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MEETING MINUTES: RPA 1 Transportation Enhancement Committee
Thursday, August 24, 2017, 9:30 a.m.
Driftless Area Education and Visitor Center, Lansing

Board members in attendance: Sheryl Struthers, Barb Schroeder, Val Reinke, James Janett, Joshua Johnson, Bruce Palmborg, Rod Marlatt, Kenny Slocum, Harlan Satrom, Russ Loven, Rachelle Howe and Michelle Barness.

1. Meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Chair Marlatt.
2. Motion to approve the agenda was made by Schroeder, seconded by Loven, all approved.
3. A motion to approve the 5-18-17 minutes was made by Reinke, seconded by Schroeder, all approved.
4. Committee Updates:
 - o Allamakee County:
 - o Driftless Visitor Center – There has been good visitor attendance so far. They held a donor appreciation event in August, and they are beginning to program events now. Janett shared some of the future improvements, including trail/path connections to the bluffs and towards the river, and also explained some of the design improvements, including geothermal heating and LED lights. The Allamakee County Conservation office are now located in the center.
 - o Clayton County:
 - o Pony Hollow Trail - Slocum shared that the Pony Hollow Trail extension is being worked on through Elkader, connecting to the Motor Mill site. The Hwy 13 portion of the trail will be done by DOT, but Grandview Rd. and north is held up with land acquisition.
 - o Fayette County:
 - o TRRC – There is an October 17th letting for bridge work for the TRRC. They will bid it as a winter job. They added 109 ft. and around \$300K to the bridge to meet the zero-rise requirement.
 - o Winneshiek County:
 - o Trout Run Trail – There is a December letting for a box culvert under 52 to connect Trout Run Trail to the planned Dry Run Trail. It would have been done earlier but they had to re-bid and are looking at a longer construction window to reduce costs.
 - o Prairie Farmer Trail – The trail sustained a lot of damage recently. Winneshiek County Conservation was able to work with Decorah to clean up tree damage just outside of Decorah. Schroeder also shared that there was an ATV trail ride event hosted by the Rotary which had good turnout. It was also a good way of exposing elderly donors to the trail system.
 - o There was discussion among committee members regarding how close to plant trees to trails. Schroeder explained that planting of prairie along trails was typical, with trees more often located near benches. She suggested using native trees, such as Bur Oaks, and said they had a native tree list. Marlatt suggested setting trees back a little from trails to avoid maintenance issues.
 - o Winneshiek County Conservation just purchased the Neste Valley Recreation Area for a park at the half way point on Dry Run Trail. They are in the conceptual planning stage for the site. The Neste cabin will be preserved for historical value.

- Oelwein:
 - The council set aside funds to do crack sealing on a 15 yr old trail.
 - They will do a trail extension and update a pedestrian bridge in the city park near the aquatic center.
 - The city's park master plan is complete and they're starting work on projects. Funding for projects is from the city so far.
 - Barness shared information on the upcoming October 18th Transportation Summit with the committee, and suggested they plan on attending the summit to hear the speakers and to exhibit information on regional trails. Marlatt and Schroeder suggested having information on the Backbone Trail and scenic byways at an exhibitor table. Marlatt will work with RC&D on getting visuals and information on scenic byways; Barness will update and print the Backbone Trail map for the enhancement table at the summit. The committee then had some discussion around the issue of a culture of driving your own vehicle versus taking advantage of public transportation options.
 - Barness reviewed some of the proposed transportation actions coming out of a 7 Rivers Alliance WISE Plan workforce study. She requested feedback from the committee on whether the actions would be received and/or implemented in the RPA-1 region. Committee members spent time discussing the locations of specific informal park and ride lots throughout the region, which was one of the identified action items. Marlatt briefly discussed the action item for looking at shared use opportunities for scenic byway lots and park and rides. The committee also discussed where information on the region's trails and transportation system could be gathered to contribute to the action item to create a regional website portal for transportation information.
 - Barness shared several items on the Backbone Trail study, including a document defining the proposed format of the study, and a trails inventory and trail survey worksheet for committee members to complete.
5. Barness will follow-up with committee members regarding setting the date for the next meeting.
 6. Schroeder made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Marlatt. All in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 10:35 a.m.