

**DNR'S DISABILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL
COUNCIL PURPOSE/MISSION**

To advise the Department of Natural Resources on matters pertaining to the accessibility of all department programs and services by persons with disabilities.

- To draft recommendations to the Department for legislation, administrative rules, or department policy.
- To identify and evaluate needs of persons with disabilities and to communicate them to the Department.
- To help to increase public awareness and sensitivity to the needs of persons with
- To communicate with individuals and other organizations dedicated to similar purposes.

**MEETING MINUTES
DISABILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL
FRIDAY, JUNE 25, 2021
VIA SKYPE**

Members Present via Skype: Cathryn Scott, Keith Pamperin, Jim Rutledge, Kirsten Engel, John Martinson, Calvin Richtig, John Mitchell, and Andrea Frisch

Members absent: Patricia Ardovino

Others Present via Skype: Barry Gilbeck, Nick Zouski, and Julie Amakobe

Guests Present via Skype: Friends of Peninsula State Park & Eric Hyde

Chair Martinson called the meeting to order at 10:03 am.

First, the Council reviewed the agenda.

Kirsten made a motion to accept the agenda. John Mitchell seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Next, the Council reviewed the meeting minutes from March 26, 2021.

Keith made a motion to accept the minutes. Cathryn seconded the motion and all were in favor.

The first topic to be discussed was the Peninsula Eagle Tower and Accessible Playground projects as presented by the Friends of Peninsula State Park and Eric Hyde, the Parks Superintendent. Calvin said he had met the Friends Group and Property Manager while visiting the Eagle Tower. A Friends Group member Christi Holicek talked about how the Tower has been visited and how incredibly happy the public is with the new Tower. Another Friends Group Member Steve Strucely said he talked with a person who has a disability from a Disability

Advocacy group and she had visited the Tower before, but was never able to go up the Tower. The Friends Group has a little booth/table at the foot of the Tower and are receiving lots of positive public input. Even people afraid of heights really like the Tower now. Keith indicated he is going to the ribbon cutting. It should be noted others who are able bodied prefer using the ramp even though they do not have to because of the great view. Eric Hyde, Peninsula State Park Superintendent, joined us. He said older persons, as well as persons with disabilities, are enjoying the Tower. Eric is now going to look at making more areas of his park accessible. Calvin asked if the Park's attendance had improved due to the new Tower. Eric said in general the attendance at the Park has increased because of Covid and that attendance has even more increased with the new Tower. Because of the increased number of visitors, Eric said the Park even had to open up an additional parking lot. Cathryn asked if the Park was doing any public relations. Eric said the local media and others were there on the first day it was open. Keith asked for a breakdown of costs. Steve said the Friends Group raised \$750,000. Eric indicated the final cost of the Tower was \$3.6 million dollars. He said video shoots are also being planned. Eric would like to have interpretive language displayed at the Tower (ramp location). Calvin said he would be a good resource for this project (interpretive display).

Eric said the playground had to be taken down. He is working with the Friends Group to help initiate the purchase of the new equipment. The playground equipment will need to be accessible. The Friends Group shared their desire in assisting with the purchase of the playground equipment. They (the Park and Friends Group) need advice about the area for the new playground equipment as the current playground is near or on an historic site. John Martinson said the Chris and Dana Reeve Foundation help fund accessible playgrounds. The Friends group should look at this potential opportunity. Peninsula's Nature Center and Amphitheater have been recently renovated and are now accessible. Kohler Andrae and High Cliff are also doing playground projects so DNR should try to coordinate and construct all of them at same time to get a better deal.

It was suggested Eric work with Accessibility Wisconsin to get Trac chairs to help those getting up the Tower. Options for Independent Living in Green Bay could house the Trac chair(s). Options for Independent Living could also lend out scooters. Nick talked to legal and DNR can't own or lend out the chairs because of liability issues. Accessibility Wisconsin can do this. DNR is working out an agreement with Accessibility Wisconsin. Options for Independent Living can be the host site and then the Friends Group and volunteers could check in and check out the chairs.

Customer Service and Licensing Updates led by Barry.

