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MEMORANDUM

April 26, 1977

To George T. Matthews, Chairperson
University Senate Steering Committee

From Robert G. Gaylor, Chairman *RGG*
Campus Development and Environment Committee

Subject Annual Report of the Committee

Please find attached the annual report of the activities of the Campus Development and Environment Committee for 1976/77.

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cc: Bill Marshall
Jerry Freeman
Joseph Klaitz
Steven Miller
Margaret Pigott
Dale Carpenter
Larry Stebbins
Lori Philo
Roberta Ritcheske
George Karas
Rosalind Andreas
Kenneth Coffman

attachment

Annual Report
of the
Campus Development and Environment Committee
1976/77

The Committee settled down to serious work during the winter term. As the year progressed various members of the University were assigned to the Committee.

The Committee listened carefully to Mr. Karas explain the new building plans for the campus area. Further, Mr. Karas discussed the proposed Oakland University Conservation Corps project. Since our initial discussion the proposal has been funded for operation this summer. The Corps project will provide work experiences for youths who will develop nature trails, clean the ravine areas, and work in the Wilson Greenhouse, etc.

The Committee investigated the possible parking alternatives if and when the fifty-meter swimming pool is constructed between the Sports and Recreation Building and the Central Heating Plant; and is recommending to the appropriate officials that no new parking lots be constructed unless absolutely essential. Further, the Committee recommends that if it is essential that the lot be constructed in the "front lawn" area of the three small dorms.

A subcommittee was selected to investigate the long-range plans for the south campus area. Steven Miller, Bill Marshall and Larry Stebbins recommended the following items which were subsequently adopted by the full Committee:

First, that the Jim Lawless proposal of 1971 be reaffirmed as a working model to be implemented. In particular, that cross campus nature trails be laid out and a cross campus ski trail be constructed.

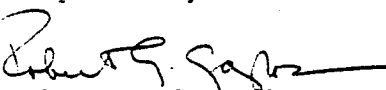
Second, that within the Conservation Corps project this summer they clear all the trash from all creeks and ravines on campus.

Third, that trees be replanted in ravine areas to halt erosion. This project will also be part of the Conservation Corps summer work.

Fourth, the subcommittee will continue to meet (with as many of the full Committee as are here this summer) to develop a long-range plan for the south campus area with the possible goal that this area be declared as the campus nature area.

The Committee has met with various success in regards to attendance and hopes to prepare a long-range plan for the campus development next year.

Respectfully submitted for the Committee


Robert Gaylor, Chairman
April 26, 1977

Enclosure: Copy of the Jim Lawless proposal.

NATURE 1

To: The Long Range Development Committee

From: James M. Lawless Jr.

Re: The Establishment of a Nature Trail and Area on
the Oakland University Campus 1-27-71

NATURE 1

Located on the southern portion of the campus and bounded by two new pipe lines is a beautiful, relatively untouched area of approximately 300-500 acres. This area contains swamps, bogs, fields, forests, a stream, and a Magnetics Laboratory. There are many species of birds, animals, reptilia easily found and observed. The plant life is a beautiful cross section of Michigan's greenery. No roads, to speak of, or trails at present penetrate this area except the small road to the Magnetics Lab.

There is now located behind our Sports and Recreation Building a new heating plant, the location of which will force the University to expand to the plateau to the northeast of Hamlin Hall.

Using these two groups of facts, I would now like to make the following proposals to the Long Range Development Committee. First, that the entire tract of land bounded by the sewer and gas lines be set aside, on as permanent a basis as possible, as the Oakland University Nature Area. Second, that a group of students, faculty, and staff or any other interested persons, be allowed to construct, with minimum damage to the environment, a nature trail, and possibly in the future, a hiking trail in this area for the use of the Oakland Community.

I realize, as do we all, that money is very short, but I do not believe that there is too much money involved in these requests. The designation of the Nature Area as such would require only a commitment of some land -- land that probably will not be used for a

reasonably long time. I also believe that the Nature Trail could be kept simple enough to have a minimal amount of funding, and PLEA has already offered its resources, both manual and financial.

There are several different concepts that could be employed in the actual construction of such a trail. They vary in cost and complexity. The simplest could be a footpath carved out of the bush. This would present several large disadvantages. The most important of these is erosion, which could get a firm hold on a bare trail and eventually destroy the trail environment. A second, and equally bad possibility, is the trail bike and its rider. Many of these consider a smooth bare trail an open invitation to ride on, which is equally destructive to the nature area and, combined with erosion, can quickly destroy a trail. And finally, this type of trail is useful only to a person who is willing to carry with him numerous field manuals and guides which can get rather cumbersome. This type of trail would, however, be the easiest to set up and the most inexpensive.

A second type of trail would be to lay wood chips down as the base and add simple causeways and a small bridge across the stream. This would involve more work and money, but by using natural materials (dead trees, etc.) the cost could be kept to a minimum; wood chips are free or very inexpensive. The labor required would be provided by any interested people from the Oakland University community. Also, along the trail there could be simple-numbered stakes which correspond to a numbered handout with small explanatory or descriptive paragraphs.

This would greatly assist the novice in his understanding and classification and make the trail more valuable. A trail of this type would probably increase the possibility of vandalism and would definitely need more work. The wood chips would have to be replaced periodically and the trail markings changed with the season.

The third and final type of trail and I hate to mention it, would consist of a cleared trail 2-3 feet wide, with a wood chip base and with signs placed along it at the various points of interest. The construction of this type of trail would require a great deal of time and effort and would cost somewhat more than most of the other types mentioned here. It would also make the trail more open to trail bikes, erosion and vandalism.

A nature trail would benefit the University academically in a number of ways. If set aside on a fairly permanent basis, such an area would provide an ideal location on campus for ecological and biological studies. This area could also provide informal educational space for students to learn, hike and generally relax.

I realize that there would be many problems in the construction and maintenance of such areas and trails. I believe that it would benefit the University in the long run to reserve this land now for future use.

(signed 1/27/71 by J M L Jr)

James M. Lawless, Jr.

1/27/71

JML/gsc

Received at the Office of
Robert G. Gaylor, Associate Dean, Kresge Library and
Chairman of Campus Development and Environment Committee
5/3/77

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