



## MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

Minutes of October 19, 2022

9:00 AM

Pere Marquette Depot  
Bay City, Michigan

Chair Cummings called the meeting of the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) Board of Trustees (Board) to order at 9:00 a.m., Wednesday, October 19, 2022, and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### I. INTRODUCTIONS

The following Board members were present:

Sam Cummings, Chair; from the City of Grand Rapids, Kent County  
Steve Hamp, Vice-Chair; from the City of Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County  
William (Bill) Rustem; from Alaiedon Township, Ingham County  
Dr. Brandy Brown; from the City of Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo County  
DNR Director Daniel Eichinger, from the Village of Lake Isabella, Isabella County

Michael Chuff, Acting Grants Management Section Manager, introduced himself.

Jon Mayes, Recreation Grants Unit Manager; Alex Galloway, Grant Coordinator; Merrie Carlock, Grant Coordinator; Charamy Cleary, Grant Coordinator; Dan Lord, Assistant Chief; and Scott Whitcomb, Director of the Office of Lands introduced themselves.

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

Jonathon Jarosz, Executive Director, Heart of the Lakes, thanked everyone for coming to the Saginaw Bay area.

Chair Cummings, thanked the board, staff, Heart of the Lakes and everyone involved in making the tour a fun success! Seeing all the effort put into the field trips is inspiring. Congratulations on the restoration of the Pere Marquette Depot as well.

#### II. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FOR MEETING OF AUGUST 17, 2022

Chair Cummings called for adoption of the minutes for the August 17, 2022, MNRTF Board meeting.

**MOVED BY BILL RUSTEM, SUPPORTED BY DIRECTOR EICHINGER, TO  
ADOPT THE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 17, 2022, MNRTF BOARD  
MEETING.**

**MOTION PASSED WITHOUT DISSENTING VOTE.**

### III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA FOR MEETING OF OCTOBER 19, 2022

Chair Cummings called for adoption of the agenda for the October 19, 2022, MNRTF Board meeting with the notation that we will be moving Glen Chown (public comment), Executive Director, Grant Traverse Regional Land Conservancy to after the presentations.

**MOVED BY STEVE HAMP, SUPPORTED BY BILL RUSTEM, TO ADOPT THE AGENDA FOR THE OCTOBER 19, 2022, MNRTF BOARD MEETING.**

**MOTION PASSED WITHOUT DISSENTING VOTE.**

### IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chris Bunch, Executive Director, Six Rivers Land Conservancy, shared his gratitude with Jonathon Jarosz and the rest of the staff for the fabulous tour and discussion over dinner. The intersection of urban environments and access to nature is critical. There is an additional piece that they don't just attract and retain talented people, they also create talented people. Having that access to nature and the ability to get outside and connect and unwind is critical in the development and evolution of our people, communities, and children. The Land Conservancy has done some additional work to add to the scores on the Highland Township Acquisition (Huron Watershed) and the Village of Beverly Hills (Rouge River) project applications. A commitment has been made regarding the Village of Beverly Hills project to repurpose the existing home into a nature center.

Tanya Moore, Landscape Architect, City of Bay City and Tim Botzau, Parks and Environmental Affairs Manager, City of Bay City, detailed the 238 acres of park land and 13 miles of trails in their community. The application they are here to talk about is known as the 'Crooked Bridge'. The Crooked Bridge is a unique feature to the waterfront offering fishing opportunities. The Crooked Bridge connects Bigelow Park on the south side and Fitness (Veterans) Park on the north. The bridge has approximately 13 bump-outs with benches and lighting. The request is to redo/upgrade the decking (original 1993), railing, and lighting, while making the bridge more accessible. Of the 13 bump-out areas, 9 will have accessible lower railings. Another part of the application is to update the parking at Fitness Park with accessible parking spots.

Courtney Gilmore, Friends of Orchard Beach State Park, Township of Manistee, discussed the relocating of a historic shelter within Orchard Beach State Park due to erosion. As part of that project the playground was removed. Friends of Orchard Beach State Park got involved to help fundraise to rebuild the playground. An accessible playground will cost approximately \$600,000. Local fundraising has raised \$250,000 to date. This playground is important to the community, and local and visiting families. The playground will be located within the day-use area of the State Park, and park staff fully support the project.

