

Alabama Trails Commission and Advisory Board Joint Meeting
Alabama Wildlife Federation NaturePlex
3050 Lanark Road
Millbrook, Alabama
August 16, 2017
10:00 am

ATC Attendees

Amy Rauworth, Chair
Phillip West, Vice Chair
Debbie Quinn
Richard Guthrie
Rebecca Fulks
Grey Brennan
Jeffery A. Pruitt
Johnny Smith
Graham Sisson
Allen Armstrong

ATCAB Attendees

Jim Felder
Jason Dockery
John Jensen
Mark Wilson
Odell Sanders
Josh Burnett
Nisa Miranda, Chair
Ken Thomas
Hayward Warren
Jeff Dequattro
Maecie Martin Walker
Richard Martin - Emeritus

Visitors

Crystal Davis
Shante' Holley
Kim Martin
Jim Plott
William Robbins
Brian Rushing
Elizabeth Lawlor

Welcome and Introductions

Amy Rauworth called the meeting to order at 10:04 am and asked attendees to introduce themselves.

Approval of Minutes

Amy Rauworth asked if anyone had any additions or suggestions to the minutes from the last meeting. None were made and she requested a motion to approve. The motion to approve was made by Debbie Quinn and seconded by Allen Armstrong. The motion passed.

Commission Chair Report

- a. Amy Rauworth introduced the following new Commission and Board appointees:
 - Chip Dixon, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
 - Hayward Warren, Alabama Hiking Trails Society
 - Jeff DeQuattro, Alabike

- b. Ms Rauworth then discussed the remaining Commission and Board vacancies which included:
 - Business Council of Alabama – Commission
 - University Appointee –Board
 - USDA –Board
 - Underrepresented Federal Agency –Board

- c. Amy then explained that the Executive Committee’s recommendation for the underrepresented Federal Agency to be represented on the Board was the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Graham Sisson made the motion and Phillip West seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- d. Debbie Quinn spoke regarding Ike Lyon’s retirement and thanked him for his service. Since he was not present it was suggested that his gift be presented to him at the meeting in November.

Alabama Trails Foundation Status

Debbie Quinn explained that the establishment of an interim board was being discussed. She also explained that donations for the 100 Alabama Miles Challenge and the Pinhoti Trail study were being accepted. Amy Rauworth pointed out that a handout containing information about the 100 Alabama Miles Challenge was provided in the meeting packets.

Initiative Update Report

Brian Rushing gave an update on various initiatives described in detail in the meeting packet.

Wiregrass Trail Project

- Will be the longest rail trail in Alabama if it is developed
- The Commission is working with local municipalities to acquire the corridor
- The Commission is attempting to obtain the required matching funds from Forever Wild
- The commission is currently seeking funding for activities to meet NEPA requirements and the completion of the hazardous materials survey

Gadsden Rail Trail – The city of Gadsden is negotiating with Norfolk Southern

Pinhoti Trails Facility Enhancement Project

- Collaborative effort between the Commission and the landowners which include; Alabama Forestry Commission, U.S. National Forest Service, Alabama State Lands, Alabama State Parks, and some non-profits
- Looking to improve and enhance the facilities along the trail to bring them up to national standards and make the trail more attractive and marketable for visitors
- Submitted an application to the Resource Advisory Commission with the National Forest Service, which made a recommendation to the National Forest to approve funding for the project

100 Alabama Miles Challenge

- Designed after the Missouri program
- Will encourage people to walk, bike, run, etc. at 100 miles a year
- The website to monitor the number of miles traveled
- Participants can collect electronic badges
- Missouri has 30,000 active users that have logged 5.7 million miles

Leadership Workshops

- Designed for recreational trail planners, designers, builders, and operators
- The next workshop will be held at Vulcan Park in Birmingham on October 26, 2017
- Approximately 60 individuals attended the previous workshop held in Huntsville

Trail Counters and Economic Impact Surveys - An effort to close a gap in understanding trail usage patterns as well as the economic impact of recreational trail use in Alabama. Attendees discussed topics such as HETAP, uniform accessibility trail information, previous and existing studies/surveys, survey topics, identifying accessible sections of the Pinhoti Trail, availability of HETAP machines, survey methods, the rollout date for the 100 Alabama Miles Challenge, etc.

Member Presentations on Trail-Related Work

Odell Sanders gave a presentation on how the U.S. Forest Service manages its trails. The presentation included information such as number of agencies and employees, Forest Service acreage, overall budget vs. recreation budget, trail mileage, standard plans and maintenance schedules, use of volunteers, etc.

Dr. Mark Wilson, Health Officer for Jefferson County, spoke on the link between recreation and trail use and the need for health care. Topics discussed included the Health Action Partnership of Jefferson County, increased need for mental health care, set aside for grants, need for CDC grants received, TIGER grant received, Parks RX, etc.

Josh Burnette, Forester with the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), discussed TVA's role in providing recreation. Such information provided included a history of TVA, shift toward economic development, acreage owned across the Tennessee Valley, land management, lack of funding for recreation, improving existing areas, trail mileage on TVA lands, partnerships for trail maintenance, etc.

Ideation Exercise

Amy Rauthworth asked everyone to write down known events on sticky notes or a contact person in your organization and place the information on the appropriate poster on the wall based on the date of the event.

Announcements

- Jim Felder – University of North Alabama Nature Corp Program (Florence) will be offering an 18-hour generalist course for professional outfitting. Three, 6 hour courses \$75 each, or \$65 each for all 3 – certificate program January 23-25, 2018.
- Nisa Miranda suggested identifying places in Alabama that are low-hanging fruit and make those priorities for funding.
- Ken Thomas – suggested the need for a way to share information since there were so many common goals among the attendees/organizations.
- Brian Rushing explained that the Alabamarecreationtrails.org website has a section dedicated to resources and publicly consumable documents. He recommended that information be submitted to him to be posted on site.
- Odell Sanders mentioned that the Forest Service could possibly provide engineering services if they were provided enough advance notice.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held November 28th, 2017, at 10:00 am at Palisades Park in Oneonta.

Meeting adjourned 12:08 pm