

**'KEWEENAW AREA SILENT SPORTS PARTNERSHIP'
KICKOFF MEETING**

**Tuesday, February 12, 2007
7:30 PM - MTU SDC ROOM 237**

MINUTES

PRESENT/REPRESENTING

Pat Szubielak
Arni Ronis
Caleb Wendel
Steve Vizanko
Mark Norton, Swedetown/Deer Chase
Mark Klein
Jeff Parker, MTU
Jay Green, KNSC
Arnie Kinnunen, Portage Health
Steve DeLong
Michael Young
Mike Abbott, MTU
Charles Eschbach, Michigan Nature Assoc.
Dan Dalquist, Keweenaw Trekkers
Chris Schmidt, Red Jacket Cycling
Sam Raymond, Copper Harbor Trail Club
Ed Kraai, Copper Isle Ski Club
Sue Ellen Kinglsey
Bill Marlor
John Griffith, North Woods Conservancy
John Diebel, KNSC
Lori Hauswirth, Chain Drive
Jim LaMuth
Arlyn Aronson

INTRODUCTIONS

Jim LaMuth (as facilitator) opened the meeting. Introductions followed.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION

Lori Hauswirth explained the reason for the meeting. After numerous conversations amongst varying groups of people for an umbrella organization, cohesive voice, greater representation, and sharing resources amongst groups she felt it was time to initiate some forward momentum regarding the idea. The 'partnership' would not replace any existing groups but would build upon/coordinate the great local trail efforts. Lori felt it was important that the group be user rather than government driven. Discussion followed amongst the group.

John Griffith has been attending Keweenaw ATV meetings and their organization is getting them more attention. He said it was a good idea to organize the silent sports efforts and the North Woods Conservancy Board would be on board with the idea. It was also noted that it would be good to have a person/paid position to act as a 'director' for the organization.

Dan Dalquist said it is necessary and will lead to better funding for local projects. He also noted how the Marquette Area is benefitting from this type of partnership. Caleb Wendel noted that there is definitely strength in numbers and this would be good for the area. Jeff Parker added that success leads to success. Steve Vizanko restated that a larger voice has more clout.

Ed Kraai noted that they (Copper Island Ski Club) have been more successful with grants when done through the Township as it has a larger voice than the club on its own. He would also like to see a 'director' to stay focused on the efforts of the organization.

Sam Raymond supported the idea as necessary. He noted the extensive plans for the Keweenaw and believes a larger organization would provide strength and additional opportunities.

John Griffith added that just as the motorized group is working together, its essential that the non-motorized speak as a group also.

Mike Abbott noted that its important that we would be our own 'autonomous' organization.

The group agreed that there is definatly interest in moving forward with the idea.

ORGANIZATION MISSION

A brainstorm exercise was led by Jim LaMuth. Attendees spent 5 minutes writing down their 5 main purposes for the organization. The main purposes were then shared with the group and recorded. After being recorded on an easel pad at the front of the room, then similar ideas were consolidated. The attendees were then given 3 dots to place next to what they believed was the most important 'purpose' of the future organization. These ideas would be used in the future to develop the organization mission. The following 'purposes' were recorded and were ranked based on their respective score.

- Unite/Organize/Integrate/Partner/Umbrella/De-Duplicate/Coordinate Volunteers (18.5)
- Support Conservation/Preservation/Access – Existing & Expanding (16.5)
- Advocate/Lobby/Represent Regionally – Voice Downstate (15.5)
- Strategic Regional Vision (8)
- Secure and Generate Funding (6)
- Economic Impact (3.5)
- Education - Safety, Helath, Sustainability, Alternative Transportation (3.5)
- Autonomous (2)
- Market/Promote (1)
- Information Conduit (1)
- Diversity(Types) of Non-Motorized (1)
- Sponsor/Coordinate Events
- Share Tools/Equipment
- Share Experience

ACTION ITEMS

Additional groups were identified that should be brought to the table including: Michigan Audobon, Nature Conservancy, Keweenaw Land Trust, Gration Conservancy, local schools, local EDCs, recreation committees (City of Hancock Recreation Committee, City of Houghton Bicycle Committee, Houghton Planning Commission, Keweenaw County, etc.), Isle Royale National Park, MTU C4 Cycling, Houghton – Keweenaw Conservation District, UP RC&D, Bill Olson, WUPPDR and Keweenaw National Historical Park. It was agreed that we would expand

the contact list as groups/persons are identified and start a list-serve for the group. Lori Hauswirth will work with Mike Abbott to begin a list-serve.

It was then asked whether persons present would support and/or bring the 'partnership' idea to their respective boards. Positives were received from MTU, Keweenaw Chain Drive Festival, Deer Chase/Swedetown, KNSC (will discuss), KLT (Sue Ellen will bring to board), Copper Island Ski Club, Copper Harbor Trails Club, and Northwoods Conservancy.

Preliminary discussion took place on potential organization names. John Griffith thought we should stay away from 'non-motorized' because it can be negative. It was agreed that we would discuss names for the group at an upcoming meeting so we can begin to develop an identity.

John Griffith said that the North Woods Conservancy had hundreds of acres with the potential for trail development. Jeff Parker was connected with John to lend his extensive experience to the layout of trails at the North Woods property.

It was agreed that we should start gathering all trail/land information available so a comprehensive inventory could be created. Keweenaw Ridge Trail (Ed Kisiel's work) and Houghton County Planning Commission (WUPPDR Mapping) efforts will provide most of the background for this effort.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Lori Hauswirth announced that the International Mountain Bike Association's Trail Care Crew would be coming to the Keweenaw on August 1, 2, & 3rd, 2008. Their visit will include consultation on local trails, presentations on efforts around the world and a local sustainable trail building school.

Mike Abbott announced that MTU would be receiving a 'disability grant' with funding through the Kellogg foundations to provide opportunities for recreation at the MTU trails. The project includes development of an 'ATV' wheelchair, voice directions at the trail, tactile signage, hand cycles and sit-skis.

John Diebel announced that the KNSC/Sons of Norway Baneloppet would be held on Saturday, February 16th, 2008 at the Maasto Hiihto Trails.

Ed Kraai announced that the Bear Chase would be March 9th and that the race would be starting and finishing close to/in downtown for this year's event. The Junior Bear Chase will be on March 8th at the MTU Trails.

Charlie Eshbach announced the "Ski to the Estivants" would be held on Saturday, February 16th, 2008. The event would start at 11 am beginning at Lake Fanny Hooe Resort..

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the 'partnership' group was scheduled for **Tuesday, March 11th**. The meeting will once again be held at the SDC beginning at 7:30pm. Future meetings will tentatively be held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month.