

**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 disabilities.
- To communicate with individuals and other organizations dedicated to similar purposes.

**MEETING MINUTES
DISABILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING
FRIDAY, MARCH 27, 2020
TELECONFERENCE**

Members Present via Teleconference: Cathryn Scott, Keith Pamperin, Jim Rutledge, Kirsten Engel, John Martinson, John Mitchell, Patricia Ardivino, and Andrea Frisch

Members Absent: Calvin Richtig

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

Chair Martinson called the meeting to order at 10:04 am.

First, the Council reviewed the agenda.

Keith made a motion to accept the agenda with the one addition, John Mitchell seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

Next, the Council reviewed the meeting minutes from December 16, 2019.

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

Chair Martinson asked for introductions from the two new DAC Members Patricia Ardivino and Andrea Frisch. Both Members are from the La Crosse area.

Patricia indicated she has worked for agencies providing services to people with disabilities for over 20 years. These include working as an instructor in the Department of Recreation Management and Therapeutic Recreation at the University of Wisconsin, La Crosse; Coordinator of an adult day center; and Program Director of a sheltered workshop and a community-based recreation center for people with disabilities. Patricia retired from teaching at UW La Crosse and is presently teaching with the Department of Recreation, Tourism, and Therapeutic Recreation at

Winona State University in Winona, Minnesota. Patricia believes she should "leave no leisure activity stone unturned" and particularly likes to bird watch, bike, kayak, and travel.

Andrea Frisch is a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Coordinator and is an Inclusive Youth Conservation Corps Coordinator with WisCorps, an environmental education and conservation corps non-profit. Andrea grew up in the "Northwoods," regularly recreating with her family in Wisconsin's state parks/forests and national forests. As a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist, Andrea bases her practice in the outdoors and in adaptive sports. She is dedicated to creating greater accessibility to nature and outdoor recreation for people of all abilities. Andrea enjoys practicing yoga; birding, hiking, cross-country skiing, deer hunting, coaching Power Wheelchair Soccer and camping with her partner, Ryan and his service dog Wally.

Each DAC member also introduced themselves. Welcome Patricia and Andrea!

Next, Barry gave his Customer Service and Licensing updates to the Council.

Legislative Items

- Assembly adjourned
- Senate is not meeting

Bills not passed

- 2019 SB 85 (see also AB 79) Disabled Veteran Patron Bill - issuance of conservation patron licenses to certain veterans with disabilities
- 2019 SB 587 (see also AB 673) Disability Percentage Bill - the disability rating at which veterans qualify for certain hunting and fishing authorizations and exemptions from state park and trail admission fees
- 2019 SB 755 (see also AB 826) - hunting and fishing approvals for persons with disabilities - This bill proposes to expand the list of medical professionals that may certify an applicant is disabled when applying for a disabled resident annual fishing license and hunting and fishing method accommodations authorized by statute
- 2019 AB 784 (see also SB 719) - modifying administrative rules relating to the use of wood to contain bear bait in stumps

Bills passed

- 2019 AB 239 (see also SB 231) placing, possessing, or transporting a bow or crossbow in or on a motorboat, vehicle, all-terrain vehicle, or utility terrain vehicle
- 2019 SB 383 (see AB 414) - the fee for a first-time annual fishing license for residents who are 16 or 17 years old or who are 65 years old or older.
- 2019 AB 704 (see also AB 691) - operation of motorboats by minors
 - Under this bill, the parent, guardian, or adult accompanying a minor operating a motorboat must hold a valid boating safety certificate issued or honored by DNR or must have been born before January 1, 1989. The bill provides that a person who was born on or after January 1, 1989, and is at least 16 may operate a motorboat only if that person holds a valid boating safety certificate issued or honored by DNR or is accompanied by a person who holds a valid boating safety certificate issued or honored by DNR or was born before January 1, 1989.

Legislature is convening a workgroup to look at Disabled Veteran Products to try to streamline them.

