated that the public has a negative perception of the trails. It is hard to get permission to do a trail ride,

limits the number of people and environmental issues. He stated that we need to change the perception of the user.

Maureen Neighbors gave an update on RTP. She stated that she thinks the compliance workshop will be in June in round one and will do application workshops for RTP and LWCF.

ALDOT

Tiger Grants are highly competitive. They will be coming out in Federal Regulation soon. The City of Foley received one last year. May 1 is the deadline for the grants.

Jim Felder discussed his Toronto trip to the Outdoor Expo which approximately 27,000 attended. Jim created his own brochure of top 10 trail destinations in Alabama. He would like to create a brochure to hand out at next year's Expo. He stated that he will need funding for this.

Phillip West questioned if everyone cares if the Appalachian Trails comes into Alabama. He asked if we could get them to attend another meeting in December in Birmingham. Greg stated that if we build a chair lift to the new mountain biking trail, it would be the only one in North America just solely dedicated to mountain biking.

The next meeting will be in Elkmont on August 6, 2015. Bring your bike or horse and plan to stay overnight.

The meeting adjourned at 12:37 p.m.