



## **MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND**

### **BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**

**Minutes of February 15, 2023**

9:00 AM

Michigan Nature Association, Okemos

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, February 15, 2023. Chair Hamp asked for a moment of silence to reflect on the unfortunate incident at Michigan State University. Chair Hamp also thanked Garret with Michigan Nature Association (MNA) for hosting the Board on such short notice and asked him to say a few words. Garret thanked everyone for coming and stated the MNA is the oldest conservancy in Michigan with a statewide footprint of 180 areas throughout Michigan. The MNA building is a collaborative space used by different nature-based associations.

#### **I. INTRODUCTIONS**

##### **a. Introduction of New Board Member, Shannon Lott**

Chair Hamp introduced Shannon Lott, Acting Director of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Shannon was previously the Resource Deputy Director of the DNR with 25 years of experience.

##### **b. Introduction of New Board Member, Chris MacInnes**

Chair Hamp introduced Chris MacInnes. Chris and her husband own and operate Crystal Mountain Resort. Chris adds some welcome geographic diversity to the board. Chris expressed her excitement and honor to serve on the Board.

The following Board members were present:

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

Chair Hamp indicated that Dr. Brandy Brown was unable to attend today due to an illness.

Dan Lord, Assistant Chief, Finance and Operations Division, Department of Natural Resources, introduced himself. Dan thanked Garret again for the last-minute accommodations. Dan also commented that this is the first time the Board has had a female majority! The following DNR staff also introduced themselves: Jon Mayes, Recreation Grants Program Manager; Erin Campbell, Conversion Officer; Charamy Cleary, Alexandria Galloway, Merrie Carlock, and Riley Millard; Grant Coordinators.

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

II. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FOR MEETING OF DECEMBER 14, 2022

Chair Hamp called for adoption of the minutes for the December 14, 2022, MNRTF Board meeting.

**MOVED BY RUSTEM, SUPPORTED BY MACINNES, TO ADOPT THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 14, 2022, MNRTF BOARD MEETING. MOTION PASSED WITHOUT DISSENTING VOTE.**

III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA FOR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 15, 2023

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

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

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

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

Chris recognized Grants staff for their efforts in managing SPARK Grants in addition to traditional grant programs. Chris welcomed the new Board members and offered to host the tour of Board members for a Down River area tour in June. Six Rivers Land Conservancy will be bringing the Highland Township acquisition back before the Board, along with a project in Troy in collaboration with the school district and Oakland County Parks. That project includes 70 acres of forested wetlands with state-threatened spotted turtles.

b. Justin Gish, Land Protection Specialist, Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy

Not present.

c. Wayne Koppa, Crawford County Trails Commission

Wayne is a 26-year member of the Crawford County Trails Committee. Crawford County is known for its various trails and the best trail is the one that goes to Hartwick Pines. Many of these trails have been built by the road commission with Michigan Department of Transportation funding. The road commission is interested in building trails using MNRTF grants, but they are not recognized as an eligible applicant. Crawford County is very rural and does not have formal parks and recreation staff to apply for MNRTF grants.

Bill Rustem and Chair Hamp asked questions and encouraged Wayne to work with DNR staff to figure out a way to move forward. Dan Lord clarified that eligible applicants must be legally constituted to provide public recreation.

V. NEW BUSINESS

a. Status of MNRTF Appropriation Bill – Jon Mayes

Jon Mayes reminded the Board that each year we need to have a bill passed by the legislature for the recommendations the Board puts forth the previous December. That bill has gone to the legislature.

Dan Lord stated that Jon Mayes and Jessica Mistak are talking with legislators on Friday. Bill Rustem offered to help answer questions.

b. Reflect on MNRTF Annual Report – Jon Mayes

Jon distributed printed reports to the Board and made extra copies available to the public.

c. DNR Recreation Grant Virtual Workshop Plan – Jon Mayes

We have a virtual Recreation Grant Workshop planned for Thursday, February 16 at 1:00 p.m. Over 425 individuals have looked at the announcement. We expect a good turnout. We will be discussing Trust Fund, Recreation Passport, and Land and Water Conservation Fund grant opportunities.

d. Status of American Rescue Plan Act Funding (SPARK) – Dan Lord

Dan Lord complimented DNR staff for their efforts. Traditional recreation grant programs typically see about 150 applications requesting \$55 million; SPARK received 462 applications requesting \$280 million resulting in 3 times the number of applications and 5 times the dollar amount normally requested. SPARK round one resulted in 21 communities receiving \$14.2 million: a good mix of projects throughout the state. Alex Galloway helped by working with GIS staff to determine different ways to evaluate communities. Six projects were awarded the top \$1 million amount and average grant award amounts combined was \$675,000. We plan to hold an onboarding meeting in March with awarded grantees. Staff have begun discussing what the next round of funding will look like. Approximately \$50 million will be available and the timeline will be announced after April 1.

