

XIII. CONSULTATION AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public Involvement

There has been considerable emphasis on public involvement during this trail planning effort. As a part of this planning process, the IAPTF, NPS, and WDNR made numerous contacts with the public, Waupaca County, Portage County, and the affected townships. Outlined below are the results of our contacts:

Public Meetings - Series I

Township Meetings

Town of Alban

Date: March 1, 1994, 7:00 p.m.

Attended by: Dave Daniels (WDNR), Sally Freckmann (IAPTF), Steve Clark (IAPTF), and Pam Schuler (NPS)

The Ice Age Trail proposal was the first item on the agenda. A few potentially affected landowners attended the meeting. Pam presented the maps showing the proposed Ice Age Trail corridor and talked about the reasons for its location. She also provided an overview of the corridor planning process, its purpose and tentative timetable. Steve Clark talked about the Foundation and its role in the project. Sally handed out brochures and provided background on the Portage County Chapter and existing trail. Members of the town board were friendly but skeptical. They expressed concerns that landowners close to the trail are worried about their privacy. They also felt a number of landowners within their township would be reluctant to sell their land.

Town of Iola

Date: March 28, 1994

Attended by: Ken VanDyke (IAPTF), Gary Werner (IAPTF), Tracey Teodecki (WDNR), Mike Kirk (IAPTF)

Ken VanDyke introduced the project and the presenters. Tracey spoke briefly about the Triad partnership, the State Stewardship Program, and the corridor planning process. Gary provided an in-depth presentation on the proposed corridor and the two alternative trail routes.

The Town Chair asked one of the Town Board members if he had any specific questions he wanted to ask, since the proposed trail will run very near his property. He had concerns about more people being around, in general. He was particularly concerned about the need to tie-up his dog when hikers and bikers were in the area.

(We explained that bikers are not allowed on the trail). He was also concerned about his heifers being chased. In sum, this man is concerned about the trail being "policed". He is of the opinion that if people are going to be out there, the area needs to be supervised.

The Town Chair emphasized the need for good communication with landowners along the trail.

Other questions included:

*How will we approach potential landowners? *What if the landowner says "No", and do not want to sell? We explained that land is purchased from willing sellers only. We approach a landowner and let them know our intentions for the trail. If the landowner does not want to sell or provide an easement, we can jog the trail a little to another potential seller's land. Gary explained possible options for buying land along the trail, such as purchasing a wider strip than we need and leasing crop land back to the farmer, etc.

*How is the trail marked? Gary explained about the yellow paint on marker posts and that some signage is used.

*How wide a strip of land will we want to purchase from a single landowner?

Town of New Hope

Date: March 16, 1994, 7:00 p.m.

Attended by: Gary Werner (IAPTF), Pam Schuler (NPS), Dave Daniels (WDNR), Bill Moorman (WDNR), Sally Freckman (IAPTF)

Pam and Gary provided the Board with an informational presentation of the proposed trail corridor and the planning process. Sally handed out brochures and updated the Board on the Portage County Chapter and existing trail. This Town Board is familiar with the trail as portions of it already exist in the township; therefore, few questions were asked.

Town of Scandinavia

Date: April 11, 1994

Attended by: Ken Van Dyke (IAPTF), Gary Werner (IAPTF), Tracey Teodecki (WDNR)

Tracey introduced the project and spoke about the Triad partnership, State Stewardship monies, and the corridor planning process. Gary provided the Board with an in-depth presentation of the proposed trail corridor and the two proposed route alternatives.

Attendants asked a variety of questions. A few citizens at the meeting attended specifically to discuss the trail in Scandinavia township. The discussion was generally positive. The attendants seemed genuinely interested in how the trail would work best in the township.

