

Provincial Trails Advisory Body (PTAB)
Conference Call Meeting - Thursday February 18, 2016

MINUTES

<u>Members present</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
John Hawkings (co-chair)	Director, Recreation Sites & Trails BC (RSTBC)
Jeremy McCall (co-chair)	Executive Director, Outdoor Recreation Council
Tennessee Trent	RSTBC
Kirby Villeneuve	BC Parks
Brian Farquhar	BC Recreation & Parks Association (BCRPA)
David Oliver	BC Wildlife Federation (BCWF)
<u>Appointed by the Outdoor Recreation Council (ORC)</u>	
Andrew Drouin	Central Okanagan Trail Alliance
Nick Heath	BC Marine Trail Network Association
Bob Holland	Quad Riders ATV Association of BC
Orville Smith	Horse Council of BC
Tyler Kraushar	BC Snowmobile Federation
<u>Unable to attend</u>	
Allan Callander	Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure (MOTI)
Evan Loveless	Wilderness Tourism Association (WTA)

Welcome: John called the meeting to order at 10.03 AM.

1. Approval of agenda

The Agenda was approved by consent with the following changes: Strategy Component 15 was removed from Agenda Item 6 and Component 22 was added.

2. Review of the Trails Strategy and PTAB Terms of Reference: Is the PTAB progressing as intended? Note: The PTAB is intended to provide advice on the implementation of the Trails Strategy. The vision of the Trails Strategy is for *“a world-renowned, sustainable network of trails, with opportunities for all, which provides benefits for trail users, communities and the province”*.

Discussion: John said that after the PTAB`s first year it is time for review. Jeremy said it has become apparent that completing the Key Components of the Trails Strategy is a huge task which is well beyond the capabilities of a group of 13 busy people. He suggested that some tasks should be contracted out to other groups or to consultants, leaving the PTAB with a coordinating function. He suggested there could also be a role for a PTAB secretariat or part time person to make sure the work progresses between meetings (Note: ORC will soon be hiring a part time office assistant). John acknowledged that RSTBC has some financial capacity but requires time to allocate its resources. Bob said it takes a year just to get to know each other. Tyler said that before long before new people will come on the PTAB so that will be ongoing process. He suggested more frequent conference calls. John questioned whether the PTAB had taken on too much.

After this discussion John said the question of whether the PTAB is a “doer” or an advisor has to be decided. Tyler said it does not have the capacity to be a doer. John agreed and pointed out that the government should be the doer and the PTAB should advise. Brian supported that statement and commented on three initiatives he has been involved in recently:

1. A draft resolution being put forward by the Association of Vancouver Island Communities to introduce regional government authority to establish trails within or through MOTI roads and maintain trails in conjunction with MOTI. (See Trails Strategy Key Component 6).
2. Meetings with staff of the Agricultural Land Commission regarding trails and best practices in the Agricultural Land Reserve.
3. An initiative of the Vancouver Island Tourism Authority to promote trails, which ties in with Trails Strategy Key Component 8.

Nick concluded this discussion by saying he did not think the PTAB has an executive function and it should not be doing research. Its role is advisory. He also said there is a danger in setting goals too high. Another member noted a need to clarify the role of the PTAB based on capacity and clarification of mandate.

Action item: Brian to circulate the draft resolution being proposed by AVIC.

3. Review of minutes of October 30 meeting

Jeremy reviewed the Action Items in the minutes:

- Allan to update PTAB about Division 24/signage for this meeting – Outstanding.
- Jeremy to distribute link to the Alberta trail classification system (completed) and contact the Executive Director of Alberta TrailNet (waiting for response).
- PTAB members from BC Government agencies to prepare a report card for this meeting - Outstanding

4. Approval of minutes of October 30 meeting

Motion: Moved & seconded (OS/DO). That the minutes of the October 30 meeting be approved. **Motion carried.** These minutes are posted on the PTAB pages on the ORC website at www.orcbc.ca

5. Key Components of the Trails Strategy - Current sub-committees

Component 9 - Legislation, regulations and policy to manage motorized use: John commented that MFLNRO, in conjunction with the BC Forest Safety Council plans to get better information about the ORV legislation and requirements out to ORV users by way of brochures. Jeremy said that some time ago the ORV Joint Advisory Group (JAG) was surveyed for ideas by a consulting firm which then produced a report on ways to inform the public with several options. Vera Vukelich has the report which could be a useful starting point. John recommends that the PTAB have a continuing role in ORV management. Tennessee said some smaller communities are struggling with the challenge of ORV's passing through their communities. David said there are inconsistent rules for ORVs on public roads and forest service roads. It was noted that the ORV Act now allows crossing of public highways under certain safety conditions but traveling them along is still not possible. This is an important issue to be addressed by the ORV community.

