

MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

Minutes of June 16, 2021
Virtual Webinar Meeting
9:00 AM

Dan Lord, Grants Section Manager, Department of Natural Resources (DNR), provided an overview to all participants on how the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Board's virtual webinar meeting will be conducted and how to navigate the screens.

Chair McDonough called the meeting of the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) Board of Trustees (Board) to order at 9:02 a.m., Wednesday, June 16, 2021.

I. INTRODUCTIONS

The following Board members remotely participated in this meeting, as permitted under the Ingham County Board of Commissioners Resolution #21-138, Public Act 228 of 2020 and DNR Policy 17.01-07, from the following locations in the State of Michigan:

Erin McDonough, Chair; City of Williamston, Ingham County
Sam Cummings, Vice-Chair; City of Grand Rapids, Kent County
Steve Hamp; Crystal Lake Township, Benzie County
Bill Rustem; Alaedon Township, Ingham County
Dan Eichinger, DNR Director; Village of Lake Isabella, Isabella County

Dan Lord introduced himself and Grants Management staff: Jon Mayes, MNRTF Grants Program Manager; Mike Chuff, MNRTF Financial Specialist; Merrie Carlock, Lindsay Ross, Andrea Stay, and Alexandria McBride, Grant Coordinators; Yolanda Taylor, Administrative Assistant to the Board; and Erik Eklund, DNR Finance and Operations Division Chief Budget Officer, who will address the MNRTF Financial Update or other budget questions.

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

II. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FOR MEETING OF APRIL 21, 2021

Chair McDonough called for adoption of the minutes for the April 21, 2021 MNRTF Board meeting.

**MOVED BY EICHINGER, SUPPORTED BY RUSTEM, TO ADOPT THE
MINUTES OF THE APRIL 21, 2021 MNRTF BOARD MEETING.
MOTION PASSED WITHOUT DISSENTING VOTE.**

III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA FOR MEETING OF JUNE 16, 2021

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

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

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Terry Spencer, Monitor Township Supervisor

TF21-0033 - Kawkawlin River Access Improvements, Monitor Charter Township (Bay County)

Terry Spencer expressed his support for grant application TF21-0033 – Kawkawlin River Access Improvements, to increase and provide access to the Kawkawlin River in Monitor Township. The township is asking for:

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

Currently, there are only two access points to the Kawkawlin River. One access point is a state-owned site, and the other is located at Steih Park, the location for these improvements. Terry gave an overview of the project and the proposed renovations and improvements at Steih Park.

This proposal was previously presented to the Board, but they made improvements to their plan and are once again seeking support for funding. Michael Kelly, Director of the Great Lakes Office, The Conservation Fund, also spoke in support of this project at the Board’s April meeting.

Chris Bunch, Executive Director, Six Rivers Land Conservancy

DNR Infrastructure, October Tour/Meeting, and Moving 2020 Projects to Completion

Chris Bunch expressed his continued gratitude to the Board and staff for providing opportunities to preserve and provide access to the state’s natural resources. He also expressed his excitement in the Governor’s announcement to invest \$250 million in infrastructure improvements to the state parks system and offers their assistance and support to the department.

He also reiterated that the conservancy is still ready and looking forward to providing the Board and staff with a tour of projects in and around the City of Detroit and hosting the meeting in October. The October meeting also coincides with the annual convention luncheon at the Detroit Athletic Club. They would be thrilled to have the Board and staff join them. Chris is seeking confirmation from the Board so they can move forward with making final plans and arrangements.

Lisha Ramsdell, Associate Director, Huron Pines

TF21-0022 – Lake Huron Coastal Preserve Acquisition, Alabaster Township (Iosco County)

Lisha Ramsdell expressed her support for grant application TF21-0022 – Lake Huron Coastal Preserve Acquisition. Huron Pines is a partner on this project. This project is scheduled to be presented to the Board and it is the first trust fund application from the township. Community support for this project is strong. Not often do Great Lakes shorelines become available. She asked that the Board support this acquisition/project. It is a large project for a small community so acquiring funds is difficult, but this project is important to the preservation of the shoreline and to the community.

