

Outdoor Recreational Trails Advisory Board (ORTAB)

MINUTES January 16-18, 2024 9 AM-4:30 PM IN-PERSON, TELE & VIDEO CONFERENCE

MEETING CALLED BY:	Department of Natural Resources: Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation (DPOR)
TYPE OF MEETING:	Grant Applications of Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Funding Recommendations and Rankings
FACILITATOR:	Joel Del Rosario, Administrative Operations Manager
NOTE TAKER:	Natalya Fomina, DPOR Grants Administrator
TIMERKEEPER:	All
ATTENDEES:	Alaska State Parks Staff: Ricky Gease, DPOR Director, Joel Del Rosario, Administrative Operations Manager, Danette Berkovitz, Grants Manager, Natalya Fomina, Grants Administrator, Kathleen Tarr, Grants Administrator, Jean Ayers, Grants Administrator, ORTAB Members: Motorized Trail Representatives: Rod Arno, Bryant Wright (Not Present), Ronald Lurk, Non-Motorized Trail Representatives: Christy Gentemann, Libby Kugel, ORTAB Chair, Mike Sirofchuck, Diversified Trail Representatives: Sally Andersen (Not Present), Jeff Budd, Andrew Carmichael.

9:00 AM. Meeting was called to order by Administrative Operations Manager, Joel Del Rosario. Staff, ORTAB members, and members of the public introduced themselves. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was established. Attendees introduced themselves and provided opening comments. Mr. Gease expressed appreciation to ORTAB members for their dedicated time and service for the first in-person meeting since COVID-19. He reviewed the agenda and noted that this is the first year that the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR) (Parks) projects for the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) and the Land Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) are split apart from the non-DPOR projects, including non-profit, municipalities, Tribes, and local government projects. Mr. Gease indicated that this year is the most projects reviewed by the ORTAB in his tenure. He expressed the importance of members sharing their insights and perspectives during the evaluation of each of the proposed projects.

No public comments were made. Leading to Chair Kugel to close public comment period.

Agenda Topic: Alaska Long Trail (ALT) Fairbanks Planning & Design

DISCUSSION	Chair Kugel asked if a representative was online from ALT Fairbanks Planning & Design. Andrea Jacobs, Trails Coordinator for Fairbanks NorthStar Borough, introduced Trisha Levasseur, Parks Project Manager for Fairbanks NorthStar Borough. Ms. Jacobs provided a summary of the project. Members asked questions and discussion occurred about the project. Mr. Gease gave additional background information on the project and the parts of the ALT that go through Alaska State Parks, which are legislatively designated lands for outdoor regulations. DPOR has the authority to build trails and charge fees within State Park lands. Maintenance of the trails is funded through revenue streams such as campgrounds, parking lots, and commercial use permits. These revenue streams are important for the long-term viability and maintenance of the trails. Mr. Gease explained that Forest lands cannot charge fees and cannot enforce regulations. Municipalities can charge fees and enforce municipal codes. Mr. Gease discussed that the funding that previously has been provided for the ALT is for trails that do not need easements. Trails that need easements and permission of the landowner should secure and purchase the easements through the planning and design phase. Additionally, the planning and design process should address what revenue streams will be utilized to fund trail maintenance on an ongoing basis. Chair Kugel expressed support for the project. Mr. Sirofchuck expressed support for the project. Mr. Budd expressed support for the trial but scored the project low because of the eligibility question of whether the project needs to be shovel-ready. The question was noted and will be answered by Ms. Fomina when she returns to the meeting in the afternoon. Mr. Arno noted that the application stated that there was no opposition to the project. However, he indicated that there was indeed opposition to the project in Fairbanks to the point that the Governor participated in vetoing portions of the ALT and the Legislature not providing full funding. Mr. Sirofchuck disagreed that the Governor's veto of funding for the entire ALT can be considered opposition to this grant request. He noted that the grant request was advertised locally and in the appropriate way and no opposition was indicated in the affected area. Mr. Carmichael expressed support for the project.
COMMENTS & CONCERNS	Chair Kugel noted that the Board will continue to review this project when Ms. Fomina returns and provides additional information. Members will be able to change scores at that time. There were no additional questions or comments.

