

DNR 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 people with disabilities and to communicate them to the Department.
- To help to increase public awareness and sensitivity to the needs of persons with disabilities.
- To communicate with individuals and other organizations dedicated to similar purposes.

DISABILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING SUMMARY

Monday March 23rd, 2026

**In person at Heritage Hill State Historical Park
in Green Bay, Wisconsin**

OR

Virtually via Microsoft Teams or call-in.

Members Present: John Martinson, Calvin Richtig, Kirsten Engel, John (Jack) Heim, John Fritz, Lindsay Muench, and Keith Pamperin.

Members Present Online: John Mitchell and Amy Carlson.

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Nick Zouski, Shannon Holt, Brett Daul, and James Chitek from the DNR.

Guest presenters: Ryan Haffel and Brooke Vanhandel (Deer Hunt for Disabled Persons)
Corrina Regnier (Cabin Reservations) and Jamie Steffenhagen (Magic Mobility devices)

MOTIONS

NONE.

ACTION ITEMS

- A. Shannon to send meeting invitation to Corrina for June meeting at Richard Bong SRA.
- B. Nick to talk to fisheries legislative liaison for clarification as to if only persons with a disabled fishing license OR if class A, B, and C permit holders can fish on urban ponds.
- C. Nick to send link to group for donations on NRF website.
- D. Group requests an update from Cyndi Camellia on Digital Accessibility.

FULL MEETING MINUTES

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

Next the Council reviewed the agenda.

Keith made a motion to approve the amended agenda. John Fritz seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

The Council reviewed the meeting minutes from December 5th, 2025.

John Martinson made a motion to approve the minutes. Lindsay seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

Cabin Update – Corrina Regnier (7:39)

Parks and Recreation is working towards a goal of integrating our accessible cabin reservation process with our online reservation system to make that application process easier, more accessible, and more in line with the current campsite reservation process. The reservation software is not equipped to handle the process for large cabin reservations that involve different categories and different priority levels. The Department of Parks and Recreation is in the process of choosing a new vendor from proposed bids. The current contract with CAMIS ends November 30th and a new contract with the vendor selected in the bidding process will begin December 1st, 2026. They expect to have the new vendor selected within the next few weeks. There is a possibility that CAMIS may be the selected vendor again. Once the vendor is selected Parks will begin working with them on the large cabin reservation process.

Meanwhile, Parks has found a way to add the two rustic cabins to the current reservation site. These cabins are located at Blue Mounds State Park and Copper Falls State Park. Rustic cabins have no plumbing or electricity. These two will follow the same 11-month reservation window as the campsites. Parks is ready to go live on the reservation website with these two. Anyone looking to

reserve one of the eight larger cabins will still be directed to the current application process. The two rustic cabins do not have the high demand or occupancy rate of large cabins and therefore do not follow need-based prioritization. They are reservable first come first serve. Corrina will provide another update at June DAC meeting.

Customer Service and Licensing Updates – James Chitek (52:24)

Hunt/Fish Updates:

New License Year:

- 2026 Licenses went on sale on 3/1/2026
- Updates to Go Wild
 - Online customers are now required to log in with a username and password if they have already created one. If not yet created, customers can use the account lookup option and then will be prompted to create a username and password.

Fishing:

- New regulations for the 2026-2027 season are now available
- Trout – General Open Season for inland streams is now the first Saturday in April (April 4th this year) (previously was the first Saturday in May)
- Default trout regulations are now “green” – 5 trout in total of any length
 - Previously was “yellow” – 3 trout in total over 8”
- Inland Musky Season now opens statewide on the first Saturday in May (May 2nd 2026)
- General Game Fish opens the first Saturday in May (May 2nd this year)
- Sturgeon Catch and Release – There are now designated waters for catching and releasing sturgeon with season dates of June 6, 2026 – March 7, 2027
- Free Fishing Weekend June 6-7, 2026

Turkey:

- Spring Turkey Bonus Harvest Authorizations went on sale March 16th.
 - No leftover permits for Zone 6 this year. Zone 7 had limited availability
- Spring Turkey Hunting Seasons begin April 15th (Youth Hunt April 11-12)

Deer:

- Gun Deer Hunt for Hunters with Disabilities
 - Season Dates: October 3-11
 - Sponsor (Landowner) signup will be open May 1st – July 1st
 - Hunter signup period will be open July 15th – Sept. 15th
 - Please contact Brooke VanHandel, Assistant Deer and Elk Specialist, via email brooke.vanhandel@wisconsin.gov or by phone at (608) 354-3492 with questions.

Elk:

- Application Deadline is May 31st
 - New in 2026 – There is two separate applications, one for bull and one for antlerless. Customers can apply for one or both. In addition, customers now must select unit they are applying for as licenses/tags will be unit specific.
- 2026 Elk Quota
 - Northern Elk Management Zone (fka Clam Lake Elk Range – 8 Bulls (Subject to 50% declaration by Ceded Territory Tribes)
 - Central Elk Management Zone (fka Black River Elk Range) – 6 Bulls, 6 Antlerless
- In 2026, there will be one continuous hunting season, opening Saturday, Oct. 17, and continuing through Sunday, Dec. 13, eliminating the split-season structure that was in effect from 2018-2025.

