



## MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

Minutes of April 19, 2023

9:00 AM

Michigan Nature Association  
2310 Science Parkway, Suite 100  
Okemos, Michigan 48864

Chair Hamp called the meeting of the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) Board of Trustees (Board) to order at 9:00 a.m., Wednesday, April 19, 2023.

#### I. INTRODUCTIONS

The following Board members were present:

Steve Hamp, Chair; from the City of Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County  
Bill Rustem; from Alaiedon Township, Ingham County  
Dr. Brandy Brown; from the City of Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo County  
Chris MacInnes, from the Village of Beulah, Benzie County  
Shannon Lott, DNR Acting Director; from the Village of Webberville, Ingham County

The following Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Grants Management Section staff introduced themselves: Dan Lord, Assistant Chief, Finance and Operations Division; Mike Chuff, Financial Specialist; Charamy Cleary, Alexandria Galloway, Samantha Davis, Merrie Carlock, and Riley Millard; Grant Coordinators.

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

Dan Lord announced that Clay Summers has accepted the position of Grants Management Section Manger. His first day will be May 15, 2023.

##### a. Michigan Nature Association Overview – Garret Johnson

Garret had a conflict and could not make the meeting.

#### II. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FOR MEETING OF February 15, 2023

Chair Hamp called for adoption of the minutes for the February 15, 2023, MNRTF Board meeting.

**MOVED BY RUSTEM, SUPPORTED BY MACINNES, TO ADOPT THE  
MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 15, 2023, MNRTF BOARD MEETING.  
MOTION PASSED WITHOUT DISSENTING VOTE.**

III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA FOR MEETING OF April 19, 2023

Chair Hamp called for adoption of the agenda for the April 19, 2023, MNRTF Board Meeting.

**MOVED BY RUSTEM, SUPPORTED BY MACINNES, TO ADOPT THE  
AGENDA OF THE APRIL 19, 2023, MNRTF BOARD MEETING.  
MOTION PASSED WITHOUT DISSENTING VOTE.**

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

a. Chris Bunch, Executive Director, Six Rivers Land Conservancy

Chris Bunch thanked the Board for the privilege of speaking and expressed his gratitude to the Board for volunteering to manage this fabulous fund. Mr. Bunch provided a brief update on the tour that is part of the June MNRTF meeting. Six Rivers Land Conservancy is part of some applications before the Board, including the Turtle Woods Acquisition in Troy. Six Rivers Land Conservancy has been involved in that project for 30 years now! Highland Township is coming back before the Board. Six Rivers Land Conservancy is directly supporting or involved with 7 projects before the Board; 4 acquisition projects and 3 development projects. Mr. Bunch expressed his excitement for the Casco Township development grant application as Six Rivers Land Conservancy was involved in helping the township acquire the park, along with MNRTF funding.

Mr. Bunch also discussed how things have evolved over the past few years with the COVID shutdown, economic impacts, economic inputs, and new Board members. Therefore, Chris wanted to revisit what the conservancy does within their region and express his thanks to the Board for the work they do in the big picture of public access and public recreation.

Six Rivers is a land conservancy, they are about land conservation. Sustaining the quality of the environment and the communities that we live in. They are very committed to access for recreation. But as a land conservancy their focus is on the land conservation component, large tract unstructured recreation. They are committed to preserving ecological integrity and natural features for their intrinsic values. Not just structured recreation, but the value of nature for the wholeness of the community. There are 8 million acres of public land in Michigan with only 200,000 acres of public land in southeast Michigan. Six Rivers Land Conservancy would like to see that adjust. Six Rivers Land Conservancy recognizes that the MNRTF is a competitive program which at times can create some creative tension. Therefore, Six Rivers Land Conservancy is supporting 7 applications in addition to 2 that they have a direct stake in. As we continue to evolve the MNRTF, Chris Bunch continues to believe that we should advocate the important to exercise some latitude in judgement and not try to crush everything into formulated inputs and responses.

b. Amy O'Leary, Executive Director, Southeast Michigan Council of Governments

Amy O'Leary thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak. Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) works with local units of government including 7 counties in southeast Michigan, which include approximately 180 members. Ms. O'Leary detailed a Green Task Force, which is growing our resiliency, equity, and economy with nature. To accomplish that, they are looking at large tracts of land and park space in the southeast region of Michigan.

Ms. O’Leary detailed the need for increased access and equitable improvement for residents of southeast Michigan. The region is home to 4.8 million residents. Last year the southeast region submitted 24 applications to the Board, of those 6 were awarded. That represents 13% of the statewide awards. This level of investment has been consistent across DNR grant programs. SEMCOG and the Green Task Force do not believe this is consistent with the recommendation of the SCORP. Southeast Michigan communities have a greater demand with more people to serve, but they also have greater barriers with greater disparities to overcome.

Historic investment does not show the benefit of the scoring criteria that is intended to benefit urban areas. SEMCOG has observed a 5-10% decline in MNRTF investment since the urban area criteria has been put in place. Considering the investments per capita southeast Michigan is significantly lower than other parts of the state. Even with the relatively high investment over the program’s history, the impact to the people and their quality of life is much lower than they would like. These programs simply are not serving the region. Macomb County is the third largest county in population and third from last in the state’s per capita investment from the MNRTF.

SEMCOG is supporting 24 applications from the region. SEMCOG and the DNR need to do better. It’s not about reviewing simply what comes to the Board. We need to go to the communities to guide and help them.

