

**OFFICIAL MINUTES
PIGEON RIVER COUNTRY ADVISORY COUNCIL
JULY 15, 2011**

A meeting of the Pigeon River Country Advisory Council (PRCAC) was held on Friday July 15, 2011 at the Pigeon River Country Management Unit Headquarters. Chairman John Walters called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mike Brown, Paul Rose, John Walters, Ken Glasser, Eugene Horan, Arch Reeves, Dick Myers, Randy Sanders, Rique Campa, Don Horrocks, Kerry Mase, Mark Ennes, Jim Supina, Pete Gustafson

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jack Deming, Bob Hess, Jessica Turino, Dave Smethurst

EX-OFFICIO PRESENT : Jeff Stampfly, Brian Mastenbrook, Scott Whitcomb, Nick Torsky

EX-OFFICIO ABSENT: Tim Cwalinski, Fisheries Division, DNR, Rick Henderson, DEQ

OTHERS PRESENT: Rex Ainsle, Mark Olson, Enbridge; Judy Jarecki, Joe Jarecki, Ray Hoobler, Matt Kahn, George Marks, Enbridge; Larry Kleinhardt, Tony Matelski, Cheboygan County Commission

CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS:

The meeting started with the Pledge of Allegiance followed by introduction of attendees. Chairman Walters welcomed everyone to the summer meeting on behalf of the Council Members.

AGENDA

Brown requested the agenda be amended to add under New Business the subject of the process of reviewing and distribution of subcommittee minutes. Also, Chairman Walters suggested having guest speaker, Mark Olson, Enbridge, be moved ahead on the agenda to just before the Break. Agenda accepted as published.

APPROVAL OF APRIL 15, 2011 ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Motion by Glasser to accept the April 15, 2011 Advisory Council Meeting minutes as published, second by Mase. Motion passed unanimously

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Ray Hoobler, PRC Association, discussed his concern over the poor quality of county roads to and from the floodings within the PRCFS. He asked that the PRCAC bring this issue to local county officials. Larry Kleinhardt, discussed the issue of poor quality county roads and the need for additional parking for horse rigs at Lee Grade Ranch area. Tony Matelski, Cheboygan County Commissioner, was in attendance at this council meeting and would take the concerns of poor road quality back to Cheboygan County Road Commission for discussion.

OLD BUSINESS:

Update on PRC Land Acquisitions – Scott Whitcomb

Whitcomb will cover the topic in his Unit Report.

NEW BUSINESS

Enbridge Pipeline Response – Mark Olson, Enbridge, from Superior Wisconsin and George Marks, a local representative from the Indian River area gave a PowerPoint presentation to the council which emphasized Enbridge's responsibility for pipeline monitoring safety.

Enbridge is a company that transports petroleum; Enbridge does not own any of the product.

Mark Olson gave a brief introduction of Enbridge. He commented on the quality of the pipeline and the materials for which they are constructed. He mentioned that the pipeline is remotely monitored from Alberta. He also mentioned the pipeline is at least 58 years old. Mark explained briefly how Enbridge uses a system for inspection of cracks, dents or corrosion remotely and the system is called a “smart pig”.

All pipelines have pipeline markers. Markers are used for emergency situations or helpful information for any type of work in and around the pipeline. When crossing a pipeline for any type of work, look for the pipeline markers with all the contact information with name and phone number and contact Enbridge and they will work with you to cross safely.

The right-of-way of the pipeline is flown every 2 weeks, at least 26 inspections a year and flies the entire pipeline looking for anything unusual in and around the pipeline.

Emergency Response Planning – Enbridge maintains emergency response training with all staff to handle situations as they happen. All Emergency Response Plans are reviewed regularly by the company and Enbridge is very willing to set up and coordinate safety response plans with local first responders to protect the public and the environment.

Chairman Walters mentioned on August 16th there will be a “mock” oil spill emergency situation being completed on the AuSable River at the Parmalee Bridge if anyone was interested in attending.

