

Alabama Trails Commission and Advisory Board Joint Meeting  
Red Mountain Park  
Birmingham, Alabama  
August 3, 2016  
11:00 am

ATC Attendees

Debbie Quinn, Chair  
Josh Jones  
Amy Rauworth  
Richard Guthrie  
Rebecca Fulks  
Greg Lein  
Jeffery Pruitt  
Wayde Morse

ATCAB Attendees

Jim Felder  
Richard Martin  
Nisa Miranda  
John Jensen  
Mark Wilson  
Cindy Ragland

Visitors

Steven Newton  
David Brewster  
Josh Burnette  
Alan McDermott  
Cheryl Morgan  
Elizabeth Lawlor  
Terri Collins  
Ashley Hines  
Jim Plott  
Crystal Davis  
Kim Martin  
Tatum Smith  
Brian Rushing

Introduction

Debbie Quinn called the meeting to order at 11:03 AM. The attendees then introduced themselves.

A quorum was present for the Alabama Trails Commission (ATC) but not the Alabama Trails Commission Advisory Board (ATCAB).

### Approval of Minutes

Debbie Quinn asked if anyone had any additions or suggestions to the minutes from the last meeting. No changes were recommended and the minutes from the previous meeting were approved as sent.

### Commission Chair Report

Debbie Quinn reported the following about Legislation:

- Legislation update passed this year. Appointments will be 4 year terms.
- Everyone needs to be reappointed, maxed out 2 year terms.
- Another seat has been added to the ATC to be appointed by the Association of County Commissions of Alabama.

Debbie Quinn discussed member terms, re-appointments and new appointments. There is a good balance of representation in North, South, East, and West to include Alabama Land Trust, Alabama Railways, Alabama Power, State Lands, Blue Cross Blue Shield, and two recreation user groups. The executive committee will be working on the appointments over the next few months.

Debbie Quinn discussed the amended Bylaws. The committee added an Executive Committee, elected from Commission and Advisory Board. Ms. Quinn asked for any suggestions or additions. They will have regular meetings 3 times a year (could be 2 times a year if there is nothing to meet about).

The Rural Tourism Conference is scheduled for October 25-26, 2016, in Columbus, Mississippi. It is being organized by Tom Chestnut and tourism departments from Mississippi, Alabama, and Tennessee. Ms. Quinn mentioned the possibility of Jim Felder participating. The cost is \$75 and would be a good day trip or weekend event. The only way to participate is by booth as the speaking panels are already filled.

The Conservation Fund Conference is put on by an organization in Virginia. They are having a conference in Pensacola, Florida on September 27-28, 2016. Debbie was asked to speak at the conference and she agreed. Ms. Quinn recommended Cheryl Morgan speak about trails and transportation and Robin Birdsong about connecting urban and rural landscapes. Anyone interested in attending should let Debbie know.

Greg Lein discussed State Parks and the legislative session. There was discussion on ways to encourage support for Alabama State Parks such as a Dirt Pass which has a lot of corporate interest.

A new Trail Coordinator position was designated for Alabama State Parks. Ken Thomas serves as Trail Coordinator for the Northern Region. There will eventually be a Southern Trail Coordinator or the Northern Trail Coordinator position will be broadened to statewide.

Greg Lein mentioned positive things that came out of the Legislature. Of the four bills, three passed; car tag, new boat tag, constitutional amendments to protect two park funds. The tax check-off didn't pass. It may be reintroduced and pass in the future.

### High Efficiency Trail Assessment Process (HETAP Training)

Amy Rauworth mentioned the assessment equipment, universal trail design, and funding sources for the Lakeshore Foundation project. Ms. Rauworth reported that all of the assessments of the Oak Mountain State Park pedestrian trails had been completed.

- Signs are being created and will resemble a nutrition label, showing grades, slopes, impediments
- There will be digital brochures and video footage of the training scheduled for September 29-30, 2016. Approximately 30-50 individuals will be trained.
- Online modular training could enhance hands on training.
- Extra points on Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant applications will be given if you commit to using this process to assess the trail.
- Connects to GIS mapping, easily works with mountain bike standards, and gives quantifiable data on rating trail systems.
- The Lakeshore Foundation is now trying to determine how the equipment will be loaned out for use by other agencies/organizations/communities, etc.

Debbie Quinn hopes Forestry, the Tennessee Valley Authority, and State Parks send people to learn how to use it so the process would be incorporated in trails statewide. Next week Andrew Yaeger from National Public Radio will be doing a story on it.