Agenda topic: Beach Lake Park – 10-Mile Mushing Trail

DISCUSSION	Chair Kugel requested Jeffrey Urbanus to provide a synopsis of the Beach Lake Park – 10-Mile Mushing Trail project. Mr. Urbanus, Capital Projects Manager with Eagle River Parks and Recreation, gave a summary of the proposal. Members asked questions and discussion occurred about the project. Mr. Lurk expressed support for the project. He disagreed with the diversified classification. Ms. Gentemann expressed support for the project. Chair Kugel expressed support for the project. Mr. Sirofchuck expressed support for the project. He noted that it is possible to change this project's classification during the target allocation process. Mr. Budd had no comment. Mr. Carmichael disagreed with the diversified classification. Mr. Gease suggested that members rank the project based on the details of its merits, rather than on its listed classification. He explained that a diversified classification means there is more than one user
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	group and that projects can have different criterion that could place them in multiple classifications. Mr. Arno commented that it gets down to funding, and proposals like this are an issue.
COMMENTS & CONCERNS	There were no further questions, comments, and no score changes.

Agenda topic: Guide Expansion & Education Outreach

DISCUSSION	Chair Kugel requested the representative for Guide Expansion & Education Outreach provide a synopsis of the project. Ms. Lanette Oliver, Valdez Adventure Alliance, gave a summary of the proposal. Members asked questions and discussion occurred about the project. Ms. Gentemann expressed support for the project. Chair Kugel expressed support for the project. Mr. Sirofchuck expressed support for the project. Mr. Budd had no comment. Mr. Arno expressed support for the project. Mr. Lurk expressed support for the project. Mr. Gease expressed support for the project. He suggested that the proponent create two to five social media templates in addition to the online downloadable pdf. Mr. Sirofchuck increased his score to 85. Mr. Lurk increased his score to 86.
COMMENTS & CONCERNS	There were no further questions or comments.

Agenda topic: Petersville Road Groundbreaking

DISCUSSION	The representative for Petersville Road Groundbreaking was not online now. The decision was made to contact the representative and schedule a time for the representative to provide information.
COMMENTS & CONCERNS	There were no further questions or comments.

Agenda topic: South Denali Trail Marking and Trail Maintenance

DISCUSSION	Chair Kugel requested the representative for South Denali Trail Marking and Trail Maintenance provide a synopsis of the project. John Scudder, representing Curry Ridge Riders Friends of Denali State Park, gave a summary of the proposal. Members asked questions and discussion occurred about the project. Mr. Sirofchuck expressed support for the project. An unidentified member expressed support for the project. Mr. Lurk informed that he is a member of the Curry Ridge Riders Board of Directors. He noted that he scored the project. Chair Kugel commented that his score will be considered if he is not financially benefiting from the project. Ms. Gentemann expressed support for the project.
COMMENTS & CONCERNS	There were no further questions or comments. An at-ease was taken. The ORTAB reconvened its regular meeting at 10:38 a.m.

Agenda topic: Petersville Road Groundbreaking

DISCUSSION	Michele Stevens, representative for Petersville Road Groundbreaking, showed the informational video of the proposal. She then provided a verbal synopsis of the project. Members asked questions and discussion occurred about the project. Mr. Arno expressed support for the project. Mr. Lurk expressed support for the project. Ms. Gentemann expressed support for the project. Chair Kugel expressed support for the project. Mr. Sirofchuck expressed support for the project. Mr. Budd increased his score 10 points. Mr. Sirofchuck increased his score to 90.
COMMENTS & CONCERNS	There were no further questions or comments. An at-ease was taken for lunch. The ORTAB reconvened its regular meeting at 1:00 p.m.

