

**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
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2021
VIA SKYPE**

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

Members absent: Jim Rutledge, Andrea Frisch, and Patricia Ardivino

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

Chair Martinson called the meeting to order at 10:08 am.

First item on the agenda was the Introduction of New DAC Member Shannon Columb. Nick said the New DAC member is not present on the call most likely due to the short notice given to her regarding the meeting. She has not been given her letter yet, so she could not vote anyway. John Mitchell wanted to know if Nick could give us information on Shannon Columb. He said the DAC was given her application to review. Cathryn read Shannon's information to the Council from her DAC application.

First, the Council reviewed the agenda. John Martinson said he wanted to add an agenda item regarding Patricia Ardivino attendance.

Keith made a motion to accept the agenda with the added item. John Mitchell seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Next, the Council reviewed the meeting minutes from June 25, 2021.

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

The first topic to be discussed was Customer Service and Licensing Updates led by Barry.

- Class A and C disabled hunting information now available on disabled hunting web page: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/hunt/disdeer.html> There also a link on the White-tailed deer hunting web page.
 - This website has been updated to include options for use of harvest authorizations.
- [2021 Hunting and Trapping Season Dates sheet](#) had an incorrect end date for the Deer Hunt for Hunters with Disabilities. This has been corrected and is available on the website.
- Legislation
 - [SB 176](#) – passed out of committee on 6/16/21. Available for scheduling by full Senate. This bill establishes Wisconsin resident disabled veterans with a service-connected disability of 50% or greater or who is individually unemployable may purchase a conservation patron license for \$65 instead of the regular \$165 fee. This bill also decreases the required minimum disability rating from 70 percent to 50 percent to purchase a reduced fee (\$3) annual fishing license and receive the free Disabled Veteran State Park Admission/Trail Pass Card.
 - [AB 165 \(see also SB 192\)](#) – combining archer and crossbow hunting licenses. Still in committee.
 - [AB 421 \(see also SB 422\)](#) – access to WisDOT records for State IDs. Still in committee
 - [AB 434 \(see also SB 438\)](#) - medical professionals certifying conditions/eligibility for disabled permits. Allows PTs and OTs to certify an applicant for a disabled hunting/fishing permit meets eligibility criteria for issuance of permit. Still in committee.
 - [AB 346 \(see also SB 397\)](#) - a fishing license for a child with a disability. This bill requires the Department of Natural Resources and to issue an annual fishing license to resident and nonresident children that present documentation from a medical professional that they have a disability defined in s. 106.50 (1m) (g). Documentation must be a certificate 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. Per 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. Still in committee.
 - Act 70 signed into law increasing the maximum weight of a UTV to 3,000 pounds.

○ Additional Items

- Department Service Center counters open for service. Green Bay, Spooner, Fitchburg, Woodruff, Eau Claire, Janesville, La Crosse, Rhinelander, Waukesha, Milwaukee, Oshkosh, Wausau, and Madison are currently open for walk in customers.
- Boat application and ATV application forms have been updated to help meet statutory requirements and make it easier for customers to recognize and complete the needed forms.
- The Customer Service program has hired several new staff members and will be prepared for the upcoming hunting seasons.
- The combined hunting regulations are available online and should be available in hard copy at most vendors.

