



COUNTY OF BECKER

Recreational Advisory Committee

915 Lake Ave., Detroit Lakes, MN 56501
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RAC Meeting

Wednesday, April 20 2016 @ 4:00 PM

Meeting to be held @ Dunton Locks – VFW Shelter

AGENDA

1. Chair Welcome & Introductions

2. February Meeting Minutes: Review/Approval

3. April Agenda Review/Approval

4. Open Forum

5. Dunton Locks Public Engagement Process
 - Review of Workshop/Online Survey Results (See p. 3-9)
 - In looking at the Survey what issues/opportunities rise to the top?
 - Recommendations

For more information on the workshop and online survey results go to the County website: http://www.co.becker.mn.us/dept/parks_recreation/planning_projects.aspx

Directions on how to get to Dunton Locks County Park: The park is located just three miles south of the city of Detroit Lakes on US 59, then one-third mile west on Co. Rd.6, then south again on Co. Rd. 19 to Dunton Locks Road.

Google Map link for Park:

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=zSGEdCxtiqe0.kGVSuNjcVKIo&hl=en&ie=UTF8&msa=0&ll=46.801822%2C-95.869102&spn=0.058753%2C0.10437&z=13>

6. Other Issues

7. Agenda Items for Next Meeting

8. Adjournment

**Recreational Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 9th, 2015**

Committee Members Present: Karen Mulari (C), Larry Knutson, Hank Ludtke, Del Bergseth, Lonnie Neuner, Ben Grimsley

Staff Present: Guy Fischer

Audience/Guest Participation Per Agenda: Mandy Erickson (DNR), Stephen Roos (Center for Rural Design – Univ. of MN, Randy Thoreson, National Park Service)

1. Chair Welcome/Introductions
 - December Meeting Minutes approved; Ludtke motion, Bergseth 2nd - motion carried
 - February Agenda approved; Neuner motion, Ludtke 2nd – motion carried
2. Open Forum: - None
3. Dunton Locks Public Engagement Process/Workshop (Stephen Roos): Steve began discussion with RAC on Phase 1 Work Tasks: Identification of issues and development of appropriate questions for the workshop. Comments/discussion included – what recreational opportunities currently exist at the Park now? What does the public want? Importance of delineating seasonal uses relative to recreation. Facilities, parking, signage, rules. Developing an introduction for the workshop. Exploring additional means to provide outreach for those who may not be able to attend (ex. post questions to County website (a questionnaire) to provide alternative means of responding). Don't forget nearby Lake Associations/other organizations who can help get the word out. Meeting date/time discussed March 7th from 6:30-8:30 p.m. . Seek alternative neutral location for meeting.

Next Steps

- An overview will be developed as an introductory to the park, its facilities and recreational trails.
- Existing recreational uses will be identified.
- Anticipate a set of questions to be developed by Steve for review by the RAC soon.
- Maps that delineate the scope of the park were developed by BC Soil and Water that can be utilized for the workshop.
- Steve/aide to prepare Presentation Materials and Questionnaire.
- Workshop meeting to be held March 7th from 6:30-8:30.
- Staff to find neutral location for public workshop.

4. Meeting Adjourned.

Dunton Locks County Park – Survey Summary

3-31-2016

The following survey data was obtained from the recent Dunton Locks County Park Workshop and the online survey that was posted on the County’s webpage. Twenty-five people responded to the County Survey (workshop/online). The County sought public feedback in the following areas: **Activities at the Park, Facilities, Maintenance/Management, Enforcement, and Signage/Wayfinding**. Survey summary efforts below aim to prioritize survey feedback and list comments as they appeared for each of the aforementioned areas.

ACTIVITIES AT THE PARK

Rank	Activity Type	Often	Seldom	Nice, but no	Poor Amenity
1.	Hiking	14	11		
2.	Bird/Wildlife Watching	12	10	3	
3.	Biking	9	9	6	
4.	Events/Private Gatherings	5	13	4	
5.	Picnicking	3	15	3	
6.	Fishing	2	15	5	
7.	ccx-skiing	2	11	4	
8.	Snowshoeing	2	11	6	1
9.	Other: Photography	2			

COMMENTS RELATED TO SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES:

1. Hiking
 - Nice rugged trails, but a concern about soil erosion and lack of adequate trail maintenance expressed (6 comments).
2. Bird/Wildlife Watching
 - Great area for birding; its designated as a Pine to Prairie Birding Trail (2 comments).
 - More observation areas for birds are desired – a couple of additional piers for wildlife watching would be great (2 comments).
3. Biking
 - More paved trails (family) and loop where trail ends. Reference to regular maintenance/repair work needed (6 comments).
 - Need better/improve Mt. Bike Trails; create one-way trails to increase safety and enjoyment (2 comments).
4. Events/Private Gatherings
 - Great setup with ample parking and nice features.
 - Never considered this venue.
5. Picnicking
 - Great setup and enjoy picnicking here.