Component 10 - Enhance recreation opportunities by reducing liability risk: Tennessee agreed to circulate his memo about the Occupier's Liability Act to members of the PTAB and to obtain a legal opinion on its suitability for public distribution.

Action item: Tennessee to circulate the Occupier's Liability Act memo.

Component 12 – Catalogue of funding sources: Andrew has prepared a list of possible funding sources. He questioned whether the PTAB plans to write grant applications to create a pool of funds for trails. He doubted that most groups have

the experience required to write effective applications. Jeremy said he doesn't think that should be the job of the PTAB. Orville said the objective is to distribute the list to trail user groups. Andrew agreed to circulate the list. John said this would be timely because there will be substantial funds available for trail funding during the next two years. He also mentioned a possible role for ORC in deciding which groups should receive funding. David suggested that trail groups be given assistance with applying for grants.

Action item: Andrew to distribute list of funding sources to PTAB members.

Component 13 – Consolidate existing trail standards, guidelines and best practices and ensure they are communicated: Jeremy acknowledged that no further action had been taken since October. If there was agreement he proposed that a simplified version of the Alberta Trail Classification System be developed rather than reinventing the wheel. He also suggested that Justin Ellis of Stantec Engineering, who had developed the Alberta system, would be in a good position to improve it. Tennessee supported that type of approach. He said it would be useful to develop a project outline as a basis for applying for funding. Kirby said BC Parks could partner RSTBC. Jeremy agreed to move it to the next stage.

Action item: Jeremy to develop an outline of an improved user-friendly trail classification system with input from RSTBC and BC Parks.

Component 14 – Education programs to foster responsible trail use: No further progress.

Component 15 – Compliance and enforcement: No further progress.

Component 16 – Integrate recreation use into resource roads: See agenda item 8 below.

Component 19 – Undertake comprehensive survey of trail users: John reported on a presentation he just made to the BC Recreation and Parks Association. While this type of survey had been important in 2009 before the Banff Trails Conference he questioned its usefulness today. Andrew said some presenters at the Mountain Bike Tourism Association conference in Williams Lake in October had used this type of information. (Later in the meeting Andrew offered to design a survey.)

Component 7 – Reduce Red Tape: No further progress. The Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (MFLNRO) is reported to be adopting a so-called "lean" approach to paperwork. Bob said he would continue to work on Action 7 and consider how to simplify procedures for applicants. John reminded members about RSTBC's *Application Information and Guidelines for Trails and Recreation Facilities* which Bob listed in his October report (see Appendix to October 30 minutes). Jeremy agreed to post links on the PTAB website.

Action item: Jeremy to post the link to the *Application Information & Guidelines for Trails and Recreation Facilities* on the PTAB pages on the ORC website.

6. Review remaining Key Components of the Trails Strategy

It was agreed to briefly review the Key Components not addressed up to this point.

Components 1 & 2 – Environmental Stewardship: Tennessee reminded members about the Environmental Screening Tool developed by RSTBC in conjunction with the Shuswap Trail Alliance. He said the Recreation Officers are aware of it and he

agreed to send the link to ORC so it can be posted on the PTAB pages on the ORC website.

Action item: ORC to post the link on the PTAB pages on the ORC website.

Component 3 – Collaboratively develop local, regional and provincial trail system plans: Tennessee said that RSTBC is continually engaged in this process and there are currently ten such processes under way. Brian said it is important to compile a list of best practices during these processes.

Component 4 – Engage First Nations in collaborative trail planning: Brian reported that the Cowichan Regional District has entered into a Letter of Understanding with the Malahat First Nation with respect to planning in the South Shawnigan Lake area.

Component 5 – Engage landowners in collaborative trail planning: Tennessee said RSTBC is already engaged in this.

Component 6 – Integrate trail planning with the transportation network system: Brian said the proposed resolution being put forward by the Association of Vancouver Island Communities to develop standards and maintain trails in conjunction with MOTI ties in with Trails Strategy Component 6.

Component 8 – Develop a communication and education strategy to inform trail users: John said this ties in with Component 7. We require a good information document. It was agreed that this should be done as soon as possible.

Component 11 – Establish a reliable and diverse funding model: This could be developed from the information gathered by Andrew for Component 12.

