

**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 March 14, 2025**

**Challenge the Outdoors clubhouse, 2647 Cherry Drive, Pulaski, WI  
OR virtually via Microsoft Teams or call-in.**

Members Present in-person: John Martinson, Calvin Richtig, Keith Pamperin, and John Fritz.

Members Present online/virtually: John Mitchell, Kirsten Engel, John (Jack) Heim, Amy Carlson, and Lindsay Muench.

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Nick Zouski, Shannon Holt, Brett Daul, and James Chitek from the DNR.  
Carl, Debbie and Steve from Challenge the Outdoors.

Guest presenters: None

---

Chair Martinson called the meeting to order at 10:15 am.

Next the Council reviewed the agenda.

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

The Council next reviewed the meeting minutes from December 6th, 2024.

**Keith made a motion to approve the minutes. Kirsten seconded the motion, and all were in favor.**

## **MOTIONS**

*Elections were held.*

**Kirsten nominated Calvin for Chair, so moved by John Fritz and seconded by Keith. All in favor.**

**John Martinson nominated Keith for Vice Chair, so moved by John Fritz and seconded by Calvin. All in favor.**

## **ACTION ITEMS**

- Brett to send Shannon proposed budget document to send to members.
- Nick to add Potawatomi Accessible Look-out Platform to June agenda.
- Add Capital Projects updates and Capital Budget timelines to December meetings.
- Nick to double check Tower list.
- Members should email Nick to confirm renewal of their term on the council.
- Nick to update John Fritz from alternate to full member.
- Shannon and Nick will make sure that we have a staff member meet us at Sandhill WA for a tour after the June DAC meeting.

## **MEETING MINUTES**

### **Customer Service and Licensing Updates**

#### **Hunt/Fish Updates:**

##### **New License Year:**

- 2025 licenses went on sale on 3/1/25
- Updates to Go Wild
  - Online customers will be prompted to set up a username and password this year
  - Account lookup option is slated to be removed starting with the 2026 license year

##### **Fishing:**

- New Regulations for the 2025-2026 license year are available
  - No significant changes this year
- General Inland Water fishing opens May 3<sup>rd</sup>

##### **Turkey:**

- Spring Turkey Bonus Harvest Authorizations will go on sale next week
  - No leftover permits for Zones 6 & 7 this year
- Spring Turkey Hunting Seasons begin April 16<sup>th</sup> (Youth Hunt April 12-13)

##### **Deer:**

- New DMU Boundaries: [proposed-dmu-map](#)
  - Public Comments were received between Oct. 11 and Oct. 20
  - Public Meeting Held on Oct. 15
  - Four Open Houses held in mid-November 2024
  - Public Hearing held on 1/8/25
  - Approved by NRB on 2/16/25 and will go into effect for the 2025 hunting season
  - Select Metro Sub-Units
    - Expansion of sub-units in Racine, Kenosha, Waukesha, and Sheboygan Counties
    - Small reduction in Manitowoc County
  - Central Forest Zone
    - Monroe, Juneau, Wood counties will see a reduction. Adams county would be eliminated.
  - Northern Forest Zones
    - Would revert back to habitat based DMU's
    - Changes to the Forest/Farmland Zone boundaries
- Gun Deer Hunt for Hunters with Disabilities
  - Season Dates: Oct. 4-12
  - Sponsor (Landowner) signup will be open May 1<sup>st</sup> – July 1<sup>st</sup>
  - Hunter signup will be open July 15<sup>th</sup> – September 15<sup>th</sup>
  - Please contact Brooke VanHandel, Assistant Deer and Elk Specialist, via email [brooke.vanhandel@wisconsin.gov](mailto:brooke.vanhandel@wisconsin.gov) or by phone at (608) 354-3492 with questions.

Elk:

- Application Deadline May 31<sup>st</sup>
- 2025 Elk Quota - [Item-6.D.-2024-Elk-Season.pdf](#)
  - Clam Lake Zone – 8 Bulls (Subject to 50% declaration by Ceded Territory Tribes)
  - Black River Zone – 4 Bulls, 5 Antlerless

#### Legislative Updates:

- SB45/AB50 Budget Proposal
  - Section 497-600 – changes to statutory fee schedule for numerous hunting/fishing license approvals. Below are increases that could impact hunters/anglers with disabilities
    - Section 529 – Res. Senior Fishing License (+\$10)
    - Section 535 – Res. Disabled Fishing (+\$10)
    - Section 537 – Res. Disabled Veteran Fishing (+\$10)
    - Section 555 – Res. Purple Heart Conservation Patron (+\$10)
    - Section 557 – Res. Disabled Veteran Recreation Card (+\$10)
    - Section 562 – NR Purple Heart Conservation Patron (+\$10)
- 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
- 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
- AB16 – Relating to repealing an administrative rule of the DNR related to the possession of firearms
  - Read first time and referred to Committee on Environment
- 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

#### Other Updates:

- Wisconsin Conservation Congress Spring Hearings will be held in-person on **April 14, 2025**, at 6pm in each county, or online starting on April 14, 2025, at 7pm through April 16, 2025, at 6pm.
- NRB Meeting on Feb. 26, 2025 – Report of the 2024-2025 deer seasons
  - License sales were up 1% over LY
  - Deer Harvest was up 6% - WM
  - Safest gun deer season in 40 years with 1, non-fatal, hunting related injury - PSRP
  - License Purchases – Oldest male – 103 years, oldest female – 97 years

#### Capital Budget

Governor Evers released the proposed 2025-2027 budget proposal in February. The DNR requested \$227 million dollars, the governor recommended \$164 million in enumerated projects. Additionally, the governor recommended \$17 million for non-enumerated projects and approximately \$32 million were pushed to a future biennium. Projects of interest for accessibility include, replacing many vault toilets with ADA compliant vaults, trail and bridge repairs, replacing shower/toilet buildings, boat access improvements, and road and parking lot improvements. Starting in design in 25-27, will be the Devil's Lake State Park and Willow River State Park Interpretive Center replacements. Unfortunately, funding for new ADA cabins was not recommended by the governor in this biennium proposal. The governor did recommend funding of \$5.5 million dollars for the Potawatomi Accessible Look-out Platform.

