

**OFFICIAL MINUTES
PIGEON RIVER COUNTRY ADVISORY COUNCIL
July 17, 2009**

A meeting of the Pigeon River Country Advisory Council was held on Friday, July 17, 2009 at the Pigeon River Country Management Unit Headquarters. Chairman Glasser called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ken Glasser, Pete Gustafson, Mike Brown, Jim Supina, Arch Reeves, Rique Campa, Mark Ennes, Dave Smethurst, Bob Bolinger, John Walters, Bob Hess and Dick Myers

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mike Castle, Carol Clute, Paul Rose, Jack Deming, Mike Estes and Randy Sanders

EX-OFFICIO PRESENT Dayle Garlock, Rick Henderson, Brian Mastenbrook, and Scott Whitcomb

EX-OFFICIO ABSENT: Dave Borgeson and Tim Reis

OTHERS PRESENT: Eric Bottorff, Greg Drogowski, Eugene Horan, Ray Hoobler, Joe Jarecki, Gordon McMullen, Matt Storey and Peggy Moczul

CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS:

Chairman Glasser welcomed everyone.

AGENDA

The Chandler Dam at Black River item was removed because the presenter was not available.

APPROVAL OF JANUARY 16, 2009 ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Under Other Business a correction was made to indicate the number of elk killed should read 200 – 300.

Motion by Supina, support by Gustafson to approve the April 17, 2009 minutes with the indicated correction. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Joe Jarecki reported that Tim Cwalinski was not able to attend this meeting but wanted to report that the Hackett Lake fish survey had been cut. Tim hoped they would be able to get some information next year from Hackett Lake.

OLD BUSINESS

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Oil and Gas Committee Report

Sub-committee Chair Mike Brown reported on the July 2, 2009 meeting. There were a limited number of committee members present. The topic was new proposals to drill in the Song of the Morning. DEQ had not seen any changes to the existing application. Song of the Morning is working on obtaining easements going out to the west toward Dudd Road.

Dave Smethurst brought a draft of a proposal for a review process for oil and gas drilling permits that would offer consistency in the review process. The Advisory Council members will all get notification of the Oil and Gas Sub-committee meeting dates, times and location. Any Advisory Council members could

choose to attend.

A **Motion** was brought to the Advisory Council from this Sub-committee to ask DNR to clarify whether Oil and Gas drilling can occur within the Pigeon River Natural River zone and if there are any restrictions defined in regards to oil and gas development. Motion made by Smethurst, support by Bolinger. After discussion and clarification, Motion carried.

A **Motion** was brought to the Advisory Council from the Oil and Gas Sub-committee to recommend the Advisory Council request interpretation from the DNR/DEQ whether non-development leases issued to prevent adverse drainage in annexed areas permitted any surface disturbance for installation of infrastructure and provisions stating that all proposed wells shall use existing infrastructure. Motion made by Brown, support by Smethurst. After discussion and clarification, Motion carried.

Standards and Limitations Committee Report

Sub-committee Chairman John Walters reported on discussion about using snowmobiles to retrieve harvested elk from the Green Timbers area. The Council discussed this issue and determined that there was no objection to the use of snowmobiles by management to retrieve a poached elk.

Motion made by Walters, support by Supina that the Council recommends that the policy of the Concept of Management restricting vehicle access to county and open forest roads should be followed during the elk hunting season. Retrieval of legally harvested elk should not be considered a management activity permitted as an exception to the motorized vehicle restriction. Motion carried.

An update was also given concerning the ORV ordinances in the Pigeon River Country. Montmorency County roads within the PRC are closed, most Otsego county roads are closed within the PRC and Cheboygan County roads are all open to ORV's. The effective date is July 23rd and Walters anticipates problems. DNR Law Enforcement plans to have low tolerance for those not following the new ordinance.

NEW BUSINESS

Protocol for Advisory Council Meetings

Scott Whitcomb presented a proposal for discussion on standardizing the reporting of the Advisory Council and Sub-committee meetings. Two changes were made; the word "draft" should be added to the minutes from the Council meetings and should be sent to all members for review within two weeks of the meeting.

A **Motion** made by Gustafson and support by Walters to accept the meeting protocol as follows.

1. Meeting dates determined at the October meeting and are posted on the DNR calendar and web site.
2. Pigeon River Country Advisory Council (PRCAC) meeting is held.
3. Within two weeks of the meeting date, the Secretary will send a draft of the minutes to the PRCAC Chair.
4. The PRCAC members review the draft minutes for completeness and accuracy. Any necessary changes should be sent to the Secretary.
5. The PRCAC Chair will send the letter to the DNR Director
6. Subcommittee Chairs will report the minutes from meetings, to the Secretary within two weeks of the meeting date.
7. Agenda items for the next meeting are due to the Secretary at least four weeks prior to the meeting date, including handout material.
8. A draft agenda will be emailed to the Chair three weeks prior to the meeting date.
9. Final agenda and material will be emailed/mailed to the PRCAC and interested parties two weeks prior to the meeting date. Agenda is posted on the DNR web site.

Exceptions to this process will be made, at the discretion of the Secretary and Chair, for unexpected critical issues that may arise within four weeks of the meeting dates. Motion carried.