## V. NEW BUSINESS

### a. Status of MNRTF Appropriation Bill, HB4238 – Dan Lord

HB4238 (Board recommendations from December 2022) was introduced March 9, 2023. There has been a lot of change over in the legislature, and they did not take up the bill at that time. The bill remains with the appropriations committee. This is not out of the norm, as it has ranged from March to August historically.

### b. Webinar Summary – Charamy Cleary

Grant Coordinators and Jon Mayes hosted an online webinar in February 2023 which included over 400 participants. The webinar provided a review of program updates, walked applicants through the application requirements and process, allowed for an online questions and answer session, and followed up with an in-person session at the mParks Conference.

### c. 2023 Application Summary – Alexandria Galloway

Alexandria Galloway provided a summary of 2023 applicants. All data is as of April 2023. April 1 is the deadline for the MNRTF, the Recreation Passport program, and the Land and Water Conservation Fund program.

- Recreation Passport \$150,000 max
- Land and Water Conservation Fund \$500,000 max with a 50% match
- MNRTF \$300,000 max for development; no max for acquisition

In 2023, 139 applications have been received (112 development / 27 acquisition). This is on par with our 10-year average. MNRTF funding request for 2023 is currently \$60M (\$29M in development and \$31M in acquisition).

Alexandria Galloway also shared a map depicting geographic distribution of local and state development and acquisition grant applications.

d. Status of American Rescue Plan Act Funding – Daniel Lord

One year ago, the DNR was appropriated \$450M. \$250M went to the backlog of infrastructure projects within our state park system. The other \$200M came to Finance and Operations Division. Three direct projects had allocations within the statute: \$60M for the City of Detroit – Joe Lewis Greenway, \$55M to Grand Rapids – Grand River Greenway, and \$20M in the Upper Peninsula – Copper Peak Ski Facility. The remaining \$65M was launched as the SPARK program. SPARK has a very diverse advisory group who met about six times in 2022 to establish the scoring criteria. SPARK has no match requirement and a maximum request of \$1M.

The DNR launched Round one in October 2022. The application process closed in December with a grand total request of \$208M! There is a press release scheduled for this coming Friday that will announce the next round of SPARK.

Chair Hamp complimented Grants staff for all their accomplishments. Acting Director Lott also expressed her gratitude for all the hard work of Grants staff in 2022. Staff received a round of applause.

e. Calculation of Inflation on Development Grants – Chair Hamp

Chair Hamp summarized increasing the maximum development grant from \$300,000. The Board has been reviewing this topic for approximately three years. Chair Hamp reminded the Board that it was an action of the Board in 2011 to roll the maximum \$500,000 development grant back to \$300,000. Since then, we have been able to hold our corpus and grow it. In today's dollars, \$300,000 does not buy what it did in 2011. Clay Summers with mParks summarized survey results of 180 municipal directors; the results were consistent that an increase is needed. Most partners selected the \$400,000 - \$500,000 range.

Bill Rustem proposed a motion to raise the development grant maximum for the 2024 cycle to \$400,000.

**MOVED BY RUSTEM, SUPPORTED BY MACINNES, TO SUPPORT THE INCREASE IN THE MAXIMUM DEVELOPMENT GRANT TO \$400,000. MOTION PASSED WITHOUT DISSENTING VOTE.**

f. Director's Update – Acting Director Lott

Acting Director Lott mentioned that all Board members received an email about Camp Grayling. A press release will be issued next week with the DNR's decision on the Camp Grayling expansion request. Acting Director Lott also expressed her excitement for the upcoming tours.

g. Update on MNRTF Staff Activities – Dan Lord

Dan Lord detailed that in addition to the three open grant categories, and SPARK opening in May, staff are reviewing a lot of five-year recreation plans that are an eligibility requirement for our programs. There are over 200 plans that require administrative review, a lot of back-and-forth communication, and summer site visits.

h. Withdrawal of Projects – Samantha Davis & Charamy Cleary

Two projects submitted for withdrawal include:

- TF20-0071 – Maple Grove Township Park Addition (Saginaw County), Grant Amount \$23,100
- TF20-0048 – Blackman Charter Township, Canary Lane River Access (Jackson County), Grant Amount \$45,000

**MOVED BY RUSTEM, SUPPORTED BY BROWN, TO ADOPT WITHDRAWAL OF TF20-0071, MAPLE GROVE TOWNSHIP PARK ADDITION; AND TF20-0048, BLACKMAN CHARTER TOWNSHIP, CANARY LANE RIVER ACCESS, FOR A TOTAL OF \$68,100. MOTION PASSED WITHOUT DISSENTING VOTE.**

VI. BOARD PACKET REFERENCE MATERIALS

Chair Hamp reminded the Board that all remaining meeting materials are contained in the Board's packet of materials and will entertain any questions about those materials. No discussion of the meeting materials took place.

VII. OTHER MATTERS AS PROPERLY BROUGHT BEFORE THE BOARD

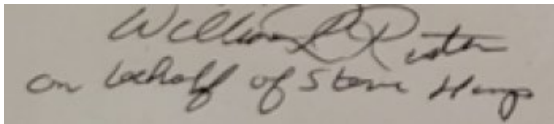
VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next meeting of the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Board is scheduled for 9:00 AM, Wednesday, June 14, 2023, at the River Raisin Battlefield Visitors Center, 333 North Dixie Highway, Monroe, Michigan 48162. Information will be posted in advance on the Board's website.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Hamp asked for additional comments or discussion. None was offered.

The meeting adjourned at 10:19 a.m.



Steve Hamp, Chairperson  
Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund  
Board of Trustees



on behalf of  
Dan Lord, Acting Manager  
Grants Management Section  
DNR Finance and Operations Division

7/7/2023

DATE