Dana Burd, Founder, Friends of Pier Cove Park

TF21-1094 – Pier Cove Park Renovation, Ganges Township (Allegan County)

Dana Burd is a volunteer with Ganges Township, helping the township with their plans to improve the park and public beach access. Pier Cove is a small park in Allegan County that was closed at

the onset of the pandemic because of beach erosion. Dana got together with some friends/family and offered to do whatever they could to reopen the park. They repaired the stairs and started the Friends of Pier Cove Park, raising \$10,000 in donations to install additional sheet piling to protect against erosion, and another \$15,000 from local breweries and other community organizations and events. He asked the Board to support the township's efforts to preserve and improve this park.

V. PRESENTATIONS FROM 2021 GRANT APPLICANTS

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

The June 2021 Trust Fund applications presented include:

1. **TF21-0113 – Pewabic Hill Mountain Bike Trail System Development, City of Iron Mountain (Dickinson County);** Jordan Stanchina, City Manager

MNRTF Grant Request:	\$183,200	(70%)
Matching Funds:	\$ 79,000	(30%)
Total Project Cost:	\$262,200	

2. **TF21-0022 – Lake Huron Coastal Preserve Acquisition, Alabaster Township (Iosco County);** Stephanie Wentworth, Township Supervisor; and Heather Huffstutler, Huron Pines

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

3. **TF21-0137 – AuSable Township Iron Belle Trail Development, AuSable Township (Iosco County);** Leisa Sutton, Township Superintendent; and Emily Meyerson, Consultant

MNRTF Grant Request:	\$ 300,000	(11%)
Matching Funds:	\$2,478,000	(89%)
Total Project Cost:	\$2,778,000	

4. **TF21-0127 – Lake County ORV Park, Webber Township; and TF21-0141 – Lake County ORV Park Development (Lake County);** Tobi Lake, Lake County Administrator; and Ryan Coffey, MSU Extension

TF21-0127

MNRTF Grant Request:	\$183,800	(74%)
Matching Funds:	\$ 64,600	(26%)
Total Project Cost:	\$248,400	

TF21-0141

MNRTF Grant Request:	\$300,000	(63%)
Matching Funds:	\$180,000	(37%)
Total Project Cost:	\$480,000	

5. **TF21-0070 – Negaunee/Marquette Township Property Acquisition, Iron Ore Heritage Trail (Marquette County);** Carol Fulsher, Administrator, Iron Ore Heritage Trail

MNRTF Grant Request:	\$310,000	(75%)
Matching Funds:	\$104,400	(25%)
Total Project Cost:	\$414,400	

6. **TF21-0053 – Peek-a-Boo Trail Development, Clark Township (Mackinac County);** Dave Murray, Deputy Supervisor; and Mark Clymer, Township Supervisor

MNRTF Grant Request:	\$200,300	(75%)
Matching Funds:	\$ 66,800	(25%)
Total Project Cost:	\$267,100	

7. **TF21-0068 – Winter Sports Park Hockey Rink Pavilion Development; and TF21-0108 – Boor Property Skyline Expansion Acquisition;** Kendall Klingelsmith, City of Petoskey Parks and Recreation Director

TF21-0068

MNRTF Grant Request:	\$298,000	(50%)
Matching Funds:	\$302,000	(50%)
Total Project Cost:	\$600,000	

TF21-0108

MNRTF Grant Request:	\$187,500	(75%)
Matching Funds:	\$ 62,500	(25%)
Total Project Cost:	\$250,000	

8. **TF21-0128 – Lake Michigan Property Acquisition, City of Manistique (Schoolcraft County);** Kevin Trevillian, Coleman Engineering Company; and Sheila Aldrich, City Manager

MNRTF Grant Request:	\$449,000	(75%)
Matching Funds:	\$150,100	(25%)
Total Project Cost:	\$599,100	

9. **TF21-0204 – Baraga Waterfront Park Addition, Village of Baraga (Baraga County);** Greg Kingstrom, U.P. Engineers and Architects, Inc., on behalf of the Village of Baraga

MNRTF Grant Request:	\$250,000	(49%)
Matching Funds:	\$265,000	(51%)
Total Project Cost:	\$515,000	

10. **TF21-0195 - North Sturgeon River Recreation Acquisition (Baraga County);** Wendy Goodreau, Baraga County Clerk; and Carl Lindquist, Superior Watershed Partnership

MNRTF Grant Request:	\$2,737,500	(75%)
Matching Funds:	\$ 912,500	(25%)
Total Project Cost:	\$3,650,000	

Chair McDonough had to leave the meeting temporarily at 11:15 a.m.; Bill Rustem led the meeting.

