

PAINT CREEK TRAILWAYS COMMISSION

\*\*\*DRAFT\*\*\*

June 18, 2024

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Paintcreektrail.org

**REGULAR MEETING of the PAINT CREEK TRAILWAYS COMMISSION  
City of Rochester Municipal Offices  
400 Sixth Street, Rochester, MI 48307**

The June 18, 2024, meeting of the Paint Creek Trailways Commission was called to order at 7:00 p.m. in the main conference room of the City of Rochester Municipal Offices.

**ATTENDANCE**

**PRESENT**

Voting Members:

Steve Sage (R), Chairperson  
David Walker (RH), Vice-Chairperson  
Robin Buxar (Oakland)  
Ken Elwert (RH)  
Linda Gamage (R)  
Conner Reiter (Orion)

Voting Alternates:

None

A QUORUM WAS PRESENT.

Non-Voting Alternates:

David Becker (R)  
Carol Morlan (RH)

Village Non-Voting Alternate: Stanley Ford (Village of Lake Orion)

Staff:

Tom Correll, Trail Manager  
Nicole Sands, Administrative Assistant

Friends of the Paint Creek Trail:

Louis Carrio, President

**ABSENT**

Voting Members: Brian Blust (Oakland), Julia Dalrymple (Orion)

Alternates: Russell George (RH), Sara King (R), Dave Mabry (Oakland), Martha Olijnyk (Oakland), Matt Pfeiffer (Orion), Aaron Whatley (Orion)

Village Non-Voting Member: Jason Peltier (Village of Lake Orion)

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chairperson Sage led the Commissioners, staff and those present in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.

**AMENDMENTS TO AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

MOVED BY BUXAR, SECONDED BY ELWERT, to approve this evening's agenda as presented.

MOTION CARRIED.

**GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no one present who wished to comment on an item not on this evening's agenda.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

This evening's Consent Agenda consists of the following: (a) minutes of the May 21, 2024, regular meeting and (b) Treasurer's Report for May 2024.

MOVED BY BUXAR, SECONDED BY ELWERT, to approve and file the minutes of the May 21, 2024, regular meeting, and to receive and file the Treasurer's Report for May 2024.

MOTION CARRIED.

There were no changes proposed to the minutes of the May 21, 2024, closed session meeting.

**APPROVAL OF INVOICES**

Trail Manager Correll and the Commissioners reviewed the list of invoices dated June 18, 2024.

MOVED BY ELWERT, SECONDED BY BUXAR, to approve payment of the invoices as presented.

AYES: Buxar, Elwert, Gamage, Reiter, Sage, Walker

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Blust, Dalrymple

MOTION CARRIED.

**VANGUARD TROUT UNLIMITED PROJECT**

Joe Bruce, Conservation Chairman of the Vanguard Chapter of Trout Unlimited, was present.

**Habitat Restoration Work Done in 2023 (Phase 3)**

Mr. Bruce updated the Commissioners on habitat installation work conducted during 2023. The Vanguard Chapter worked along an approximately 1,800 foot stretch of the Paint Creek, just north of Tienken Road. They installed 60 log structures called “vanes.” A vane is composed of two logs that are anchored into the creek bed in a V-configuration, with one end butting into the edge of the bank and the other end pointing upstream. These scientifically designed vanes redirect current to the center of the creek, which makes the center deeper and creates a better habitat for the trout. The vanes also redirect sediment from the center of the creek to the banks, thus rebuilding them.

Mr. Bruce said he recently visited this area of the Paint Creek and the structures appear to be functioning very well.

He continued that erosion is a significant problem along the Paint Creek, particularly when people mow their lawns to the water’s edge. As erosion takes place, the creek becomes wider, shallower, warmer and a less desirable habitat for the fish.

**Request for Permit for Phase 4 Work**

The Vanguard Chapter of Trout Unlimited would like to conduct two electro shock population studies this year. They typically conduct one study before they do habitat improvement work, so one study will be done just north of Dinosaur Hill Nature Preserve. They also like to conduct studies each of the two years following a project to evaluate the success of the work, so this would be in the area just north of Tienken Road.