Agenda topic: Alaska Long Trail (ALT) Fairbanks Planning & Design

DISCUSSION	Discussion occurred with Ms. Fomina regarding the eligibility of the ALT Fairbanks Planning & Design project. Ms. Fomina stated that exclusive planning and design projects are not a permissible use of the RTP grant funds. There is no stipulation that can be used for planning and design applications. Additionally, Ms. Fomina expressed concerns that the ALT project application noted the potential of crossing public and private lands, but the application did not include landowner authorization documents. The budget workbook submitted with the application was also deficient in showing details of how the funds would be used for each task. Mr. Gease asked if the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and RTP allow applications that work with Division of Mining, Land and Water (DMLW) to map an actual trail route easement and then pay for that easement. Christy McNally commented that she has not reviewed a project with those specifications and without seeing the scope of work, it is difficult to determine eligibility. Regarding the ALT project, Ms. McNally noted she has not reviewed its scope of work but believes that Ms. Fomina conducted a thorough review. She explained that RTP funds can be utilized by the State during their master planning efforts. Mr. Gease explained that no work on the Alaska Long Trail will be conducted outside of State Park lands unless there is a trail easement secured on general State land. Mr. Gease requested Ms. McNally specifically review and provide advice on the eligibility of an ORTAB application to use RTP funds to coordinate with DMLW to do the actual survey work for a trail easement on general State lands and to pay the fees for the surveyor on those lands that are outside of State
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	<p>Park lands. Ms. McNally agreed to review the scenario. Chair Kugel reiterated that the ALT project is not eligible in its current format. She hopes the project can be reworked to make its components eligible for submittal and review next year. Ms. Jacobs expressed appreciation for the ORTAB’s review. Mr. Gease requested members to review the eligible list of non-motorized projects that can be moved to the diversified portfolio to achieve a balanced overall portfolio to submit to FHWA. He noted that there are ample opportunities to scale up the DPOR projects, if necessary. Mr. Gease reiterated that the overall scoring of the projects should result in as many high-quality projects that are broadly distributed across the state. Mr. Arno commented that he believes one of the ORTAB’s goals is to try to reduce conflict between users that are congregated in specific areas of the state. He discussed legislation within the last 10 years that distributes funds in urban areas where underprivileged folks do not have the opportunity to access the close-by wild areas. Mr. Arno changed his score for the ALT down to 50. Chair Kugel noted that without the ALT project, there is enough funding for all the eligible projects. Mr. Gease discussed the history of LWCF and the Great America Outdoors Act. He noted that the funding is not keeping up with inflation and is about 30% of what the funding was 50 years ago. He discussed the different national programs, and the amount of funding Alaska receives based on the different criteria of population and land mass. Based on population criteria, Alaska receives \$2.5 million, which is the same amount as American Samoa. Other states are receiving as much as \$20 million. Alaska receives the maximum amount of funding from the Dingell-Johnson and Pittman-Robertson grants since those contain a land-based calculation. Mr. Gease reviewed the current administrative criteria to compete for the national Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program (ORLP) grants that focus on urban areas with populations greater than 30,000, and in a census tract that is double the national median poverty rate. The national median poverty rate is about 10%. Due to the combination of these restrictions, only two out of the 206 census tracts in Alaska qualify to apply. One of the tracts is the Russian Jack Park in Anchorage and another is a park in Fairbanks. The restrictions limit Alaska’s ability to participate. Mr. Gease discussed funding levels and noted that on an equitable basis, outdoor recreation is underfunded every year. He believes the structure will have to change for the outdoor recreation industry to close the funding gap with targeted excise taxes and user-pay, user-benefit system. Mr. Gease explained that every state is faced with the same challenge of creating sustainable and stable funding resources to manage outdoor access. Most of the funding is generated by other taxes, such as real estate transaction taxes, lottery taxes, or water right fees, for example. Very little funding is raised by the recreation user. He explained that through the structure of Dingell-Johnson and Pittman-Robertson, the user who buys a gun and goes out hunting or buys a fishing rod and goes out fishing is paying for their access through the excise tax. Mr. Gease emphasized the importance of ORTAB distributing funding into Alaska’s communities and noted this is the largest source of direct and consistent funding for outdoor recreation in Alaska. Mr. Gease reviewed discussions with the Denali Commission to assist in rural areas that may not be able to reach the 50% match requirement and could benefit from additional walkways in different tourist corridors. Mr. Carmichael asked Mr. Gease if he had a written narrative or outline of his discussion points. Mr. Gease noted that he has talked with staff. He explained that the State belongs to the National Governors Association’s Outdoor Recreation Learning Network which is funded 50% by the retailers. Mr. Gease explained that approximately 80% of the LWCF funding gets distributed to California, New York, Illinois, and Texas. The smaller population states do not benefit as much. He gave examples of the limitations and restrictions of the program structure. Mr. Gease indicated that he would discuss the Build America, Buy America Act restrictions and protocols in the Thursday meeting.</p>
COMMENTS & CONCERNS	There were no other comments or questions.

