



MN Rovers Trail Committee meeting, November 18 2004, Ed Solstad's

In Attendance: John Elliott, Tom Harris, Torsten Muller, Ed Solstad, Tom Suter

Summary of MWTA meeting from November 5th

The Forest Service suggested that annual refreshers for cross-cut saws can in the future be achieved by a get documented get-together and working through safety-points the FS wants to have covered. Recertification every three years will still have to be in the form of a saw training with a demonstration of skills. During the MWTA meeting, which was attended by Tom Harris and Torsten, Barbara Soderberg from the FS suggested a grant opportunity from the National Forest Foundation, for which the Kek and BRTA could apply jointly, as the foundation gives large grants focused on "results on the ground." The previous year, the FS helped with a grant proposal for publicity material and was denied funding. The deadline for this grant opportunity is at the end of February.

The BRTA will also need to work with the FS to obtain an agreement for the maintenance of the trail. So far, the Minnesota Rovers have the agreement, and we would need to transfer that, or potentially apply for a new one ourselves. This should be done over the winter, before the trail clearing trips in May of 2005. We will also need to obtain a USFS statement that the BRT is for foot-travel only to post signs and prevent ATV use, which occurs in the Gunflint area. The FS also offered cooperation with reroutes and the installation of new backpacker-only campsites on the trail. Steve Schug suggested that this would be a good thing to work on over the winter and suggested a potential start date for the installation sometime at the end of 2005. Tom's suggested camp site next to a beaver pond was rejected because of concerns over hikers using the water untreated.

During an NCTA meeting on November 14, it was brought up that the BRTA and Rovers would be asked to sign a resolution of support to aid in lobbying for the re-route of the NCTA to include the Arrowhead trails. Also, the upcoming MWTA trips will be published in Backpacker magazine and the Minnesota Conservation Volunteer, which will hopefully help to fill the trips. BRTA members discussed the possibility of getting the BRTA trips advertised in local newspapers, namely the St. Paul Pioneer Press, Star Tribune, Cook County Herald and Duluth News Tribune and other, smaller publications along the North Shore. The Kek had good luck with the "Volunteer Vacations" organization, but the deadline for submissions was in October, but we should keep this in mind for next year, provided we can find leaders that are capable of taking time off to lead 5- or 6-day trips. We agreed to look into the rules for submission, and in case we go forward, to obtain a concessionaire agreement with the Forest Service. It was suggested to offer a free membership in the BRTA for participants on the trip.

John Elliot inquired about rumors of a BRTA-Kek merger. This was brought up during the Kek board meeting and rejected, mainly because the BRTA does not want a total split from the Rovers. It was also questioned what benefit would be achieved.

Trail Condition and Trail Clearing Trips

With the trail clearing season over, Tom has planned five trips, 3 of which in the BWCA, which will go out on the weekends between May 12 and June 5, 2005. Ed has a mechanized trip planner for May 20-22. Tom also wanted to get in touch with Chris Fothergill to coordinate with his REI sponsored trip. The group briefly discussed a cabin-like building on McFarland lake. Tom found out that the building is on

FS land, but belongs to a college. It is currently not in usable shape, but the group agreed to look into tracking the owners for a potential use agreement. It was also decided that due to the increase in gas and food prices, the trip prices would need to be raised as follows:

2-day trip	\$60
3-day trip	\$65
4-day trip	\$75

The possibility of giving trip leaders complimentary gifts was discussed, and it was agreed that it would be better to ask REI for donations of items such as water filters and cartridges, which would be provided to trip leaders. This would also lower trip costs, as costs for water filtration for a group of 9 people would be defrayed. Lastly, Tom mentioned that the FS will seek \$1000 for trail clearing on the BRT for us, and the chances stand good, given recent budget forecasts.

The group discussed possible uses for grant money, and it was agreed that we desperately need trail kiosks as the trail heads. The trail head on Rengo Road, McFarland Lake, Daniels Spur, South Lake Trail and Caribou Rock Trail were mentioned as candidates for kiosks. Also, trail signs outside the BWCA are needed. The use of carsonite poles in tree-less areas was proposed, in particular in an area between Portage Brook and Stump River. Need for coordination of designs between USFS, NPS, NCTA and the Minnesota DNR was mentioned.

Tom volunteered as BRTA contact person to the MWTA.

Miscellaneous

- John has set-up an account for the BRTA and send the Rovers' treasurer a request for a check to transfer funds. It was agreed to have two potential signatories for the account with John and Tom Harris. They will coordinate to get their signatures on file with the bank. Ed will work on the 501(c)(3) paperwork to get the tax-status number for donations.
- Tom Suter inquired of the BRTA would use Rovers' cage equipment in the future. The BRTA will advertise the trips as Rovers trips and therefore will use cage equipment as needed. The Rovers have plans for purchasing new 4-person tents at the next REI sale.
- Torsten's design for a letterhead was adopted.
- It was agreed to give Heston's Resort greater exposure on our web-site by providing a graphic link and moving the link to the "Financial Support" section.
- The web-site has been updated to include a feedback form with the capability of anonymously forwarding e-mails according to the topic selected. Participants were urged to see if they want to receive mail from the site.
- The group discussed the need to determine the owners of the land the trail crosses. Tom mentioned that the Nature Conservancy might own parts of it. It was decided to purchase a plat map of Cook County for that purpose. The BRTA should also get in touch with the Minnesota DNR to alert the DNR again to the trail. When the NCTA reroute is approved, we need written agreements with all land owners to incorporate the trail into the National Scenic Trail.