Rustem asked if there were any additional comments or questions on the presentations.

Director Eichinger commented that there is a lot of natural resource value with this project. He also commented that, over the past 10-15 years, there seems to be a positive shift in the perspective and perception on the value of public land and publicly accessible land, and how important public recreation is to the economy of communities like Baraga County.

Chair McDonough returned to the meeting at 11:25 a.m.

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

VI. NEW BUSINESS

Update on the Department's Public Land Strategy Process

Scott Whitcomb, DNR Senior Advisor for Wildlife and Public Lands, gave the Board an update on the status of the Public Land Strategy review. As a reminder, the DNR manages a lot of public land, but this review focuses on the 4.6 million acres of public lands and 6.4 million acres of mineral rights that are managed on behalf of the residents of Michigan.

He reiterated the Director's comments, stating there has been a lot of debates over the years on how land should be managed when it is in the public domain. In 2012, Public Act 240 of 2012 directed the department to complete a land strategy review. It was completed and submitted to the Legislature in 2013 and adopted by the Governor under Public Act 240 of 2018. Public Act 240 of 2018 subsequently required the DNR to submit an updated public land strategy by July 1, 2021.

Because of the overlap, the Public Land Strategy review ('sprint') team has been focusing on and implementing components of the 2013 strategy while developing the current Public Land Strategy. Their efforts included reviewing project boundaries to reduce private inholdings by one million acres. Review was completed in November and the Director approved the new boundaries in December 2020. The sprint team is also reviewing ten counties at a time (totaling 240,000 acres) to identify lands that the department would like to retain versus lands that are considered surplus for disposal. Most of these lands came to the department through tax reversion. The first ten counties are complete and will be presented to the Director for action in July 2021. This entire process will take a few years to complete.

The 2013 Public Land Strategy also required the department to submit a report to the Legislature on land transaction activities that have occurred implementing the land strategy. This report was submitted to the Legislature in May 2021 and can be found at www.michigan.gov/publiclands, along with the Public Land Strategy.

Scott covered some other aspects that the land review sprint team focused on, including goals, strategic initiatives, key land acquisition strategies, high level outcomes, and public stakeholder input. He highlighted that the diversity, equity and inclusion and accessibility components of this plan were very well received by the public.

Hamp commented that the Public Land Strategy goals and initiatives align with the goals and priorities of the Board. Whitcomb responded that the land review sprint team reviewed everything from the Governor's and the Director's priorities to the MNRTF, SCORP (State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan), and divisional plans to align all strategies as much as possible.

Chair McDonough commented that she has seen these goals and strategies in so many different plans throughout the years so it's nice to see them being consolidated into one plan. She further

commented that it takes a long time to achieve outcomes but, for over a decade, the department has already been implementing a lot of these initiatives.

Scott closed by stating that the department is targeting July 1 to submit the updated Public Land Strategy to the Legislature and are hoping for adoption as soon as possible. The department will then focus on implementation and tracking measurable objectives.

Members of the Board commented that it is obvious public lands and economic development are at the forefront, which is evidenced by the increase in applications received by the Board. The Board thanked Scott for the update and congratulated the sprint team and the department on their efforts.

Overview of Historical Development Application Requests and Grant Awards

Dan Lord and Mike Chuff, MNRTF Financial Specialist, provided the Board with data/metrics on development projects, a theme that the Board and staff will revisit moving towards grant funding decision-making and implementing Proposal 1. At the April meeting, a suggestion was made to consider increasing development grant funding from \$300,000 to \$500,000.

In response to this suggestion, information was provided to the Board outlining funding that has been granted by the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and the Recreation Passport (RP) grant program (two other programs that contribute to development grant funding), in addition to the MNRTF. The development grant funding maximums for each program, per application, are:

- RP = \$150,000 maximum
- MNRTF = \$300,000 maximum; and
- LWCF = increased to \$500,000 maximum this year.