They are requesting permission to drive a car and trailer on the Paint Creek Trail on July 20<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>, between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., to drop off fish sampling equipment. They would drive

June 18, 2024

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onto the trail at one location, and off the Trail at a different location (they do not like to have to turn around on the Trail), and each visit would take roughly 30 minutes.

Additionally, they are requesting permission to allow their contractor to drive his pickup truck onto the Trail if necessary in order to do some repair work on one of the vanes. However, Mr. Bruce did not know what date this might be.

The Vanguard Chapter has obtained and provided a copy of the necessary insurance.

#### **Easement to Conduct Work in 2025 (Phase 4)**

Finally, in 2025, the Vanguard Chapter of Trout Unlimited wishes to install an additional approximately 50 log structures in the area just north of the bridge near Tienken Road to where the Phase 3 work was done. While most of this work will be conducted on private properties and they have already obtained permission from the primary land owners, this work will require a permit from EGLE. Vanguard Trout Unlimited is seeking the support of other stakeholders, including the Paint Creek Trailways Commission, in conjunction with their EGLE permit application.

Mr. Bruce shared the club's passion for this project. Once this Phase 4 work is complete, the Vanguard Chapter of Trout Unlimited will have improved trout habitat along just over one mile of the Paint Creek, raised and invested approximately \$50,000 in this project, and contributed several hundred volunteer hours. He continued that the Paint Creek is a very special asset. In fact, it is the only cold water stream in southeast Michigan that the MDNR stocks. He continued that the Paint Creek cannot "take care of itself," particularly in this urban area, so it is important that we continue to maintain it in order to keep this unique resource from disappearing.

#### **General Discussion**

Commissioner Becker thanked the Vanguard Chapter of Trout Unlimited for doing this very important work in our community. He confirmed with Mr. Bruce that the proposed work for 2025 is to be done north of the bridge that is to the north of the Tienken Road crossing, and not at the bridge near Dinosaur Hill Nature Preserve that will be replaced next year.

Vice-Chairperson Walker concurred that it is wonderful that Trout Unlimited is caring for the Paint Creek as they have been doing. He verified where they plan to access the Paint Creek Trail. Mr. Bruce responded that on Day 1, they will be conducting a population study near where they had accomplished the Phase 2 work of this project, which is by Dinosaur Hill Nature Preserve. On Day 2, they will conduct a population study north of Tienken Road. Mr. Walker pointed out that the application indicates other access points. Mr. Bruce will amend the application to correct this.

Commissioner Gamage had several questions. She was concerned that Mr. Bruce is proposing that the car and trailer drive across the bridge near Dinosaur Hill that is planned for replacement next year, as she has concerns about the safety of this bridge.

She next referenced the logs under the bridge near Dinosaur Hill Nature Preserve. Mr. Bruce explained that a different chapter of Trout Unlimited handles this, and they plan to remove the log jam later this year. Commissioner Gamage said she would be happy to help if they need assistance with this project.

Ms. Gamage recalled Mr. Bruce's concerns about erosion along the bank. Mr. Bruce said Mikela Dean, watershed ecologist with the Clinton River Watershed Council, can share educational information with property owners who live along the Paint Creek, such as best practices information as well as suggested plantings for this sensitive area. Commissioner Gamage thought it might be helpful to post this information in the kiosks along the Trail, as well as put it out on social media.

Finally, Commissioner Gamage asked if there is an alternate way to secure the vane logs. She is concerned that once the logs deteriorate and wash away, we will have metal fastening rods in the waterway. Mr. Bruce responded that this is an approved method, and added that the MDNR requires that the vanes be inspected two years after installation. He said that an alternative would be to bring in heavy earthmoving equipment, rocks, etc., but this would be cost prohibitive.

MOVED BY ELWERT, SECONDED BY BUXAR, to approve the request from the Vanguard Chapter of Trout Unlimited for a temporary permit to access the Paint Creek Trail to conduct population studies as well as to repair one vane as discussed this evening, with the understanding that the applicant will correct the application as it concerns where the applicant will access and leave the Trail.

MOTION CARRIED.

MOVED BY ELWERT, SECONDED BY BUXAR, to grant a temporary easement for access to the Paint Creek Trail and to support the Vanguard Chapter of Trout Unlimited's plan to conduct additional habitat improvement work to the north of Tienken Road as discussed this evening.

