

**DNR'S DISABILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL
COUNCIL PURPOSE/MISSION**

To advise the Department of Natural Resources on matters pertaining to the accessibility of all department programs and services by persons with disabilities.

- To draft recommendations to the Department for legislation, administrative rules, or department policy.
- To identify and evaluate needs of persons with disabilities and to communicate them to the Department.
- To help to increase public awareness and sensitivity to the needs of persons with
- To communicate with individuals and other organizations dedicated to similar purposes.

**MEETING MINUTES
DISABILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL
Thursday September 07, 2023
Held virtually via Microsoft Teams or call-in.**

Members Present: John Martinson, Keith Pamperin, Calvin Richtig, John Mitchell, and Shannon Columb. All joined virtually on MS Teams.

Members Absent: Andrea Frisch and Kirsten Engel

Others Present: Nick Zouski, Shannon Holt, Deanna Sell, Barry Gilbeck, Dan Olson

Guest presenters: None

Chair Martinson called the meeting to order at 10:13 am.

Introductions: None

Next the Council reviewed the agenda. There was a last-minute addition to Accessibility Coordinator Updates for an update on the Potawatomi tower.

Keith made a motion to approve the amended agenda. Calvin seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

The Council next reviewed the meeting minutes from March 17th, 2023.

Calvin made a motion to approve the minutes. John Mitchell seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

The Council next reviewed the meeting minutes from June 16th, 2023.

Calvin made a motion to approve the minutes. Keith seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

Customer Service and Licensing- Barry

Antlerless Deer Bonus Authorization Sales

- Went on sale on August 14.
- Still bonus authorizations remaining in many units

Gun Hunt for Hunters with Disabilities

- Season Dates: Oct. 7-15, 2023
- Sponsor sign-up was through Aug. 1, 2023
 - o Sponsor Application: <https://apps.dnr.wi.gov/disabledhunt/>
- The hunter sign-up period for 2023 opened in August 2023. Sponsor contact information is available on the DNR Website for interested hunters to call and reserve locations directly with the landowner. Please contact Ally Magnin, Assistant Deer and Elk Specialist, via email at ally.magnin@wisconsin.gov or by phone at (608)354-3492 with questions.

Hunting Seasons Opening

- Early Goose, Teal and Dove season opened Sept. 1
- Bear Season Opened Sept. 6
- Deer Archery/Crossbow and Small game opens Sept. 16
- Other dates and deadlines can be found at the following link:
 - o [Season dates and application deadlines || Wisconsin DNR](#)

Legislative Update:

- No action has been taken on bills from previous minutes.
 - [23 SB 68](#) – Resident lifetime fishing license, lifetime fishing trust fund
 - Companion bill is 23 AB 72
 - [23 SB 44/AB 71](#) – Disability rating for veterans to qualify for license authorizations, admissions fee exemptions
 - [LRB-0907/1](#) relating to: a fishing license for a child with a disability)
 - [23 SB 310](#) relating to: access to Department of Transportation records to establish residency for approvals issued by the Department of Natural Resources
 - Companion bill is 23 AB 306

Non-Resident Fee Increase

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) announced July 11 a fee increase for many nonresident hunting and fishing licenses as a result of the final 2024-2025 budget enacted by Governor Tony Evers.

The fee changes range from \$5-\$40 and are only for nonresidents. Licenses for the 2023-2024 season are valid through March 31, 2024. The last time license fees for residents or nonresidents increased was 2005.