There was a discussion about Dayle Garlock's offer to follow up on some of the Motions that have been discussed at this meeting. The group appreciated the offer for Garlock to follow up, but the Motion would still be included in the letter from the PRCAC Chair to the Department Director so that there is a record of the discussion and follow-up on the Motions.

Hackett Lake

Scott Whitcomb explained that there is a dispute over the boundary line of the State owned land at Hackett Lake and an adjacent private land owner. There is legal action taken between the land owner and some of the neighbors regarding access issues. The legal action does not include the State. A survey has been ordered but is not yet complete. The Hackett Lake property was acquired by the State but has not been made an official part of the Pigeon River Country. The application for Trust Fund indicates that this land was within the boundary of the PRC. But that is not the case. The boundary change would require action by the DNR Director at the Natural Resource Commission meeting.

A **Motion** was offered by Smethurst concerning the Hackett Lake property being included within the boundary of the PRC. This same motion was made and carried on October 24, 2008. Because the motion would be redundant the Motion was withdrawn.

A **Motion** made by Smethurst, support by Brown that the Hackett Lake property be included within the boundary of the PRC. Motion carried.

BREAK

EX-OFFICIO REPORTS

Law Enforcement Update

Eric Bottorff reported that there have been a few issues with fishing licenses at Cornwall Flooding and people not paying the camping fees in the campgrounds. He reported that there has not been much fishing at the sinkhole lakes. There was a report of an empty worm container found at the sinkhole lakes.

DNR Forest, Mineral & Fire Management Division Update

Dayle Garlock talked about the changes within in Department of Natural Resources because of the budget issues. Employees have six furlough days this fiscal year. There are discussions about more furlough days next fiscal year. There have also been discussions about consolidating the number of departments.

Steven Fletcher was contacted with an offer on the minerals in the Blue Lakes area. There will be an appraisal and presumable a counter offer from Mr. Fletcher. There is an August 2nd due date to request funds from the Natural Resources Trust Fund, but Trust Fund dollars are usually not used to purchase minerals. The effective date of the purchase would be 2011 or later.

With regard to 900 acres of the Ford property, the State already owns most of the minerals.

The Biodiversity Conservation Team is in the process of selecting specific pieces of State land. Land within the Pigeon River Country is one of the proposed areas. The Concept of Management may not mesh well with the bio-diversity initiative. The first meeting for the Eco-Team will be August 19th and Scott will be there. This Team will make recommendations, and the Department Director will make the final decisions.

Scott Whitcomb introduced Matt Storey who is the Pigeon River Country student intern funded by the Pigeon River Country Association. He will be here for 30 weeks and will be exposed to a wide range of activities. One of his projects will be to inventory the road system, document breaches to berms, and signage needs.

Whitcomb asked that the Council members look at the information on the member roster and submit any necessary changes. Also, we only received a sub-committee member list from the John Walters for the Standards and Limitations sub-committees. We still need current member lists for Oil and Gas, Wildlife and Horseback sub-committees.

The bridge over the Pigeon River on Sturgeon Valley Road is currently scheduled to be opened by the end of August, 2009.

The Pigeon River Country Open House is scheduled for July 28th and the Compartment Review is scheduled for August 25th.

Whitcomb reported on the Departmental Forest Certification Internal Audit conducted in June 2009, which was to prepare for the external audit that is scheduled for October. Six minor non-conformances were reported and responded to. The internal auditors were impressed with the Advisory Council, Concept of Management and the vehicle access plan.

Whitcomb updated the Council on progress at Pickerel Lake. The contractor has some work to finish and the picnic tables have not arrived yet. The campground will be opened November 1, 2009. There was discussion that the DNR should explain to the public why there have been delays in opening this campground.

A **Motion** was offered by Smethurst, supported by Myers to express concern and disappointment that the campground is closed. Motion carried.

There have been on-going safety concerns because of the hills and blind turns on the horse riding trails. Carol Clute offered alternate routes to address the safety concerns. Wildlife, Fisheries and Forest, Minerals and Fire Management need to review and approve the proposed re-routes. The Recreation Section is now reviewing. A copy of the proposal will be provided to the Advisory Council members.

Smethurst asked about the building on Kronlund property. He was told that it was high on the priority list. There might be asbestos abatement that needs to take place first.

Forest, Mineral & Fire Management

Wildlife Division

Brian Mastenbrook reported that Wildlife is using bear hair snares to collect DNA samples for testing. This information is used to estimate the population. There is a deer management planning going on for 2010. Elk planning was delayed until the deer planning was complete.

Because of budget issues, Wildlife will be spending more time on private land issues. Biologists will be moved within the State to address staff shortages. The number of deer check stations will be reduced because DNR will not be hiring any seasonal staff.

There will be zero Antler-less deer permits in Otsego and Cheboygan Counties on private and public land.

Mike Brown wanted to discuss bear hunting concerns were raised on the practice of dragging the roads. The practice is illegal.

Arch Reeves asked that a new chair be named for the Wildlife sub-committee. Jim Supina volunteered for the position.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Biodiversity recommendations from the Eco Team with maps

Learn more about the funds that might be available for projects in the Cheboygan River watershed on private land

OTHER BUSINESS

ADJOURN

Chairman Glasser adjourned the meeting at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Scott Whitcomb, Secretary