- There will be a thorough review during the next session
- Representative Edming will be involved

Barry is to e-mail Jim Rutledge with the workgroup names

Spring Hearings on April 13

- Will be online
- Will include NRB Questions about changes in Crossbow Seasons
- Will include NRB Questions about Deer Season changes

Barry indicated comments may be submitted on-line

Change to Otter Permit Authorizations

- They are now issued with your trapping license
- Since there is no longer a drawing, by Statute, these are no longer able to be transferred to anyone including disabled trappers

Bear Applications Delayed

- The bear applications for 2021 have been delayed until the new Zone structure is approved and finalized
 - o You can sign up for notifications on the Bear web page on the DNR Site

Parks will remain open

- Buildings except for some restrooms are all closed at this time
- Trails and boat launches will remain open at this time
- Fees are currently waived due to COVID - 19

The next agenda item was the DNR website update given by Nick. Nick indicated each DNR Bureau needs to have a website liaison. Information regarding changes, deletions, and additions needs to be in by 3/20. In regard to the logo, Nick is working with the Office of Communications. The drop-down menus are being eliminated. The update is an ongoing process. The new DNR website configuration will have “picture boxes” file readers. As one hovers over the file, it will say “accessibility”. Nick said he needs photos. In particular, he needs hunting and camping photos of persons with disabilities. These photos will be placed on the website (don’t forget to get prior permission to use). Please get these photos to Nick within the next couple of weeks. John Martinson asked about the color of the logo. He thought black, blue or green would be good. Kirsten asked if the new DNR website will have a link to show accessibility features at each park. This question lead into the discussion of the next agenda item.

Next, Nick updated the Council on the accessible features survey. He said the survey was completed and they received responses from almost everyone in Parks. For now, the summary is a list of accessible features for each park. The Bureau of Parks prefers to have a statement regarding accessibility at each Park. Nick believes the accessible features (sites) should be on each of the parks’ maps. Nick confirmed each park will have an accessible features page.

There was a lot of discussion on this topic. Andrea asked if there was a contact at the park who is knowledgeable of accessibility and who responds to calls and e-mails. Nick responded currently the parks have skeleton staff including many limited term employees (LTEs) and not all are knowledgeable of accessibility. Cathryn asked Nick to send her the list of accessible features used in the survey monkey. Nick said he will figure out a way to extract the survey info into a readable and shareable format.

Patricia asked if there were alternative formats for the maps? Nick indicated there were no alternative formats except for large print. She also asked if there was an app for accessibility at state parks? The answer from Nick was “No, not at this time”. John Martinson mentioned Minnesota has an app called OptionsOutdoors.org as discussed at a previous meeting. Unfortunately, one person, Lenny Sorenson, is responsible for the data entry and upkeep of this app. Nick said 3rd party apps rely on people to keep them updated. Andrea said New York University’s Recreation Inclusive Institute has students go out and collect accessibility features and enters these onto a database. Nick said DNR has external links to its website.

Nick said currently one has to go to Open the Outdoors part of the DNR Webpage to get to the accessibility features. For example, one clicks on Experience, then one clicks on accessible kayaks and then this lists the parks with accessible kayaks and finally one clicks on the park it wants to go to with an accessible kayak. This will be corrected on the website. Andrea is pleased to hear this is changing. Nick said he would like to go to each property and see what accessible features each one has. Cathryn said she is willing to work with volunteers if DNR wants to organize this. The Conservation Corps can possibly help with this also. Patricia has students, although most are from Minnesota, that could possibly help. Is there a comprehensive list of DNR properties? Nick said a workgroup is needed to come up with this list. John Mitchell asked what the response rate was to the park survey and Nick said 100%; every park responded.

Patricia asked if the WI Department of Tourism is helping out at all? The answer was “No”. Keith said for new members, the DAC has already asked for a full inventory of accessible features at all DNR properties. Nick is working on the inventory. Patricia asked if programming is part of the survey and Nick answered “No”.

Since the Council was ahead of schedule John Martinson asked if the next agenda item could be moved up on the agenda. All were in favor.

The next agenda item was the PDMD update. First Nick gave background on the PDMD topic for Patricia and Andrea. The U.S. Department of Justice Americans with Disabilities Act on the use of power-driven mobility devices (PDMD) went into effect on March 15, 2011. The rules require public entities to make reasonable modifications to policies, practices, and procedures to allow PDMDs at public facilities.