Next, the DAC discussed the Wisconsin Waterfowl Association (WWA) Hunting Blind Project Update & Inventory of Blinds. Nick said the Inventory of Blinds List was sent out to everyone on the Council. He was hoping it is complete, but if new ones need to be added, they will be added later. Jackson Marsh WA is the Hunting Blind Project referred to in the agenda. John Mitchell liked that the List was an interactive list where new blinds can be added at any time. John Mitchell has financial support to help with funding of the Jackson Marsh hunting blind project. The wetland issue identified for this project, and which has taken a year to work through, has been frustrating. Nick indicated the funding source needs to be identified before anything on the project can be done. Likewise, the scope of the project has to be established before funding can be located/identified. John Mitchell thought the Project was slowed down several times. Resolving the wetland issue is in process; the appropriate permit has been applied for. Nick thinks the wetland issue should be resolved within the next couple of months. The Jackson Marsh WA blind should be approved by Spring and then construction can begin. This project consists of a blind and graveling the road and parking area. The WWA had a meeting where the location of the blind was discussed. Volunteers will be doing the work. Keith said it would be helpful for John to put in writing (e-mail) stating the frustration experienced with this project. This delay, going years without anything completed, is inexcusable. Keith said maybe a letter to the DNR Secretary is appropriate. There was lots of discussion on this topic. Julie recommended John Mitchell send an e-mail to the Jackson Marsh Wildlife Area (WA) Wildlife Biologist. Nick will have the Property Manager (Wildlife Biologist) call John Mitchell for the follow up. John suggested to the Council they look over the list and let Nick know of any that are not listed. The list will be in a map format and will be placed on the Accessibility site and probably the Hunting site. Cathryn asked if the map could be downloaded. Nick said it was up to the IT folks on how it will look and operate. Nick said if it is not looking good, we can let them know. Contacting IT regarding the Blinds is currently on Nick's to do list. Nick said all blinds will be on the map so they can be found. John Martinson wanted a category added to the list specifying the type of blind (hunting or waterfowl).

Next on the agenda was the Town of Linn Shadow Lane Bridge. Nick said this bridge was replaced and it is on Lake Geneva. The Town needed a permit because it was bridge going over the roadway. There was no DNR funding for this project at all. Nick advised the Town to talk to their lawyer and then they may have to go to the Department of Justice. The Corps of Engineers designed the accessible bridge, but the contractor did not build it that way. It is not accessible.

The next agenda item on the agenda was Accessibility Coordinator Updates.

1) Brule River State Forest Hunter Cabin – The cabin is being built and will open this Spring. It was made accessible, but is not an accessible cabin. The Property Manager said he will be putting in an accessible hunting blind.

2) The All Terrain Chairs Site Hosting Agreement- The Agreement is still with the Secretary's Office. The Office of Communication took it over and then took it to the Secretary's Office. This is the Agreement with Access Ability Wisconsin (AAW) to provide all terrain chairs to State Parks. There will be host site. The Friends Group of the certain park getting a chair will do the check-in and reporting of the chair, etc. There will be just one Agreement so any park can use it. Calvin asked if the chairs will be located on the property? Nick said "Yes, the chairs will be stored at the state parks and parks will have a secure space for the chairs and charging capabilities".

3) The Peninsula Tower – The grand opening of Eagle Tower at Peninsula State Park went very well. Nick has been contacted to do an interviews and the Tower really is a high profile destination up in that area. Calvin asked if he saw the Natural Resource Magazine. Keith and Calvin are in the picture. Calvin will send a link to the DAC. Nick said the Secretary's office is very good with publicizing accessibility items. Kirsten asked if there are any updates on the Potawatomi Tower. She said this project it is likely influenced by the Peninsula Tower. Calvin said there is nothing in the local news on this and Nick said he hasn't heard of anything either. Keith said the Eagle Tower is a success for sure. Nothing negative. Keith thought the Tower and the hunting blind should be closed during the winter because these would be too difficult to maintain with the snow.

4) Environmentally Sensitive Campsites - Nick needs to follow up with the new person in Parks (the other staff person left the Bureau). For now, it is past camping season, so this will not be an issue.

5) Dog Trail Availability at Willow River State Park . Nick has no yet followed up on this issue.

6) DNR Website – The Bureau of Fisheries has incorporated a person using a wheel chair on its fishing webpage. The photo was on the "Catch and Release" Tile. Even though this event was not disability related, they used a person with a disability. (Nice!) However, the Accessibility Tile was taken down from the DNR website. Nick will follow up to find out "why"?