- Deer
- NRB took up deer season recommendations on 06/23/21. Goal is to have FZ selections available in Go Wild in July. Those that have already purchased their deer hunting license will need to log into their customer account and select the Farmland Zone DMU where they would like their antlerless harvest authorizations to be valid. After they are available, FZ selections will be part of the deer license purchase. Customers may defer their choice until later if needed.
- Bonus harvest authorization sale in mid-August. Sales begin at 10 a.m. each

- day and each deer license holder can purchase one bonus authorization per day until sold out.
- August 16-Forest Zones (Northern and Central) ○ August 17-Central Farmland Zone ○ August 18-Southern Farmland Zone
 - August 19-All zones available. Harvest Authorizations can be purchased until sold out or the season ends.
 - [2021 Hunting and Trapping Season Dates sheet](#) has an incorrect end date for the Deer Hunt for Hunters with Disabilities. It should read Oct. 2-10, but currently reads Oct. 2 – 11. Our Wildlife program will be updating the online version, but any hard copies printed/ordered will still have the typo.
 - Legislation ○ [SB 176 \(see also AB 161\)](#) decreases the minimum required disability rating (from %70 or greater -> %50 or greater) a veteran must have to qualify to purchase a disabled veteran fishing license for \$3.00. Also creates a reduced fee (\$65 instead of \$165) Conservation Patron license for veterans with a disability rating of %50 or greater. Passed out of committee 06/17/21. If this bill does make it into law, it has a delayed effective date of March 1, 2022.
 - [SB 269 \(see also AB 265\)](#) increases the UTV weight limit to 3,000 pounds has passed both houses and is awaiting Gov. Evers' signature. Could be signed in early August. Will take at least four months to implement the changes in our system, as it requires programming.
 - [SB 422](#) provides access to DOT State ID database for purpose of verifying residency. Introduced 06/14/21. Department provided fiscal estimate. Still in committee.
 - [AB 165 \(see also SB 192\)](#) combines the archer and crossbow hunting licenses. Public hearing on 06/08/21. Still in committee.
 - [AB 346 \(see also SB 397\)](#) provides a free fishing license for a resident or nonresident child with a disability. Requires he or she produce a certificate of the disability from a licensed physician or psychologist who has personally examined the child and who has expertise concerning the type of physical or mental disability evidenced by the child. In this bill, the definition of "disability" has the meaning given in s. 106.50 (1m) (g): "Disability" means a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a record of having such an impairment or being regarded as having such an impairment. "Disability" does not include the current illegal use of a controlled substance, as defined in s. 961.01 (4), or a controlled substance analog, as defined in s. 961.01 (4m), unless the individual is participating in a supervised drug rehabilitation program. Introduced 05/21/21. Department prepared fiscal estimate. Still in committee.
 - Because this is a free fishing license, the two trout stamps are included as part of this license.
 - Additional Items ○ Secretary Cole received a letter from a father of a 20-year old with Downs Syndrome who was disappointed his son's application for a disabled hunting permit was denied. Wanted permit in order to receive a Class A bear license transfer. Asked for information on the Disability Advisory Council, which we provided. Department explained statutory limitations of disabled

hunting permits and denied the father's request the department approve his son's application.

- Some Department Service Center counters are open for service. Green Bay, Spooner, Fitchburg, Woodruff, and Madison are currently open for walk in customers.

Next, the DAC discussed the Conservation Congress Citizen Resolution involving the Fishing Assistant requirements given by Kirsten. Kirsten said the Resolution passed. Carrie Lee is the liaison to the Conservation Congress and is assigned to the Committee assignments. She will schedule a Committee meeting and at that time the author (Kirsten) will receive a letter. If the Resolution passes out of the Committee, then the Resolution will go to the District Leadership Council and if passed, it will then finally be placed on Conservation Congress Statewide Survey. If the Resolution passes the Statewide process, it will need to be picked up by someone in the State Assembly to start the legislative process. The process can be found here: https://dnr.wi.gov/About/WCC/Documents/spring_hearing/ResolutionProcess.pdf

Next on the agenda was the public input questions from Bill Brown. There was discussion on the 40 acres minimum and 3-hunter minimum for the special gun deer disabled hunts. The land application and hunter application deadlines, in June and September, were also discussed.

John Mitchell asked if the companion (assistant) will need to have a deer hunting license. Barry said, "Yes". This can be found under State Statutes 29.193. The accompanying person may not hunt or carry a firearm, bow or crossbow unless that person has been issued a deer hunting license. An accompanying person who has not been issued a deer hunting license is limited to field dressing, tagging and retrieving game for the permit holder. John said that there is a companion license in other states. DNR's Wisconsin Administrative Code further clarifies the rules for an assistant. The designated assistant of the special gun deer hunt participant may use a firearm while retrieving a deer shot by a participant provided the assistant possesses a current valid deer hunting license.