Legislative Updates:

- SB2 – Relating to expanding veterans benefits to individuals who served in Laos in support of the United States during the Vietnam War
 - 1/24/25 – Read first time and referred to Committee on Natural Resources, Veteran and Military Affairs
 - 3/11/25 – Report passage of Committee, Ayes-4, Noes-1 – Available for Scheduling
 - 5/15/25 – passed in the Senate and referred to the Assembly
 - 6/20/25 – Referred to committee on Rules
 - No Update since June 2025 Meeting
- SB19/AB18 – Relating to fee waivers for state park vehicle admission receipts to pupils with Every Kid Outdoors passes
 - 2/5/25 – Read first time and referred to Committee on Financial Institutions and Sporting Heritage
 - 2/6/25 – Red first time and referred to Committee on Forestry, Parks and Outdoor Recreation
 - 5/6/25 – Public Hearing Held
 - 9/2/25 - Referred to Assembly committee on Rules
 - No Updates since September 2025 Meeting
- SB112/AB117 – Relating to hunting of sandhill cranes, programs related to sandhill crane damage, providing an exemption from emergency rule procedures, granting rule-making authority, and making an appropriation.
 - 3/11/25 – Read first time and referred to Committee on Sporting Heritage
 - 4/29/25 – Fiscal estimate received
 - 11/19/25 – Public hearing held
 - 2/19/26 – Read a third time and passed Assembly. Sent to senate.
 - 2/23/26 – Received from Assembly
 - 2/25/26 – Read first time and referred to Committee on Senate Organization; available for scheduling.
- SB265/AB267 – Relating to waiver of fees for admission to state parks on Earth Day
 - 5/20/25 – Read first time and referred to Committee on Financial Institutions Sporting Heritage
 - 7/17/25 – Fiscal estimate received
 - 8/26/25 – Public hearing held
 - No Update since September Meeting
- SB339/AB327 – Relating to the weight limit for utility terrain vehicles (increase from 3000 to 3500 pounds)
 - 6/19/25 -Read first time and referred to Committee on Transportation and Local Government
 - 9/16/25 – Public hearing held
 - 10/14/25 – Read a third time and passed, referred to Assembly
 - 11/7/25 – Referred to Committee on Rules
 - 1/13/26 – Read a second time, rules suspended. Read a third time and passed.
 - 2/5/26 – Presented to the Governor
 - 2/9/26 – Signed by Governor – Act 83
- AB682 – Relating to fees for nonresident hunting, trapping, and fishing approvals and nonresident vehicle admission receipts.

- 11/26/25 – Read first time and referred to Committee on Sporting Heritage
- 1/6/26 – Committee on Sporting Heritage hearing.
- SB700/AB704 – Relating to fees for Snowmobile Registration and trail use stickers (Registration +\$15, AWSC Club Trail Pass +\$10, WI Res Trail Pass +\$20, NR Trail Pass +\$20)
 - 12/2/25 – Read for first time and referred to Committee on Transportation and Local Government
 - 1/6/26 – Senate Public Hearing held
 - 1/13/26 – Assembly Public Hearing held
 - 2/3/26 – Available for Scheduling (Senate)
 - 2/4/26 – Referred to Committee on Rules (Assembly)

Other Updates:

- Wisconsin Conservation Congress spring hearings will be held in person on April 13th, 2026, in each county, or online April 13th-15th
- Locations - [2026 Spring Hearing Locations.pdf](#)
- Questionnaire - [2026 Spring Hearing Questionnaire.pdf](#)

Urban Fishing Expansion – Nick Zouski (1:26 min)

Nick visited Lapham Peak recently for a project where they are building an accessible fishing pier on Lupo Pond that is categorized as an Urban Fishing Pond. From the web: “Several ponds are designated as urban fishing waters to make fishing opportunities more readily available and encourage more people, especially youngsters, to go fishing.” This designation restricts who can fish at the pond to youth and those with a disabled fishing license. Possessing a disabled fishing license further restricts use because there are income limits to obtain the license. Nick is wondering how difficult it would be to expand the regulations to include those with a class A, B, or C permit. James pulled up the fishing regulations and it said, “Note only persons 15 years of age and younger and certain disabled anglers may fish these water.” However, it doesn't expound on who qualifies as a disabled angler. We need more clarification on Statute 29.053. and Statute 29.193 (3) (a),(b) or (c). Nick to talk to fisheries legislative liaison for clarification as to if only persons with a disabled fishing license OR if class A, B, and C permit holders can fish on urban ponds.

Lunch Break 11:45 – 12:30

Accessibility Coordinator Updates – Nick Zouski (8:27)

- Brochure – There is a new brochure for the accessibility fund; it will be printed soon. The website for donations (through Natural Resources Foundation, 501-C3) is live. <https://www.wisconservation.org/accessible-recreation/>. IT will add a link on the Open The Outdoors webpage. Nick is ordering QR code stickers that will take people to Open The Outdoors website.

