

Arizona State Committee On Trails Action Report

Agenda Item #D1

MINUTES OF PUBLIC MEETING

of

THE ARIZONA STATE COMMITTEE ON TRAILS (ASCOT)

of

THE ARIZONA STATE PARKS BOARD

Held on **Saturday, July 28, 2012, at Black Mesa Ranger Station Conference Room, 2748 AZ Hwy 260, Heber-Overgaard, AZ beginning at 10 am.** Public comment will be taken.

Approved by ASCOT as corrected by unanimous vote at the September 28, 2012 meeting.

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order by Nick Lund, Chair, at 10:00 a.m. Roll call: present: Ryan Domsalla, Phyllis Ralley, Nick Lund, Laddie Cox, Bill Gibson, Linda Slay, Richard Kesselman, Reba Wells Grandrud, Lisa Marie Gerdl (Telephonic), Anna Pfender (Telephonic), Dan Gronseth (Telephonic), Laurel Arndt (Telephonic)

Absent: Jackie Keller, Jarod Rogers, Loren Worthington

State Park Staff: None

Call to the public: None present

ASCOT ACTION ITEMS

ASCOT Will Review and Approve Minutes from the April 6, 2012 Meeting.

Richard Kesselman made a motion to approve the April 6, 2012 minutes. Bill Gibson seconded the motion. Anna Pfender pointed out a correction to the minutes. In Paragraph 5 – Work Product, mention was made of Volunteers for Arizona as a trail design & maintenance partner for the International Trails Symposium; this should be corrected to read “Volunteers for Outdoor Arizona”. The minutes were approved unanimously as corrected.

ASCOT Will Review and May Adopt a Welcome Letter to be Used as an Orientation for New Members.

A potential welcome letter to be used as orientation for new members was emailed to all for review and comment subsequent to the April 6, 2012 meeting. Nick Lund thanked all of those who responded with their suggestions and asked that a motion be made so that the welcome letter could be discussed. Richard Kesselman made a motion to accept the welcome letter, which was seconded by Reba Wells Grandrud. Ms. Grandrud then suggested that acronyms be spelled out in the beginning of letter for clarity. Anna Pfender stated that there was a typo on the second page of the letter where it stated that urban & rural trails may “quality”, this should be “qualify”. Ms. Pfender also stated that the second sentence under the section “Conforming with AZ Laws” is confusing. It states that ASCOT members are unpaid volunteers and not paid by the State of Arizona. Ms. Pfender is employed by another state

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agency, and wondered if, since she is paid by the State of Arizona, if she could even serve on ASCOT. Nick Lund stated that ASCOT members are working for state government when on ASCOT. Further discussion ensued, with the result that this section was changed to read, "ASCOT is a part of State Government. Members, even though they are unpaid volunteers, work for State government in their capacity on ASCOT".

Chair Lund asked that, since we had a motion on the table, and if there were no further corrections, we vote to accept the welcome letter as amended. The motion passed unanimously. It was suggested that Bruce Weidenhamer, former ASCOT member, be given credit for his development of the welcome letter.

Ascot Will Discuss The Findings of the Subcommittee on a Trail Rating System for the State Trail System ("STS") Trails.

Jackie Keller was chair of this subcommittee, but was not present. Richard Kesselman reported that the committee met several times. Areas of research were assigned, one of which was the legal liabilities of adopting a trail rating system. Mr. Kesselman reported that they did not find any issues of this kind. Phoenix Parks & Recs, for example, reported no lawsuits in 20 years. Other research was conducted on different types of rating systems and what should be included. Some items were mileage, elevation tread, and difficulty. It was also pointed out that the condition of a trail changes with weather conditions, or, on long trails, sections may be quite different. Mr. Kesselman reviewed 15 different State Parks on line. Most agencies did not rate difficulty, but included length, elevation change, etc.

Mr. Kesselman stated that, in an online review, he found that there are over 700 trails in the STS. Of these trails, 376 are managed by the US Department of Agriculture (Forest Service), 53 by the National Park Service, with varying numbers of trails being managed by Arizona State Parks, BLM, City of Phoenix, and Maricopa County. 85% of the STS trails are managed by 6 land managers. All of these various land managers would have to buy in to the rating system. Since most agencies already have their own rating systems, the committee decided that it was somewhat fruitless to come up with ASCOT's own rating system. This led to a discussion of the already existing State Trails Guide. Mr. Kesselman pointed out that the State Trails Guide contains good information on all of 700 trails in existence at the time. At the time the books were printed, 30 or 40 of the trails were planned only. Mr. Kesselman further suggested that getting into a rating system was not really relevant, and that we already have good information. Maybe we should concentrate on cleaning up and updating what we already have, then go to land managers, and get the information out to the public. Laddie Cox stated that the minutes contained a good summation of the sub-committee's meetings. Mr. Cox called attention to D.3 A of the subcommittee's report, which stated that the State Trails Guide was published in 2003 and needs to be updated. The Subcommittee agreed that State Parks already has a good guide. Mr. Cox then read section D.3 C of the recommendations, which included suggestions to correct and update the list of trails, delete un-built trails; include trails which have been added to the system and appoint a subcommittee to accomplish these tasks.

Laddie Cox moved that ASCOT adopt recommendation of trail rating subcommittee under Section D.3.b to update the State Trails Guide, the list of trails, and the trail criteria to distribute. Richard Kesselman seconded the motion. Mr. Kesselman stated that 176 of 713 STS trails were planned as of May 2009. Nick Lund suggested that we go back to the land managers and ask for updates on their STS trails to help update the guides. Mr. Cox felt that knowing the current condition of a trail was very important to the public. There was further discussion on working with volunteers and how to get this information out

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and how to assist the land managers. Phyllis Ralley pointed out that this was a huge scope of work, and maybe State Parks would need to find a contractor to manage the project. Laurel Arndt stated that it took more than one year with paid State Parks Staff to produce the first set of guides. The current State Trails Guides divide the state into 6 zones; there is one guide for each zone. The guides are assembled as 3-ring binders so sheets can be taken out. This makes the guides easier to update and use. Ms. Arndt suggested that maybe the guides be scanned and gotten online. Richard Kesselman thought that the guides would be more convenient and assessable on line. Updating the guides and placing them online would be an appropriate action for ASCOT and worth our effort. Mr. Kesselman wondered if there could be legal issues in deleting trails from the STS.

Dan Gronseth suggested that the recommendation be modified so that either the subcommittee or an individual comes up with a letter or notice to send to the land managers and ask for updates to their STS trails. At this time, there was a call for the vote to adopt the recommendations of the subcommittee in Section D.3.b.C, which passed unanimously. There was further discussion as to whether a new subcommittee should be formed or the existing one expanded.

Reba Wells Grandrud moved that ASCOT expand the motion under section C to include all of the recommendations of the subcommittee. Dan Gronseth seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Richard Kesselman felt that item c.3 – updating the State Trails Guide, is the first real mission of the subcommittee and wondered if we should limit the scope to that. Nick Lund stated that it is the subcommittee's role is to develop a plan. Bill Gibson pointed out that he took on the job to see what was in data base when he first came on ASCOT. It took 1 ½ years to determine that the BLM has 1100 miles of trails, a little over 40% of which are land verified. 443 of these trails are on the STS; Mr. Gibson stated that ASCOT would need a commitment from the various agencies. Phyllis Ralley stated that the public wants GPS data. Laurel Arndt pointed out that a good data base already exists, but it is hard for the agencies to step in to update it at the present. State Parks is not in a position to update its data base right now. This is not a job for volunteers or interns as this is proprietary data belonging to State Parks. Ryan Domsalla agreed that the agencies are being asked to do work, and would be looking for a contact at State Parks. Nick Lund asked what will ASCOT be recommending to State Parks? Linda Slay pointed out that over 100 new trails have been added since the State Trails Guide came out and are not listed in the guides. Dan Gronseth suggested that the subcommittee make the recommendation to ASCOT or State Parks to make time available for this project. Laurel Arndt stated that this is a technical task, and suggested that we ask the Parks Board to elevate updating the guides as a priority task. There was further discussion about what a big task this would be to take on and what resources would be needed.

Richard Kesselman stated that there was not language in the motion that was passed telling the subcommittee that item 3.c, updating the State Trails Guide, is a priority, and moved to amend Reba's motion to give clear direction to the subcommittee that this task be a priority. Phyllis Ralley seconded the motion. Ms. Grandrud volunteered to withdraw her motion. Chairman Lund stated that we had already voted to act on the current subcommittee's recommendations. Ryan Domsalla felt that it was okay to approve all four recommendations and leave it up to the new subcommittee to prioritize them. Laddie Cox stated that there were two major tasks: 1. Gather the information and update the guides; and 2. help the land managers and State Parks to get the information out. There are limited ways to update the data, the most difficult of which is boots on the ground.