Since 1990, DNR has maintained a permit system to allow individuals with disabilities to use motor vehicles on DNR lands as a mode of personal conveyance. DNR updated its motorized vehicle use application and permit process to reflect the new ADA rules. The DNR also assessed areas of DNR properties individually to determine where PDMDs could be used safely while maintaining resource protection. The permit allows access to areas of DNR lands that would be difficult or impossible for persons with disabilities to get to otherwise. To access a particular property with a PDMD, one may apply for an individual permit. Once the application is

submitted to the property manager, he or she will work with the applicant to determine where and when the applicant may use his/her device.

It was brought to the DAC's attention that although the all-terrain (Trac) chair does not meet the definition of a wheelchair, the all-terrain chair does less damage to the environment than some of the larger powered wheelchairs. The disabled community wanted to be able to use the all-terrain chair without having to get a PDMD permit. In other words, persons with disabilities wanted to be able to go at any time and to any DNR property and use the all-terrain chair just like they would if they were using a wheelchair. At one time it was discussed that a PDMD permit might be used by an individual at any DNR property and at any time. However, this "statewide PDMD" was not approved since some DNR properties had sensitive areas that would not allow, for example, ATV usage and some properties have restricted areas at different times of the year. Kirsten asked if the PDMD application could be filled out on-line. Currently, the majority of PDMD applications are mailed in and this likely causes delays. In addition, the permit application states that DNR has 30 days to respond with issuing the permit. Why is this such a long time period? Nick said that some property managers were overwhelmed with the number of applications they needed to process and therefore a 30-day time period was established. Kirsten's questions spurred some other general questions. First, are parks currently open? As of March 27, Parks remain open including restrooms, although the parks' entrance visitor stations (PEVS) are closed. Jim asked if the shooting ranges are still open and Barry indicated all shooting ranges are closed. *[Update unrelated to these minutes, the DNR closed all Parks on April 9 and then reopened them on May 1. Due to the Wisconsin Supreme Court ruling on May 13, all shooting ranges are now open as well.]

Getting back to the PDMD discussion, Nick indicated the all-terrain chair does not meet the definition of wheelchair. The DAC recommended users of the all-terrain chair not need a PDMD permit and at the same time recognizing it couldn't change the definition of wheelchair. The PDMD permit should be used for other vehicles such as ATVs and not the all-terrain chair to access public lands. The DNR would need to initiate a rule change when considering accessing public lands, the definition of wheelchair would include all terrain chairs and users of the all-terrain chairs will no longer need a permit to use on this chair state lands. This rule change is in its final phase of wording and is going to be presented to the DNR Operations Management Team for approval. Once approved by this Team, the rule change will go to public meeting/hearing for comments and then to the Legislative Rule Change Committee for final approval and implementation.

The next agenda item was the Accessibility Coordinator updates. The first item was the State ID issue update. The DNR requires a driver's license as proof of Wisconsin residency when purchasing a DNR hunting or fishing license. Currently persons who do not have a driver's license, including persons who are visually impaired, have to go in person to a DNR Service Center to prove residency in order to purchase a DNR license. Nick said he and Julie met with the Information Technology (IT) Chief in Customer Service and Licensing Section, Mark Rappe, regarding the state ID issue. Mark indicated this issue/problem is a DOT issue and involves the state statutes. The DOT does not share State ID information with other agencies unlike the State Drivers Licenses information. Since this would involve a statutory change initiated by DOT, DNR can not do anything about this. Nick asked about a reasonable accommodation for those persons who do not have a State ID. Nick and Julie were told if the person filling out the application for a license contacts DNR, it will let them know what documentation is needed as proof of residency. This information can be scanned and e-mailed to DNR as proof of residency

for the DNR user and then the user if he/she chooses will be issued a Go Wild Card. Once the applicant has a Go Wild Card, this is the only item they need as proof of residency for any future DNR license purchases. The problem is that when this applicant who does not have a driver's license is filling out the application, he/she is not directed to an alternative such as contacting DNR to provide an alternate form of documentation for proof of residency. Mark Rappe said he will add this language in the application. This new language will direct the applicant to call the DNR who will in turn inform him/her of what to provide as alternative documentation for proof of residency. The new language will also allow the alternative documentation to be e-mailed or faxed in. It was noted screen readers should be able to work when hovering over this area. Nick will follow up and make sure this application change has been implemented.