The questions asked included:

- * In Scandinavia Township, does the trail run mostly along the Waupaca/Portage County line?
- * Is the trail for hikers ONLY? Are horses or bicycles allowed?
- * What sort of experience do we have with keeping people ON the trail? (And not trespassing on surrounding land?)
- * WDNR owns enough land already. If we sell WDNR more land for this trail, we'll lose even more of our tax base. We explained that this wasn't true; WDNR pays taxes on the land it owns.
- * If we come in and purchase a strip of land right through a 40 acre parcel, we'll decrease the value of the entire farm. Ken VanDyke explained that a local farm that had the trail on it was sold recently, the trail actually ADDED value to the farm.
- * How far away will the trail be from surrounding houses and other buildings? We explained that this would vary on a case-by-case basis.
- * Does the trail use existing road rights-of-way?
- * Do bridges that we build meet some sort of specifications? Whose specifications?
- * Will the trail cross existing utility rights-of-way?
- * Will the trail be closed during deer gun season? What about turkey hunting?
- * How is camping regulated on the trail?
- * Will we take land by condemnation? We explained that land purchases would be from willing sellers only.

Town of Amherst

Date: March 3, 1994, 6:30 p.m.

Attended by: Gary Werner (IAPTF), Steve Clark (IAPTF), Dave Daniels (WDNR), Sally Freckmann (IAPTF)

Gary provided an informational presentation of the proposed trail corridor and the planning process. Sally handed out brochures and updated the Board on the status of the Portage County Chapter and existing trail. The Town Board asked many questions about the location and geology of the Ice Age Trail. They seemed interested and supportive of the project. Several members of the Board said they are familiar with portions of the trail. They had concerns about the land acquisition process, but were happy to hear that land would be purchased only from willing sellers.

Town of Farmington

Date: March 21, 1994

Attended by: Ken VanDyke (IAPTF), Gary Werner (IAPTF), Tracey Teodecki (WDNR), Merle Lang (WDNR), Mike Kirk (IAPTF), Steve Clark (IAPTF)

Ken VanDyke introduced the project and the presenters. Tracey spoke briefly about the Triad partnership, State Stewardship Program, and the corridor planning process. The Town Board specifically asked us to keep our remarks to 30 minutes, so Gary provided an in-depth but concise description of the corridor planning process and the proposed corridor and alternative routes.

The only question asked was in regard to the width of the strip of land we might be interested in purchasing from a single landowner for the trail. Gary talked about the flexibility of the negotiating/purchasing process---buy and rent back to landowner, purchase and resell excess.

Town of Lanark

Date: March 7, 1994, 7:00 p.m.

Attended by: Dave Daniels (WDNR), Gary Werner (IAPTF), Sally Freckmann (IAPTF)

Gary provided an informational presentation about the proposed trail corridor to the Town Board. Sally updated the Board on the status of the existing trail and Portage County Chapter. The Board asked questions to clarify points made during the presentation by the IAPTF staff.

Town of Dayton:

Date: March 9, 1994

Attended by: Ken VanDyke (IAPTF), Gary Werner (IAPTF), Tracey Teodecki (WDNR), John Woodliffe (WDNR)

Tracey introduced the project and spoke about the Triad partnership, State Stewardship Program, and the corridor planning process. Gary provided an in-depth presentation about the proposed trail corridor and the two proposed trail route alternatives.

There were a number of citizens attending the meeting; however, there were few questions.

One question asked was in regard to the actual width of the strip of land that we would be interested in purchasing---did we want to purchase a mile-wide strip? (People seem to get the impression that because the corridor can be up to 1 mile wide, we would want to purchase a 1-mile-wide right-of-way). Gary talked about the flexibility of our negotiating/purchasing process, i.e. we can buy land, then rent it back to the owner, purchase and resell excess.

Town of Belmont:

Date: March 1, 1994, 8:30 p.m.

Attended by: Pam Schuler (NPS), Steve Clark (IAPTF), Sally Freckman (IAPTF), Dave Daniels (WDNR)

Pam provided the Board with an informational presentation of the proposed corridor and the planning process. Steve Clark talked about the Foundation and their role in this project. Sally handed out brochures and updated the board on the status of the existing trail and the Portage County Chapter. While friendly, the Town Board expressed concerns about the loss of property tax base due to increased ownership of town lands, land use implications of easements, future uses of land in the township, and how the trail is funded. Concerning the issue of loss of tax base, we explained IAPTF pay property tax on all the Ice Age Trail lands it owns and that the WDNR pay property taxes on all land dedicated to the state for the trail since July 1, 1991.

Public Open House Meetings Open House Meetings were held for landowners and public officials on June 8, 12, and 16, 1994. See Attachment 5 for summary of meetings.