

**MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND**

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**

**MINUTES**

August 18, 2021

MSU Veterinary Diagnostic Lab – Room 101  
4125 Beaumont Road, Lansing

Chair McDonough called the meeting of the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) Board of Trustees (Board) to order at 9:00 a.m., Wednesday, August 18, 2021. She announced this is the first live, in-person meeting since April 2020 and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**I. INTRODUCTIONS**

The following Board members were present:

Erin McDonough, Chair; from the City of Williamston, Ingham County  
Steve Hamp; from the City of Ann Arbor, Ingham County  
Bill Rustem; from Alaiedon Township, Ingham County  
Dan Eichinger, DNR Director; from the Village of Lake Isabella, Isabella County

The following Board members were absent from the meeting:

Sam Cummings, Vice-Chair; from the City of Grand Rapids, Kent County

Dan Lord, Grants Management Section Manager, Department of Natural Resources (DNR), introduced himself and the following staff also introduced themselves: Jon Mayes, MNRTF Grants Program Manager; Mike Chuff, MNRTF Financial Specialist; Lindsay Ross, Andrea Stay, Merrie Carlock, and Alexandria McBride, Grant Coordinators; and Erik Eklund, Chief Budget Officer, DNR Finance and Operations Division, who will address the MNRTF Financial Update and other budget-related questions. The assistant to the Board, Yolanda Taylor, participated via conference call.

Also participating were various staff members of the DNR and other interested parties.

**II. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FOR MEETING OF JUNE 16, 2021**

Chair McDonough called for adoption of the minutes for the June 16, 2021 MNRTF Board meeting.

**MOVED BY EICHINGER, SUPPORTED BY HAMP, TO ADOPT THE MINUTES  
OF THE JUNE 16, 2021 MNRTF BOARD MEETING. MOTION PASSED  
WITHOUT DISSENTING VOTE.**

**III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA FOR MEETING OF AUGUST 18, 2021**

Chair McDonough called for the adoption of the agenda for the August 18, 2021 MNRTF Board meeting.

**MOVED BY RUSTEM, SUPPORTED BY EICHINGER, TO ADOPT THE AGENDA FOR THE AUGUST 18, 2021 MNRTF BOARD MEETING. MOTION PASSED WITHOUT DISSENTING VOTE.**

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

**Chris Bunch, Executive Director, Six Rivers Land Conservancy**

October Meeting, Tour and Luncheon

Chris Bunch expressed his continued gratitude to the Board and staff for providing opportunities to access the state's natural resources, and for their assistance in getting applications submitted and closing out projects from previous years.

He also expressed his excitement in the Governor's announcement to invest \$150 million in local parks and recreation. Hopefully this will give the Board leverage and access to other resources to establish more conservation and recreation, especially in the southern part of the state where recreational opportunities are lacking.

The host committee for the October 19-20, 2021 MNRTF Board tour/meeting in Detroit is working feverishly to get everything in place. The conservancy also has their conservation leadership luncheon at the Detroit Athletic Club immediately following the October 20, 2021 MNRTF Board meeting. Linda Hubbard, CEO of Carhart is their keynote speaker, with Ducks Unlimited as their key sponsor. All Board members and staff are invited to attend.

Lastly, he expressed his support for the Marine City project to add additional access to the Great Lakes and its connecting waterways. He is very confident that this will be a great project and urges the Board to support this project.

**Matt Cowall, Executive Director, Land Information Access Association**

TF21-0143 – Hickory Forest Acquisition, City of Traverse City and Garfield Township Recreation Authority (Grand Traverse County)

Matt Cowall addressed the Board in support of the Hickory Forest Acquisition. He explained that the previous owner (a well-known conservationist) passed away in 2019 and left the property to his children, but he wanted it to be maintained for recreational and public purposes. The family reached out to the Recreation Authority and received 72 percent approval in support of this acquisition. The 76-acre forest is adjacent to a ski area that is owned by the city. It would be an amazing addition and is one of the remaining forested parcels in that area. There is one small private inholding that the family has never been willing to sell, despite the fact they cannot access the land.

MNRTF Grant Request:	\$467,600	(70%)
Matching Funds:	\$200,600	(30%)
Total Project Cost:	\$668,200	

On behalf of the citizens and their constituents, he asked for the Board's support of this project.

**Michael Kelly, Director, Great Lakes Office – The Conservation Fund**

TF21-0033 - Kawkawlin River Access Improvements, Monitor Charter Township (Bay County); and TF21-0022 – Lake Huron Coastal Preserve Acquisition, Alabaster Township (Iosco County)

Michael Kelly expressed his support of two MNRTF grant applications.

TF21-0033 – Kawkawlin River Access Improvements. Geographically, the Kawkawlin is a direct tributary to Saginaw Bay, covering 14 townships in mid-Michigan with only one proper public access site. Other locations that are being used as access points are road endings. The river is a well-known site for walleye spawning and other fish species. It is also popular for power boating, kayaking, and canoeing. This project will make improvements to the only public access site at Steih Park.