Clay Summers, Executive Director, mParks, thanked everyone for the phenomenal tour, thanked Chair Cummings for his years of service on the Board, and thanked Dan Lord for allowing mParks to be a part of the process on the SPARK grants. Every year mParks selects a few awards. At this year's annual conference, one recipient was not available to attend. On behalf of Chad Stevens, president of mParks, Clay Summers presented the Commitment to Excellence Award to Dan Lord.

*"Thank you to the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Board and the DNR staff for allowing Clay to speak in my place today as I am unfortunately unable to attend. One of the privileges of serving as the mParks president is being able to select the annual Commitment to Excellence*

*Award. This award is intended to recognize an individual that has provided exemplary leadership to their profession over time. Someone that has embraced the ever-changing field that we work in and settles for nothing less than excellence in their job. This year it is an honor to present the award to Dan Lord. Dan has not been afraid to roll up his sleeves and dive into discussions regarding the trust fund scoring system and structure with our mParks members. The first time I met Dan was at a meeting at the Foster Community Center in Lansing several years ago. I remember how much it meant for all the mParks members present that we were being listened to and that Dan and his team were receptive to our suggestions. Since that time there have been changes to the application process and scoring and Dan has championed open communication and dialogue between Grants Section and mParks. Dan has also consistently been an attendee at our annual conference and willing to participate in webinars and other meetings throughout his tenure. We usually present this award at our annual conference, but Dan was taking some well-deserved personal recreation time and we were unable to coordinate the presentation until today. On behalf of the mParks Board of Directors, staff and our entire membership, a sincere congratulations to Dan on receiving the 2022 mParks Commitment to Excellence Award."*

Dan Lord thanked mParks for the recognition and shared the award with Director Eichinger and our grants team. Dan stated that his success is a team effort starting at the top!

Terri Close, Hampton Township Supervisor, Charter Township of Hampton, shared some background that Consumers Energy closed their Weadock Generating Plant in Hampton Township in 2016 and will be closing the Karn Coal Plant in May of 2023. The township has not had available revenue for park improvement projects considering the significant reduction in property tax revenue with Consumers Energy leaving the township. The application submitted to the MNRTF is to improve the Finn Road Park and Campground. There is a nature trail system that connects to the campground. The campground has 57 sites, a full-time park manager who lives on site year-round, a public access boat launch, and fishing pier. The proposed grant application is to relocate the playground outside of the campground area to allow for public access, upgrade the campground for accessibility, create a berm with native vegetation, add some additional parking, and incorporate a kayak/canoe launch that is also accessible.

Lisha Ramsdell, Associate Director, Huron Pines, attended to discuss and show support for some acquisitions the DNR is looking to acquire within Otsego County. Both acquisitions are areas worthy of protection. The first is the Sturgeon River Corridor Acquisition in the Pigeon River Country along the Sturgeon River. This acquisition would help to consolidate ownership in state land. These types of acquisitions benefit wildlife habitat, river health, and clean air. The Pigeon River Country Advisory Council fully supports this acquisition. Second, The Ford at North Branch - Au Sable River Acquisition is the site of a decommissioned county road that historically ran through the river. Private landowners are looking to divest of this property.

Brian Beauchamp, Communications and Policy Director, TART Trails in Traverse City, voiced support for the Fisherman's Island State Park Regional Trail project. This project is part of a regional vision and objective to continue the trail from Acme north toward Elk Rapids and eventually all the way north to Charlevoix.

Laura Ogar, Bay County Director of Environmental Affairs and Community Development, welcomed everyone to the area and is grateful for the opportunity to highlight what has been accomplished in this area. She stressed that visual access along Saginaw Bay is very limited. The State Park services an area from Flint to the thumb. Public meetings were held asking the community what they would like to see, and they responded with visual access to the bay. Over 50% of the ownership along the bay is under state ownership. Laura urged the Board to consider partnerships

with local communities. Hampton Township has a small campground that cannot grow due to state ownership. Creative partnerships to help these facilities grow and be further developed would be nice on public lands.

Christopher Shannon, Gladwin City Administrator, City of Gladwin welcomed everyone to the Pere Marquette Depot. Chris reflected on the presentation Gladwin made in Alpena regarding the flood in May of 2020 and the damage done to the city park and campground. Their project application is to create 15 new sites in an 'Upper Campground' out of the flood zone.

#### V. MICHIGAN STATEWIDE COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN (SCORP)

Dan Lord, DNR Finance and Operations Division Assistant Chief and Scott Whitcomb, DNR Office of Public Lands Director, discussed Michigan's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), for 2023-2027.

