

**Bayfield Area Trails Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday February 8 @ 3 – 4:45 pm (via Zoom)**

**Participants:**

- Committee members present: Fahrenkrog, Finn, Kitchell, Lang, Rothe, Vanbergen, Van Stappen
- Committee members absent: Bratsch
- Communications Subcommittee: Fentress
- Trails Subcommittee: Ipsen, Johnson, Rothe, Wegerson

Select BAT Comm Chair: **Motion** to select Kate Kitchell as 2022 Chair of the BAT Comm: Vanbergen/Van Stappen; motion carried (all in favor/none opposed)

Virtual Community Meeting Debrief

- **BATs sponsoring/organizing group hikes:** consensus was that this is a good idea for people who are not comfortable hiking alone and/or who want to build social connections. However, it is outside the scope of the Bayfield Area Trails mission of creating and sustaining trails; especially when considering BATs' limited capacity.
  - Kris W. did a great job researching options. Discussion identified several mechanisms to facilitate group hikes: 1) email groups coordinated by an individual; 2) "next door" or "neighborhood" apps.; 3) meet-up apps.; 4) Facebook page of an organization.
  - **Action:** Finn will discuss the potential for the Rec. Center (RFR) to support the concept of organizing group hikes. This may include researching and posting existing groups to enable interested parties to initiate their own personal connections as they prefer.
- There seemed to be **interest in biking opportunities** (on and off-road, and fat bike) among meeting attendees. We should keep in mind the benefit of including on BATs a "champion" for the biking aspect of trails.
  - We need to maintain coordination with existing biking groups: North Coast Cycling Assoc. (Roger Aiken/Joe Groscek) and CAMBA (Mike W).
  - **Action:** invite NCCA and CAMBA to upcoming meeting to learn about their activities and opportunities to collaborate.
  - **Action:** seek out biking reps. to participate on Trails Subcommittee

Trails Subcommittee

- 14 people expressed interest after the community meeting: virtual meeting scheduled for 2/22/22 @ 5
- Hatchery Trail:
  - Johnson has done lots of research on bridges to get a handle on designs, costs, timing, installation, and pros/cons.
  - The group offered ideas about potential assistance for **geotech/soil analysis** if required by the bridge manufacturer: Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Ashland; Tom Fitz at Northland College; U.S. Forest Service Engineering Group (Rhineland), National Park Service (Tommy Richardson) Lang indicated we should contact Bayfield County about bridge supports that were installed at Siskiwit Falls.
  - Fundraising: Town is set up to accept donations; KK has submitted 2 grants with 2 more by 3/1. Plan to launch a fundraising campaign, including web page, around mid-May to June.
- Manual: work in progress

Communications Subcommittee

- Due to other commitments, Tony Jeannette is focusing his support to BATs on technical assistance and maintenance for the website, social media, and online maps. He will not attend BAT Comm

meetings or organize Subcommittee. Consensus was that BATs is extremely fortunate to have Tony's support!

- After the community meeting there were really good responses from people with the needed skills
- A virtual meeting will be convened by first week of March

#### Program/Project Updates (Kitchell)

- On Feb. 1<sup>st</sup>, a consolidated funding package was submitted to the County for potential Federal and State funding opportunities (e.g. Am. Rescue Plan and Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act).
  - Finn commented that this has gotten positive visibility with the County about the BATs vision and organization. It also generated enthusiasm and momentum for the "Ashwahalla" trail from AWB to Valhalla.
  - County Forest & Parks staff is supportive, although limited in capacity. Although they are hiring another rec. staff member, we need to be mindful and patient with the planning and approval processes.
- Wetlands:
  - Kitchell submitted a grant to the Biodiversity Fund to support completion of the wetlands purchase and interpretive signage. If successful, there should not be a need for more funding in 2022.
  - Lang reported that the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship grant will be reviewed by the Joint Finance Committee next week.
  - NAWCA grant will be decided in next 2 weeks
  - WCMP grant briefing on 1/27 was well-received. The staff recommended funding the proposal and the committee chair was very supportive. Decision expected in May.