MNRTF Grant Request:	\$269,400	(60%)
Matching Funds:	\$182,000	(40%)
Total Project Cost:	\$451,400	

TF21-0022 – Lake Huron Coastal Preserve Acquisition. Alabaster Township is seeking to acquire 145 acres of property along the Saginaw Bay to just south of Tawas, which includes one mile of Lake Huron frontage. This parcel is intended for public use and access and is immediately adjacent to the Iron Belle Trail. This is a \$2.5 million dollar project, which includes funding for acquisition, care, and future maintenance of the property.

MNRTF Grant Request:	\$1,700,000	(68%)
Matching Funds:	\$ 832,000	(32%)
Total Project Cost:	\$2,532,000	

He asked for the Board’s support in funding these two projects.

**Brad Jensen, Executive Director, Huron Pines**

Brad Jensen also expressed his support of Alabaster Township’s grant application TF21-0022. Just north of Bay City, it is about 70 miles to Tawas State Park. All properties along this 70-mile stretch traveling US-23 is in private ownership so you never see the lake. This 145-acre acquisition will provide access to Lake Huron and additional recreational opportunities, including access to the Iron Belle Trail which runs through this parcel of land. Huron Pines purchased the land from U.S. Gypsum at 15 percent below the appraised value just to keep it off the market and hold it for recreational development.

Board member Bill Rustem commented that he received a call from former Natural Resources Commissioner Keith Charters who also expressed his support of this project.

**Lisha Ramsdell, Associate Director, Huron Pines**

Lisha Ramsdell also expressed her support for grant application TF21-0022. Alabaster Township was unable to attend the meeting, so she read a letter from the township supervisor on their behalf. This is the first time Alabaster Township has applied for a MNRTF grant. US-23 bisects the property, with about 75 acres on the lake side and the remaining property being located on the other side of the highway.

**V. PRESENTATIONS FROM 2021 GRANT APPLICANTS**

Chair McDonough announced the Board will receive eight presentations on nine trust fund grant applications/projects. She asked that presenters adhere to their time. Questions by the Board were addressed during each presentation.

The August 2021 Trust Fund applications presented include:

**1. TF21-0138 – Belle River Acquisition, City of Marine City (St. Clair County)**

MNRTF Grant Request:	\$272,000	(74%)
Matching Funds:	\$ 96,000	(26%)
Total Project Cost:	\$368,000	

**2. TF21-0188 – Riverfront Land/Trail Acquisition in Downtown Ann Arbor, City of Ann Arbor (Washtenaw County)**

MNRTF Grant Request:	\$5,000,000	(66%)
Matching Funds:	\$2,594,500	(34%)
Total Project Cost:	\$7,594,500	

**3. TF21-0157 – Veterans Park and Hamtramck Stadium Restroom Renovation, City of Hamtramck (Wayne County)**

MNRTF Grant Request:	\$300,000	(75%)
Matching Funds:	\$100,000	(25%)
Total Project Cost:	\$400,000	

**4. TF21-0031 – Adado Riverfront Park Accessibility Improvements, City of Lansing (Ingham County)**

MNRTF Grant Request:	\$300,000	(48%)
Matching Funds:	\$335,900	(52%)
Total Project Cost:	\$635,900	

Director Eichinger complimented the city on their vision, for expanding the definition of universal accessibility to include people with development disabilities, sensory sensitivities, etc., and for considering how to expand and lean into what that means so that public spaces are welcoming to everybody.

**5. TF21-0124 – Patton Park Renovation and TF21-0125 - Romanowski Park Renovation, City of Detroit (Wayne County)**

TF21-0124

MNRTF Grant Request:	\$300,000	(47%)
Matching Funds:	\$350,000	(53%)
Total Project Cost:	\$650,000	

TF21-0125

MNRTF Grant Request:	\$300,000	(60%)
Matching Funds:	\$200,000	(40%)
Total Project Cost:	\$500,000	

6. **TF21-0016 – Lake Erie Metropark Nature Trail Improvement, Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority (Wayne County)**

MNRTF Grant Request:	\$300,000	(35%)
Matching Funds:	\$571,800	(65%)
Total Project Cost:	\$871,800	

Director Eichinger commented that the Board has talked previously about tying projects to the restoration of coastal marsh complexes and this project accomplishes that goal.

7. **TF21-0040 – Genoa Township Park Expansion, Genoa Township (Livingston County)**

MNRTF Grant Request:	\$ 300,000	(17%)
Matching Funds:	\$1,501,000	(83%)
Total Project Cost:	\$1,801,000	

8. **TF21-0071 – Melrose Township Circle Park and Parking Lot Acquisition, Melrose Township (Charlevoix County)**

MNRTF Grant Request:	\$1,824,000	(75%)
Matching Funds:	\$ 609,000	(25%)
Total Project Cost:	\$2,433,000	

Chair McDonough asked if there were any additional comments or questions on the presentations; none were offered.