- **Digital Accessibility** – Nick spoke to Cyndi Camellia, Digital Accessibility Specialist, about adding an Accessibility tab along the top banner of the DNR homepage to take people to Open The Outdoors page. Having a forward-facing accessibility link is universally acknowledged. Whereas many people who are not current DNR customers may not know to associate Open The Outdoors tab with accessibility information. Office of Communications has a new Bureau Director, Andi Sedlacek, and has been more receptive to ideas. Nick and Shannon met with IT regarding the federal mandate that all state and local government entities must comply with new ADA digital accessibility rules, ensuring websites, apps, and content meet standards. IT flagged four items on the Open The Outdoors page. These are in the process of being updated, converted to a webpage, or were no longer needed and removed. Meeting minutes were found to be complying. Lindsay requests an update from Cyndi. There still remains the issue of the accessibility link at the bottom of page (website footer). It is very limited as far as who to contact or what to do. Nick will talk to Cyndi.
- **September Property Tour Update** – Pike Lake beach area and parking lot is going to be undergoing a massive reconstruction repaving project during the time of our meeting. We can go see it in the morning, but it will be shorter than we hoped, so we will visit Mauthe Lake to make it a full day.

Disabled Deer Hunt – Ryan Haffel & Brooke Vanhandel (34:58) (41:10)

There were brief introductions including interest in hunting. There is a new change upcoming in 2026 where two days will overlap with the youth hunt and during this period hunting is open statewide (blaze orange required) to hunters with disabilities. There is interest in evaluating options to increase opportunities for deer hunters with disabilities from the current process. Currently, lands enrolled must be at least 60 acres in size and must be able to accommodate three hunters. The 60-acres is a policy decision that can be changed; relaxing this rule is possible without any administrative code change. The minimum number of hunters is in administrative code and would require a rule change.

Feedback and surveys indicate many disabled hunters wish to hunt on lands they either own or friends own, but the paperwork, acreage requirements, and hunter requirements preclude them from enrolling the lands. The majority of survey respondents were supportive of going from the nine-day hunt down to a four-day statewide hunt. Wildlife Management wishes to know if there is still a desire to move forward? There are four proposed options:

- I. Do nothing – One of the biggest barriers identified has been removed with adding the DHHD with the 2-day youth hunt. Eligible hunters can now hunt statewide for those 2 days.
- II. Modify acreage requirement (policy change).
- III. Overhaul DHHD and NR 10.40. To convert to 4-day hunt to coincide with Youth hunt and eliminate NR 10.40 altogether.
- IV. Keep 9-day DHHD and Modify NR 10.40 to lower minimum number of hunters and acreage.

Discussions ensued weighing pros and cons. The group would like to see how the new structure this fall works with the overlap of the second weekend with the youth hunt.

Public Comments – Open 1:30-1:45pm

None.

Officer Elections - Calvin

President – Kirsten nominated Lindsay, Calvin seconded. There were no other nominations. All were in favor.

Vice President – Jack moves Keith is elected by acclamation, John Martinson seconded. There were no other nominees. All were in favor.

Sunrise Medical – Jamie Steffenhagen (1:31min)

Jamie represents Magic Mobility and brings three types of outdoor power wheelchairs for group to try, the X8, XT4, and 360. Magic Mobility has paired with Tennessee State Parks to provide equipment. These chairs would be another option besides Trackchair. The 360 is a versatile mid-wheel drive designed for both indoor maneuverability and true off-road capability. Powered by high performance 800 W, 4 pole motors allowing smooth navigation over obstacles and uneven surfaces even at slower speeds. Suspension and comfort-fully independent all wheel suspension with adjustable coil spring on each caster arm. This allows one arm to climb over obstacles while other wheels maintain stability, providing smooth and level ride. Wheel options- urban or off-road. The X8 is designed to handle challenging terrain like sand, snow and uneven ground. 4 high torque motors providing more than just speed but also highly efficient in maximizing battery life and range. Smooth and jolt free ride- the articulating front suspension keeps all four drive wheels on the ground ensuring a smooth and jolt free ride. Low pressure knobby tires provide increased grip and climbing capability. Leave No Trace- low pressure knobby tires protect trails preventing erosion and minimizing environmental impact. The XT4 has patented suspension features front and rear suspension for improved stability and traction on rough terrain. Equipped with four 700-watt motors that provide necessary power for tackling challenging environments. Longer battery range of 19 miles. Servo powered steering offers intuitive steering for better control on slippery surfaces.

Member Updates

Calvin- Has a new job as an ATP with New Motion. He plans to remain on the council, but it is no longer one of his job duties as it was with Options for Independent Living.

Jack – Annual climbing trip to Devil’s Lake is June 5th- 7th, 2026.

Adjourn

Keith moved to adjourn the meeting. Amy seconded. Motion passed.

Property Tour of Heritage Hill State Historical Park

Tour was self-guided. Heritage Hill consists of four sections: La Baye Fur Trade, Fort Howard, Growing Community, and Agricultural Area. Members tried out the Magic Mobility chairs and attempted to locate Right Hear beacons. Jack was able to locate one beacon in the visitors’ center and one in the Growing Community area. Due to time constraints and muddy conditions only a portion was visited.