The SCORP is a five-year strategic plan that directs state and local investment in priority outdoor recreation infrastructure and programming. It evaluates ongoing and emerging outdoor recreation trends, needs, and issues, and establishes priority strategies for achieving outdoor recreation goals. Developing a five-year SCORP also makes Michigan eligible for U.S. National Park Service support through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).

Extensive statewide surveys and focus groups were used to identify outdoor trends, recreation frequency, motivators, barriers to recreation, and physical fitness and health goals. Surveys indicated 95% participate in at least one outdoor activity (trail or road, water, winter activities) and indicated barriers to outdoor recreation (age, health, time). Focus group results point to four key story lines: recreation participation, motivations, lands available, and fitness outcomes.

##### Statistical information:

Top five reasons for outdoor recreation

94% enjoy nature

93% feel better mentally and emotionally

89% enjoy time away from routines

82% exercise and physical challenge

80% new experiences

The top five barriers to outdoor recreation

64% don't have time

60% recreation areas are too crowded

53% poorly maintained facilities

49% concern about safety and crime

49% ability to participate - don't have enough money

The overall goal of SCORP is to ensure that our outdoor recreation assets are developed and managed to be convenient, welcoming, friendly and provide economic benefits to communities.

SCORP will be posted for public comment in early November before it is routed for Governor Whitmer's signature and forwarded to the National Park Service by the end of the calendar year.

## VI. PRESENTATIONS FROM 2022 DNR GRANT APPLICANTS

Scott Whitcomb detailed the review process for new land acquisitions. As we go forward, we look for land consolidation making recreation and management easier and establishing new recreation areas in parts of the state that do not have as much opportunity.

Questions by the Board were addressed during each presentation.

The December 2022 MNRTF applications presented include:

Kerry Heckman, Forest Land Administrator, DNR Forest Resources Division

- a. TF22-0187 The Ford at North Branch - Au Sable River Acquisition (Otsego County)
- b. TF22-0178 Jaxon Creek Headwaters Acquisition (Grand Traverse County)
- c. TF22-0217 Sturgeon River Corridor Acquisition (Otsego County)

Val Frawley, Public Land Matters Biologist, DNR Wildlife Division

- a. TF22-0133 Backus Creek State Game Area Acquisition (Roscommon County)
- b. TF22-0135 Crow Island State Game Area Acquisition (Bay and Saginaw Counties)
- c. TF22-0137 Portland State Game Area Acquisition (Ionia County)
- d. TF22-0194 Paw Paw River Land Acquisition (Van Buren County)

Matt Lincoln, Land Specialist and Grant Coordinator, DNR Parks and Recreation Division

- a. TF22-0165 Fort Wilkins – Keweenaw Point Acquisition (Keweenaw County)
- b. TF22-0141 Waterloo Recreation Area Land Consolidation Acquisition (Jackson County)
- c. TF22-0142 Mitchell State Park Land Consolidation Acquisition (Wexford County)
- d. TF22-0122 Lexington State Harbor Renovation (Sanilac County)
- e. TF22-0159 Fisherman's Island State Park Regional Trail (Charlevoix County)
- f. TF22-0120 Webber Dam North BAS (Ionia County)

Shana Ramsey, Interpreter, DNR Fisheries Division

- a. TF22-0013 Wolf Lake Hatchery Visitor Center Animal Exhibit Renovation (Van Buren County)

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

Glen Chown (public comment), Executive Director, Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, stated he is blown away by the revitalization in the Saginaw Bay area and is grateful for the Board's role in these investments. Glen shared Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy's support for the Jaxon Creek Headwaters Acquisition. Development pressure in the Grand Traverse region is at an all-time high. This acquisition is a critical purchase. Jaxon Creek is a high-quality blue-ribbon trout stream that supports natural self-sustaining brook trout and excellent water quality. This application has strong regional and local support.

## VII. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Status of American Rescue Plan Act (Spark) Funding – Dan Lord

The department has been very fortunate to be appropriated \$450M American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding. Parks and Recreation Division is receiving \$250M and Finance and Operations Division is receiving \$200M. There are three projects in statute including the Joe Lewis Greenway, Grand Rapids Greenway, and Copper Peak Recreation Area which total \$135M. The remaining \$65M per statute is to establish a new competitive grant program (Spark). This was a great opportunity to look at our grant programs and see what we could do

differently. The department established an advisory group to help refine the scoring categories which make this program unique. Spark will launch next week. Continue to watch our websites as we continue to update it almost daily. Round 1 Spark applications are due December 19, with rounds two and three taking place in 2023.