Rose asked about the materials of the Enbridge Pipeline and if the older the pipeline the chance of more corrosion. Mark Olson indicated that the age of a pipeline does not necessarily matter if maintained and monitored correctly. Mark mentioned the case at the Kalamazoo River, the leak was not from one of the older pipelines, but a pipeline that was approximately from the 60s.

Whitcomb asked the lead time Enbridge would need to work with local foresters on logging jobs or the loggers themselves for a job in and around an existing pipeline. Mark suggested giving Enbridge a good amount of lead time before the logging job starts (possibly when we know what sales we will be advertising and their locations) so that they can set up a time to meet with the forester and logging company. Possibly put specification in state timber sale contracts requiring contact made with Enbridge prior to start of job.

Chairman Walters suggested that a sit down meeting would be justified between himself and Scott to review all roads the pipeline crosses within the PRC so if there were questions regarding the locations; we could contact a representative from Enbridge and discuss.

For emergency shut off valves along the pipeline, they can be up to 15 miles apart anywhere along the pipeline. Enbridge is looking at putting more remote shut off valves on pipelines, but this is a costly improvement for the company, but Enbridge is working towards it.

Enbridge does complete Emergency Response Exercises and Chairman Walters would like to set something up for a mock emergency response within the PRC and will contact Enbridge to set up.

Elk Research – Rique Campa

Elk Responses to Recreational Use & Habitat Potential in Michigan –

There is a proposed research project that has been designed by MSU and MDNR biologists and managers to look at different disturbances caused by recreational users and if these types of disturbances influence elk behaviors, movements and habitat selection patterns throughout the PRCSF

as well as on private lands. The proposed would investigate elk responses to several different types of recreation use, specifically bikers and horseback riders.

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and DNR Public Advisory Committee met and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation committed \$20,000 to this project. The research project is still looking for other funding partners to get involved and Rique asked if there is anyone out there that anyone knows that would support this project, please let him know. (See attached Elk Responses to recreational Use & Habitat Potential in Michigan report.)

Horrocks asked if other recreational users such as hikers be involved in this project. Campa said it could be added, but it would cause the research to be even more expensive.

Policy on Council Meeting Minutes

Chairman Walters explained the policy on council meeting minutes. Once the minutes are approved at a council meeting, they are no longer draft, and can be distributed to the public. There is no policy on committee meeting minutes and the process of distribution.

Discussion ensued regarding minutes from the committee meetings are not official minutes and should not be distributed outside of committee or council members until approved. Motion by Supina, seconded by Horrocks, minutes from committee meetings will not be distributed outside of the committee until all members of the committee have approved them.

Further discussion suggested a disclaimer at the bottom of the Draft Minutes, indicating that these are draft only, minutes taken from a sub-committee of an advisory council. This would clear up the issue that any recommendation from a committee of the advisory council is only a recommendation.

Original motion by Supina, seconded by Horrocks was amended to read the following:

- Minutes from a committee meeting will not be distributed to the public or organizations the committee members represent until after the committee members have approved them. All minutes will have "Draft" on top and a disclaimer on the bottom indicating the minutes are in draft form, have not been approved and do not represent policy until adopted by the advisory council. Minutes to be distributed via electronic or by phone to committee members to expedite the approval process.

Motion carried.

BREAK

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Standards & Limitations – Rose

May 18th Draft Minutes of the Standards and Limitations Committee Meeting were passed out to the council. The meeting was scheduled in response to a request made by the PRAC to consider and develop a policy recommendation relating to commercial uses and more specifically commercial guiding within the PRC.

- A motion was made by the committee to recommend a ban on all commercial guiding within the PRC. Motion carried by a 3 -2 vote.
- A second motion recommending that an examination take place of incidental uses which could be classified as a commercial activity but should not require Departmental oversight. Motion unanimously carried.
- A third motion was made recommending the full council request Department policy be revised which would require all use permits relating to the PRC, with respect to the commercial use and guiding, be reviewed by the unit manager as part of the approval process. Motion approved by a

unanimous vote.

Horrocks suggested that the issuance of such type of incidental use permits should be left with the Unit Manager, as it has been in the past. Chairman Walters called for a special advisory council meeting to discuss in more detail both motion 1 and 2.