Meeting Adjourned for the day at 2:04 PM

Agenda topic: Chena Lake Recreation Area River Park Trail System Reroutes Phase II

DISCUSSION	<p>Chair Kugel requested the representative for Chena Lake Recreation Area River Park Trail System Reroutes Phase 2 provide a synopsis of the project. Andrea Jacobs, Fairbanks North Star Borough, gave a summary of the proposal. Members asked questions and discussion occurred about the project. Mr. Wright indicated that he has a conflict of interest with this project. Mr. Lurk expressed support for the project. Ms. Gentemann expressed support for the project. Chair Kugel expressed support for the project. Mr. Sirofchuck expressed support for the project. There were no further questions or comments.</p>
COMMENTS & CONCERNS	<p>Chair Kugel requested Mr. Gease give an update on the easement questions relating to the Fairbanks North Star Borough’s application submitted at yesterday’s meeting. Mr. Gease discussed that permitting a trail easement is permissible under the guidelines and that the application would need to be further along in the process to reach that point. Ms. Jacobs expressed appreciation for the information. There were no further questions or comments.</p>

Agenda topic: Girdwood Middle Iditarod National Historic Trail Improvement

DISCUSSION	<p>Chair Kugel requested the representative from Girdwood Middle Iditarod National Historic Trail Improvement provide a synopsis of the project. Kyle Kelley gave a summary of the proposal. Members asked questions and discussion occurred about the project. Mr. Wright expressed support for the project. Mr. Lurk expressed support for the project. Ms. Gentemann expressed support for the project. Chair Kugel expressed support for the project. Mr. Sirofchuck expressed support for the project. Mr. Carmichael expressed support for the project. Mr. Arno expressed support for the project and confirmed the project could be classified as Diversified. Mr. Budd increased his score by five points.</p>
COMMENTS & CONCERNS	There were no further questions or comments.

Agenda topic: Happy Valley Singletrack Repairs & Features

DISCUSSION	Chair Kugel requested the representative for Happy Valley Singletrack Repairs & Features provide a synopsis of the project. Geoff Orth, representing the Fairbanks Cycle Club, gave a summary of the proposal. Members asked questions and discussion occurred about the project. Mr. Lurk expressed support for the project. Ms. Gentemann expressed support for the project. Chair Kugel expressed support for the project. Mr. Sirofchuck expressed support for the project. Mr. Arno expressed support for the project and confirmed the project could be classified as Diversified. Mr. Wright expressed support for the project. Mr. Sirofchuck increased his score to 85.
COMMENTS & CONCERNS	There were no further questions or comments.

Agenda topic: INHT: Turnagain Pass Trail Phase I

DISCUSSION	Chair Kugel requested the representative for Turnagain Pass Trail Phase 1 to provide a synopsis of the project. Mackenzie Barnwell gave a summary of the proposal. Members asked questions and discussion occurred about the project. Ms. Gentemann expressed support for the project. Chair Kugel expressed support for the project. Mr. Sirofchuck expressed support for the project. Mr. Carmichael expressed support for the project. Mr. Arno expressed support for the project and confirmed the project could be classified as Diversified. Mr. Wright expressed support for the project. He increased his score by five points. Mr. Lurk expressed support for the project. Ms. Gentemann increased her score to 93.
COMMENTS & CONCERNS	There were no further questions or comments.