The information presented gave a three-tiered approach of identifying the total number of development grant applications received, amounts requested, number of grants funded, and the total amounts awarded for all three programs since 2014. Dan also noted that, with the passage of the Great American Outdoors Act, they now have regular and reoccurring higher development amounts within the LWCF. This year, that grant award number will probably be between \$6 and \$7 million. What this shows is that there is an additional \$6 to \$7 million available in additional development grant funding, outside of the MNRTF program.

Dan further commented that the more people that participate in the RP program, with ten percent going towards the RP grant program, more dollars become available.

Chair McDonough asked if the Board would like to see any additional information or data at the next Board meeting.

Rustem would like to see distribution of development grants in urban communities versus rural communities, based on population density, and where those dollars are going geographically. Dan responded they can provide this information, pulling these two other programs in, using the U.S. Census data.

Acquisition and Development Combined Applications

This topic was tabled for a future meeting.

Update on MNRTF Staff Activities

Dan Lord announced there were no withdrawal requests submitted for this meeting. He thanked the presenters and the grant coordinators for identifying the subset of applications that were presented today. A great mix of projects and contributing partners.

Dan reported that on May 6, the Governor signed the MNRTF supplemental appropriation bill into law. This year was unique as she signed the bill at the Discovery Pier in Elmwood Township on the west arm of the Grand Traverse Bay. He thanked the project partners and stakeholders for participating in this event. Now that the supplemental has been signed, 2020 grant awards are being executed and projects can begin moving forward.

Staff are currently reviewing the 2021 round of applications for administrative completeness, doing initial scoring and, with the department and the Office of the State Employer's approval to travel again, site visits have resumed. A few ribbon cutting ceremonies have also been held:

- The Joe Louis Greenway in Detroit, a comprehensive multi-use trail system that will connect all neighborhoods around the boundary of the city down to the riverfront; and
- The Ottawa Bend Area in Georgetown Township (Ottawa County), a multi-phase acquisition that the department has participated in.

Both projects received MNRTF funding by the Board.

They continue to work through hurdles with the new on-line grant management system. There is a recorded webinar posted on-line to help applicants navigate this new system, and the department is starting to navigate through the return-to-work and remote work agreements, policies, and procedures.

Dan turned the meeting over to the Director to provide an update on the Governor's announcement to invest \$250 million in Michigan state parks infrastructure.

Update on the Governor's Announcement to Invest \$250 Million to Michigan State Parks

Director Eichinger reported that he and Bill Rustem had the opportunity to participate in the Governor's historic announcement to invest \$250 million federal dollars from the American Recovery Plan into addressing the maintenance and capital backlog in the state park system. This additional funding will give the department the opportunity to reinvest and upgrade a 102-year-old state park infrastructure system, which will also be an investment in and provide economic benefit to the local, surrounding communities.

The dollars still need to be appropriated through the Legislature. The Director will update the Board as things progress.

Dan closed by thanking the production crew behind the scenes and all staff for coordinating, conducting, and participating in this meeting.

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.

Rustem commented that the Crystal Lake property has moved into the completed phase. He hopes the department will develop it into another state game area.

He also asked about two open grant projects. One is a trail in Detroit that has been pending since 2011, and the other is also a trail in southeast Michigan that has been pending since 2015. He wanted to know if these two projects are tied to the Joe Louis Greenway or Iron Belle Trail systems.

Jon Mayes responded that the 2015 project does relate to the Joe Louis Greenway. The department has had ongoing conversations with the City of Detroit and Michigan Department of Transportation. There are many encroachment issues along that route, so they are looking at various reroutes and movement of the trail alignment. Dan Lord added that there are environmental issues as well. The trail moves through a heavily industrial, urbanized area so they want to tie up any loose ends, especially as they relate to public safety. For the 2011 project, the railroad changed ownership so they are working through that adjustment as well. Jon will follow up on these older projects and report his findings at the next Board meeting.

Dan also commented that, until they have approval from the Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy on environmental issues, those grant dollars are held until they receive those environmental assurances.

No further discussion of the remaining materials was 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, August 18, 2021, beginning at 9:00 a.m. It may be in-person in Lansing, but a decision will be made by the Board in consultation with the department and information 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 and staff.

The meeting adjourned at 12:09 P.M.

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

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

DATE