Members discussed the attendance of journalists at the training to get the story out. The members further discussed, the signage, equipment, associated costs, and advertising/educating the public.

### Initiative Updates

Brian Rushing mentioned that \$400,000 in RTP funds from the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) and \$400,000 in Transportation Alternatives Program funds from the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) has been secured to acquire approximately 43 miles of CSX rail line between Geneva and Andalusia. An MOU is being developed between Forever Wild (FW), ADECA, ALDOT, City of Geneva, and Geneva County on how the funding will flow. Then FW can move forward with the necessary appraisals. FW will actually hold title to the property. Geneva and Coffee Counties are partners and five municipalities. Covington County

has yet to commit to the project. Each municipality would be responsible for maintenance of the trail within its city limits. We are looking at additional partnerships for this project.

Debbie Quinn said there is a mile and half line in Gadsden they are working with Norfolk Southern to acquire. Additionally, there is less than a mile in downtown Montgomery which the city of Montgomery is taking the lead on. There is also a seven mile corridor owned by a private individual interested in allowing public trail use on the property. The challenge is that the property crosses at least three major roadways.

Brian Rushing said there is an abandoned two-mile inactive section in Fayette owned by Norfolk Southern. Mr. Rushing stated that he was assisting the city with a RTP application to acquire the property. The city has been invited to participate in the second-level application process.

### Other Projects

Brian Rushing discussed the Pinhoti Trail.

- Bringing key stakeholders together.
- Set goals and objectives.
- Improving signage and trail.
- Guidelines for facilities.
- Develop a budget.
- Make it a permanent destination for outdoor hiking.

Brian discussed the 100 Missouri Miles and how it could be a big draw to state parks and has potential in Alabama. It is an initiative to challenge people to get out on trails and walk 100 miles in a year.

- The group watched a video from 100 Missouri Miles. Of the 27,000 active users there, they logged 5 million miles.
- There is potential for competitions/gamification, health insurers would be interested.
- The idea was well received by the group.
- Brian will move forward and reach out to potential partners.

Debbie Quinn discussed a potential mountain biking trail in South Alabama.

- South Alabama mountain biking group working with Debbie Quinn, Baldwin County, and FW to develop MOU.
- North of I-65 in Baldwin County.
- Very hilly, lots of ravines.

Debbie Quinn also mentioned the Mobile Greenway project which would connect an existing park to the river. Neighborhoods were working on it separately and Debbie may try to schedule a meeting to get some activity going on this project again.

### ALDOT Pedestrian Workgroup Update

Rebecca Fulks reported that workshops were held in each region to gather data from the public. They received great feedback. The goal is to have a dynamic document in September. They want to focus on connectivity and continuity. Bike and pedestrian transportation and the safest way to walk and bike where people need to go is the goal. Walking/biking trails enhance neighborhoods. The next step in the process is the development of the draft plan.

It was mentioned that the Community Development Block Grant has an excellent email list of impoverished areas. Debbie Quinn is working with the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency to incorporate biking into the Alabama driver's license exam.

Jim Felder gave an updated on the Alabama Top Trails booklet. Jim is still seeking funding for the cost of printing the booklets. The members discussed possible funding sources.

### Other Business

Wayde Morse discussed the extension office grant through the Center for Disease Control and how the data was obtained. He further discussed how the data could be used. He hopes the availability of competitive funding will be extended allowing the possibility for additional projects.

Brian Rushing gave a recap of the May Alabama Recreational Trails Leadership (ARTL) Workshop held on May 14, 2016. There were 30 participants in attendance. It was scheduled for a Saturday to attract more user groups but the majority of attendees were from public agencies. Brian will continue to reach out to user groups.

The fall ARTL workshop will likely be held on October 20 or 21, 2016, possibly at Five Rivers. He is looking into the possibility of securing an out of state speaker to discuss trail interests. Brian requested suggestions from the group on possible field trips, speakers, and topics.

The Alabama Recreation Trail website 2.0 is out. It is responsive on mobile devices. It has an updated look and design. The search page uses Google maps. Data is still being populated. The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources provided much needed data where there was a huge gap, however more data needed from user groups. Brian is looking at adding HETAP data in the future.

Presentation by David Dionne, Executive Director of Red Mountain Park

David Dionne gave a history of Red Mountain Park and offered to take attendees on a tour following the meeting.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be November 9<sup>th</sup>, location TBD.

The meeting adjourned at 12:52 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Crystal Davis