

**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 15, 2024  
Held in person at Schmeckle Reserve, Steven's Point, WI.  
and virtually via Microsoft Teams or call-in.**

Members Present: John Martinson, Keith Pamperin, Calvin Richtig, John Mitchell, Kirsten Engel, and John (Jack) Heim. Amy Carlson joined virtually on MS Teams.

Members Absent: Andrea Frisch, Shannon Columb, and Lindsay Muench

Others Present: Nick Zouski, Shannon Holt, Deanna Sell, and Barry Gilbeck.

Guest presenters: Jeff Pagels

---

Chair Martinson called the meeting to order at 10:25 am.

Introductions: Everyone introduced themselves to the new members.

Next the Council reviewed the agenda. They wished to have four topics added: Steve's Bill, Accessibility to Documents, Attendance, and Public Comment Period.

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

The Council next reviewed the meeting minutes from December 15th, 2023.

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

**Minutes Discussion**- DAC would like minutes sent to all DNR Bureau Directors as soon as possible. It's problematic when the meeting is only quarterly to approve the minutes and they are wondering if there is a way to approve the minutes electronically before the next meeting so they can be sent to DNR leadership in a timely manner.

**New Members** – We have two new full members, John (Jack) Heim and Lindsay Muench, and one new alternate member, Amy Carlson. It was suggested to do a press release and social media posts with new member bios as an opportunity to increase awareness for the DAC and accessibility.

**Customer Service Updates – Barry**

New License Sales year began on March 1, 2024.

- Old licenses are still valid until March 31, 2024

Turkey Bonus Authorization Sales

- Sales begin next week on 3/18/24.
- Zone 1 sales will be Monday and one zone per day until Friday.

Fishing Opener

- May 4 is this year's open season for fishing most species.
  - o New regulations posted on the DNR website: [FishingRegsElectronic2425.pdf \(widen.net\)](#)
  - o New handout for regulations changes: [NewRegs20242025.pdf \(wisconsin.gov\)](#)
- Walleye regulation change to 3 fish statewide
- Free fishing weekend is June 1-2
- Urban and Community Fishing March 9 – April 26, 2024
  - o Check on page 26-27 of the fishing regulations.

Legislative Updates:

- State ID Card Legislation Updates:
  - o Legislation allows for "access to Department of Transportation records to establish residency for approvals issued by the Department of Natural Resources."
  - o [23 SB 310](#) Presented to the Governor on 3-11-2024.
  - o [23 AB 306](#) - Presented to the Governor on 3-11-2024.
- Legislation introduced for nonresident archer and crossbow hunting licenses.
  - o 12/08/23 - [23 SB 780](#) and [23 AB 799](#) Report approved by the Governor on 2-29-2024. 2023 Wisconsin Act 99.
  - o Nonresident archer and crossbow fees would increase from \$162.25 to \$197.25 (or from \$165.00 to \$200.00 with fees)
- Lifetime Fishing License Legislation Updates:
  - o [23 AB 72](#) - 11/15/23 Public hearing held before the Assembly Committee on Sporting Heritage & department provided testimony. No further updates
- Disability Rating for Veterans
  - o 23 SB 44/AB 71 – Disability rating for veterans to qualify for license authorizations, admissions fee exemptions.
  - o 2023-03-14 [To Senate Financial Institutions and Sporting Heritage Committee](#)
- Fishing license for child with a disability
  - o [LRB-0907/1](#) relating to: a fishing license for a child with a disability. – No further action since last meeting

- Hunting with an Airgun.
  - o SB 586/ AB 633 Hunting with an air gun, providing an exemption from emergency rule procedures, granting rule-making authority, and providing a penalty.
  - o Presented to the Governor on 3-11-2024.
- Transportation of Fish
  - o SB 411/AB 430 The transportation of fish taken by hook and line.
  - o Current law restricts the transportation of a fish with the head or tail, or both, removed or a filleted fish, if that fish is subject to a minimum size limit and taken by hook and line from inland waters or outlying waters. Under current law, such a dressed or filleted fish may be transported only if it continues to meet the minimum size limit. Under this bill, such a dressed or filleted fish may also be transported if the person transporting the fish provides upon request a physical or digital photograph that bears a stamp of the time and date on which the photograph was taken and that shows the fish before the head or tail was removed alongside a ruler or other method acceptable to the Department of Natural Resources for proving its length.
  - o Presented to the Governor on 3-11-2024.
- Free Fishing Weekend in January
  - o SB 34/AB 35 Modifying the designation of a free fishing weekend in January.
  - o Presented to the Governor on 3-11-2024.
- Muzzleloader definition
  - o SB 587/AB 632 Defining muzzle-loading firearm for hunting purposes.
  - o This bill defines “muzzle-loading firearm,” as that term applies to hunting, to mean a firearm that shoots a projectile loaded exclusively from the muzzle.
  - o Presented to the Governor on 3-11-2024.
- Vehicle admission sticker and receipt validity time period.
  - o SB 415/AB 425 Annual vehicle admission receipt validity period. (FE)
  - o Presented to the Governor on 3-11-2024.