- Too much competition in DL.

6. Fishing

- This activity is very important here - lack of shore fishing opportunities critical to maintain and enhance at park; expand/enhance fishing. Shore fishing enhanced by protecting water quality (Detroit, Muskrat, Sallie)[2 comments].
- Create a couple groomed spots along No. side of Muskrat Lake.
- Need a new dock on Sallie and Muskrat Lake.

7. Ccx-skiing

- Groomed?
- Don't ski (2 comments).
- Not long enough or unique enough.
- If trails aren't groomed for skiing make them available for snowshoeing and fatbiking.
- Excellent terrain – flatter beginners' area should be improved on the eastern trails.

8. Snowshoeing

- Do not snowshoe (2 comments).

9. Other: Photography (see first bullet under Other Comments section below).

OTHER COMMENTS

- Having quiet areas to sit in park, for wildlife, scenic watching, nature study area for children and photography (lots of nature/professional photographers use the park); *Watchable Wildlife Area* (binoculars signage) [6 Comments].
- Snowmobile use (heavy) and develop snowmobile trail from West to DL. (2 Comments)
- Park being a great biking destination and Heartland Trail Connection (Dunton Locks Trail) [2 comments].
- Trails are heavily used for dog walking, but people are not cleaning up after their dogs.
- Great place to run.
- Create a kayak launch area.
- Possible Heartland connection.
- Don't get to Dunton Locks much – live 11 miles away.
- Primitive camping – yurts.
- County fishing dock by VFW shelter should be replaced.
- Make trail uses compatible with DNR land to the north.
- Buckthorn is an issue to the woods north side.
- What trail uses are eligible on private property – move trail use on non-county lands.
- County needs to stop mowing – let natural vegetation grow.
- Kind of forget it is there and available for use.
- Need garbage cans and signs depicting uses allowed.

FACILITIES – USE FREQUENCY

Rank	Facility	Often	Seldom	Never use
1.	Hiking Trails	29	10	
2.	Central Parking Lot	11	13	
3.	Restrooms	9	15	1
4.	Biking Trails	9	9	7
5.	Picnic Tables	6	14	5
6.	VFW Shelter	6	12	7
7.	Ski Trails	5	10	10
8.	Parking Lot – Off Hwy 59	4	10	9
9.	Marine Tramway	3	4	19
10.	Eagles Shelter	2	15	8

COMMENTS RELATED TO FACILITY USE:

1. Hiking Trails
 - None
2. Central Parking Lot
 - None
3. Restrooms
 - Better – more restrooms.
 - Inspect restrooms.
 - Not always available.
 - Would use if they were open.
 - Poorly maintained (no soap for handwashing).
 - Porta potties were full – almost out of TP, no hand sanitizer available.
4. Biking Trails
 - Unaware that there were trails to the east (south).
5. Picnic Tables
 - None
6. VFW Shelter
 - Utility service?
7. Ski Trails
 - If groomed would possibly be used more.
8. Parking Lot – Off Hwy 59
 - Move or enlarge east parking lot.
 - Reconfigure with roadway for safety.
 - Change road to go in back of existing parking.
 - Did not know it existed.
 - Typically park near the beach or bowling alley.
9. Marine Tramway
 - Should be removed because of AIS issues.

- Restoration/operation not justifiable. Not a tourist attraction. Money pit – not viable part of park – like to see tram operation permanently discontinued.

10. Eagles Shelter

- None

OTHER COMMENTS

- Repair/replace pier on Muskrat (3 Comments).
- Landing dock needed as people who use tram stop off to use restrooms. Don't spend money on new tram; support for tram operating in 2016 (3 comments).
- Move gate (fencing) by south shelter.
- Kayak into Muskrat area from E. parking lot.
- Snowmobile trail corridor.

PARK MAINTENANCE/MANAGEMENT

Rank	Activity Type	Well Maintained	Fair	Poor
1.	Fishing Piers	16	4	4
2.	Hiking Trails	14	9	1
3.	Event Shelters	12	9	
4.	Overlook and Viewsheds	11	12	
5.	Picnic Tables	12	11	
6.	Biking Trails	8	14	
7.	Wayfinding Signage	7	11	5
8.	Ccx-skiing Trails	4	12	3

MAINTENANCE/MANAGEMENT COMMENTS:

1. Fishing Piers
 - The one dock is in rather rough shape.
 - County pier is old unstable – DNR pier is great.
2. Hiking Trails
 - Downed trees often cleared several days later.
3. Event Shelters
 - None
4. Overlook and Viewsheds
 - Could be maintained better (open vistas @ benches).
 - It would be nice to have more park benches at these spots.
5. Picnic Tables
 - None
6. Biking Trails
 - Did not know some of them existed.
7. Wayfinding Signage
 - Consistent and better signage needed (2 comments).
8. Ccx-skiing Trails

- Grooming? They were not groomed this year (2 comments).