Component 17 – Develop a ``best practices`` approach to the stewardship of trails: Brian said the Agricultural Land Commission was keen to develop guidelines for trail management.

Component 18 – Develop and maintain an inventory of trails: John said it might not be necessary to reinvent the wheel with excellent information already available on websites like Trailforks.com which carries information on mountain biking trails. Jeremy referred to Bivouac.com and ClubTread.com for hiking and mountaineering trails. He also said it should be possible to post information similar to the Ontario Trails Council website which has trail descriptions and maps for many trails throughout Ontario. Tyler suggested a WIKI approach. Brian said Tourism Vancouver Island has trail information.

Component 20 – Support the marketing of trails: Jeremy referred to Destination BC's involvement with the funding and marketing of trails in the Sea to Sky corridor from Squamish to Pemberton and the Bridge River Valley.

Component 22 – Support existing local and regional trail committees: Jeremy said three such trail groups will be presenting at the Share the Trails Workshop in Salmon Arm on May 11 – Shuswap Trail Alliance, Tabor Mountain Recreation Society and Chilliwack Recreation Advisory Group. Andrew pointed out that there are several other trail groups or alliances in the interior such as Central Okanagan Trail Alliance and South Okanagan Trail Alliance. Jeremy suggested that a list be developed, something which ORC could do with input from others.

7. Trail funding opportunities

John said he would like to see the PTAB have a role in deciding how funds are allocated from certain funds. Jeremy referred to Washington State where the Non-

Highway and Off-Road Vehicle Activities (NOVA) Program Advisory Committee, a non-government committee, makes recommendations for expenditures from a portion of the state gasoline tax and off-road vehicle use permits. John then reviewed three types of funding sources for BC:

- A. Off Road Vehicle Special Account: The initial registration of ORVs has exceeded forecasts so funds have begun to accumulate in this account, for which John anticipates that the PTAB will have an advisory role.
- B. Rural Dividend Fund: This fund will be set up in early April with \$25 million to be spent over three years beginning in 2017. There will be an open application process. It will be administered by David Borth of MFLNRO. John said that ORC should encourage trail groups to have shovel ready projects to take advantage of this fund. We need to be clear with trail proponents that projects need to be truly shovel ready. This means First Nation consultation, public engagement, land conflict resolution, etcetera are all resolved and there is a project plan. This also includes all other authorizations and assessments that may be required (cultural heritage, water act, etc.). John said trails are eligible but criteria have not been published. He agreed to share the criteria with members.
- C. Trusts: There are three major trust funds in BC: Columbia Basin Trust, Northern Development Trust and the Island Coast Economic Trust. Kirby added that accessibility funding is available from the federal government for situations with mobility issues.

Action item: John to distribute more information about the Rural Dividend Fund to PTAB members.

8. Natural Resource Roads Act (NRRA)

Lyle Knight, Manager, Resource Roads, with MFLNRO, welcomed the opportunity to brief PTAB members. He made the following points:

- Resource roads are presently subject to 12 different statutes, some of which are prescriptive and others which have no standards for users, so there are efficiencies to be gained by rolling these into one set of rules.
- The NRRA will take a single stream management approach.
- The NRRA will improve environmental management.
- The NRRA will develop consistent road licensing rules, rules of the road, safety rules for industrial and recreation users, and address road de-activation.
- Environmental standards will mean that not all roads can be kept open.
- Roads will not be privatized.
- The Occupiers Liability Act will be relied on for recreational users. A specific amendment to the OLA was made to ensure that categories of resource roads were included in the lower duty of care identified by the Act.
- There will be a notification process when roads are to be deactivated. That process has not yet been finalized but might include a 90 days comment period.

Lyle referred to the Senior Stakeholders Advisory Group, on which Terry Wardrop was the recreation representative until recently. A revised process is to utilize PTAB body and connections, plus direct communications with groups such as ATV BC, BCORMA and BCSF, to more broadly communicate with recreational stakeholders. Jeremy said that ORC is in a position to distribute information to many recreation groups when necessary. Lyle said that the objective is not to hinder access where possible. He also mentioned the importance of having consistent rules

(Motor Vehicle Act with exceptions for ORVs) and making appropriate provisions for children on resource roads. Tyler said signage is important. Lyle concluded by saying that due to its complexity it is unlikely that the NRRA will be drafted in time for the legislatures Spring 2017 session, so Spring 2018 is more likely.

Next meeting and adjournment

The next meeting will be a conference call meeting and will likely be scheduled for mid-April. The meeting was adjourned at 12.01 PM.

Draft 3
Mar. 24/16
jm/tt
