

Saskatchewan Trails Annual General Meeting Minutes

Mar 23, 2023 07:00 PM Saskatchewan via ZOOM

Welcome from the STA

David welcomed everyone at 7:07 p.m.

Introductions

Everyone went around the room and introduced themselves:

- David Powell: former landscape architect and current STA President
- Alan: Employee at Meewasin Valley Authority and current STA Vice President
- Chris Moffatt: Representative of Manitou Beach and STA Board Member
- John Meeting – STA Board Member and General Manager of SATVA
- Matthew Maurer: Recently signed up to be a trail ambassador; helps maintain and provides guided hikes along trails in the La Ronge area.
- Cindy Mantie: Employee at Benchmark Public Relations (contracted administrator of STA)
- Rachel Groat: Representing the Conservation Learning Centre
- Saul Lipton: STA Past President and current Canadian Trails Federation Representative
- Curt Schroder: A Founding STA Director and President
- Saunya and John Richmond: TCT hikers (guest presenters)
- Ryan Goolevitch: STA Board Member
- Joe Milligan: Employee at Saskatchewan Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport; STA Ex-Officio Board Member
- Pat Rediger: STA Administrator

Canadian Trails Federation Update

CTF Present Jane Murphy was unable to attend; STA Administrator Pat Rediger presented in her absence. The National Trail Trails Coalition, of which CTF is a member, is proposing a partnership in which the federal government would contribute \$60 million to be matched by Trail User Federations' and their partners' contribution of \$60 million over the course of three years. Through the partnership, an estimated 33,000 km of trails (multi-use, ATV/ORM, non-motorized and snowmobile) could be built or upgraded in addition to infrastructure enhancement projects such as parking, staging areas, gates, walkways, water crossings, bridges and signage. Representatives from SaskTrails recently met with the Honourable Randy Boissonnault, Federal Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance to discuss our support for a national funding program. Our suggestions for funding included:

1. Creating a trails program with a 3-5 year time frame would provide smaller organizations with the time they require to develop their trail projects.
2. Typically there is a "shovel-ready" requirement when these programs are announced, but many of our smaller members are not in that position. It takes them time to raise the funds and conduct proper due diligence before they embark on their projects. Only larger organizations that were already committed to spending the funds can create shovel-ready projects.
3. Develop different targeted components to a trail program including: maintenance, Indigenous\Metis communities, tourism economic development, adaptive\accessible trails, TCT, etc.

4. Support the investment into trails that allows for proper marketing, digital mapping, proper signage including direction signage, trail head markers, training, and interprovincial cooperation.

5. The federal government should consider a feasibility study to determine the potential of creating an ATV trail park near Estevan using abandoned coal mine sites as the province transitions away from coal-fired plants. The STA, in concert with other partners including: the City of Estevan, Saskatchewan All-Terrain Vehicle Association, and many other would be willing to undertake this study such as the Saskatchewan Snowmobiling Association, Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation and Saskatchewan Ministry of Parks, Culture and Recreation.

Walking Across the TCT

Presented by Dr. Sonya Richmond and John Richmond (www.comewalkwithus.online)

The Richmonds are the first duo to photograph the entire trail and the first to blog about the entire experience. As birding enthusiasts, their original goal was to see as many birds as possible. Only 5-6 people have gone across the entire trail and even less have proceeded all the way up to the far north.

They experienced blizzards, tornadoes, smoke, driving rain, flooded regions, and random acts of kindness and generosity. They saw whales, seals, coyotes, bears, goats and so much more wildlife. They averaged about 25-30 km/day. At the end of each day they planned their next day, posted on social media, and even made presentations from our tent.

The Saskatchewan portion was difficult to navigate. Some areas are blocked although Saskatchewan is not the only province where that happens. The due came through Duck Mountain Provincial Park to Regina, then to Saskatoon, North Battleford, and then into Alberta. They did lots of road walking in Saskatchewan and felt that the prairies are underappreciated – they are not flat or boring. They especially enjoyed the provincial parks. The Qu'Appelle region has great trails including historic sites, farmland, and the riverbank. Regina/Wascana Trails area was enjoyable due to the paved trails. Douglas, Elbow and Danielson were good continuous trails and well maintained. Saskatoon/Meewasin Trails were a great experience and were well development and maintained. Northern trails exceeded their expectation.

