

**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
Tuesday September 17, 2024
Held in person at Governor Thompson State Park, Crivitz WI.
and virtually via Microsoft Teams or call-in.**

Members Present: John Martinson, Calvin Richtig, John Mitchell, Kirsten Engel, John (Jack) Heim, Amy Carlson, John Heim, and Lindsay Muench.

Members Absent: Keith Pamperin

Others Present: Nick Zouski, Shannon Holt, and Brett Daul joined virtually on MS Teams.

Guest presenters: None

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

Introductions: Everyone introduced themselves to the new members.

Next the Council reviewed the agenda. They wished to have these topics added:

- A. Public Comment at 1:30pm on every meeting agenda
- B. Discuss Previous Action Steps and follow-up after approving agenda and previous minutes on every meeting agenda – starting next meeting.
- C. Tabled items from last meeting of Devil’s Lake Accessibility and Accessibility awareness will be part of Accessibility Coordinator Updates if there is any further discussion
- D. Property tour Wednesday, Nick will send a recap about projects seen on tour

Calvin made a motion to approve the amended agenda. Amy seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

The Council next reviewed the meeting minutes from June 10th, 2024.

Calvin made a motion to approve the minutes. Amy seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

Membership

Shannon Columb has stepped down from the DAC. Alternate, John Heim will be promoted to full member. Another alternate will be appointed.

Customer Service and Licensing Updates

Barry Gilbeck has retired from the DNR, and Customer Service has not filled his position yet or appointed a new representative. Hopefully in December we will have an update or new spokesperson.

Public Land Hunting Blind Rules (37)

In the northern part of the state hunters can leave blinds up overnight and for multiple days.

MOTION: “As an accommodation we recommend that the DNR allow people with disabilities to be allowed to leave their hunting blinds up for multiple days statewide.”

Kirsten made this motion. Amy seconded. All in favor, motion passed.

(58)

Accessible Cabin Design (1:06)

During budgetary discussions, the DNR is wondering if more should be spent on building accessible cabins or more rustic cabins, thinking that if more rustic cabins were available then people with less severe disabilities would have a chance at being able to reserve a cabin. Standard design for new accessible cabins would be like a studio apartment with a small kitchenette and attached bathroom. There are currently only two rustic cabins, one at Copper Falls and one at Blue Mounds. These are basic wooden cabins with an electrical outlet, no plumbing. Nick requested feedback from the group as to the value of adding rustic cabins. The group felt that rustic cabins are a good way to get a larger supply of cabins to meet the demands and both types of cabins are equally needed.

Cabin Reservations – This continues to be an issue. Is this being worked on? Who is responsible for this? DAC members would like to have someone join an upcoming meeting to discuss.

LUNCH BREAK 12:00PM TO 1:00PM

DNR Accessibility Viewer - Some discussion before lunch when J. Mitchell brought up being unable to find the hunting blind at Bong SRA. Interactive map for shore fishing and boat access. Accessibility viewer being revamped. Previously included all public, private, and municipal boat launches but no one was maintaining or updating the database. The new interactive map will be comprised of layers that can be selected. Layers will include shore fishing, boat access, DNR owned, and hunting blinds will be one of the selections. The interactive map will have latitude and longitude GPS coordinates. There is also a link to the property and contact information for the property.

Accessibility Tech for the Blind – *RightHear* new technology being used at Natural Bridge State Park, Virginia for the visually impaired. Uses Bluetooth with an app to speak to the user giving them audio descriptions of the environment and where they are located. Bluetooth beacons connect with the app on the users phone up to 30 feet away and guide them along the path laid out. Calvin and Jack are going to investigate it more for cost and maintenance details.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YOSc5LhUNLO>

There is also another technology called *NaviLens* that will scan an area and reads signs (street signs, business signs and names, subway entrance, bus stop, etc.). [NaviLens EMPOWERING the visually impaired.](#)

Public Comments – None

Accessibility Coordinator Updates (32:51)

- **Playgrounds** – Funding for building playgrounds nearly always comes from Friends’ Groups and fundraising efforts. The DNR is requiring that any new playgrounds built be required to use a hybrid ground surface where the play elements are connected with the the poured solid surface stuff. Only fully accessible playgrounds will be built.
- **Friends Grants – Equipment** – Equipment may now be purchased using Friends Grant money. Can be used for adaptive kayaks, all terrain wheelchairs, etc. this is a 50/50 match.
- **Accessibility Fund** – No longer accepting credit card donations and we are not allowed to advertise/ solicit funds.
- **Devil’s Lake update from previous meeting** – Status of path project few hundred feet of path to climbing area. This led to discussion of Capital Budget process and how long it takes for projects to be approved in the biennial budget and then time to completion.

Action Steps

- Nick to send out email recapping projects on property tour.
- Find who is responsible for cabin reservation system & have them attend DAC meeting.
- Ask cabin reservation administration to send letters to those turned down for cabin reservations and explain to them alternative options such as rustic cabins or ADA campsites. Also, send survey to ask what users want/need/require.
- Calvin and Jack looking into **RightHear**.

Member's Updates – Requested via email. None received.

Adjourn

Amy moved to adjourn the meeting. Jack seconded. Motion passes.

Chair Martinson adjourned the meeting at 2:45 pm.

*****Property tour of Governor Thompson State Park followed on Wednesday.**

Tour included boat launch #13 with fishing pier, campground bathroom facility and accessible campsite, and beach.