New Nonresident Hunting Fees

- Annual Small Game: \$90
- Five-Day Small Game: \$60
- Deer: \$200
- Archery and Crossbow: \$165
- Turkey: \$65
- Furbearing Animal: \$165

New Nonresident Fishing Fees

- Individual One-Day: \$15
- Individual Annual: \$55
- Individual Four-Day: \$29
- Individual 15-Day: \$33
- Family Annual: \$70
- Family 15-Day: \$45

New Nonresident Combination License Fees

- Conservation Patron: \$620
- Sports License: \$295

Adaptive Equipment Inventory- Nick

As discussed in June meeting, Nick and Deanna were able to secure \$40,000.00 to purchase adaptive equipment including beach wheelchairs, adaptive kayaks, and a GRIT mobility device. Equipment is currently being dispersed to parks and we are working out processes with each location as to how the use will be administrated. Nick and Deanna have been working to get the State Parks Accessibility map updated: [Accessibility_Map_72123 \(widen.net\)](#) and are still working with Parks Dept. to update individual park websites with available equipment and features. So far the Find a Park page has new adaptive equipment checkbox added, plus other accessible/universal information: [Find a Park | Wisconsin State Parks, Forests and Trails | Wisconsin DNR](#). The DNR is hoping to be able to add more detail to each location as to specific equipment at each site once the park is ready to go live with loaning it out. This is a big ask from IT, to maintain this level of detail on each parks' website.

Outdoor WC Program – Nick

The DNR is launching an Outdoor Wheelchair program with the kickoff event at Point Beach State Forest on Thursday September 28th 1:00pm- 3:00pm. Currently Peninsula State Park is the only one with the program up and running. Press release here: [Peninsula State Park Receives Adaptive Wheelchair Donation | Wisconsin DNR](#). Other locations that will be getting outdoor wheelchairs include Buckhorn State Park, Mead Wildlife Area, and more to come. The most difficult part to these programs is finding a group to partner with to be responsible for check-in and out of equipment. Different locations will have different types of chairs, such as a Track Chair, GRIT, or Terrain Hopper. The Accessibility fund is still being set-up and should be live for check or money order donations by the time of the event and will hopefully be able to accept credit card donations by December. If a location is unsure of what type of chair would work best for their property, Options for Independent Living would be willing to demo both the Track Chair and Terrain Hopper. Contact Calvin for more information. DNR will have a link added to [External links | Open the Outdoors | Wisconsin DNR](#) as a partner for Options for Independent Living. Nick also has a write-up about the different types of chairs and equipment and the benefits and drawbacks of each.

Recruitment/ Attendance

This meeting was supposed to be a two-day, with overnight, meeting at Northern Highland American Legion State Forest. We were unable to hold the meeting in-person this time as only two members had committed to attending in-person and were in question if we would achieve quorum if anyone was unable to join online. We are hoping that with the recruitment and addition of new members, attaining quorum will become easier. In order to gain a new pool of applicants, the following press release was announced on Friday, September 1st [Recruitment Open For DNR's Disability Advisory Council | Wisconsin DNR](#). Deadline for applications is September 30th. Applications will then be scored and the DNR hopes to have new members by the December meeting.

Concerning attendance, the date for the next years' meetings are set in December. Of course, things come up, but you should try to plan around these times whenever possible. There are only four meetings per year. Please put them on your calendar as soon as the dates are known. Please prioritize attending meetings as a part of the commitment and responsibility to your role as a member. DNR employees are not voting members, this is your group, and its effectiveness is dependent on members participation. Members gave feedback that they feel that it is important to be able to see the property when they travel. Without being able to see the property some felt that just traveling for a meeting without a property tour is too difficult. They would also like to see hotel options further in advance. Moving forward, we should plan the coming years' meeting in December tentatively, but then finalize the next meeting at the end of each. There was also a question brought up as to if a companion were required for travel if their expenses would be covered. The question was raised as to how many people are required to attend in-person before the meeting is switched to virtual? The council requested time to see the property and speak to the property manager. Discussion was tabled until after lunch.

LUNCH – 11:53 to 12:30

Recruitment/ Attendance Continued

Discussion continued concerning meeting schedules and making it easier for members to attend virtually vs in-person. The December meeting is typically virtual. The March meeting can remain as a flexible option depending on weather conditions. In-person attendance has been expected for the summer and fall meetings. With the fall meeting typically being an overnight with property tour. This topic should be discussed with newly recruited members before any action is taken and will be added to the December agenda.