7) Blackhawk Lake Recreational Area - This recreational area is managed by the County Park System. Nick and Deanna (budget coordinator) were to go out there and take a look at the situation. The County was going to hold/keep a couple of boat slips which are accessible for persons with disabilities. Nick will go there at a future date to see if they actually did this.

Calvin asked if the signs that were set up at Peninsula State Park for comments from the public on accessibility (he saw one at a winter check in area) had provided any comments. Nick said, "No comments have come in so far."

The next agenda item was the DAC Webpage and Open the Outdoors. Julie let the Council know that the DAC now has its own webpage again in Open the Outdoors. (while the DNR website was being renovated, they removed the DAC information). It is easy to find and once again has the DAC membership, the DAC charter, and the DAC minutes.

New accessibility items have been added to the DNR website per Kirsten and all agreed this is good. The DAC shared the screen and looked at these items. Calvin asked if these new accessibility items are based on new information or old information. Calvin asked if Nick could send them the PDF file with all the responses (accessibility features) from Parks' Property Managers. Nick indicated he can't find the PDF to send out. Nick said this PDF file is only for Parks because not all fishing piers are in state parks. Kirsten said when you filter and click on Hartman Creek State Park, for example, you get to the actual Park page and there still isn't good accessible information there. Calvin thought at least this is a great start. Calvin reminded the Council that Nick has said in the past that Parks pages don't get updated often. He thought the Council needs to push on this. Nick will talk to Parks and have them add a tab to their park page because if they did the map, they must have the information for their park. It appears the browser is not working well for the filters, etc.

Calvin asked if the Council can have DNR promote the interactive accessibility map now that it is up and running and make it more visible? The Council wants to get more people involved. He stated marketing is needed. Nick said he has talked to the Office of Communications and now things are getting done and he has talked to them before to promote accessibility. However, he doesn't know what its Communication Plan is. Is the Plan complete? Nick will said he will ask the Office of Communication again. Calvin said she had the map on the phone; was this Sarah Hoyer? Calvin wants someone from the Office of Communications at our next meeting. He wants the Council to thank and ask for more publicity. Nick will reach out to Katie (Communications) and have her come to the next meeting. Calvin asked about who (audience) to send this information out to. Kirsten said there are still some quirks that need to be worked out before we promote it. John Martinson said you can clear out at the bottom. Kirsten indicated when you want to look up accessible cabins and trails, you can't get both to appear at the same time. It only brings up those sites with both an accessible cabin and accessible trails and it doesn't list those parks which has only an accessible cabin or only an accessible trail. Nick will talk to them and invite someone to next meeting. The Council can then go through its Communication Plan. Currently, the database doesn't show all accessible features/items. Nick said that some probably haven't been entered yet. Kirsten said park visitors could call in and say where there is something (an accessible feature) missing and this call will push it to get entered.

Calvin asked if there a DNR plan to add more accessible cabins? Nick has an idea and this is to have more cabins like the rustic cabin in Copper Falls. He suggested an accessible restroom/shower should be added to the rustic cabin design. Julie told the Council that maintaining the cabins was a cost issue. She said there is no longer a DNR Cabin Committee nor a list of location priorities for the accessible cabins. Private campgrounds could get involved, too, although this may not be a big deal. Nick said there is a new Parks Director Steve Scmelzer and he might be open to doing some of the Copper Falls cabins with bathrooms. Nick will follow up with Steve, so the Council should wait to see what he says before it makes a motion. Kirsten says that the DAC does not have to go along with the DNR position, the Council should say what it thinks is improatnt for more cabins, including the rustic cabins. Calvin indicated this would add value to the state parks if more of them had cabins. Calvin said to look for funds and partnerships. Calvin said now that Peninsula State Park has the accessible tower and accessible playground, the Friends Group may be interested in adding an accessbile cabin. The public should let DNR know these are in high demand. Keith agreed with Calvin and said there are higher levels of funding than in recent years. The Council should look to get more cabins. Nick reiterated the smaller rustic cabin with a restroom/shower is a good idea to promote. Nick wasn't sure who he needs to talk to to get this to happen. This is why he wants to talk to Steve Schmelzer (Parks Director) first. Keith says he doesn't agree with Nick regarding the smaller cabins. He stated again the demand is high for the full accessible cabins. Kirsten says the full accessbile cabins are a little glorified versus what the genral public uses. There was lots of discussion regarding this topic. Keith had talked with Diane Brusoe (Deputy Administrator for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks) and she said she was interesed in this topic. Nick wanted the name of the group Keith talked to and will name drop the information to Diane Brusoe. Keith said the fishishg pier at Buckhorn State Park is great! Calvin said to wait until the next meeting. He wants to let the DNR (Parks) know the DAC is in favor of more accessible cabins. Nick will contact Diane and will let her know about the Council's interest in more cabins.