Rose moved that the Advisory Council approve the third motion the committee set forth. Seconded by Supina. Motion carried.

Gustafson suggested mushroom picking and camping issues on state land be sent to the Standard and Limitations Committee for discussion to be put on an upcoming agenda.

Standards and Limitations Committee was also at the Forest Access Committee meeting on July 13, 2011 to discuss the possibility of the expansion of Elk Hill SFC and to improve the camping situation for equine uses. A variety of elements of this proposal were discussed and the committee decided that no action was appropriate at this time. Walters suggested that the Standard and Limitations Committee continue to take part in this proposal.

An improved reservation system was discussed regarding Elk Hill SFC to create something similar to what the State Parks system uses. Whitcomb will be pursuing this issue to find out what exactly would be involved to change this reservation system.

State Forest Access - Supina

Minutes from the Forest Access Committee were handed out to the council members. The meeting was scheduled to discuss equestrian related issues of interest to both the Forest Access committee members and the Standard and Limitations Committee members. The DNR has been requested to consider further improvements to equestrian access by the Equestrian Trails Subcommittee. Whitcomb presented a proposal that would provide nine miles of new connector trails to facilitate more looped systems to eliminate dead end trails for the equine users. The committee members felt the merits of the proposal were acceptable, but the expansion of equine access is of concern and created much philosophical discussion. The proposal from Whitcomb also included 3 off site dispersed horse camps.

Supina made motion the council accept the committee's motion to endorse the proposal presented, seconded by Campa. Motion carried with 1 dissenting vote.

EX-OFFICIO REPORTS

Law Enforcement Update –

CO Torsky has seen a decrease in the amount of trout fishing this season, possibly due to the water levels on the rivers early spring. He has seen some increase of fishing at the Sinkhole Lakes. CO Torsky has seen an increase in illegal horse activities and mentioned with the right to ride legislation – more illegal horse and camping activities outside designated areas is happening. There has also been more illegal ORV activity in and around the unit partial due to the allowance of ORV's on county road right-of-ways. The ordinance to allow ORV's on right-of-ways on county roads was initiated for the purpose of going to and from designated ORV routes on State land, or state forest campgrounds, going to and from camps, etc. But unfortunately many ORV's are using county road right of ways as another form of riding and there has been significant amount of damage due to this.

Otsego County is the only county which did not pass the ORV ordinance (within the PRC) – both Cheboygan and Montmorency passed the ORV ordinance.

Horrocks suggested taking the ORV ordinance back to Cheboygan County Board of Commissioners and township representatives to see if the roads in and around the PRC could be closed to ORV use.

Forest Management Division Update –

Jeff Stampfly, new District Forest Management Supervisor out of Gaylord introduced himself to the council and others in attendance. Jeff replaced Dayle Garlock. Jeff has worked for the DNR for 25 years. Jeff worked most of his career in the Shingleton Management Unit. Jeff has been at the Gaylord office now for 6 weeks.

PRC Unit Update –

Land Acquisitions

Scott gave the following report on newly acquired lands within the PRC or approval to acquire:

- A 95 acre parcel, off Clute Road on Swartz Trail. The property was owned by the Visconti Family.
- A 40 acre parcel was acquired off Sawdust Pile Road at the end of Rd 96. The property was owned by the Stevens Family. A small cabin is on this property.
- Another 40 acre parcel was acquired on Sawdust Pile Road. This was the Bruot property. There is 1 Antrim Well on this property. This parcel is outside of the PRC Boundary, but will be managed by PRC staff.
- A 80 acre parcel, the Tinsey Property, off Sparr Road is in the process of being acquired. This parcel has Black River frontage. The Director has given permission to proceed to purchase.
- Another 40 acre parcel, the Craft Property, also has been given approval to proceed on acquisition. This parcel is on Chandler Dam Road - near the Kronlund property. This parcel has river access.

Building Demolition Update – Kronlund, Perry & Hackett Lake properties have buildings to be removed. The bidding process is taking place now for demolition material refuse pickup. The permits to have the buildings removed have been submitted to Lansing. Whitcomb was pleased to report that everything is moving along.

