



Minutes

Date: October 21, 2009

RE: Grand River Expedition 2010 Upper Grand Regional Planning – Meeting Notes

Attendees Present: Kenny Price, Jack Ripstra, Geoff Snyder, Charles Parmelee, Scott TenBrink, Jim Seitz, Paul Rentschler

The meeting began at Daryl's Downtown Restaurant at 5:00 p.m. and moved outdoors to view possible landing and exhibition sites for the midday stop in downtown Jackson on Day 2 of GRE2010.

Clearing Passage through Logjams

Jim Seitz asked if Paul Rentschler had yet contacted Russel Bodell, Grand River Adventures, to see if he (Russell) would be willing to expand the area he maintains for canoe passage; coming upstream as far as Maple Grove Road. Rentschler stated that he had not yet called Russell. Charlie Parmelee noted that he had planned to contact the Onondaga River Rats group to tackle log jams from Maple Grove to either US-127 or Tompkins Road. Paul suggested that it might be best to arrange a conference call or short meeting with Jim; Kathy Kulchinski, GREAT's Rivermaster; Russell; and Charlie to determine responsibilities and plans for clearing/opening passage through log jams next spring.

Jim noted that the dredged portion of the Grand River, between Jackson and Onondaga, is the worst for collecting log jams. He worries that we will have adequate time to open this section next year, between high spring water conditions and the July GRE 2010 event.

Art Contest

Kenny Price saw Alison Loveday, the Executive Director of the Arts and Cultural Alliance of Jackson County, in the restaurant and asked her to join the discussion. Kenny asked Alison if she thought we could offer a art contest to start the GR Expedition. Alison stated that we could and that she would be willing to help. A K-12 poster contest could be coordinated through Art AP(ART) with a parallel contest for professional artists.

Alison suggested that we would need to determine rules/guidelines for submittals and push materials out in early 2010 to allow participants time to respond and develop artworks. She suggested that non-participating artists could serve as jurors, that prizes may include cash awards, free framing, gift certificates, etc. and that the finalists, or all entries, could be exhibited at Art 634.

Alison suggested that she could also coordinate with the Arts Council of Grand Rapids to discuss exhibits at both ends of the expedition. We could also have exhibits in each town along the way, but would need to identify a way to safely transport the artworks. Transporting photographs of sculptural pieces was recommended instead of moving the artworks themselves.

Alison suggested contacting the Jackson Community Foundation in January for a small grant to cover framing, etc.



Insurance

Jim Seitz asked about insurance coverage for the event. Charlie Parmalee answered that the Timberland RC&D Council had agreed to be the fiduciary for the event and that this may also include serving as the hub for insurance. He indicated that this was an item the Steering Committee was investigating.

Fundraising

Paul Rentschler stated that Doug Carter had asked that each regional group, or day sponsor group, seek funding from their local community foundations. Scott TenBrink offered that we will need a budget(s) in-hand if we are going to pursue foundation funding. Rentschler stated that the Steering Committee is developing an overall event budget and that he would try to adapt that for the Upper Grand portion. Several local foundations were named. These included:

- Jackson County Community Foundation
- Speckard-Knight Charitable Foundation
- Consumers Energy Foundation
- Weatherwax Foundation
- Hurst Foundation

Scott noted that many of these share a common application form. Kenny Price said that he would talk with Jan Maino at the Jackson County Community Foundation to explore their interest, deadlines, etc.

Charlie offered that "the Spot," a GPS unit that would allow people to track the Expedition's progress on the internet, should be approached as a sponsor. Someone suggested approaching Absopure, given their bottling facilities in the Upper watershed; suggesting that they may be willing to donate bottled water for the trip.

Headwaters Tour

Jim Seitz indicated that he was researching some sites for a headwaters tour as part of the opening ceremonies, Day 1 of the Expedition. He suggested that visiting the oak savanna at the MacCready Preserve would be a nice short hike, would show off a natural resource that is rare in southern Michigan, and involves stepping over the Upper Grand where it is only a few feet across. He also suggested the Nature Conservancy's Goose Creek Grassland. Jim indicated that he would continue to explore ideas.

Jackson Mid-day Landing Site

The group walked to the proposed landing site in front of the Consumers Energy building and determined that there would be plenty of room to land 50-70+ canoes/kayaks. Jim and Geoff noted that the majority of the lawn area adjacent to the river was actually under the auspices of the Jackson DDA. Application to use this area would need to go through City Council. Don Nelson is GREAT's contact with City government. It was also noted that another GREAT Board member may be able to help get low-cost tent rental if needed.

The group then walked to the Farmers' Market. Tents in front of Consumers vs displays, etc. under the permanent shelter at the Farmers' Market were discussed. It was concluded that getting people to the market from the landing area midday was not difficult. It was noted that Kuhl's allows the Otho Rehab Race to use space indoors, with the idea that they benefit from selling food to participants. The question was asked whether we would need to prevent non-Expedition parking at the Farmers' Market for the day.

Scott noted that the Mechanic Street Bridge would be under construction next year. It was generally thought that this would not hinder canoes/kayaks, but that we will need to notify/check with the Road Commission.

Other

Charlie indicated he would look into getting a cannon for Kenny's historic reenactment/opening ceremony plans.