Keith make a motion to encourage DNR's Division of Parks to consider the development of additional accessible cabins at state parks and develop a maintenance plan for the existing accessible cabins. Calvin seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Keith and Calvin will draft a letter for Nick to send to Diane Brusoe. Julie is to send Keith Diane Brusoe's information including her email address, phone number, and title.

Nick thought it was Sophia Parr who placed the accessible map on the webpage. He will confirm who it was. She was freindly and met with Keith and Calvin.

Lastly, John Martinson talked about the attendance of one of the DAC members. John Martinson asked this Member if she still had an interest in being part of the DAC. She didn't respond to his e-mail. However, she did contact Nick and said she had several meetings, and might join the DAC meeting later today. John Mratinson will follow up with this Member via e-mail and surface mail. Nick doesn't want to score the DAC member applicants any more because some look better on paper but aren't necessarily a plus to the group. John Mitchell said an intereview can better show the applicant's interest more than being scored.

Cathryn wants this item (DAC attendance) to be put on the next meeting's agenda. The Council will look at how it addresses the issue of filling positions and how it can get new members on board such as a recruiting plan. Julie asked about drafting a policy on how to address the issue of filling positions. Cathryn wants to recruit and not just choose friends of DAC members. Keith commented the new members need to represent different disabilities rather than represent a certain geographical location. John Martinson agrees with Keith's comment. Again there was a lot of discussion generated on this topic.

John Martinson wanted to be on the Committee. Keith said Chair John Martinson should pick three Members to be on this Committee. Kirsten volunteered to work on a draft process. Cathryn and John Martinson will work on a policy and plan.

Final agenda item was the Members' Updates.

John Martinson – John participated in the Wheelchair White Tails hunt near Niagara last week. He had a good time. It was a beautiful area. The group takes a couple people out during the archery season.

Calvin - Nothing at this time.

John Mitchell - Check the Adaptive Sportsman website for updates.

Kirsten – Nothing at this time.

Cathryn – Nothing at this time.

Keith – Keith Pamperin was privileged to participate in a European Style Pheasant Hunt September 4th sponsored by Adaptive Sportsman. Each disabled hunter teamed up in groups of three with a dog handler. It was fun to watch the dog work go on point and have the pheasant flush! Each hunter had the opportunity to harvest three birds. A few birds flew away with many excuses invented! Keith let the Council know this Pheasant Hunt had all hunters in Trac chairs!

Challenge the Outdoors was offered a donated Bear Hunt in Zone A, for a disabled member that had a Bear tag, by Joe Kalman, Wisconsin Bear Guide Service out of Mellon, WI. Fortunately, Keith had been saving points toward a Bear Tag for eight years and was successful in applying for a tag. On the second day of the hunt Keith was successful in harvesting his first Black Bear. The Bear dressed out at 153 pounds!

Challenge the Outdoors Inc. is preparing to host a deer hunt for persons with disabilities on October 2nd and 3rd.

Challenge the Outdoors is hosting its first fund raising banquet Saturday January 8th at the Grand Meridian Hotel in Appleton.

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

John Martinson adjourned the meeting at 1:52 pm.