

2nd MORE Commission Meeting
May 14, 2018, 1-4pm
Woodmont Lodge, Hancock, MD

14 Commissioners present: Secretary Belton, Sean Mann, Brian Raines, Paul Edwards, Rick Decker, T.J. Jenkins, Matt Liddle, Joel Dunn, Tamika Newkirk, Cathy Bramble, Liz Fitzsimmons, Steve Green, Walter Ficklin, Deanne McCue

2 Commissioners absent: William Pickrum, Anna Chaney

Staff: Deputy Secretary Throwe, Diana Carroll, Kelly Collins Choi, Stephen Schatz, Angie Hummer, Scott Knoche

Secretary Belton - Welcome, history of Woodmont Lodge

John F. Wilson, DNR - LPRP Update

Process - Recreational lands inventory/Level of Service/Gaps & needs analysis.

Public input & stakeholder regional workshops held throughout state. Public survey data available. Frostburg University conducting Economic Analysis

Regional Trail meetings also identified gaps, ie. Baltimore City to Patapsco SP

What is current LWCF funding annually? \$1.2M annually from DOI/NPS

How does this tie into POS? Identifies gaps to direct funding

Changes since 2014 LPRP? Public needs consistent

Liz Fitzsimmons - State Tourism

Fish & Hunt Maryland website; Visitmd.org telling the story of Maryland.

Destination consultant stressed highlighting recreational trail system and connectivity throughout the state. Need to help small outdoor recreational businesses overcome barriers to entry and attract manufacturing businesses, ie. sailboats, kayaks. Branding needs to focus on "excitement factor."

What is the Tourism budget? \$8.5M operating, \$2.5M to locals

1st Stakeholder Panel

Dan Spedden, President, Hagerstown-Washington County CVB

Independent Organization with \$1.2M budget, 1.2M visitors annually bring \$256M in spending. #1 beneficiaries are restaurants, then retail, transportation, lodging.

Recommendations include: WMD Rail Trail extension to Fort Frederick SP.

Purchase and develop John Brown property as new State Park. Develop

Weaverton-Roxbury Rail Trail. Fund Trail Town program to assist communities

along C&O in recreation based economic development. Preserve Antietam Creek as a river valley park from PA to Potomac.

Liz Shatto, Executive Director, Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area

HA funds grants to gov and non-profits in Washington/Frederick/Carroll Ctys, ex. Heritage bicycle tour maps. HA blog includes “virtual triathlons.” Tour & student groups visit DC & Gettysburg, opportunity to gain visits to battlefields in MD, and outdoor recreation component enhances popularity. DNR historic and cultural resources need funding. Geocaching trails present new opportunity, combine history and outdoor recreation for young families and diverse groups.

Lee Baihley, Owner, River and Trail Outfitters

Largest outfitter in the region with 3 offices in MD and 1 in WV. Employee 130 people, ½ seasonal staff are high school/college students. “America Outdoors” data says outfitters within 50-70 mi of city see growth. Most popular trips are “specialty trips” ie. kayak-winery tours for DC visitors. Partnerships with campgrounds for better marketing. Want better train access to campgrounds, ie New Brunswick. Training staff through partnerships, ie Sandy Spring Adventure camp for ziplining & ropes courses. Business challenges: Keeping up with minimum wage (10% differential); Healthy Working Families Act for sick leave to seasonal youth staff; Sales/amusement taxes are higher in MD than WV.

Discussion

How do we assure funds are going back to the natural resources, and also demonstrate their value? Look at small numbers, not big ones, ie economic tools can model how participation and revenue change when public lands added or removed. It’s about salesmanship, State Parks don’t make money, but everyone else does, ie summer jobs, local businesses. Need reports on how they provide wider economic benefits, and provide to legislators.

How best to enhance Antietam? Rural Legacy, MALPH, other easements preserve landscape, need more easements along Sharpsburg Pike. Antietam & Monocacy seeing increased visitation, Gettysburg stagnant.

What is stopping trail connections? Non-willing landowners.

What is the obstacle to development of the Weaverton-Roxbury trail? Ownership challenges

2nd Stakeholder Panel

Jenny Willoughby, Sustainability Manager, City of Frederick

Frederick City Watershed is unique - owned by City as water supply, so managed for water quality and forest stewardship, RTEs, also recreation component in Watershed Master Plan and management agreement with DNR. Popular biking/hunting/fishing destination with 1 sanctioned trail and 80 miles of illegal trails, working with Ad Hoc Committee and Mid-Atlantic Off Road Enthusiasts to close illegal trails and build sustainable ones.

Clyde Hicks, Owner, The Trail House

Retail business owner for 34 years, and working on Frederick City Watershed trails. Grant leveraging Heritage Area, RTP, MHT funds for sustainable trails. Connectivity opportunity, between Cunningham Falls SP and Gambrills SP. Recommends connecting City of Frederick connect to C&O Canal.

Robin Zanotti, President, C&O Canal Trust

Trail Towns/Canal Towns partnership - 8 towns working together to improve economic impact, but no sustainable funding and need staff. NPS budgets declining, C&O Canal Trust raises funds for preservation and programming, aim to bring people to the park. Towpath critical infrastructure and needs maintenance, aim to fix 80 worst miles.

Discussion

Data on C&O Canal through-cyclists? No data, but strava heat map, estimates are 75,000 through cyclists, may be busiest in country. Talk to ACA and other groups about needs, perhaps TEP be used for trail maintenance.

Who is protecting C&O Canal viewsheds, any University support? NPS easements and purview.

How can we bring Frederick City Watershed sustainable trails online faster? Need to protect downhill sections, more law enforcement needed, NRP spread thin. Give alternative trails.

How do we encourage more cities to hire Sustainability Managers? Need to attract folks with wide skill-set, ie. natural and water resources, planning, etc.

Wrap-up/Commission Feedback

Common themes for the day are: Partnerships, Connectivity, Cultural Heritage
Would like more information on various grant funds available to help organizations and NRP/law enforcement needs.

Would like consistent visitation data and economic data. Delve into Bureau of Economic Analysis data at future meetings

Would like to hear more from small business owners, especially on risk/reward of growth. Focus on getting more small business entry.

Future stakeholder panels with consistent question, ie: How can we best help you?

Next meeting - End of July in Central Region, will solicit dates.