Agenda topic: Ninilchick Scenic View Reconstruction

DISCUSSION	Chair Kugel requested the representative for Ninilchick Scenic View Reconstruction provide a synopsis of the project. Brandon Drzazgowski, Kenai Watershed Forum, gave a summary of the proposal. Members asked questions and gave suggestions regarding the project design. Chair Kugel expressed support for the project. Mr. Sirofchuck expressed support for the project. Mr. Budd expressed support for the project. Mr. Carmichael expressed support for the project. Mr. Arno expressed support for the project. Mr. Lurk expressed support for the project. Ms. Gentemann expressed support for the project. Mr. Carmichael increased his score by three points.
COMMENTS & CONCERNS	There were no further questions or comments.

Agenda topic: Trail Connecting Seldovia to the Tutka Backdoor Trail

DISCUSSION	Chair Kugel requested the representative for Trail Connecting Seldovia to the Tutka Backdoor Trail to provide a synopsis of the project. Bretwood Higman, Ground Truth Alaska, gave a summary of the proposal. Members asked questions and discussion occurred about the project. Mr. Budd expressed support for the project and increased his score by four points. Mr. Carmichael expressed support for the project. Mr. Arno decreased his score to 80. Mr. Wright expressed support for the project. Mr. Lurk expressed support for the project. Ms. Gentemann expressed support for the project and increased her score to 92. Chair Kugel expressed support for the project. Mr. Carmichael increased his score by five points. Mr. Sirofchuck increased his score to 84.
COMMENTS & CONCERNS	There were no further questions or comments.

Agenda topic: Cooper Landing Trails Snow Grooming Equipment

DISCUSSION	Chair Kugel requested the representative for Cooper Landing Trails Snow Grooming Equipment to provide a synopsis of the project. David Story, Cooper Landing Community Club, gave a summary of the proposal. Members asked questions and discussion occurred about the project. Mr. Budd expressed support for the project. Mr. Carmichael expressed support for the project. Mr. Arno expressed support for the project. Mr. Wright expressed support for the project. Mr. Lurk expressed support for the project. Ms. Gentemann expressed support for the project. Chair Kugel expressed support for the project. Mr. Sirofchuck expressed support for the project. Mr. Budd increased his score by four points.
COMMENTS & CONCERNS	There were no further questions or comments. An at-ease was taken. The ORTAB reconvened its regular meeting at 10:10 AM.

Agenda topic: RTP Applications Overall Ranking and Recommendations to Meet FHWA 40/30/30 Percent Target

DISCUSSION	The recommendation is as follows based on category:
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Motion approved unanimously	Second: Jeff Budd
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Meeting Adjourned for the day at 12:03 PM

Agenda topic: Approval of LWCF Minutes from April 7, 2023 Teleconference

ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE
A motion was made to approve the Minutes of April 7, 2023, and the Minutes of December 7, 2023.	Motion: Jeff Budd
Motion approved unanimously	Second: Ronald Lurk

Agenda topic: Alaska State Parks Remarks, Discussion and Scoring of the 9 (Nine) Project Proposals Shown Below