Bill Rustem asked for the list of the 6 communities receiving \$1 million. Dan Lord stated City of Flint, Village of Cassopolis (Cass County), City of Trenton (Wayne County), City of Albion (Calhoun County), Village of Sebawaing (Huron County), and the Village of Hersey (Osceola County). Chair Hamp acknowledged staff effort and community need for this type of funding.

e. Land and Water Acquisitions – Jon Mayes

Jon Mayes stated that Land and Water will have around \$7 million available. This is the first time since the 1980s that acquisition has been on the table for Land and Water.

f. Current Status of MNRTF Conversions – Erin Campbell

Erin Campbell thanked the Board for the opportunity to provide a report. Erin provided a refresher for our new Board members on what a conversion is. When a site is acquired with grant monies, it is encumbered in perpetuity. A conversion happens when a portion of that property is not available for public recreation. For the Trust Fund, the DNR is managing 33 active conversions in 14 counties. Erin works very closely with grantees. Currently, 3 are in review with Oakland County.

Bill Rustem asked about mitigation. Erin said that mitigation can be replacement land, which is not necessarily acreage to acreage but market value replacement (equal or higher). Mitigation also involves recreation utility e.g., a ballpark doesn't need to be replaced with ballpark if replacement meets the current recreational needs of community.

Chair Hamp asked what happens if a community cannot mitigate. Erin said this does happen e.g., City of Ecorse does not have replacement land; in this situation, the DNR offers flexibility as to what replacement land can look like. The DNR has more flexibility with Trust Fund conversions and less with Land and Water.

Even if a conversion is active, the community can still apply for funding but will receive a point deduction for future grant applications. Shannon Lott asked if there's a timeline for resolution. Erin

said no, they can sit for years or decades. Erin has taken on a more active role in reaching out to communities to identify solutions. Chris MacInnes asked if authority for conversions rests with DNR. Dan Lord said that there's a Board policy that covers conversions. The Board does have the ability to raise a community's score up to eliminate the point deduction. Bill Rustem asked for the rationale for not letting communities pay the Trust Fund grant back. Erin said that Trust Fund is modeled after Land and Water which sets the precedent for mitigation. Erin also said that it could be dangerous to allow communities to sell Trust Fund land to developers. Dan expanded the importance of keeping recreational land in locations where it may be limited. Bill Rustem asked about the geographic area that could be explored for mitigation. Erin explained options that include weighing proximity and recreational gains.

Chris Bunch offered that Heart of the Lakes may be able to help DNR resolve conversions in some communities. Chris will reach out to Erin directly.

Bill Rustem asked about the geographic scope of conversions. Erin said they are all over the state and some are small, and some are large. The DNR is offering flexibility to help communities avoid conversions, e.g., work in road right-of-ways. Bill liked the idea of having private sector help with resolving conversions.

Dan Lord mentioned there are communities such as Idlewild that rely on grants for recreation and could potentially use help from the private sector.

Chair Hamp said it's encouraging to see how the DNR looks at this issue and pays attention to communities that are under-resourced.

Erin Campbell said that the DNR updated the policy and procedures booklet for conversions to help local communities better understand responsibilities.

#### g. Withdrawal of Projects

The two projects submitted for withdrawal include:

- TF21-0015 – Linden Park Pickleball Courts Development (Genesee County); Grant Amount: \$296,000
- TF20-0110 – Village of Milford (Oakland County); Grant Amount: \$43,800

Chair Hamp called for a motion to accept the withdrawal of both projects.

**MOVED BY RUSTEM, SUPPORTED BY MACINNES, TO ADOPT  
WITHDRAWAL OF TF21-0015, LINDEN PARK PICKLEBALL COURTS  
DEVELOPMENT; AND TF20-0110, VILLAGE OF MILFORD.  
MOTION PASSED WITHOUT DISSENTING VOTE.**

Chair Hamp clarified that the returned funds from these projects will be added to the December 2023 available funds.

#### h. Summer Tour and Meeting Locations – Jon Mayes

Jon Mayes said that the June meeting is typically in the Lower Peninsula and the August meeting is in the Upper Peninsula. Jon said that the City of Sault Ste. Marie tentatively offered to host in August. There are some neat things happening at Alford Park and Chair Hamp mentioned a stop at Father Marquette.

Board discussed visiting Down River in June and taking Chris Bunch up on his offer.

i. Update on MNRTF Staff Activities – Dan Lord

Staff are taking a breath from SPARK and focusing on other duties including review of 5-Year Recreation Plans, getting ready for the mParks conference, the recreation grant webinar, and preparations for April 1 recreation grant deadlines.

Dan Lord mentioned that Jessica Mistak is moving back to her position in Fisheries Division and the Grants Section Manager position is posted with hopes to fill by April. The Executive budget was released by the Governor last week and highlighted areas include invasive species management, renewable energy/energy efficiency, getting every 4<sup>th</sup> grader into a State Park, and staff support for Finance and Operations Division. Shannon Lott added that \$64 million for Brandon Road Lock and Dam invasive carp control and pay equity for Conservation Officers were also included in the supplemental.

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

Chair Hamp announced the next meeting of the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Board is scheduled for 9:00 AM, Wednesday, April 19, 2023. Information will be posted in advance on the Board's website.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 10:35 a.m.



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



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

04/19/2023

DATE