OTHER COMMENTS

- Trash Can enclosures.
- Dog bags station.
- Canoe/kayak access.
- Adopt-a-Park Program.
- Night Lighting (solar).
- Muskrat Lake pier is needed replacement.
- Need formal agreement with private landowners allowing trail use – long term lease.
- Create a “Friends of Dunton Locks” committee to raise dollars and seek donations, maybe even land donations.

ENFORCEMENT

Rank	Activity Type	Never had a problem	Some issues...YES	Rampant Violations...NO
1.	Picnic Tables	22		
2.	Parking Lot- Off Hwy 59	21	1	
3.	VFW Shelter	20	2	
4.	Eagles Shelter	20	1	
5.	Parking Lot – Central	19	4	
6.	Hiking Trails	18	4	1
7.	Ski Trails	18	2	
8.	Restrooms	16	6	
9.	Biking Trails	15	4	1
10.	Marine Tramway	14	4	1

ENFORCEMENT COMMENTS:

1. Picnic Tables
 - Water from the pump is horrible tasting. I think it discourages more picnic use.
2. Parking Lot – Off Hwy 59
 - Signage is a concern as did not even know until lately that this was even an option.
3. VFW Shelter
 - Garbage sometimes piles up because its not picked up after weekend events.
4. Eagles Shelter
 - None
5. Parking Lot – Central
 - Seems to have illegal and after dark activities.
 - Lack of parking on busy days at the park.
6. Hiking Trails
 - Dog walkers need to pick up the dog poop; dog use (3 comments).
 - Horse s--t on trails.
7. Ski Trails

- None
- Restrooms
 - Not always available.
 - Poorly maintained and generally not cleaned.
 - Biking Trails
 - Hours – night biking.
 - Bitten by dog while riding bike.
 - Horse s--t on trails.
 - Marine Tramway
 - Tram operations conflict with other park uses including fishing, walking and wildlife observation. As a person with limited mobility, I avoid the tram area because I fear tripping/injury.

OTHER COMMENTS

- Hours of operation in relation to Heartland Trail coming thru.
- Efforts should be made to monitor and prevent crime and inappropriate use of bathrooms.
- Current discussions with City Commissioners regarding the tram. The tram committee has an operational plan in place which will provide for Tram operations on weekends.
- The parking lot is often used for naughtiness. Should be patrolled or electronically surveilled to minimize this.

SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING

Rank	Activity Type	Never had a problem...Yes	Some issues...Yes	Missing but need...NO	Useless Remove...No
1.	Picnic Tables	22	1		
2.	VFW Shelter	22	1		
3.	Eagles Shelter	20	1	1	
4.	Restrooms	18	4	1	
5.	Parking Lot – Central	15	7	2	
6.	Parking Lot-Off Hwy 59	15	6	3	
7.	Marine Tramway	15			6
8.	Hiking Trails	14	7	1	
9.	Biking Trails	13	9	3	
10.	Ski Trails	11	8	2	

SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING COMMENTS:

- Picnic Tables
 - None
- VFW Shelter
 - None
- Eagles Shelter
 - None
- Restrooms
 - None

5. Parking Lot – Central

- Parking entrance, guidance; entrance clarity; Better entrance directions on West side coming south on 19; West, better internal direction signage; for someone unfamiliar with the park the signage is not all that easy to follow (5 comments).
- Right of Way/road markings need to point to the parking lot road to the left as approaching the park and not lead into the DNR parking lot. Exiting the DNR parking lots also needs a stop sign. Public exiting the parking lot road should have the right of way.
- A map would be nice for people to see the trailhead.

6. Parking Lot – Off Hwy 59

- East, better internal direction signage; Better internal signage.
- Get rid of temporary saw horses that have been there for years.

7. Marine Tramway

- But have never used it.

8. Hiking Trails

- Trail signage (distance, maps, etc.); Distances of trails would be nice; Existing trail signs not very helpful (3 comments).
- More pleasing signage on all trails (not blue and safety yellow metal).
- Maybe better signage on the north trails in regard to picking up after your pooch.
- Dog pick up stations.

9. Biking Trails

- These could be made to accommodate fat bikes.
- No bike trail signage that I've seen.

10. Ski Trails

- None

OTHER COMMENTS

- Overall signage needs consistency.
- Central Parking Lot is not signed well.
- Why is there a fence before So. picnic shelter?
- Eagle Scouts – entry kiosk signage
- “This is where you are...” signage relative to where you are in the park. Distance = highlighted.
- Should have signs regarding dog walking i.e. leashes and picking up after dogs – maybe poo bags could be provided.
- Biking trails should be one-way, with improved signage and limits on walking or other uses. Also facilities should be better able to accommodate fat bikes, kayaks and other emerging uses.