MOTION CARRIED.

### **MASTER PLAN UPDATE**

Trail Manager Correll met with a representative from Giffels Webster today for the Master Plan update kickoff meeting. He reviewed the revised timeline. Giffels Webster will conduct an accessibility assessment of the Trail this summer. Between mid-July and mid-September, they will obtain public input through a survey, a stakeholder workshop, and a public online workshop which they will conduct at no additional cost. At the September meeting, the

## PAINT CREEK TRAILWAYS COMMISSION

\*\*\*DRAFT\*\*\*

June 18, 2024

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Commission will discuss and review the Recreation Inventory. At the October regular meeting, the Commission will discuss and review the Planning and Public Input Process. Giffels Webster will share the public input results at the November regular meeting, at which time the Commissioners will also discuss the Goals and Objectives. At the January regular meeting, the Commission will discuss and review the Action Plan.

Prior to the July meeting, Manager Correll asked Commissioners to review the 25-question proposed survey, which includes the same questions asked for the prior Master Plan update. He will send out an email reminder to this effect.

When the Commission last updated the Master Plan, Commissioners formed four subcommittees to review and make recommendations on the different sections of the document. These subcommittees are: (1) Administrative Structure Review Subcommittee, (2) Planning and Public Input Subcommittee, (3) Recreation Inventory Review Subcommittee, and (4) Action Program Review Subcommittee – Goals and Objectives, and Capital Improvement Schedule. Manager Correll asked members to indicate which committees they would work on. Commissioner Becker asked to work with the Action Program Review Subcommittee. Commissioner Elwert would like to work on the Administrative Structure Review Subcommittee.

### **LABOR DAY BRIDGE WALK 2024**

The 17<sup>th</sup> annual Labor Day Bridge Walk will take place on Monday, September 2<sup>nd</sup>. Trail Manager Correll shared the 2024 Sponsorship Form, and he will send out a list of prior sponsors.

The Friends of the Paint Creek Trail have offered to be the presenting sponsor this year. Louis Carrio, President of the Friends of the Paint Creek Trail, was present and indicated that the group is flexible and happy to support the event even if they are not the presenting sponsor. Commissioner Elwert said that Spalding DeDecker has been the presenting sponsor since the inception of this event. The Commissioners agreed that Commissioner Elwert should ask Spalding DeDecker if they would once again like to be the presenting sponsor.

### **2023 AUDIT**

Manager Correll reviewed the 2023 audit report. The auditor's opinion letter indicates that he found no major issues during his audit review.

The Commissioners discussed the Statement of Net Position. Commissioner Becker asked about a list of assets. Manager Correll has a spreadsheet of assets, which was provided by the auditor, that he can share.

MOVED BY ELWERT, SECONDED BY BUXAR, given that the auditor found no major issues, to approve the 2023 Audit Report as presented.

MOTION CARRIED.

Manager Correll said that the contract with the auditor is up, the auditor is retiring, and the auditor does not have anyone to recommend to perform the audit next year. The Commissioners discussed that they can look into auditors used by other not-for-profit groups, as well as auditors used by the local municipalities. Commissioner Becker recalled that this Commission had problems several years ago with one auditor, and he asked that we do not use that auditor again.

The Trailways Commission currently uses QuickBooks Desktop 18. We will need to transition to a more updated system soon, and Manager Correll said we may need to hire someone to transfer the information to the newer version.

### **MANAGER'S REPORTS**

Manager Correll reviewed his memorandum of May 14<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Complaints, Vandalism, Feedback**

Trail Crossing Private Drive Between Adams Road and Clarkston Road/Kern Road. Two joggers reported that they were running north on the Trail between the Royal Oak Archers property and the Clarkston Road/Kern Road crossing. They crossed the private driveway that crosses the Trail. The driver of the vehicle on the driveway yelled and cursed at them. The driver then met the joggers at their vehicle, at the Clarkston Road/Kern Road crossing and they had a minor verbal altercation at that point.

