



Iron County Outdoor Recreation Enthusiasts

Annual Meeting - Notes

Tuesday, October 24, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.

Mercer Community Center

[See attached document for attendance log:](#)

1. Call to order

[Karen Hagemann called the meeting to order at 5:08pm. Karen asked for round table introductions.](#)

2. Approval of minutes from the 2022 Annual Meeting

3. [Mike Ondresky motioned to approve notes and Diane O'Krongly seconded. Motion passed.](#)

4. Treasurer's and Membership report

[Mark Fedora reviewed current financials. Mark reported a total income of \\$3,205 over the past year \(Oct of 2022 through Sept of 2023\) which includes \\$2048 from membership dues. . Total expenses were \\$852 putting our net income is \\$2553. Hurley Bike fund stands at \\$44,485 and the general fund is \\$8,433. Membership was 64 this past year. Diane O'Krongly made a motion to approve this report and Bob seconded it. Motion passed.](#)

5. Election of board members up for re-election:

a. President

[Karen Hageman is nominated for re-election.](#)

b. Vice-President

[Ian Shakelford is nominated for re-election.](#)

c. Secretary

[Brenda Nelson is nominated for re-election.](#)

d. Board Member

[Bob Traczyk is nominated for re-election.](#)

e. Board Member

[Mike Ondresky declined re-election. Gail Ondresky was nominated for this board member position.](#)

[Martha motioned to accept this slate of officers. Kit seconded. Motion passed.](#)

Board members up for re-election next year: Diane O'Krongly, Mark Fedora, and Kit Bogenschneider. Add Bill Wagner to the distribution list to attend quarterly meetings. Bill is interested in a future board position.

6. 2022/2023 Activity Reports:

a. Hurley Nonmotorized Trail

Karen Hagemann reported that the Canadian National RR has agreed to sell, but the price is \$200,000 for the 3-mile section to Montreal. The City Atty for Hurley negotiated the price originally and will attempt to negotiate this current offer. This cost will likely need to be fund-raised for as the city will not pay this. The original DNR grant will need to be re-applied for to help support this cost. The city will also need to do an appraisal before any purchase can be made. Heda asked, "Can we ask the RR to donate this land?" The Hurley trail committee will investigate.

b. Update on Mercer bike trail to WinMan by Brenda Nelson

- ICORE is leading a project to expand the paved Mercer Bike trail from Carow Park along County J to WinMan Trails. This makes a trail loop from Mercer through Winchester, through Manitowish Waters and back to Mercer. This adds an additional 9 miles of paved trail to the current 52 miles Heart of Vilas trail system which has recently been named a National Recreation Trail
- The town of Mercer has expanded the current trail from Snow's IGA through town to Carow Park by widening Lakeshore drive and painting Bike/Pedestrian lines. The Chamber is currently working on signage for this extension, making the route clearer and showing connections to area businesses.
- We applied for a DOT TAP Grant for trail planning in March and were awarded this grant in June. This was a \$150,000 grant to fund trail planning and feasibility work.
 - The planning study will include wetland delineation, soil testing, alternative route analysis, real estate analysis, permitting, and construction costs.
 - The project will be funded 80% by the DOT and 20% by the sponsor
 - The Mercer Chamber of Commerce has already committed to funding \$10,000 toward this project.
- In August, the town of Mercer agreed to be the official sponsor for the planning project and signed the necessary DOT agreement taking on this accountability. The DOT required that a municipality must be the official sponsor.
 - We wrote a "roles and responsibilities" document for Eric Snow which outlines how ICORE will lead the project, and coordinate and communicate with the town to ensure that the town is involved in key oversight.
- In September, we were able to secure the necessary state database entry and federal highway commission approval for the grant funding. Town Supervisor, Mike Lambert who is the liaison with the Mercer Parks Board agreed to take the required sponsor training and be our official liaison with the town board.
- Also in September, we were granted a pass at having to use the state bidding process to hire an engineering firm. This was because we submitted the RFQ process that we used to find Becher-Hoppe Engineering in 2022 to help us get started on the project. The state uses a detailed qualification process comparing multiple firm's capabilities to do this type of work. Because we had followed and documented a very similar process, we

were granted an exemption and were allowed to pursue a contract with Becher Hoppe and skip the bidding process.

- Currently, Becher-Hoppe is working on the contract and it should be complete within the next few weeks. The DOT will negotiate the terms of the contract on our behalf and the town of Mercer must sign the contract.
- Next Steps:
 - The Feasibility study will be complete by Nov 1, 2024
 - This timing allows us to apply for construction grants during the 2024 grant cycle for spring 2025 construction which may be just the first phase. This project will be likely 2 or 3 phases and each phase extends the completion by at least another year to capture grants for each phase.
 - In 2024 ICORE will be focused on building our business case for the bike trail, public outreach, key stakeholder meetings (including local businesses, key private donors, and coordination between townships and counties), and of course fund-raising.

c. 2023 ICORE Events

Kit B. reported on the Looney Paddlers success in 2023. There were 20 paddles and only two of the scheduled paddles were rained out. Teis group has transitioned to hiking in fall and will then transition to snowshoeing this winter.

Mike O. reported on the Monday mixed paddles. The season started late but was very successful with local experts involved on each paddle. There were also many good potlucks at member's homes and visiting local restaurants.

d. Open comment

Discussion ensued about how to get more people interested in silent sports and ICORE. Can we host an event to illicit some excitement for ICORE and increase membership and participation.

7. Adjourn

Mark Fedora motioned to adjourn at 6:12pm. and Gail O. seconded it. Motion passed.

The annual meeting was followed by a potluck and a presentation by Bethany Thomas on the North Country Trail with an educational film about the North Country Trail.