The Board thanked the presenters and department staff for coordinating these presentations.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

**Withdrawal of Projects**

The following four project withdrawal requests were presented to the Board for their approval.

- TF18-0030 – Wise Road Acquisition, City of Lansing (Ingham County)  
Grant Amount: \$20,500;
- TF19-0024 – East St. Joseph Street Property, City of Lansing (Ingham County)  
Grant Amount: \$75,000;
- TF19-0025 – River Street Property, City of Lansing (Ingham County)  
Grant Amount: \$60,000; and
- TF20-0022 – Stanley Road Land Acquisition, Genesee County Parks/Recreation (Lapeer County)  
Grant Amount: \$250,100

All withdrawals total \$405,600.

Chair McDonough asked if there was any additional information to provide, and if the Board had any questions regarding the withdrawal requests. No additional information or questions were offered.

Chair McDonough called for a motion to accept the withdrawal of all four applications.

**MOVED BY RUSTEM, SUPPORTED BY HAMP, TO ADOPT WITHDRAWAL OF TF18-0030 - WISE ROAD ACQUISITION, TF19-0024 - EAST ST. JOSEPH STREET PROPERTY, AND TF19-0025 - RIVER STREET PROPERTY (INGHAM COUNTY); AND TF20-0022 - STANLEY ROAD LAND ACQUISITION (LAPEER COUNTY); TOTALING \$405,600. MOTION PASSED WITHOUT DISSENTING VOTE.**

### **Update from the Director**

Director Eichinger reported that he and Board member Rustem participated in meetings with the Governor regarding her announcement to invest \$250 million in American Rescue Plan (ARP) federal dollars to resolve the infrastructure backlog that exists in Michigan state parks. She also announced an additional \$150 million in ARP federal dollars for local park and recreation investment. Together, this totals a \$400 million investment across the parks and recreation spectrum in the State of Michigan.

He further announced that these dollars still need to be appropriated by the Legislature. In the meantime, administration's intent for the \$150 million is to allocate or grant those dollars similar to the existing Recreation Passport grant program. They are also pulling together a workgroup to figure out how to move the additional \$250 million through the state parks system over the next couple of years. Michigan state parks capital outlay improvements usually total \$20 million annually, so moving \$250 million through the system will require a lot of work and planning. However, this is a great opportunity for state parks and all parks and recreation partners across the state. Currently, there is no additional information as to the size of a project, program details, or match requirements. He asked the Board, staff, and local units to consider how they will use this one-time, transformational investment if/when the dollars become available in the most efficient and effective manner for their communities. This will be a historic investment in the state and local parks systems statewide.

The Director will provide additional updates as things progress.

### **Update on MNRTF Staff Activities**

Dan Lord thanked the grant coordinators for working with applicants and pulling together today's presentations, as well as Mike Chuff for running the presentations and coordinating things behind the scenes. He also thanked all presenters for attending this first in-person meeting since early 2020.

He also reported that some restrictions have been lifted so on-site visits have resumed. Grants staff are also wrapping up group scoring, with the hopes of releasing preliminary scoring by mid-September. This will provide grant applicants the opportunity to review their preliminary scores and enhance their applications before final scoring is set.

Dan further reported that there have been conversations around development funding across the three programs and what that looks like in population centers. Staff did not have all census data pulled together the way they wanted to present that information at this meeting, but they will present it at the October meeting in Detroit.

Staff are also working on program booklet updates, enhancements to the system, and are already thinking about the next funding cycle.

VII. BOARD PACKET REFERENCE MATERIALS

- MNRTF Financial Report
- DNR Real Estate Report – MNRTF State Acquisitions
- MNRTF Completed Projects Report
- MNRTF Open Projects Status Report

Chair McDonough asked the Board if they had any questions regarding the reference materials; none were offered.

VIII. OTHER MATTERS AS PROPERLY BROUGHT BEFORE THE BOARD

None.

IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair McDonough announced the next meeting of the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Board is scheduled for Wednesday, October 20, 2021, beginning at 9:00 a.m. The meeting is currently scheduled to be held in Detroit. Information regarding the location and format of the meeting will be posted on the Board's website.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Chair McDonough asked for additional comments or discussion. None were offered.

She then asked for a motion to adjourn.

**MOVED BY EICHINGER, SUPPORTED BY RUSTEM, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. MOTION PASSED WITHOUT DISSENTING VOTE.**

Chair McDonough thanked the Board members, staff, and presenters.

The meeting adjourned at 11:22 a.m.

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Erin McDonough, Chairperson  
Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund  
Board of Trustees

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Dan Lord, Manager  
Grants Management Section  
DNR Finance and Operations Division

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DATE