John Mitchell asked if the minimum 3 hunters, minimum 40 acres, and the June and September deadline dates were in State Statute or Administrative Code. The 3 hunters minimum and the September deadline date is in NR 10.40, Wisconsin Administrative Code, but the 40 acres minimum is in DNR Policy. Barry believes the 40 acres minimum is in policy for safety reasons. Nick explained if these requirements were not in administrative rule or policy, there would be "mini" special hunts for individuals. John Martinson asked about a getting a companion license. Barry replied, "It's a big undertaking to implement another DNR license."

The next agenda item was Mapping Accessible Features with John Mitchell and Nick leading the discussion. John Mitchell wanted to know the status. The status is Parks is on a two-tiered process. The accessibility features need to get on the Park's webpage. The Bureau of Parks is working on a poster. This poster is actually a map with all State Parks (and Recreational Areas) identified on it with different colored dots representing different accessible areas within the Parks. Calvin asked if each park will have its own map? Nick said, "no it will not." All the Parks are on one map. Individual park maps are available at the parks and on-line. Andrea likes

one big map with all the Parks listed. Then she can go to the park with the most dots (accessible features). Calvin asked if the accessible features will be added to the individual maps as well. Nick said the individual parks are responsible for their own maps and they know this. Unfortunately, these individual maps do not get updated very often. Calvin asked if Nick had a list of the accessible inventory. Nick said he will send the large PDF file to everyone. Nick said they (he and Parks) are still working on language for a disclaimer.

Nick let the Council know the "Open the Outdoors" icon is going away. It will shift to "Access for Everyone". There will be a different graphic and the icon will be more visible. These changes are coming soon. John Mitchell asked if the Accessibility webpage will include hunting blinds? Nick said he is hoping to add an Interactive Map for boating access and fishing piers and also add another tier for hunting blinds.

The next agenda item was the Funding for Waterfowl Blinds as discussed by John Mitchell and Nick. Nick thought he sent this update out, but it was still in his "drafts". The Waterfowl Blinds Project hasn't been entered into the Development Project System (DPS) yet. The Property Manager is responsible to get this into DPS. John Mitchell is concerned with the current estimated project cost of \$4,000. A private group has raised \$2,000 so far. They want to know how much DNR/Nick can contribute to project. Does the Park Manager or Wildlife Management (WM) Biologist know that this group is contributing? Nick said, "Yes, the WM person does know this. John said they were going to put in a gravel trail and parking lot. The private group does not know what DNR can provide. Nick will send out another reply to a mass e-mail audience of what DNR can fund and not fund.

The next item on the agenda was the Accessibility Coordinator Updates led by Nick.

1) Steve's Bill. Barry mentioned Steve's Bill (SB422) was dropped from the budget bill, but that this is ok since it didn't have money tied to it. The Bill is currently in Committee.

2) Accessibility Poster. Nick sent the accessibility poster out to the DAC. He then submitted it to the Bureau of Parks and now it needs to go to the Bureau of Communications. The poster background was changed to a darker shade of blue for DNR and accessibility (national color). Keith asked about a new symbol/logo for the poster. Calvin said the symbol has not been approved or implemented as the International symbol for persons with disabilities by the ADA.

3) All Terrain Chair at Dodgeville and Blue Mound State Parks. Nick is having an issue with people getting back to him. The Friends Group had a meeting and are on board, but they haven't gotten back to Nick. Nick talked to Ray Anderson at Accessibility Wisconsin and he wants it to get finalized also. Kirsten said there is a big banner at Blue Mound State Park stating this location is the future place for the all-terrain chair. Nick will follow up on Monday. The Friends Group Representative isn't getting back to Nick.

Relating to Dodgeville State Park, Nick doesn't believe that the Friends Group has even discussed and/or approved the use of the all-terrain chair. Nick will follow up with this Friends Group too.

4)Environmental Sensitivity Campsites. Nick said he sent information to Caitlin in Parks. He hasn't heard back. Nick thought she was moving on to a new job. He will follow up with Missy.

5)Blackhawk Lake Recreational Area Update. Nick hasn't followed up on this. He did ask the Property Manager what their policy is. Jim Rutledge said to contact the County Attorney. He had a contentious discussion with him. They had a lengthy discussion and finally the Attorney agreed with Jim to have a couple of sites left open for persons with disabilities during registration time. Cathryn mentioned a municipality constructed a new pier and docking area that was supposedly accessible, but was not. Cathryn will get Nick the information.