Staffing at PRC –

Matt Kahn, an intern with the PRC Association, is a student at Michigan State University. Matt has been working on the maintenance of all pathways this summer. Bob Henning left the PRC early June and has taken on a new job with the Department. We were able to hire another Stateworker, Caleb Libtke. The PRC will be recommending replacing Bob's position as soon as possible. The Unit Manager position at the Atlanta Management Unit has been posted and should be filled within the next 2 months. Foresters Rick & Sara have been busy marking timber. The PRC Open House and Compartment Review are scheduled for Sept 14th and Oct 4th respectively.

On a side note, Brian Mastenbrook requested that the Wildlife Committee be involved or be notified of the prescriptions being suggested for the PRC prior to the dates scheduled for the Compartment Review and Open House. The committee will then have an ample amount of time to bring any concerns they may have to the Advisory Council.

Wildlife Division Updates

Brian Mastenbrook introduced Rex Ainslie. Rex is the new Wildlife Division Supervisor out of the Bay City Office and has worked for the DNR for 26 years.

Deer Antlerless Quota recommendations have been approved for Otsego and Cheboygan counties. There will be no antlerless permits this year. Brian also mentioned that the fawning crop was great this year. Elk hunting seasons have been approved. The September season will have 90 permits. There will be no October season. There will be 65 permits in the December hunt, which is fewer than the past. Wildlife Division is still working on the issue of elk being outside the elk boundary. There are still some issues in the Hillman area and around 12 to 15 elk are in and around the Crawford/Otsego county borders.

Elk Plan – Brian is now working on the 3rd Draft of the Elk Plan. The next step will be routing of the plan through to the Chief of Wildlife Division, the Director and then it will be reviewed by the tribes and

finally, there will be the presentation to the Natural Resources Commission and chance for public comment. Brian is hopeful this will be happening late August or September.

Wildlife Division has been planting and mowing in the PRC. In addition, Wildlife has had some prescribed burns this past year and a lot of habitat improvements. Brian indicated that despite all cuts, realignments within Wildlife Division and budget problems they have still maintained and have been able to complete all tasks put in front of them, mostly due to the hard work of employees like Mark Monroe. Feral Swine Issue – the House has passed a resolution that will regulate feral swine. Brian indicated that if anyone had a strong position on this issue, to contact their local legislator and let them know. There are still reports of wolf sightings in and around the Rendezvous site with possible pups. Some pictures were taken of a wolf in the Osmun Road area, 1 mile south of Osmun Lake, which showed the animal to be in poor shape with mange. Another confirmed wolf from a recent survey was found 1 mile north of Black Lake – Alpena State Road area.

The topic of changing the opener date of Deer Season from November 15th to the Saturday opener according to Brian has become a dead issue. As far as Brian knows, it will stay at the 15th of November. Baiting and Feeding Issue – it is now legal in Otsego and Cheboygan counties. There will be a 2 gallon limit, to be spread over an area of 10x10. Wildlife Division will still be interested in any reporting of illegal baiting/feeding issues.

Fisheries Division Update –

Tim Cwalinski was not at the council meeting, but provided the members with updates from Fisheries Division. In summary Fisheries reports the stocking of the 4 sinkhole lakes within the PRC. Fisheries Division is working with Huron Pines on large woody debris enhancement along a portion of the Pigeon River, upstream of Elk Hill. A survey of Town Corner Lake showed both the bluegill and bass population in fine condition. The large woody debris project along the Black River in the vicinity of Chandler Dam ongoing with staff from the Upper Black River Council is ongoing. A new reach of the river will be staked out for future large woody debris projects, possibly near Blue Lakes. Fisheries Division will try to do limnological profiles on North & South Blue and Round Lakes and survey Cornwall Flooding. The Black River sand trap has not been excavated due to lack in funding and staffing in Fisheries Division.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- October 21, 2011 will be the next scheduled Advisory Council meeting.
- There will be a special council meeting to discuss commercial guides and commercial use prior to this regularly scheduled council meeting date.

ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned 9:36

Respectfully Submitted,

Scott Whitcomb, Secretary