Accessibility Coordinator Updates

- **Promotional Materials** – We are looking for ideas to give away for promotional materials to rebrand Open the Outdoors to Outdoors for All. The change is currently in limbo, so we may have to print old brochures. Hoping to get something to members to be able to hand out at disability events, sporting shows, etc. If there are any events that you know of coming up, please let Nick know.
- **Deer Hunt for PWD** – Deadline for hunters to sign up is September 15th.
- **Boat Access Map**- This map is going away: [Find boat and shore fishing access sites](#). **NOTE:** This map application shows boat and fishing site locations under various ownership, including DNR, counties, municipalities etc. The software is being phased out and there is no one maintaining this map, so it will be discontinued. At this point we are unsure of what will replace this map, but hopefully, it's just DNR boat launches.
- **SCORP**- Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan- The DNR is required to submit a master plan every four years to receive federal funding.
- **Potawatomi tower project update** – In budget process, the Legislature approved \$500K for “in-kind” restoration work; for a total of \$1 Million dollars when added to the emergency funding approved by the governor in March. “Improved accessibility to the tower and site improvements, as proposed in the Governor’s recommendation, will not be achieved under the revised budget” per inserted update.



230901 Tower
Stabilization Update

- The DAC believes that the re-opening of this observation tower does not provide equitable enjoyment and experience for all visitors. Discussion ensued and the following motion was formulated by the group.
- [Calvin made the following motion, Shannon C. seconded, all were in favor.](#)
MOTION: Regarding the Potawatomi State Park tower, the DAC supports their original motion that the tower remained closed until such time that it can be made accessible for all individuals to participate in the program of in-person viewing for which the tower was originally intended, by following ADA Standards for Accessible Design.
- Motion from 3/17/2023: Motion: The WI DNR Disability Advisory Council (DAC) recommends the construction of a New Potawatomi Tower with all areas of the tower in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as the historic restoration of the Tower is not in compliance with the ADA, and not accessible to all visitors of all abilities. The DAC recommends the DNR proceed

with construction of a new tower with ADA accessible tower platforms and helical ramp. Moving forward the DAC requests that the council be updated and consulted in a timely matter on the steps of the tower project including planning and development, design, and other stages of construction.

- Calvin made a motion the DAC support the original DNR statement made on February 12, 2020, regarding the decommissioning of the Potawatomi tower structure. If, however the tower is repaired, it must in accordance with the ADA. If DNR opts to reconstruct, this too, must be in accordance with the ADA. Kirsten seconded the motion, and all were in favor. DNR statement made on February 12, 2020: “The department legal team determined that all three options outlined in the report would require the tower to be physically accessible in accord with the Americans with Disabilities Act. As such, the department has made the decision to deconstruct the existing tower and work with partners, including the Sturgeon Bay Historical Society, and the public, to explore a future, accessible observation opportunity at the park according to the park's existing master plan.

Accessible Features Map/ Website – previously covered in nick’s updates. [Find a Park | Wisconsin State Parks, Forests and Trails | Wisconsin DNR](#)

State Fair – Display table had a universal kayak and a beach wheelchair that drew a lot of attention and started conversations.

Members’ Updates -All

- **John Martinson** – Adaptive Sportsmen is teaming up with Feather Ridge Farms and SCI Badgerland to host a pheasant hunt for disabled people on September 23rd in Marshall. <https://adaptivesportsmen.org/>
- **John Mitchell** – There are also two bow hunts for Adaptive Sportsmen, but they are currently at full capacity.
- **Calvin Richtig** - None
- **Shannon Columb** - None
- **Keith Pamperin** – Challenge the Outdoors is gearing up for the annual deer hunt with over 40 members signed up. Also partnering with Green Bay Duck Hunters Association for mentored water fowl hunt, this is only open to those age 16 or under. CTO is also partnering with Triple J’s Hunt club for a mentored pheasant hunt.

Adjourn:

Keith moved to adjourn the meeting. Shannon C. seconded. All present in favor.

Chair Martinson adjourned the meeting at 3:04 pm.