Keith asked if the Accessibility Coordinator's name is listed on this application site? Nick said, "No, not currently". Cathryn just checked and this application language change has not yet been implemented on the website. Nick will follow up on this as well. The Council was reminded Calvin was going to write a joint letter with other Departments to try to get DOT to amend the statutes and that he should still pursue this.

Next Nick talked about DAC vacancy recruitment. He said he has not heard back from the Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired. He said he thought it was valuable to have a visually impaired person on the Council. Their input is very important. Nick will contact the Council again. Nick said the two appointment letters to the DAC for Patricia and Andrea are still at DNR Secretary's office and the two DAC reappointment letters for John Mitchell and Calvin are still on his desk.

The next Accessibility Coordinator update was on the Eagle Tower project. There is no update at this time since things at DNR are on hold.

The next update is the DNR Facebook and YouTube captioning. Nick followed up on this and both platforms use the built-in captioning feature. He talked with Sarah Hoye DNR's Communications Director. Only one or two videos were captioned. Her Office knows that all need to be captioned. The video the Council referenced at its last meeting wasn't a DNR video. Patricia said is DNR letting YouTube use their own captioning? Nick thought so. She said it shouldn't be doing this. The Office of Communications does the captioning for DNR information going out to the public. The problem is Friends' Groups pages are not official DNR pages. The question is what is the legal obligation for captioning non-DNR outlets? Nick will try to figure this out and follow up where necessary.

Next Nick discussed the "Out We Go" (Parks) events and how Parks is hosting all terrain chairs for those events. This is on Nick's to do list and includes working with the Parks' Friends Groups and coordinating the use of all terrain chairs at these Parks events. Nick will be working with the Parks Friends' Groups liaison on this project. The issue is how to recruit volunteers to help persons with disabilities to use the all-terrain chairs at these events. Nick suggested doing a blanket PDMD until the rule change is finalized. John Martinson thinks this is a good idea.

The last Accessibility Coordinator update is John Mitchell's inquiry on hunting blinds' blueprints. John asked if DNR has blueprints for hunting blinds. Nick said "Yes, DNR has blueprints for both fowl and deer blinds". He will send both of these blueprints to John Mitchell. Nick's next project is to map where the blinds are located.

John Martinson asked about the June 18 & 19 meeting destination. Black River State Forest was suggested, but Nick indicated that it didn't have a lot of unique accessible features. It does have some very nice accessible trails, but there isn't a lot more. Nick suggested the DAC visit Buckhorn State Park. He said the property manager, Heather Wolf, would love to have the Council visit the Park. Nick asked if this location will work. Cathryn and John Mitchell thought this was a good choice. Jim said Buckhorn State Park is centralized. Kirsten asked since the Council had chosen Door County for its June meeting, whether the DAC could move this to the September meeting? It was agreed this would be fine. Nick was to find hotels in the Buckhorn-Mauston area.

John Martinson: John let the Council know the Deer and Turkey Expo event for April is postponed and rescheduled for August 7-9. John told the Council to stay safe during the Covid-19 times.

Patricia: Patricia is working on getting 70 students prepared to be part of the on-line learning process.

John Mitchell: John indicated Adaptive Sportsman cancelled its April pheasant hunt and is updating its website. Boerner Botanical Gardens now has an all-terrain chair for use.

Jim: Jim informed the Council on June 25-26; the Wisconsin Paralyzed Veterans of America will be hosting its annual trap shoot. The PVA will be covering expenditures for youth shooters (lunch, targets, shells). Jim also said Cadiz Springs State Recreational Area had repaired its dam and there is water in the lake!

Cathryn: No updates at this time.

Keith: The April 4th Raffle Shoot has been cancelled until next year. This is a big issue.

Kirsten: No updates at this time.

Andrea: Andrea asked if the DAC Member updates were included in the meeting minutes. Julie said "Yes". Andrea informed the Council the Conservation Crews work has been cancelled until April 24th. Andrea explained the Conservation Crews are made up of persons 18-25 years of age who work on conservation projects on public lands. Persons with disabilities are considered. Right now, they don't have any projects. To ensure persons who are deaf and hard of hearing are included, the application process is being reviewed for inclusiveness.

Kirsten made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jim seconded the motion, and all were in favor. John Martinson adjourned the meeting at 12:37.