Manager Correll reported this incident to the Oakland County Sheriff's Department through the Oakland Township substation. He said this is an unusual situation as the driveway crosses the Paint Creek Trail. There is a stop sign for the Trail users, but there are no stop signs for the users of the private driveway.

Geocaching. A geocache was improperly taped to a Paint Creek Trail sign. Staff was able to locate the owner of the geocache. The owner was given a copy of the Geocaching Guidelines and invited to fill out an Application for Geocaching Placement, which they did.

Sticker Graffiti. There was sticker graffiti near the Rochester/Rochester Hills portions of the Trail. Local government entities were contacted to remove this.

#### **Repairs and Maintenance**

Stairs North of Clarkston Road/Kern Road. The railing on the stairway north of this crossing needs minor repair. Manager Correll will inform Orion Township of this.

### **Follow Up/Ongoing Projects**

Adopt-a-Trail. Manager Correll shared an update on the Adopt-a-Trail program. Most of the groups have completed their spring cleanup, and the program is going well.

Mounted Patrol. The mounted patrol has been out twice this month and are working to fill their schedule to be out approximately twice a week for the remainder of the summer.

Website Update. On June 26<sup>th</sup>, Manager Correll will have a kickoff meeting with IDMI regarding the website update.

### **Medical Emergencies, Police, Fire Calls on Trail**

Trail Manager Correll is not aware of any emergencies on the Trail.

### **Events**

National Trails Day. On June 1<sup>st</sup>, Trailways staff and members of the Friends of the Paint Creek Trail held a family scavenger hunt and hosted an informal informational table in honor of National Trails Day. They gave away free safety brochures and bicycle bells to promote safety and shared use of the Trail. Scavenger hunt participants received hats as rewards.

## **FRIENDS OF THE PAINT CREEK TRAIL REPORT**

### **Merchandise**

President Louis Carrio stated that the Friends of the Paint Creek Trail offers merchandise for sale. They recently started offering purchasers the ability to go online, select the color, style and size of a shirt, and have it mailed directly to them. When he announced this through the Friends' Facebook page, he quickly received a number of orders. Mr. Carrio said this appears to be a win-win opportunity as people can purchase what they want, and we do not have to maintain an inventory.

## **COMMISSIONER FORD'S REPORT**

### **Thank You to Trail Workers**

Commissioner Ford thanked those who work to maintain the Paint Creek Trailway, even when the weather is as hot and oppressive as it was today.



**COMMISSIONER MORLAN**

**Recent Rochester Hills Splashpad Shooting**

A shooter shot and injured multiple people on Saturday. Commissioner Morlan asked for continued prayers for the victims of that shooting. If anyone wishes to make a donation to the families of those injured, she recommends that they do so through the City of Rochester Hills website as it is a safe site.

**COMMISSIONER BECKER'S REPORT**

**Bicycle Patrol Report**

Commissioner Becker noted that a bicycle patrol report reflects that the map sign near the Adams Road crossing is down. Additionally, the brochure box by the Silver Bell Road crossing is missing. Manager Correll said the map sign was removed and the Commission decided to not replace it at this time. The brochure box, located by the Silver Bell Road crossing, was damaged and removed. The box is currently being repaired.

**COMMISSIONER ELWERT'S REPORT**

**New Rochester Hills Park Ranger**

The former Park Ranger was promoted to another position. The new Park Ranger's name is Grant.

**COMMISSIONER WALKER'S REPORT**

**License Agreements**

Commissioner Walker asked about the status of the license agreements. Director Correll had no updates to share.

**COMMISSIONER GAMAGE'S REPORT**

**Solaronics**

The City of Rochester Hills will consider the request for rezoning for this property at their June 24<sup>th</sup> meeting. Manager Correll said he plans to attend.

PAINT CREEK TRAILWAYS COMMISSION

\*\*\*DRAFT\*\*\*

June 18, 2024

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**ADJOURNMENT**

MOVED BY GAMAGE, SECONDED BY BUXAR, there being no further business before the Commission, to adjourn the meeting at 7:58 p.m.

MOTION CARRIED.

Respectfully submitted,

Ingrid R. Kliffel  
Recording Secretary

Approved,

Julia Dalrymple  
Secretary

Approved,

Tom Correll  
Trail Manager