- b. Development Grant Maximum Discussion – Michael Chuff and Jon Mayes  
The \$300,000 maximum grant request was established in 2011. That amount has not been increased for inflation in 11 years. A survey was completed by mParks that indicated 46% said the amount is fair and 54% said the amount is not fair.

Chair Cummings recommended that further discussion take place at the February Board meeting. Bill Rustem suggested that any change not go into effect sooner than 2024 (after Spark is rolled out). Director Eichinger stated that if a change is made to the maximum grant dollar amount, provisions should be made to preserve space for the small grant initiatives.

Chair Cummings suggested a full discussion on this topic in early in 2023 for implementation in 2024. Director Eichinger suggested mParks conduct a workshop at their March conference to look at how we could sustain the small grant component at the same time as increasing the maximum. This topic will be added to the April MNRTF agenda after the March mParks conference.

- c. Consensus Recommendation Meeting – Chair Sam Cummings  
The consensus recommendation meeting, by statute, must be held by December 1 to discuss a potential consensus spend recommendation with the legislature. Bill Rustem volunteered to again participate in this meeting.
- d. WITHDRAWAL OF PROJECTS – Jon Mayes  
TF20-0098 – Kayak Point Park, City of Auburn Hills (Oakland County); Grant Amount: \$192,600  
The application is being withdrawn due to environmental issues on the land, remediation cost and concern about long-term maintenance.

Chair Cummings called for a motion to accept the withdrawal of TF20-0098 – Kayak Point Park, City of Auburn Hills (Oakland County).

**MOVED BY STEVE HAMP, SUPPORTED BY DR. BROWN, TO ACCEPT THE  
WITHDRAWAL OF TF20-0098 – KAYAK POINT PARK, CITY OF AUBURN  
HILLS (OAKLAND COUNTY).**

**MOTION PASSED WITHOUT DISSENTING VOTE.**

- e. Director's Update – Director Eichinger  
Director Eichinger thanked our host Jonathon Jarosz and the team in Bay City for the great tour yesterday! It is incredibly important to our staff and team to be able to get out and see projects where the trust fund has made an impact.

Director Eichinger shared with the Board that Mark Hoffman, Chief Administrative Officer, will be retiring at the end of the calendar year. Kristin Phillips who was Chief of our Marketing and Outreach Division has agreed to take over as Chief Administrative Officer. Kristin has been working with Mark for the past month to help transition into that role. Jon Spieles is acting Chief of Marketing and Outreach Division as we work to fill that role.

f. Update on MNRTF Staff Activities – Michael Chuff

Staff have been working on application scoring for the current cycle. The supplemental period is underway which gives applicants the chance to improve their application. A final list will be prepared by late November. Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 began October 1, 2022, keeping financial staff busy closing out FY 2022 and conducting financial prep for FY 2023. Staff are also working on ARPA with roll-out at the end of the month. Grants Management Section has also been approved to bring on a limited-term Grant Coordinator, which is currently posted online.

VI. BOARD PACKET REFERENCE MATERIALS

Chair Cummings asked the Board if they had any questions or discussion about the remaining meeting materials. No discussion of the meeting materials took place.

VII. OTHER MATTERS AS PROPERLY BROUGHT BEFORE THE BOARD

None were offered.

VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Cummings announced the next meeting of the Board is scheduled for December 14, 2022, beginning at 9:00 a.m., at the MSU Veterinary Diagnostic Lab, Room 101, Lansing. Details will be posted in advance of the meeting on the Board's [website](#).

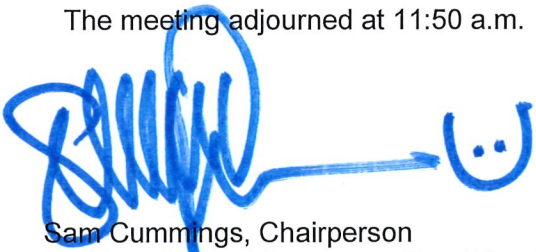
IX. ADJOURNMENT

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

Chair Cummings then asked for a motion to adjourn.

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

The meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.



Sam Cummings, Chairperson  
Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Board  
of Trustees



Michael Chuff, Acting Manager  
Grants Management Section  
DNR Finance and Operations Division

APPROVED: