

Baraga County Recreation Plan Meeting #1

When: August 2nd, 2022 from 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm

Attendees: Lyle Olsen, Polly Schaefer, Rachael Pressley (*WUPPDR*), Lisa McKenzie (*WUPPDR*), Sidney Mechling (Intern *WUPPDR*)

Baraga County Parks and Recreation Committee members: Polly Schaefer (L'anse Village), Lyle Olsen (District 4 County Commissioner), Will Wiggins (Village of Baraga), Jay Fish (Arvon Township Supervisor), Dan Robillard (District 3 County Commissioner)

Committee Email: parksccommittee@baragacounty.org

Agenda:

6:30-7:00 Recreation Plan Update Process

- Discuss Previous Baraga County Recreation Plan
- Determine Updates/Input
- Create a list of priorities/goals/objectives - Previous Goals/Objectives
- Workplan Review: Committee Responsibilities

7:00-7:30 Discuss Survey for Distribution

- Identify approach (open-ended vs specific projects)
- Make changes to the survey
- Identify a list of places to distribute the survey

Additional Discussion

- Covington property
- Township specifics

Next Steps & Summary

Meeting Notes

Recreation Plan Update Process

1. Form a Recreation Committee - **Done**
2. Review Previous Recreation Plan - **Done**
3. Conduct a Recreation Asset Inventory of County-owned facilities - **almost completed**
 - a. Focus mainly on county-owned assets but include additional regional assets
 - b. Conduct accessibility assessment for county assets
 - i. Point Abbaye - Rated a 1
 - c. Post completion report for prior DNR-Funded projects
 - i. Take photos of plaques for previously funded projects
4. Community engagement (first round)
 - a. Survey - Published on **August 17th, 2022**
 - i. Baraga county chamber of commerce has done surveys including recreation questions (Polly)
 - ii. The data from that survey can be included in the recreation plan (Rachael)
5. Update plan
6. Plan review
 - a. At LEAST a 30-day public review
 - b. Must be well publicized (newspaper, website, social media, Facebook)
7. Community engagement (second round)
 - a. Advertise public hearing held as part of the meeting of the County Commission
 - b. The meeting must be advertised for up to a week through the local newspaper
8. Plan approval
 - a. Approval by resolution adoption by the highest governing body (County Commission)
9. Plan submission - No later than 2/1/23 submitted to MiRec Portal

Discuss Previous Baraga County Recreation Plan

- Point Abbaye is currently the only recreation site the county owns but the county is in the process of acquiring about 11,000 acres in Covington Township on the Sturgeon River
- **Point Abbaye**
 - Point Abbaye has been the main focus of the last 5-year plan
 - Accessibility Rating of 1 (Lyle)
 - To get to Point Abbaye, there is a drive to the parking area which then provides access to a walking path to the point
 - The area is crushed gravel but flat so people with some mobility can still access the point.
 - To the point, it is about a ¼ of a mile walk
- **Capital Improvement projects 2018-2022**
 - **2018**
 - Vault toilet and parking lot improvement - **completed**
 - Handicap accessible campsite - **not completed**
 - Trail - **completed**
 - **2019**
 - Additional trail design and development are **currently being worked on**
 - **2020**
 - Additional trails, second trailhead with parking area and kayak launch point - **not completed**
 - Received funding for the first portion of the trail from the DNR
 - Still Interest in developing a kayak water trail where there is a pullout every 2 miles
 - L'Anse has been looking to see where to put a kayak launch in phase 3 with the marina
 - Potential partnership
 - They also just received funding for handicap accessibility for second sand beach
 - **2021**
 - Additional campsites design and development - **Currently being worked on**

- **Discuss Goals & Objectives**

- Goal 1: Improve Point Abbaye County Park with added and updated facilities
 - Committee still wants to improve Point Abbaye
- Goal 2: Secure, improve, and develop trail access for both motorized and non-motorized activities
 - Committee still agrees and projects to complete the goal are still continuing
 - ORV Scramble area
 - A play area or “goof off” area for ORV’s
 - Holly Recreation Park Downstate has one that can be used as an example
 - Possibility of having it moved to the Covington property
- Goal 3: Improve access and facilities for watersports
 - Committee still agrees
 - Focus on Kayaks and canoes
 - A group in the area wants to focus on kayak sports
 - Dan’s proposal - Point Abbaye Improvements
- Goal 4: Support and coordinate with other efforts that enhance overall recreation opportunities, and provide new types of opportunities, in Baraga County
 - Committee still agrees
 - International Dark Sky park is still an interest - keep in plan
- Comments:
 - All of the goals are still relevant
 - There are a lot of different recreation groups within the area that have an interest in the development of their specific type of recreation and the County wants to support these groups
 - It is the County’s goal and responsibility to collect information and bring everyone together to collaborate on recreation enhancements and to treat all groups equally
 - There is a major biking population, especially overflow from Copper Harbor
 - A group out of Ishpeming has races where bikers are assigned a location and when they arrive, they receive the route to complete. These races will sometimes go through the woods, private

property, and through Big Bay. They generally will follow the snowmobile trails. It is almost a “secretive” group.

- There is an Iron Man race that lasts over 3 months where participants can complete it in segments on their own time. It typically goes from Marquette to Copper Harbor
 - Tour De Yoop is a road biking race
 - A lot of events come through Baraga County
 - The creation of maps could assist bikers, hikers, visitors (Rachael)
 - The Tourist Association has maps that can be put into the recreation plan
 - There is also an app in the making - Check with Deby on potential app
 - Other projects currently in the making around the area
 - Fishing trail through L'Anse
 - Baraga County Trail Authority
 - Nature conservancy will allow snowmobile easement this winter
 - Baraga County trail is in motion - Kathy's path and the loop near township park have been worked on
 - Currently working with the township on the Linden Creek trail
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Work Plan Review

- Survey will be published on August 17th
 - Next week (8/8-8/12) Sidney will be contacting the committee to talk about changes and additions to the survey. She will then create the survey in survey monkey, create a press release and publish the survey
 - The Chamber & BCVB will be good entities to pass out the survey
 - County branding
 - **Keweenaw Bay and Beyond**
 - WUPPDR can brand the survey to fit the county brand
 - Debby has more information on county branding
 - The Website should be live in September. Final review is being conducted on Thu August 4th at 10 am

- Recreation Inventory
 - Point Abbaye
 - Accessibility assessment is a 1
 - Public Meeting
 - Committee agreed on the Second Tuesday of December (December 13th) before the county meeting
 - It will be the last meeting Dan and Lyle will be at, two new people will be coming into the commission
 - Meeting with WUPPDR and Committee to discuss survey results
 - October 14th
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Survey Discussion

- **Method**
 - Both open-ended and specific projects
 - Sidney will be checking in with committee (8/8-8/12) to ask about changes to the previous survey
 - Previous County Survey
 - Signage was a huge concern for residents
 - Signs are either non-existent or in rough shape
 - Possibility to add as a goal in the recreation plan
 - County input is different than visitor input
 - Visitors have seemed to be more respectful of the public land than locals
 - It is important to get the survey out to both locals and visitors - a big priority of the committee
- **Changes to the Survey**
 - Demographics & personal recreation questions
 - Take off questions 3 & 4 regarding living on the reservation and KBIC membership status
 - Age and mobility questions are important to determine the community's recreational needs
 - Reword question 6
 - Question 7 - Add pickleball, and disc golf and update the list to be relevant to today
 - Add a section for the Covington Site
 - Specific projects & broad, open-ended questions

- Point Abbaye
 - Keep questions 8, 9, 10
 - Possibility of adding specific projects (e.g. kayak trail, campsite development, more accessible trails & restrooms)
 - Brand survey with County branding
 - Comments:
 - The county has a lot of opportunities for recreation but the County has been lacking in promoting the activities and sites
 - The splash pad is the only one in the UP and the trails systems are great to bring in more visitors
 - The county wants to advertise more but does not want to turn into Munising or Copper Harbor where there is an overflow of visitors that disrupt the locals everyday activities
 - Munising has a lot of food trucks coming in
 - Baraga has Dogfather and burrito truck - possible avenue for more food trucks
 - Baraga has been approved to continue the walking path at the waterfront park from the State park to the lighthouse at the Ojibwe campground and is going to build a waterfront park by the Marina
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Additional Discussion

- **Covington Property**
 - Section 16, near Baraga Plains road - Wild Rivers Property
 - Looking at monetizing the park - have an entrance daily fee, for example, \$15 a day.
 - Looking at focusing on ORV recreation & possible equestrian trails, bike trails, snowmobiling, and camping
 - Trying to hit all different types of markets with this site
 - Equestrian trails
 - MiTrail has a specific equestrian trail section with several experts that can assist with the development
 - ORV Scramble area could be something that you pay a separate fee (in addition to the daily fee) to utilize
 - Scramble areas have to have maintenance and crews to maintain the area

- Baraga county trail authority is looking at adding more trails and different types of trails
 - Equestrian, water, bike, hiking
 - Baraga County Sno Drifters & ATV club
 - Manages 50-inch or less trail section under DNR grant
 - **Covington Township**
 - A community that has a lot of volunteers and a beautiful hall with a multipurpose building and sledding area with a tow rope
 - **Burt Township**
 - A resident asked the county to get involved with boat launches
 - Some of the boat launches are about 40 years old and can use updating
 - There is a lot of lakes in the area that could be a possible avenue for more recreational development/access
 - **Michigamme**
 - The westward part of the lake is in Baraga County
 - A huge recreation area with Van Riper, Craig Lake SP, Three Lakes
 - Three lakes has a snowmobile trail that follows the highway
 - The new Spurr township supervisor is new on the trail committee and is looking at getting more trails down there

** The County can partner with townships to get their goals included in the recreation plan. The townships can then utilize the recreation plan as a basis to apply for additional grants and funding for their own projects.

Next Steps WUPPDR:

- Contact the committee during the week of 8/8-8/12 to discuss changes to the survey. Develop the survey, send out a press release, and publish the survey on August 17th

Next Steps Committee:

- Find changes and additions you would like to make to the survey
- Review work plan for committee tasks and responsibilities

Meeting Closed.

Summary

- The only county-owned site is Point Abbaye
 - The accessibility rating is a **1**
- Covington township property is in the works of being acquired by the County as an additional recreation site
 - Possible recreation activities include ORV Scramble, Trails (hiking, biking, ORV, snowmobile, equestrian), Camping,
- All of the goals from the previous recreation plan are still relevant
 - The County should reach out to the townships to see if they would like to see any of their recreation goals put into the new plan to assist with future grants and funding
 - Advertising & promoting recreational opportunities is a new goal for the committee
- The county would like to see all groups of various recreational activities represented in the plan
- Trails are another area of interest for the committee
 - Hiking, Biking, Kayaking, Equestrian
 - Water trail development at Point Abbaye is of interest
- Survey to be published on August 17th and to be closed on September 16th
 - Use County branding "*Keweenaw Bay and Beyond*"
 - Sidney will reach out to the committee to discuss survey changes and additions
- Meeting to discuss survey results - **October 14th**
- Public meeting to adopt plan - **December 13th**, prior to the County meeting