6)DNR's Parks Trails Coordinator and allowing dogs on DNR trails (designed nature trails). Nick did not follow up on this. He will follow up.

The next agenda item was Open the Outdoors Website Update given by Nick and Julie.

Julie indicated when the DNR Website was updated, the Disability Advisory Council was deleted from the Open the Outdoors webpage. It has since been placed under the "Adaptive Equipment page. She is working with the DNR IT folks so the DAC will have its own page again. Nick said the IT folks thought Nick should be the web designer for Open the Outdoors page. Nick cleared things up with them and said he is not a web designer.

Next agenda item was the Adaptive Equipment at State Parks Issue led by Julie. Julie said in an official DNR announcement that adaptive equipment was currently not allowed to be checked out by Parks personnel due to Covid. Calvin thanked Julie for bringing this up. He thought the DAC should make a recommendation. There was lengthy discussion on this topic. Nick said if the Concessionaire leases out kayaks, but the Parks own the adaptive kayak, then the Concessionaire should not be allowed to lease out regular kayaks. John Mitchell said companies which that rent out toilets, have to have an accessible toilet to rent out also. It was noted private businesses do not have to have an accessible equivalent.

Keith said Mirror Lake State Park had an adaptive kayak, but kept it off site and the Parks personnel didn't know about the kayak. Nick said this only happens at Mirror Lake State Park. Nick said this adaptive kayak equipment was purchased by DNR, so this process needs to change! Calvin said he runs into this all the time with all different types of opportunities. Calvin asked if Nick has a list of how often the different types of adaptive equipment are used. Nick said he doesn't have a list, but has heard from Parks about the usage. Sit skis are rarely used, adaptive kayaks are routinely used, and beach wheelchairs are used frequently. Nick is in early stages of securing more adaptive equipment. He said there is trail funding, too, for beach access. Nick's goal is to have a beach mat (higher priority) and beach chairs at each park location with a beach. Calvin disagreed with Nick because beach mats could be used for a small area. Kirsten said DNR is a State Agency and needs to follow the regulations.

Andrea made a motion DNR require concessionaires operating on DNR properties to provide equitable access to adaptive recreational equipment or comparable recreational opportunities for individuals with disabilities when renewing the Concessionaire contracts. Kirsten seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Next on the agenda was the Visually Impaired Application Review and Approval for Vacancy. Kirsten asked if Nick should look to recruit a person for the DAC alternate position. Since the DAC already had an application in house for the underrepresented visually impaired, the Council decided to look over this application. This application came from Andrea's friend who had sent in an application for DAC alternate vacancy a while back. However, this vacancy position will now be a for a regular DAC member due to Jim's retirement from the Council and subsequent opening.

Keith made a motion to accept Shannon Columb as a new DAC member if she accepts the membership. Cathryn seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Next on the agenda was the Potawatomi Tower update. Julie presented an article written by the Sturgeon Bay Historical Society Foundation (SBHSF). There was a lot of discussion on the article. Calvin asked what DNR's opinion is now with the Tower being placed on the Federal Register of Historic Sites. Nick explained if the Tower is repaired, it needs to be accessible per DNR. The DAC still stands with this requirement as well.

The Peninsula Eagle Tower Ribbon Cutting was the next agenda item. Keith, Calvin and may be John Mitchell will be attending the ribbon cutting ceremony at Eagle Tower on July 9th.

Final agenda item was the Members' Updates.

John Martinson – Nothing at this time.

Calvin - Nothing at this time.

John Mitchell – John said to check out the Adaptive Sportsman website for any updates.

Jim – Jim did not have any updates, but said of all the Councils on which he was a member, he was the proudest to be part of the DAC.

Kirsten – Nothing at this time.

Andrea – Nothing at this time.

Keith – Keith indicated Challenge the Outdoors will have a clay shoot event on July 31st. He also mentioned the Spring Turkey Hunt went very well.

Cathryn – Nothing at this time.

The next in-person meeting will be on September 23rd and 24th at Peninsula State Park. The DAC will be touring the new Eagle Tower. Potawatomi will have the closest hotel. The DAC could possibly take a look at that tower too. **Update: the meeting will be virtual on Thursday September 23rd and the tour on September 24th is postponed and will be rescheduled.**

Keith made a motion to adjourn the meeting. John Mitchell seconded the motion and all were in favor

John Martinson adjourned the meeting at 3:06 pm.