**Steve’s Bill** – Steve’s Bill (23 SB 310 & 23 AB 306) came about and was proposed because State Statute would not allow the WI DNR Go Wild system to access Department of Transportation records as verification of a State ID card and only allowed verification of a Driver’s License to validate residency for purchasing Hunting, Fishing and Trapping licenses. Department of Transportation (DOT) is the agency responsible for issuing both Driver’s Licenses and ID cards, but records are kept in different data bases. DNR was permitted to access the Driver’s License database, but not the ID card database due to previous State Statute limiting access. This Legislation allows for "access to Department of Transportation records to establish residency for approvals issued by the Department of Natural Resources." Act #114 is effective September 1st, 2024.

**Cabin Reservations/ New Cabins** – Cabin reservations are not able to be added to the CAMIS online reservation system because it requires a live person to verify the application for reservation, and this process can not be automated. A lot of manpower goes into cabin reservations and staff on property manage reservations, cancellations, rearranging dates, and rescheduling. The DNR is looking to add a new smaller, rustic, fully accessible cabin at Willow River State Park and a fully accessible bathroom for the cabin at Copper Falls. The DNR hopes to add more cabins in the North and the West part of the state. We did not receive funding requested in the Capital Budget for these projects specifically but are prioritizing funding that we did receive to purchase some cabin “kits”. These are a prefabricated building that is a more rustic-style cabin including a bathroom, and one-bedroom with bunkbeds; like a studio apartment

with one large room plus a bathroom. For the DNR to construct a cabin on any property, it must be included in that property's master plan. Deanna and Nick have been working with the Master Planning section to ensure that verbiage is included that would allow for the possibility of cabins on each property.

**Further discussion on Cabin Reservations:** The "Tier System" favors people with Tier 1 disabilities, meaning that those with Tier 2 or Tier 3 seldom or never get to reserve cabins. More research is needed for the DAC to understand how the tiers are determined. Tier 1 people have no limit to how frequently they can reserve cabins and demand far exceeds the available cabins. The Parks program needs to review the tier system and determine if there could be a fairer system such as a lottery. The process to reserve a cabin is to fill out form 2500-085 Cabin Reservation Request Form. This form is self-reported as pictured below and can be found at <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/parks/camping/adacabins>

---

Because this cabin is one of 8 currently available in the Wisconsin State Park System, priority for its use will be for those least likely to use traditional camping facilities. Please check the category which best describes the needs of the person(s) with disability.

1.  Person with a permanent, severe physical disability, who requires a wheelchair as sole means of mobility and requires assistance with personal care needs.
  2.  Person with physical disability who requires a wheelchair as sole means of mobility and requires minimal assistance with personal care needs
  3.  Person with physical disability who requires a wheelchair as a means of mobility.
  4.  Person with physical disability who uses adaptive equipment for mobility reasons.
  5.  Others: Please explain \_\_\_\_\_
- 

The DNR and members of the DAC should investigate how National Parks handles this issue. DNR will investigate the original language for the intended use of cabins. The DNR Parks program needs to come up with a better system for cabin reservations that still lives within the original intent of the cabins. This topic was tabled until the next meeting and more research into the current system can be done.

### **Lunch Break 12:05 to 12:48pm**

**Attendance** – There are some concerns about member participation. The Council Charter states that "Regular attendance at council meetings is required for all members. Council members may be excused by notifying the chairperson or department liaison in advance. Any council member may lose his or her membership if he or she has frequent unexcused absences." There is a member of the council who has now missed four consecutive meetings. The last time this member joined a meeting was the virtual meeting held on March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023, and has not attended in-person or virtually since. Chair Martinson will contact this member to remind them of this requirement and confirm that they still wish to remain a member. Member attendance is critical to have quorum and conduct business. Meetings for the upcoming year are set in December of the previous year, so all members should be marking their calendars and scheduling around DAC. A suggestion was made to keep a directory of meeting agenda topics on the *Open The Outdoors* website so that people know what meeting minutes to look at for specific topics. *Open The Outdoors* website also needs to be updated with new members and DNR (Liaison) roles.

**Public Comments** – DAC members are sometimes contacted by the public and members of their community who have issues they would like brought to the DAC’s attention. Moving forward we plan to open approximately 10 minutes of each meeting for public comment at approximately 1:30 pm.

**Motion: Calvin moved that we add a Public Comment section and time slot to all future agendas. John Mitchell Seconded. Motion Passed.**

**Accessible Documents** – During introductions Jack asked for the agenda to be made available in braille. The DAC suggests that all public documents need to be ICT compliant and compatible with an IDR Reader and fully accessible. Member, Calvin Richtig will send some training resources that his staff has used. It was also suggested that the DNR could get portable braille readers for public meetings (Cost is approx. \$2,500.00 - \$3,000.00).