DISCUSSION	
	<p>North Pole Highway Park Renovation Chair Kugel requested the representative for North Pole Highway Park Renovation to provide a synopsis of the project. Robert Danny Wallace, City of North Pole, gave a summary of the proposal. Members asked questions and discussion occurred about the project. Mr. Arno changed his score to 85. Mr. Wright expressed support for the project. Mr. Lurk expressed support for the project. Ms. Gentemann expressed support for the project. Chair Kugel expressed support for the project. Mr. Sirofchuck expressed support for the project. Mr. Carmichael reduced his score by five points.</p> <p>Slaterville Park Entry & Access Chair Kugel requested the representative for Slaterville Park Entry & Access to provide a synopsis of the project. Kimberly Diamond, Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB), gave a summary of the proposal. Members asked questions and discussion occurred about the project. Mr. Wright expressed support for the project. He noted that he is not submitting scores for the FNSB applications due to conflict of interest. Mr. Lurk expressed support for the project. Ms. Gentemann expressed support for the project. Chair Kugel expressed support for the project. Mr. Sirofchuck expressed support for the project. Mr. Budd commented on the high cost of a kiosk. Mr. Carmichael commented on the high cost of a bench. Mr. Arno changed his score to 84. Ms. Gentemann increased her score to 90.</p> <p>South Fairbanks Park Entry & Access Chair Kugel requested the representative for South Fairbanks Park Entry & Access to provide a synopsis of the project. Kimberly Diamond, FNSB, gave a summary of the proposal. Members asked questions and discussion occurred about the project. Mr. Lurk expressed support for the project. Ms. Gentemann expressed support for the project. Chair Kugel expressed support for the project. Mr. Sirofchuck expressed support for the project. Mr. Budd commented on the high cost of a kiosk. Mr. Carmichael commented on the high cost of a bench. Mr. Wright expressed support for the project. Ms. Gentemann increased her score to 90.</p> <p>Allridge Park: Parking & Access Chair Kugel requested the representative for Allridge Park: Parking & Access to provide a synopsis of the project. Kimberly Diamond, FNSB, gave a summary of the proposal. Members asked questions and discussion occurred about the project. Ms. Gentemann expressed support for the project. Chair Kugel expressed support for the project. Mr. Sirofchuck expressed support for the project. Mr. Budd reiterated his comments for the previous FNSB projects. Mr. Carmichael expressed support for the project. Mr. Arno changed his score to 85. Mr. Wright expressed support for the project. Mr. Lurk expressed support for the project. Ms. Gentemann increased her score to 90.</p> <p>Frank Hayward Memorial Breakwater Park Chair Kugel requested the representative for Frank Hayward Memorial Breakwater Park to provide a synopsis of the project. Genelle Winter, Metlakatla Indian Community, gave a summary of the proposal. Members asked questions and discussion occurred about the project. Chair Kugel expressed support for the project. Mr. Sirofchuck expressed support for the project. Mr. Budd expressed support for the project. Mr. Carmichael expressed support for the project. Mr. Arno expressed support for the project. He changed his score to 90. Mr. Wright expressed support for the project. Mr. Lurk expressed support for the project. Ms. Gentemann expressed support for the project.</p> <p>Alder Park Playground Chair Kugel requested the representative for Alder Park Playground to provide a synopsis of the project. Morgan Barry, Ketchikan Gateway Borough, gave a summary of the proposal. Members asked questions and discussion occurred about the project. Mr. Sirofchuck expressed support for the project. Mr. Budd expressed support for the project. Mr. Carmichael expressed support for the project. Mr. Arno expressed support for the project. He changed his score to 95. Mr. Wright expressed support for the project. Mr. Lurk expressed support for the project. He changed his score to 86. Ms. Gentemann expressed support for the project. Chair Kugel expressed support for the project.</p> <p>Sigoowu Ye Park Renovation Chair Kugel requested the representative for Sigoowu Ye Park Renovation to provide a synopsis of the project. George Schaaf, City & Borough of Juneau, gave a summary of the proposal. Members asked questions and discussion occurred about the project. Mr. Budd expressed support for the project. Mr. Carmichael expressed support for the project.</p>

	<p>project. Mr. Arno changed his score to 80. Mr. Wright expressed support for the project. Mr. Lurk expressed support for the project. Ms. Gentemann expressed support for the project. Chair Kugel expressed support for the project. Mr. Sirofchuck expressed support for the project. An at-ease was taken. The ORTAB reconvened its regular meeting at 10:23 a.m.</p> <p>Crescent Harbor Park Chair Kugel requested the representative for Crescent Harbor Park to provide a synopsis of the project. Kevin Knox, City & Borough of Sitka, gave a summary of the proposal. Members asked questions and discussion occurred about the project. Mr. Carmichael expressed support for the project. Mr. Arno expressed support for the project. He changed his score to 90. Mr. Wright expressed support for the project. Mr. Lurk expressed support for the project. He changed his score to 87. Ms. Gentemann expressed support for the project. Chair Kugel expressed support for the project. Mr. Sirofchuck expressed support for the project. Mr. Budd expressed support for the project.</p> <p>Girdwood Pavilion Chair Kugel requested the representative for Girdwood Pavilion to provide a synopsis of the project. Kyle Kelley, Girdwood Parks and Recreation, gave a summary of the proposal. Members asked questions and discussion occurred about the project. Mr. Arno changed his score to 66. Mr. Wright expressed support for the project. Mr. Lurk expressed support for the project. Chair Kugel expressed support for the project. Mr. Sirofchuck expressed support for the project. Mr. Budd expressed support for the project. Mr. Carmichael expressed support for the project.</p>
COMMENTS & CONCERNS	There were no further questions or comments on any of the projects.
ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE
A motion was made by Mr. Carmichael to move all the projects forward as ranked.	Motion: Andrew Carmichael
Motion approved unanimously	Second: Jeff Budd