**Link to Document referenced during meeting and emailed afterwards:**

[https://doa.wi.gov/DFDM\\_Documents/State-Building-Program/CapBud/2025-27%20Capital%20Budget%20Agency%20Requests%20and%20Governor%27s%20Recommendation%20Book%20Final.pdf](https://doa.wi.gov/DFDM_Documents/State-Building-Program/CapBud/2025-27%20Capital%20Budget%20Agency%20Requests%20and%20Governor%27s%20Recommendation%20Book%20Final.pdf)

The DAC will draft a letter of recommendation to support the Potawatomi Accessible Look-out Platform to the Joint Finance Committee. DAC subcommittee (Calvin, Lindsay, Nick, Jack) will work on this.

### **Cabin Reservations/ New Cabins**

Subcommittee consisting of Lindsay, Calvin, Nick and Jack met and started putting together a list of ideas, thoughts and recommendations. One thing that needs to change is to be able to reserve cabins and campsites at the same time so families and groups can camp together. Another recommendation is to limit reservations to four nights per visit and two visits per year. Parks will need to put a system in place to communicate who has already had cabin reservations at other locations to allow a wider variety of users. Subcommittee will continue working on this.

**Lunch Break:** 12:00 – 12:30pm

### **Shower Design**

Amy visited MacKerricher State Park in California and appreciated their barrier free restroom and shower design. Everything is wall mounted and nothing on the floor. Sink, commode, trash can, and nice sturdy shower bench are all wall mounted. There were also nice hooks (pull away release) and handrails within reach. Jack suggested having a lead dog tie-down near the wall where door opens OR behind the door or on the back of the door approximately 16-18 inches off the floor.

### **Options Accessible Parks Grant**

Options for Independent Living received a DHS Livable Communities Grant. Projects that they were able to provide funding for include interpretative signage at Barkhausen Waterfall Preserve; a Brown County Park, beach chair at Ashwaba Mae pond in the City of Ashwaubenon, GRIT Freedom chair at Whitefish Dunes State Park, and a Mobi beach mat at Governor Thompson State Park. This Grant will also fund a *Right Hear* Bluetooth system for the visually impaired and blind at Heritage Hill State Historical Park. The \$3,500.00 grant will fund five beacons for one year of service. The technology works with a smartphone app and when a user gets in range of a beacon it will be detected and prompt audible signage. Signage can provide directions, describe surroundings and can also provide interpretive signage. Heritage Hill will be the first location in Wisconsin with this product and will be the second State Park in the country to use *Right Hear*!! <https://www.right-hear.com/>

Launch date TBD - Early to mid-summer. Options is looking forward to getting feedback during the one-year pilot program on making the best use of this product.

**Public Comments:** Open 1:30 – 1:45pm – none

### **Accessibility Coordinator Updates**

- **Tower List** – List requested at prior meeting to take proactive approach to towers that are aging out of use and need repairs. Nick is checking to see if this list is complete.
- **Kayak Launch Signs** – Nick needs a volunteer to be in photos and signage.
- **NRF Donation Fund** – We were told that we can not solicit funds for the Accessible outdoors fund, so Nick and Brett are going to work with the Natural Resources Foundation (NRF) to have donations routed through them.
- **Assessments** - one of the independent living centers did an assessment for one of our wildlife property interpretive/nature centers and wildlife management would like more assessments on DNR properties. This falls within Nicks job duties and he will be starting to do them as he is able.

### **DAC Member Terms**

Many DAC member's terms have expired. To renew, email Nick.

*Elections were held.*

**Kirsten nominated Calvin for Chair, so moved by John Fritz and seconded by Keith. All in favor.**

**John Martinson nominated Keith for Vice Chair, so moved by John Fritz and seconded by Calvin. All in favor.**

### **DAC Member Updates**

**Keith** – April 12th, Challenge Outdoors is having the annual fundraiser sporting clays fundraiser at Junior H Sporting Clays at Navarino. It's from 8:00 to 3:00 PM. Cost is \$30 to shoot and includes lunch and beverages and you can shoot a second round for an additional \$25

**Jack** – Wisconsin Adaptive Climbing trip to Devil's Lake is June 27th, 28th and 29th.

**John Mitchell**- Adaptive Sportsman's events are on the website. <https://adaptivesportsmen.org/>

**Kirsten**- In June going to Apostle Islands, Stockton Island to make accessible campsites.

**Calvin** – Options recently received a new device, a Bowhead RX adaptive electric mountain hand cycle. They also recently received a Huckleberry Hiker a chariot style device.

### **Adjourn**

Keith moved to adjourn the meeting. John Fritz seconded. Motion passes.

Chair Martinson adjourned the meeting at 2:39 pm.