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Richard Kesselman moved that we form a new subcommittee to implement recommendation d3b of the attachment, which is to update the Arizona State Trails Guide, list of trails & trail criteria. Nick Lund stated that we had already voted to accept recommendations of the current subcommittee. What is needed is a subcommittee to have the mission of bullet point 3, to update the trails guide. Mr. Kesselman's motion was amended to appoint a new subcommittee for the purpose of updating the State Trails Guide. Laddie Cox seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Chairman Lund asked for volunteers for the new committee. Rick Kesselman, Phyllis Ralley, Linda Slay, Laddie Cox, Bill Gibson, Dan Gronseth and Ann Pfender volunteered. Nick Lund will ask Jackie Keller if she would like to continue as chair. It was pointed out that we can ask other than ASCOT members to serve. Phyllis Ralley suggested having a sub-committee of agency people. Nick Lund will consult with Bob Baldwin about asking the State Parks Board if they are willing for us to do this, and able to supply a staff person or go for a grant or contractor. Laddie Cox stated that our first task is to determine how to approach this. Bill Gibson pointed out that we can't manage if we don't know what we've got. Mr. Cox and Mr. Gibson will try to determine what is already in the data bases. Nick Lund will ask the subcommittee for a preliminary report at the next meeting.

ASCOT Will Discuss their Potential Involvement in the International Trails Symposium (ITS) - Nick Lund led a discussion on ASCOT's potential involvement in the International Trails Symposium to be held in April 2013. Mr. Lund spoke to Kent Taylor about possible roles for ASCOT. (Kent Taylor and Annie McVey are program chairs on the coordinating committee). The two roles that Mr. Taylor suggested for ASCOT were: 1. Help manage presentations. This would be "on the ground work", such as making sure presenters were at the right room, at the right time, with the right equipment. We would essentially be "room hosts" in charge of final logistics; and 2. Oversee CEU's (Continuing Education Units). Part of this job would be to contact various groups that might supply CEU's. If an organization is willing to provide CEU credits, then our job would be to monitor them, get people to sign up for CEU's, keep records, report back to the organization that supplied the CEU's, and mail them out to the individual. There was discussion as to what ASCOT was willing and able to take on. The general consensus was that ASCOT is willing to provide volunteers for room monitors. Laurel Arndt volunteered to follow up with American Trail Association regarding the CEU's and what would be required of ASCOT, as she has had experience with CEU's. Nick Lund will provide contact information to Ms. Arndt for Pam Gluck with American Trails to follow up on the CEU's. Mr. Lund will also follow up with Kent Taylor for more details on what is needed. Anna Pfender, Nick Lund and Laurel Arndt are already planning on attending the symposium. Bill Gibson and Phyllis Ralley are already involved with committees for the ITS. Mr. Lund asked if ASCOT would like to take on both tasks. Phyllis Ralley moved that ASCOT accept both assignments. Anna Pfender seconded the motion, with passed unanimously.

ASCOT Will Select Two Representatives to Assist Staff In Evaluating Non-Motorized Trail Project Applications. Let the minutes reflect that Bill Gibson, Phyllis Ralley and Ryan Domsalla all recused themselves from this task as they will be submitting trails to be considered for grants. Anna Pfender, Laurel Arndt and Lisa Gerdl volunteered. Mr. Lund will let Bob Baldwin know. Dan Gronseth moved to accept all three volunteers as appointees. Ryan Domsalla seconded the motion. After discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

ASCOT Will Discuss Using the State Parks Volunteer Tracking System. Nick Lund asked if ASCOT should record and keep track of volunteer hours. Doing so could be useful in showing the value of volunteer hours. ASCOT members would be asked to register in the tracking system, report travel time, hours

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spent at meetings, time spent on subcommittees, work on the ITS, etc. Phyllis Ralley moved that ASCOT adopt the State Parks System of assessing volunteer hours and that each member go on-line and register. Ms. Ralley also asked that this be added to the welcome letter. Bill Gibson seconded the motion. There was some discussion of how the system worked. Reba Wells Grandrud reported that the National Trails System logged over one million volunteer hours last year. This information can make a difference in obtaining funding. There was also discussion of how the volunteer time of agency people could be captured. After discussion, the motion passed unanimously. Mr. Lund will contact State Parks and ask how they want this done. Using the system will require ASCOT members to register so their hours can be counted.

ASCOT Will Select a Subcommittee to Review Applications for ASCOT Membership. It was pointed out that this committee was formed at the April 6, 2012 meeting. Anna Pfender is the chair. No further action was taken.

Attendees then participated in a membership roundtable and gave updates of trail happenings around the state.

Chair Lund reminded everyone that the next ASCOT meeting will be held on Friday, September 28th at the Boyce Thompson Arboretum, near Superior. Mr. Lund reminded everyone to send in agenda items.

Meeting Adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Ann Slay