Agenda topic: New Business, Old Business for LWCF. LWCF Correspondence

DISCUSSION	<p>Discussion occurred regarding scoring criteria and features that could be included in the application and score sheet. It was decided that draft language changes will occur via email communication between April and June. Mr. Gease discussed the calendar for the programs next year. The open application period will begin August 1, 2024 through October 31, 2024. The ORTAB will conduct a teleconference meeting on December 12, 2024 to review the RTP and LWCF project applications for DPOR State projects. The ORTAB will conduct an in-person three-day meeting on January 14 through 16, 2025 for review of the Non-DPOR RTP and LWCF project applications. Mr. Gease expressed appreciation to the grants team for their efforts during and since the Covid pandemic. Mr. Budd echoed comments of appreciation to staff. Mr. Sirofchuck reiterated the comments of appreciation to staff. Mr. Gease brought to the Board's attention the discussion regarding the cluster of public safety issues that city parks, municipal parks, and State parks throughout the state are experiencing. These matters are beyond the scope of this program and include homelessness, vandalism, theft, prostitution, drug use, and syringes clogging up facility restroom toilets. Mr. Gease gave the example of the LWCF Chena River State Recreation site in Fairbanks that closed the restrooms due to syringes clogging up the flush toilets. Porta toilets were then utilized. He noted there were campground areas that were taken over by RVs that were both prostitution and drug use centers. Additionally, there were homeless people who would steal items from the nearby Walmart and Fred Meyers retailers and bring the items back to the RVs at the park to trade for drugs. He discussed confrontations between the law enforcement Park Rangers and the organized drug dealers. Mr. Gease discussed that the campground has been closed and trees were cleared to create open sight lines. A partnership with the Division of Forestry was utilized for their fire crew to come in. However, the campground has not yet been reestablished because that location requires the dedication of one to two full-time Park Rangers. The northern Fairbanks region has three commissioned Park Rangers who supervise over 30 units. Mr. Gease indicated that assistance was requested from the City of Fairbanks and the Fairbanks North Star Borough to take over the supervision of the site and they do not have the resources to provide adequate supervision either. The reality of these issues are difficult and confounding. DPOR continues to grapple with ways to repurpose the unit for outdoor recreation over the long-term. Mr. Gease emphasized that serious concerns are growing in urban and rural areas within the state and within the country. Ms. Genteman asked if grantees provide feedback on what they are doing to address similar issues and report if their actions have made an impact. She believes this information could potentially be valuable to share and collaborate between agencies. Ms. Ayers agreed that grantees are requested to provide a narrative quarterly or annually to describe the status of their scope and any problems that are occurring. She indicated the possibility of creating a cohort of grantees that call in twice a year to share information. Mr. Gease mentioned two other software ideas. He discussed the inclusion of a resources page on the GIS hub and asked Mr. Carmichael to suggest ways to make the LWCF projects more economical. Mr. Gease noted that in addition to conducting a public survey every five years in the SCORP, DPOR has the software to conduct surveys of subgroups of users as part of the community engagement program. The intent is to move to a more data-driven understanding of outdoor recreation and management. He requested members suggest subgroups to be surveyed that could provide useful information.</p>
COMMENTS & CONCERNS	Mr. Gease expressed appreciation for the members' time today. Chair Kugel expressed appreciation to Mr. Wright for his service and tenure, as this is his final meeting as a member. Members expressed appreciation to each other and to staff.

Meeting Adjourned at 11:19 AM