

T.H.O.R. Leadership Workshop

A workshop focusing on THOR's viability, strengths, weaknesses, and long term sustainability was held at Rick's Boatyard on January 16, 2010.

Kent McNeil opened the workshop at 11:30 with a brief overview of upcoming club events and the current club status:

-Big news....a new trail is in the works for Adams Park near 30th and Bedford utilizing the IMBA "Gateway Trail" model. This Gateway Trail will include a progressive, graduated degree of difficulty-type loop, interpretive signage, skills development area, and a pump track. The project is a collaborative effort involving IMBA, THOR, National Park Service (NPS), Activate Omaha, and Omaha City Parks. Adams Park is located near two grade schools and the Adams Park Community Center. The IMBA Trail Solutions Crew will begin design during the week of 24 January. The IMBA Trail Care Crew will visit Omaha during April 2010 to begin construction.

-The IMBA Trail Solutions Crew will also assess the potential for a trail system in Hummel Park.

-THOR continues to look for potential new trail areas on both sides of the river.

-The current leadership of THOR is over-extended and a new leadership core of individuals needs to be promoted.

Ryan Schutz, the IMBA Regional Director and Fields Program Manager out of Boulder, CO was introduced at 12 noon. He began an "IMBA Club Care" discussion including topics such as "why organize?" trail advocacy, leadership structure, meeting format, and event planning.

Ryan then gave us an overview of the recent **THOR Organizational Survey** results.

The noted club "**Strengths**" are:

- Dedicated core of volunteers
- Existing inventory of trails
- Vision
- Board understands its' role

The club's noted "**Weaknesses**" are:

- Lack of brand awareness
- Not enough resources

The club's noted "**Opportunities**" are:

- General increase in cycling's popularity
- City's interest in the Gateway Trail project
- Opportunities to tap into the corporate community through Activate Omaha

The noted "**Threats**" to the club are:

- Burnout of club leadership

Ryan facilitated a discussion to identify (1) **Current Club Commitments**, (2) **Potential Club Commitments**, (3) **Current Club Resources**, and (4) **Potential Club Resources**.

Current Commitments:

- Maintain the existing 8 area trails, approx 40 miles total
- Protect access to the existing 8 trails
- Preparation of the trails for organized races

Potential Commitments:

- Develop new trails such as Adams Park, Hummel Park, & Camp Calvin Crest
- Fundraisers in conjunction with races
- Reorganize THOR into new, more viable committees
- Build pump track at Tranquility (possibly in conjunction with the Boy Scouts of America)

Current Resources:

-Revenue:

- Race Sponsorship
- Membership dues
- Money in bank

-In Kind Gifts:

- Use of mower and its operational costs at Manawa

-Human resources:

- paid members = 80-100
- active members = 40-50

-Partner organizations:

- MTB race promoters
- Activate Omaha

-Support organizations (Gov't):

- Council Bluffs City Parks
- Iowa DNR
- Bellevue City Parks
- Omaha City Parks
- Camp Calvin Crest
- NE State Parks
- Iowa NRD

-Local Bike Shops:

- Midwest Trek
- Bike Masters
- Xtreme Wheels
- The Bike Way
- The Bike Rack

-Local Business Community:

- J & J Small Engine

Potential Resources:

- Additional Local Bike Shops
- Boy Scouts of America (BSA)
- MECA Community Reinvestment
- Existing recreational bike clubs
- Local policy makers at city, county, & state levels
- Nebraska Trails Council
- Eastern NE Trails
- SW Iowa Nature Trails (SWINT)
- Great Plains Trails Network
- Nemaha NRD (Steamboat Trail)
- Bike Omaha
- Casinos (Iowa)
- The “corporate community” through Activate Omaha
- Outdoor Adventure Center at UNO
- Inmate/Community Service Labor (District Court Judge)

As a group, we then came up with a list of **EXPECTATIONS**: “*what can we REASONABLY expect to do this year given our current resources*”. The list is as follows:

- Increase membership
- Successful reorganization
- Continued trail maintenance
- Raise additional funds
- Increase club’s visibility
- Engage the business community
- Strengthen our current partnerships
- Increase the club’s expertise....invest in volunteers

From this list of **EXPECTATIONS** we arrived at a list of **GOALS** for the year, along with specific measurable “Metrics” to go along with each goal.

GOAL # 1, Successful Reorganization

Metrics:

- Establish a “**Social Committee**” and execute 3 events during the year
- Establish a “**Fundraising Committee**” and execute 1 event during the year
- Establish “**Trail Leaders Committee**”. This committee may consist of all the current trail leaders. Execute 3-6 meetings during the year, establish a workday calendar, and share beer & smoked meat at least once during the year!
- Establish a “**PR/Marketing Committee**”. Establish list of Bike Shop liaisons. Design and print a THOR brochure. Execute one PR event during the year. This event may be a “Big Check” event. A Big Check event is where we calculate all the club members’ volunteer hours for a specific trail project and present the land manager with a big fake check that translates volunteer hours into a dollar amount. Schedule a press conference, take photos of the club representatives presenting the “check” to the land

manager representative, and give a framed photo of the event to the land manager organization.....something like that.

GOAL # 2, Board Goals

Metrics:

- Develop and publish a “wish list”
- Use a meeting facilitator for at least 3 Board Meetings
- Execute 6 Board Meetings during the year
- Establish a “Succession Plan” for the leadership
- Re-evaluate all these GOALS after 1 year and revise as required

GOAL #3, Increase Visibility

Metrics:

- See previous PR/Marketing Committee metrics
- Branding...put the THOR URL on everything (T-shirts/clothing items, stickers, brochures, etc)
- Execute all-inclusive “Gala” group ride 3 times during the year. The gala ride should emphasize fun, socializing, non-competitiveness, and attract all types/abilities/ages of riders. Beer & smoked meat will be provided.
- Have an organized, well-thought out presence at 3 existing popular cycling events during the year such as the Taco Ride, Corporate Cycling Challenge, etc.

GOAL #4, Increase Membership

Metrics:

- See GOAL #3 above
- Provide THOR brochures to local bike shops for them to give to new mt bike purchasers.

GOAL #5, Invest in Volunteers

Metrics

- Publicize and maximize attendance at the IMBA Trail Care Crew visit to Omaha in April of 2010.
- Establish a program to celebrate volunteers such as a Fall THOR Banquet which would be separate from the Racing Awards Banquet.