

**EXHIBIT B**

Minutes of the Alabama Trails Commission  
and Advisory Board Joint Meeting

Wednesday, August 10, 2022  
10:00 AM

(via web conference)

Alabama Trails Commission Attendees

Amy Rauworth  
Dr. Graham Sisson, Chair  
Dr. John Kvach  
Johnny Smith  
Marcus Campbell  
Sonya Baker

Advisory Board Attendees

Debbie Quinn  
Dr. Mark Wilson  
Elizabeth Lawlor  
Francesca Gross  
Hon. Terri Collins  
Jared Carter  
Jason Dockery  
Josh Burnett  
Josh Yerby  
Marie Bostick  
Nathan Wright  
Dr. Mark Wilson  
Jared Carter  
Steve Newton  
Natalie Norman  
Tim King  
Dr. Vini Nathan  
Will Collins  
Will O'Connor

Associates & Visitors

Brian Rushing – UACED  
Tom Carruthers – Alabama Trails Foundation  
Bob Sims – Birmingham Ultra trail Society  
Paula Fancher – Alabama Scenic River Trail  
Heidi Ramey - BCBS  
Jason DiSabio – Top Trails  
Phillip Darden – IMBA / SORBA  
Wayne Briskey – Grand River Motorsports  
Chuck Barnes – Grand River Motorsports  
Sundae Ragland - ALDOT

### Welcome and Introductions

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this meeting was conducted via web conference. Dr. Graham Sisson called the meeting to order at 10:00AM and called roll. A quorum **was not** present for the Alabama Trails Commission (ATC) but was present for the Advisory Board (AB).

### Approval of Minutes

Without a quorum of the ATC, Dr. Sisson tabled consideration of approval of the February 16, 2022 ATC meeting minutes.

### Executive Committee Report

Dr. Sisson gave an update of the work of several ad hoc committees that are examining important trail-related issues and that will make recommendations for how to address those issues. The purpose of this effort is to help the ATC and AB to formulate priorities for its work over the coming months and years and to aid state leadership in identifying needs and opportunities of statewide significance. The subject areas that the Executive Committee felt were particularly important and that the ad hoc committees have been examining include the following:

- **Innovation** – Identify best practices in trail planning, development, and operation that best serve all Alabamians and meet today’s and future needs.
- **Underserved Regions** – Identify regions of need and strategies for helping those regions enhance the development and use of trails.
- **Trail-Type Focus** – Identify trail types that are currently underrepresented in Alabama and opportunities to advance planning and development of projects that close those gaps.
- **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Accessibility** – Identify gaps in Alabama’s delivery of recreational trail services to all Alabamians and recommend strategies to close those gaps.
- **Funding / Development** – Develop recommendations for organizational structures and processes that will be effective in administering new funds for trails that become available in Alabama.

Due to the “gap analysis” commonality between the *Underserved Regions* and *Trail-Type Focus* subject areas, the Executive Committee decided to combine the two committees into a single *Infrastructure Gaps* committee.

The committees met together in May, June, and again in July to discuss their approach, methodologies, and deliverables and to report on their progress. The *Infrastructure Gaps*; *Innovation*; and *Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Accessibility* committees are relying heavily on the findings contained in the 2021 SCORP to inform their analysis and recommendations. The *Funding / Development* committee is mostly conducting research into best practices from other states to help inform its analysis and recommendations.

The *Infrastructure Gaps* committee is evaluating the same trail types that were included in the 2021 SCORP, which are ATV, canoe/kayak launches, horseback riding, interpretive/nature, mountain biking, OHV, paved bicycle paths, and paved walking paths.

Using SCORP measures of supply and unmet resident demand, the *Infrastructure Gaps* committee is conducting additional analysis to determine an overall *gap score* for each trail type in each region. Early findings indicate that:

- The trail infrastructure type most needed throughout Alabama is paved walking/jogging paths, followed by (in rank order) ATV trails, hiking trails, interpretive/nature trails, paved bicycle paths, canoe/kayak launches, mountain bike trails, horseback riding trails, and OHV trails.
- Five planning regions in south Alabama (with the exception of the Mobile region) have significantly higher unmet demand and lower supply of all types of trails - including walking/jogging paths - than the rest of the state. In other words, it is these regions that are most underserved by trails.

This initial analysis organizes results to highlight which trail types are most needed in each of the state's 12 planning regions and which regions have the greatest need for each trail facility type.

While the focus of this analysis so far has been on identifying underserved regions and identifying the trail types that Alabama residents most need, forthcoming recommendations for priority trail infrastructure types may also include other factors such as regional tourism opportunity and leveraging unique natural assets.

Moving forward, the ad hoc committees plan to have a draft set of recommendations together this fall and to send them to the ATC and AB for review and comment, with the intent to hold a vote for approval at the December meeting.

As you may recall, the Alabama Trails Commission facilitated the creation of the Alabama Trails Foundation with then intent to work together, along with the Advisory Board, to (1) make Alabama a nationally-recognized trail destination, (2) to ensure that all Alabamians, regardless of location, socio-economic status, age, and ability, have equal access to recreational trails, (3) to raise funds for specific trail projects and/or to pool donations to fund grants that support trail improvement, and (4) to otherwise accomplish the overall mission of the ATC, as identified in its establishing legislation. The Executive Committee plans to schedule its annual joint working meeting with the ATF likely this fall and to use information developed in the ad hoc committee process to assist in planning future collaborative work.