Each trail group has its own aspects and that is reflected in the trails that make up the TCT.

Call to Order for Business Meeting

David called the meeting to order at 8:06 p.m.

Approval of the Agenda

Motion: Chris/Matthew to approve the agenda as presented. Carried

Approval of the Previous Meeting Minutes

Motion: Curt/Saul to approve the previous meeting minutes as presented. Carried

Business Arising From the Minutes

There was no business arising from the Minutes.

President's Report

Our actions are directed by our strategic plan which has four key elements. The STA strives to be a resource for accurate trail location and operational information that is accessible to the public and membership.

Our website remains one of our primary methods of reaching the public, members and trail enthusiasts. It contains information on trail maps, safety, etiquette, environmental awareness, bridge designs, landowner agreements, processing donations, and promoting the benefits of trails. We continued to be active on social media over the past year, sharing information on trails that people should visit and illustrating these posts with videos, photos and the perspectives of people who have visited them. Our total social media following has grown by another 1,000 people this past year and now totals just over 8,000 followers overall: with 2,400 on Facebook, nearly 1315 on Twitter and 4,350 on Instagram.

Our 6th annual Give Us Your Best Shot photo contest was once again our most successful to date, proving that this particular initiative gets better every year. We received over 900 entries as opposed to last year's 850.

A few years back we became involved with the Churchill River Water Trail Legacy Project, and more specifically, the Barker Island toilet project. Thanks to volunteer labor and fundraising efforts, we were able to install a composting toilet on Barker Island, which is a stopping point for a popular canoe route in northwest Saskatchewan. We have continued to fundraise for this project and we are planning to install three more toilets this spring.

We were pleased to partner with Buffalo Pound Provincial Park and TCT to help revamp the trail network in that park to enhance the trail experience in that area. A new trail will connect all the networks in the park and bring them back to this new recreation hub which is now open to the public. Efforts continue to replace signage and create special destination points including vistas, benches, and backcountry campsites.

As part of our commitment to youth, the STA received funding from the Hire a Student Program with the Government of Canada to hire a summer student for eight weeks. We were able to extend this position for another month thanks to the federal government's Green Jobs Initiative. This year we hired Meghan Haukaas, a student at the University of Regina pursuing a degree in Journalism. Meghan worked on our social media posts, website blogs, and newsletter.

The STA supports its members through its annual Member Trail Grant Program. This year we provided \$500 grants to the Bengough & District Regional Park Authority, Leader and District Tourism, and the Saskatoon Trail Alliance. Through our Charitable Giving Program, we also continued to support the Elbow Trail Group. This year, the funds collected will be used to maintain and enhance their existing trail near the local golf course. At the national level, we remain committed to working with the Canadian Trails Federation to advocate for sustainable funding and best practices. To complete my report, I would like to thank our main fundraiser, Saskatchewan Lotteries, and the Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association.

Motion: David/Ryan to accept the report as presented.

Carried

Approval of Financial Statements

Motion: John/Curt to approve the financial statements as presented. Carried

Approval of Auditor

Motion: Alan/Ryan to reappoint Stewart, Gee, Murray and Sen as our auditor. Carried

Bylaw Amendments

There were no bylaw amendments.

Resolutions

There were no resolutions.

Board of Directors Election

The following individuals expressed an interest in serving on the board:
John Meed, Chris Exner, David Powell, and Matthew Mauer.

Motion: John/Chris for nominations to cease. Carried

John, Chris, David and Matthew were elected to the board by acclamation.

Rick Minett and Chris Moffatt are retiring from the board. David thanked them on behalf of the membership for their contributions.

New Business

There was no new business.

Adjournment

Motion: John to adjourn at 8:36 p.m.