**Public Input- Ice Age Trail– Jeff Pagels** – Jeff wishes to ask about the Ice Age Trail (IAT) and steps being added at Potawatomi State Park. Jeff used to work with IAT and would always try to get them to consider people with disabilities when building bridges and steps. Mr. Pagels referenced a “memorandum of agreement” between the IAT, DNR and National Park Service (NPS) where the DNR manages the trail on its land. In the 21-page agreement no reference was found to consider barrier free access. Mr. Pagels would like to see the memorandum agreement updated to require trail builders to consider barrier free access. The DNR has a liaison between DNR and IAT, Andrew Hanson. In the case of the steps at Potawatomi, the stairway was not *added*, it was repaired. This section of the trail is remote and does not have an accessible pathway leading to it in either direction. All construction projects on DNR owned land are supposed to be entered into the DNR’s Development Projects System. This is the process in which projects are reviewed for accessibility requirements. Occasionally, projects that are not funded through the DNR (such as Friends’ Groups or private groups such as IAT Alliance) will slip through the cracks if they are not entered by property staff. The DNR works to make sure that all staff are aware of this procedure. Now that the IAT is governed by the National Parks System, these issues may remedy themselves. IAT Liaison, Andrew Hanson, has offered to present at a DAC meeting concerning the IAT and will be invited to attend in the future.

**Outdoor Wheelchair Program** – New Trackchair donated to Newport State Park in door County. The Friends’ Group there received a used chair and are managing the use. Reminder that the Accessible Outdoors Fund is up and running and we now have brochures. The DNR is not allowed to solicit donations, but hopefully these brochures and word of mouth will encourage more donations and this funding can lead to purchasing more adaptive equipment. Action Trackchair has new 30” model available. The lifespan of a Trackchair is expected to be a minimum of 20 years.

### **Accessibility Coordinator Updates – Nick**

- **Web updates** – Working with each DNR property to have Accessibility topic added to each property’s recreation page. Parks and Rec has been trying to promote and increase awareness of accessible features and opportunities for universally accessible activities available at DNR events in their newsletter and social media.
- **DAC Website** – Needs to be updated with new members, and role definitions of DNR Liaison (Nick’s role) and Meeting Facilitator (Shannon H’s role). Members also suggested that it would be a good idea to add a meeting minute’s directory online with agenda topics so that previous discussion topics and motions can be easily found.
- **Playgrounds** – The DNR is going to start recommending getting away from sand & mulch and encouraging a solid accessible surface and when possible, playgrounds should be built to be universally accessible. It is very important to work with volunteer groups prior to fundraising so they have a better understanding of the cost. The Christopher Reeve Foundation frequently donates money for playgrounds and would be a good resource to see if any grants are available. Deanna and Nick are hoping to put together an information packet on playground requirements because there is a lot of interest in them from Friends and volunteer groups.
- **Crystal Lake** – Follow-up from last meeting. Dane County is planning to reopen the road and remove the barriers. We don’t know what the county will do if there if flooding issues in the future.

**Accessible Equipment** – Deanna put in a budget request for Adaptive Equipment. For each park district to have three to five track-chairs or outdoor wheelchairs is estimated to be approximately one million dollars. This has been proposed internally to Division Administrators and we hope to see it included in the biennial budget. Nick is looking into different accessible biking options that the DNR could offer for rentals. It has been a challenge to find equipment that does not require above average upper body strength to operate. Nick is looking at a trike with a power assist and The Rig aka “Not a Wheelchair” <https://notawheelchair.com/products/the-rig>. Peninsula State Park has developed a new trail plan which includes some mountain bike trails and some universally accessible trails.

**Setting Goals** - #1 Goal is to revamp the cabin reservation system. Additionally, ensuring that those people who reserve the accessible sites have a need and that people with CPAP breathing machine can reserve electric site or get an exception to use a portable power cell. State statute was recently updated to remove the cap on the number of campsites that have electricity.

### **Members' Updates -All**

- **John Martinson** – Is going scuba diving with Dive Pirates Foundation for adaptive scuba diving in Caymen Islands. <https://divepirates.org/>
- **Keith Pamperin** – Challenge The Outdoors is hosting the Annual Sporting Clays Fundraiser on Saturday April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at J&H Game Farm (HWY 156, 1.5 miles west of Navarino) <https://ctoforme.org>. CTO is building an accessible fishing pier on their pond in Angelica and have future plans to build a nature trail and archery range.
- **John Mitchell** - For Adaptive Sportsmen, you can check the website and the newsletter. <https://adaptivesportsmen.org/>
- **Jack Heim** – The Boulders Adaptive Climbing (local) group is having their annual trip on June 7-9. The Craggin' Classic (national), which is organized by the American Alpine Club, is on August 23-25.

### **Adjourn:**

**Calvin moved to adjourn the meeting. Kirsten seconded. All present in favor.**

**Chair Martinson adjourned the meeting at 3:06 pm.**