#### Alabama Trails Foundation (ATF) Update

- Tom Carruthers, ATF Board Chair, gave a brief summary of the ATF's current finances and a review of the grand re-opening of the Flagg Mountain observation tower. The event was a "huge success" with many state officials in attendance, including Governor Ivey. Tom thanked Rock Oates and Jason Dockery and their Alabama Forestry Commission (AFC) team for putting on a successful event.
- The next effort at Flagg Mountain will be to bring water to the mountain. The AFC has a grant to help get water in from the main road and the ATF will fundraise for bathrooms once water in on the mountain.
- The ATF is also working on planning a project at Scott Lake / Lake Jogloma on USFS land north of Flagg Mountain. This is a \$500,000 - \$600,000 project involving a bridge and trail and lake improvements. The ATF is well on its way to fundraising for this project.
- The ATF Recently developed an ad hoc committee to incorporate nonprofit best practices standards in their board and organizational policies and procedures.
- Tom added that the ATF is looking forward to working with the ATC to coordinate on all the ATF is doing.

Debbie Quinn asked about the status of the \$40,000 RAC grant for Coosa County that was secured a few years ago. Tom said he will find out and will let Debbie know.

#### Initiatives Status

- Brian Rushing gave a brief update on ATC initiatives (EXHIBIT B).
- The Wiregrass Trail Partnership is still working to secure an appraisal of the rail corridor, although there have been some complications with working with CSX's real estate division.
- The 100 Alabama Miles Challenge is entering its 5th year and the partners have are preparing an RFP for a branding and communications strategy update.

#### Alabama State Parks Update

- Will Collins gave a brief presentation on a number of Alabama State Parks (ASP) trails planning and development projects.
- ASP recently opened the OHV course at Lak Point State Park in Eufaula, which includes 7 miles of trails ranging from novice to advanced trails for people who bring their own machines.
- Also recently opened at Lake Point is a low-decelle golf cart nature path through the campground.
- ASP is utilizing the National Bicycle & Pedestrian Documentation Project ("Trails Count") process at Gulf State Park to better understand trail use and needs and help plan trail development. ASP is Working with Jacksonville State University in this effort.
- ASP Working to adopt the US Forest Service's trail design guidelines.
- ASP is beginning to draft management plan at the Oak Mountain State Park Forever Wild addition and are working with Birmingham Urban Mountain Pedalers at Oak Mountain to provide tram rides to for downhill riders.
- ASP is working with the Southeaster Climbers Coalition to explore climbing trail at Alabama State Parks.
- ASP is working with the Amy Copeland Foundation to bring all-terrain wheelchairs to Alabama State Parks.
- ASP is Using a team of AmeriCorps volunteers at Cheaha State Park to work on the Base to Summit Trail Project.
- The World Games events hosted at Oak Mountain State Park went very smoothly.

#### Alabama River Region Trails Update

- Will O'Connor gave an update on the activities of the River Region Trails multi-use trail planning efforts in the Montgomery region.
- Will shared River Region Trails'online storyboard and reviewed multiple initiatives underway in the Montgomery region, including:
  - City of Montgomery trail network master planning process (including online public input platform).
  - Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail – feasibility study to determine NPS entity and development of an improved multi-use trail following the march route.
  - Possible larger regional connections to Marion in the west and Auburn to the east. (Will expressed a "desperate need" for state-level coordination on inter-regional efforts like this and noted the ATC's statement that statewide trail connectivity is important.)
  - Cypress Park master planning for trails with natural history and environmental interpretation. Hillworks Design is working on a master plan for this site.

- There is growing local demand for small-scale pedestrian and bike improvements in Montgomery neighborhoods and River Region Trails is providing guidance to neighborhood associations on how they can work with the City of Montgomery.

#### Additional Comments

- Liability Waiver Issue in Alabama:
  - Steve Newton highlighted that the law in Alabama is vague on the enforceability of waivers signed by adults on behalf of minors.
  - Wayne Briskey, with Grand River Motorsports, said this is a particularly important issue for their planned private recreational development in Baldwin County due to high costs of liability insurance in Alabama relative to neighboring states.
  - Chuck Barnes, Wayne Briskey's partner, reviewed the issue, stating that there is insufficient legal coverage for individuals 19 and under in Alabama due to the vagueness of our statutes.
  - Tennessee has a law in place that allows for parents to sign for minors, which an Alabama law can be modeled upon.
  - This issue could significantly impact private trail and outdoor recreation development in our state.
  - The Hon. Terry Collins offered to assist the development of any needed legislative action.
- Nathan Wright announced the first-annual PinhotiFest will be in Sylacauga September 23-25, including camping, music, and speakers to celebrate the kickoff of the hiking season.
- Jason Dockery thanked Tom for his comments on the Flagg Mountain rededication and thanks to the ATC and ATF and Friends of Flagg Mountain, UACED, Alabama Hiking Trail Society for their support. AFC does have an ADEM water grant that they will use to bring water to the mountain and put power lines underground. The AFC is partnering with the Auburn School of Architecture to design restroom facilities that will compliment the historic character of the existing structures there.

#### Schedule for Next Meeting

The remaining ATC/AB meetings for this year are scheduled for December 7, 2022 at 10:00AM via zoom, unless otherwise communicated.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.