

Bayfield Area Trails Committee  
Meeting Notes – May 9, 2023 @ 3 p.m.

Meeting participants:

Committee members present:

1. Carol Fahrenkrog
2. Ashley Huinker
3. Kate Kitchell
4. Erika Lang
5. Lindley Mattson
6. Peter Rothe
7. Julie Van Stappen

Committee members absent:

1. Chuck Finn

Trails subcommittee members present:

1. John Ipsen
2. Kris Wegerson

Communications subcommittee members – none present

Meeting Objectives: The primary purpose of the meeting was to debrief on the Trails Forum and agree on follow-up/next steps.

**Estimated number of participants: 65 or more; 10 new people signed up.**

1. **Round robin debriefs on how did it go?** What could have been improved:
  - a. Rothe: went well, despite the inclement weather; it was especially valuable for making social connections after so much time apart during COVID; no specific suggestions for improvements.
  - b. Huinker: went well; lots of interest and discussion on the Red Cliff to Bayfield trail connection; an important “takeaway” for her was thinking more about how to maintain trails, especially the new R.C. to Bayfield connection if/when it occurs.
  - c. Lang: went well; agreed that it was mostly a social gathering – and that was great; it was a little hard to hear inside the tent due to closeness of quarters and lots of people
  - d. Mattson: went well; did not receive very much comment at her table; most interest was in Fire Hill; comment forms for Fire Hill are posted on the County [webpage at this link](#). They plan to initiate inventory and planning for Fire Hill this month with field visits with Forestry & Parks staff; no contract for planning – they will do the plan in-house with current staff; they plan to contract for trails final lay-out and construction.
  - e. Van Stappen: went really well; very good attendance; the social connection was really nice; great presentation; most interest in the plans for Meyers Beach improvements.
  - f. Fahrenkrog: ditto on went well – good social connections; people love maps – maps are very important; lots of interest in the new trails at Headwaters, and especially Meme Miikana (Pileated Woodpecker); everyone is looking forward to the new bridge.
  - g. Kitchell: went well; great refreshments!; had hoped for more substantive comments at the tables about trails – we had the cards and pencils for written comments, but virtually none were received; it may have been helpful to make “kick-off” remarks about providing written comments and encouraging circulation among tables; the lay out had to be changed due to weather and putting the sides on the tent: this changed the “flow” and caused some bottleneaking at the entrance by the big BATs map table and the refreshments.
  - h. Ipsen & Wegerson: great refreshments & thanks to all who pulled this together; very good presentation, although the projection was difficult to see in the tent; maybe consider an indoor venue next time – and perhaps later in the season.

2. **Next year's Forum:** Based upon the challenges with the weather and the projection, and Fahrenkrog's suggestions, the Committee agreed to pursue the following in 2024:
  - Hold Forum during Bayfield in Bloom, which is the 1<sup>st</sup> 2 weeks of May
  - "Piggy back" on the Larry Meiller broadcast at the Pavillon
  - Remember that the 1<sup>st</sup> Sat. in June is National Trails Day: factor this into the plans
  
3. Discussion about naturalist-led hikes:
  - e.g. 1x per month
  - attract new members,
  - different demographic
  - families & kids
  - can be a lot of work
  - good interp. signage and maps is essential
  - birding festival example
  - Trails Subcommittee to discuss
  - Communications Subcommittee to discuss
  - Doing 1 or 2 this summer at Frog Bay –
  - When? Key is to be consistent (e.g. 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of the month); who is the demographic?
  - Dovetail with surveys
  - Junior Trail builders program

**Action:** this was delegated to the Trails Subcommittee to consider. Maybe we could do 1 per month this year just to see how it goes and evaluate level of effort vs. benefit.
  
4. The Committee reviewed and agreed to the follow-up actions plan developed by Kitchell (inserted below)
  - Specific time-sensitive follow up:
    - Contact volunteers for the Economic & Social Impact Study? – this will also inform the long-term plan. This may reach users beyond our "local" community members.
    - Peter will send names of people who are interested:
      - Jamie Ritter – check if she is on the list. Graphic artist. Possible assistance on select needs?

### **Bayfield Area Trails Forum Follow up Actions**

1. Compile feedback from meeting:
  - a. Input written comments that were/are being received: send to Kate for compilation/input to Google form
2. Download photos onto Google drive (Tony, Kate, Others?)
3. Outreach to participants via updated BATs email list, blog (Tony), & Facebook (Tony)
  - a. Thanks to participants & presenters
  - b. Summary of highlights
  - c. Reference the current project plan which has been solidified for the year.
  - d. Link to information posted on site (Tony will post)
    - i. Maps
    - ii. Presentation
  - e. Post-participation survey (Google form) (Kate & Tony draft)
  - f. Notes:

- i. Ask for follow-up comments:
        - 1. Suggestions for existing trails
        - 2. Suggestions for new trails
        - 3. Suggestions for how to get things done
          - a. Process & organization such as ad hoc subcommittee for dog sled trails
        - 4. What do you want to stay informed about?
      - ii. Volunteer interests – per list posted at Forum (attached)
      - iii. Geographic areas of interest – keep it open-ended (e.g. Cornucopia, Red Cliff, Bayfield, Washburn, Bayview) specific community; trails most used
      - iv. Activity preferences -
4. How to carry feedback forward?
  - a. Individual organizations will use as they deem appropriate
  - b. BAT Comm – develop an areawide plan/priorities (for the next 3-5 years?)
    - i. Consider an ad hoc planning subcommittee?
    - ii. Consider ad hoc committee(s) for biking and mushing per comments.
5. Top “takeaways” from Bayfield Area Trails Overview Table (Kate & Tony)
  - Explore & pursue opportunities for less aggressive mountain biking opportunities, to complement the single-track trails at Mt. Ashwabay that have been developed by CAMBA
    - Consider an ad hoc subcommittee to pursue #1 above. Potential participants could include Erik Scott
  - Fire Hill input:
    - Lots of interest and excitement about this property
    - Opportunities for hiking and biking
    - Keep it primitive:
      - A few yurts could be a plus
      - Concerns about lighting
    - Possible connection to Valley Rd.
  - Add trails to the property owned by the School District at the intersection of County J and Valley Rd.
  - Snowshoe connection from Jerry Jolly Trails @ Star Route to the new Meme Trail (Pileated Woodpecker)
  - Differentiate mountain bike trails at Mt. Ashwabay on the BATs master map
  - Dog sled trails (from Lucy Tyrell): consider a task group to:
    - enlist information from those who knew/know about the past of these trails
    - locate/verify the County map of the blue pawprint trails (Echo Valley?)
    - identify a loop of some distance (maybe 10 miles) that could be resurrected for maintenance and grooming out of the 70 miles originally identified
    - enlist help with brushing the trail
    - enlist snowmobile help with grooming the trail in winter
    - add this trail to the BATs options for summer hiking AND WINTER dog-power sports