#### Annual MOU Review

- **Motion** to accept the revised MOU: Finn/Lang: motion carried (all in favor/none opposed)
- Town of Bell has signed
- **Action:** Kitchell & Fahrenkrog will coordinate to obtain long-delayed Town of Bayfield signature

#### Fiscal Sponsorship Agreement

- Legal review and suggested edits of the Agreement were provided (pro bono) by Brent Johnson from Lommen Abdo in Hudson, WI. These were reviewed by the Committee.
  - Comment: the Agreement needs clarifying language to specify that the scope of the Fiscal Sponsor's (RFR) oversight is only for those components of the Sponsored Organization's (BATs) program for which funding has been donated/granted through the Fiscal Sponsor.
  - All, with the exception of Vanbergen, accepted the edits.
  - **Action:** Vanbergen will request review of the Agreement by Tribal legal counsel.
- Mr. Johnson recommended that BAT Comm file Form 113-C with the state as an Unincorporated Nonprofit Association under Sec. 184. This officially registers BAT Comm as a nonprofit and affords more protection.
  - **Motion** to designate Chair (Kitchell) as the BAT Committee registered agent and to approve Kitchell to file Form 113-C with the State. Rothe/Lang; motion carried (all in favor/none opposed)
- Follow-up with RFR Board on the Agreement will occur at their next meeting on February 17<sup>th</sup>.
- Goal is to have the Agreement signed by the March BAT Comm meeting.

#### Round Robin Reports from Committee members (15 min.)

1. **Red Cliff** (VanBergen): On Feb. 7<sup>th</sup>, the Tribal Council gave approval for Vanbergen to proceed with pursuing a feasibility study, including extensive community engagement, for trails within and connecting to the Reservation. This would include the potential Red Cliff to Bayfield trail along

Highway 13. This study will require obtaining funding and contracting with a professional firm to conduct the public engagement and trails study. An important aspect of this study will be to identify areas that must be protected and open only to Tribal members as well as areas open for public access.

2. **Ashwabay (AOEF) (Finn)**
  - Summit race was extremely successful: 15 colleges from throughout the regional circuit participated.
  - Nordic trail grooming is going well.
  - Fat biking has been growing.
  - Merged Board of Directors between AOEF and Big Top will be legal on 2/14. Finn will be vice-chair; he will continue to serve as BAT Comm rep. Kellie Pedersen is secretary.
  - Meeting with the County on the plan for the Ashwabay special management area on 2/16. Finn & Olson from AOEF will be participating; Kitchell will participate from BATs.
3. **City (Kitchell):**
  - In conjunction with Winter Fest, BAT Comm is sponsoring a botany hike on Fri. 3/4 @ 1 p.m. on the Big Ravine East Rim Trail from Meyers-Olson parking area. It will be led by Sarah Johnson from Northland College. A bonfire with beverages will follow at the Wineries.
  - Northland senior, Luna Armajo, is working with the Bayfield school to develop an environmental education curriculum on the Big Ravine trails. The school is excited about this as well as establishing a longer-term relationship with Northland for future projects.
  - Plants for Big Ravine viewshed and School Trail hillside planting are being ordered.
4. **Town of Bell/Cornucopia Trails Club: (Rothe):**
  - Starting to plan trail lay-out on Pratt's Peak: may engage Will Krift in process as advisor.
  - Still finalizing the use agreement with County; but they have approval to proceed.
  - Planning to "step up" coordination with Town of Bayfield, since most of Pratt's Peak is located within that Township. Finn offered to help with communication via the Town Plan Commission.
  - Exploring the possibility of working with Steve Vizanko from Bayfield Nordic on potential nordic trails in the Siskiwit Preserve.
  - A nordic trail is being groomed around the airport in Cornucopia.
5. **County (Bratsch): not present**
6. **Landmark (Lang):** Very close to signing the purchase agreement with Maki brothers for the property along the Brownstone Trail. Exploring with the Bayfield Chamber about helping with fundraising for moving the bus business off of the site (as a land conservancy, Landmark cannot legally fundraise for this type of activity).
7. **Town of Bayfield (Fahrenkrog):** supporting the Big Ravine headwaters and Hatchery Trail projects.
8. **NPS (Van Stappen):**
  - Lots of big improvements in 2021 on the Mainland Trail, including the bridges, boardwalks, and trail tread. Interpretive signs forthcoming.
  - Due to dangerous conditions, the NPS is discouraging anyone from going out on the Lake at Meyers Beach. Ice caves are closed.

**Adjourned at 4:51 pm.**

**NEXT MEETING: Tuesday March 8<sup>th</sup> @ 3 p.m.**

Next Meeting: Focus on trails activities

- Subcommittee reports
- Project calendar
- New trails planning
- Consider inviting biking community partners: North Coast Cycling Assn. and CAMBA