

Outdoor Recreational Trails Advisory Board (ORTAB)

MINUTES January 16, 2025

IN-PERSON & VIDEO CONFERENCE

11:00 AM

Meeting was called to order. Roll call was taken and a quorum established with all 8 ORTAB members. Director Gease welcomed attendees to the final day of this 3-day combined ORTAB meeting for the Recreational Trails Program and the Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant program. Staff noted there was enough LWCF money available to fund all local LWCF requests if ORTAB merited such. Notwithstanding, ranking of projects was still warranted, as DPOR reports ranking to NPS. The Chair opened the floor for public comments. Hearing none, the Chair called on applicants to make brief, 5-minute presentations on their projects to ORTAB.

Agenda topic: Alaska State Parks Remarks, Discussion and Scoring of the 3 (Three) LWCF Project Proposals Shown Below.

DISCUSSION	<p>Toghothele Park Reserve (LWCF Request: \$124,725.00)</p> <p>Chair Kugel requested the representative for Toghothele Park Reserve to provide a synopsis of the project. Josh Verhagen, Mayor, City of Nenana, gave a summary of the proposal. This project includes demolition and removal of the existing deteriorated concrete basketball court. Sitework includes clean gravel/fill, conduit for future lighting, pouring of new concrete basketball court, and final grading around the perimeter.</p> <p>Q&A: ORTAB members appreciated the planned upgrades to this site, noting the City of Nenana had not requested LWCF assistance in many years. City staff conceded that upgrades were very much needed. (Ranked 2; Score 86)</p> <p>Lund Street Tot Lot (LWCF Request: \$125,000.00)</p> <p>Chair Kugel requested the representative for Lund Street Tot Lot to provide a synopsis of the project. Morgan Barry, Public Works Director from Ketchikan Gateway Borough (KGB), gave a summary of the proposal. This project entails the following: demolishing the existing 2-5 age playground equipment and replacing it with new and interactive play elements, new swinging elements and a spiral slide; providing a day use shelter and barbecue area; foundations for a future expanded covered playground; accessible parking area and accessible routes to the upper tier area; and new stair between the two levels of the park. This project will also include constructing a new accessible parking stall along Lund Street, a concrete sidewalk to connect all upper tier elements, and a new concrete staircase to the lower level of the park.</p> <p>Q&A: ORTAB members appreciated the philosophy of “Increase use, decrease vandalism” and concurred with Barry that by KGB upgrading play equipment and accessibility, local people would frequent the park with greater confidence and comfort. (Ranked 3; Score 84)</p>
-------------------	--

	<p>Wil Maamxsga Pts'aan Park, Phase II (LWCF Request: \$124,702.00) Chair Kugel requested the representative for Wil Maamxsga Pts'ann Park, Phase II to provide a synopsis of the project. Genelle Winter, Metlakatla Indian Community (MIC), gave a summary of the proposal. This project entails installing playground equipment for toddlers and youth to broaden the age range of people enjoying this new park site. A community survey revealed that a playground in the shape of a seiner fishing vessel would be a good fit for this site. MIC will incorporate traditional Alaska Native formline designs on play equipment and in a mural to display Metlakatla's history and heritage.</p> <p>Q&A: ORTAB members acknowledged that this was a continuation project and appreciated the strong community support for this and previous Metlakatla projects which often involved youth in developing their sites. Members also expressed appreciation for incorporating formline art in the design elements, and forward-looking plans to welcome both residents and potential tourists to the Southeast coastal community. (Ranked 1; Score 91)</p>
COMMENTS & CONCERNS	ORTAB members noted the ease with which they now found information in the applications and related evaluation sheets. There were no further questions or comments on any of the projects.
ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE
A motion was made by Mr. Sirofchuck to move all the projects forward as ranked.	Motion: Mike Sirofchuck
Motion approved unanimously	Second: Noah Lager

Agenda topic: New Business, Old Business for LWCF.

DISCUSSION	<p>Director Gease talked about new funding opportunities with the expansion of the Outdoor Legacy Partnership Program (ORLP). Some restrictions originally part of the program have been lifted for Alaska, making it easier for grants to be applied for. Originally, because of the size of Alaska, only 1 out of 206 of our census areas applied. The new instructions for ORLAP are that it may be available to Alaska regional corporations, non-profits, village corporations, and tribes. Details are still being worked out whether these projects will be open to the public or just open to the members of the tribes and village and regional corporations. The exciting opportunity about this program is that there is a minimum request of \$300,000 and the maximum request is \$15,000,000. It could really benefit our communities; however, a match must still be provided. It is more like a catch-up opportunity for Alaska. Anchorage has successfully received 2 ORLP grants: one for Chanshtnu Muldoon Park and one for Russian Jack, which brought in about \$1.5 million. With restrictions lifted, more projects around the State will hopefully be able to compete.</p> <p>In addition, the grants team is moving towards "Submittable" to handle applications in the near future. Therefore, in the next 6 months there will be emails sent to ORTAB members to look at different parts of the process to see how, and make sure, everything works okay. Feedback will be helpful from all. The next step is to ground truth the location of trails and parks in Alaska with the new GIS system that is getting set up in place right now. If an ORTAB member that would like to be part of that, let us know and we'll keep you in the loop. People are moving away from paper maps and moving to apps and Alaska wants to make sure we are on top of that. Not only having apps but making sure the information is correct. A portion of the funding will be coming from the overhead of both RTP and LWCF.</p>
-------------------	---

COMMENTS & CONCERNS	Chair Kugel asked if there were any more comments or questions. Mr. Arno shared how impressed he was with the amount of money that both RTP and LWCF were able to get this year. And he appreciated all the work that the grant team has done for these projects. No other ORTAB member had anything else to add, except Chair Kugel did bring up the idea of going back to a 2-day ORTAB meeting next year. Mr. Sirofchuck agreed with the Chair and brought up the fact that they have an opening on the ORTAB board. Director Gease said if you know of someone who might be a good fit for the position, the Division will issue a recruitment, probably in September. He thanked all members for doing a great job.
------------------------------------	--

Meeting Adjourned at 11:53 AM