



# Pigeon River Country Advisory Council

## Meeting Minutes

Location: DNR Pigeon River Headquarters, 9966 Twin Lakes Rd., Vanderbilt, MI 49795

Date: Thursday, July 18, 2024

A meeting of the Pigeon River Country Advisory Council (P.R.C.A.C.) was held on Thursday, July 18, 2024, at the DNR Pigeon River Headquarters. Chair Doug Reeves, called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m., then led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Mitchell Beach, Ryan Boyer, Rique Campa, Lance Cottrell, Barbara Curtis, Bill Loney, Lisha Ramsdell, Chair Doug Reeves, Paul Rose, Conan Smith, and Greg Walz

### **MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Sandy Franz, Matt Hall, Don Horrocks, Vice Chair Larry Partridge, Ty Ratliff, Bill Wood, and Kyle Yohe

### **EX-OFFICIO & DEPARTMENT STAFF PRESENT:**

Steve Buyze, Raija Claeys, Jeffrey Clarke, Kerry Heckman (via Teams), Jordan Hurst, and Mark Monroe

### **EX-OFFICIO ABSENT:**

Shelby Adams, Neal Godby, and the Law Enforcement Division (LED)

### **OTHERS PRESENT:**

Joe Jarecki, Judi Jarecki, Guy Lovelace, Lauren Schagel, Sandy Schmidt, Bill Smith, and Stewart Smith

### **CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS – DOUG REEVES:**

Chair Doug Reeves welcomed all to the July 2024 meeting of the Pigeon River Country Advisory Council. Chair Reeves expressed great appreciation to Mark Monroe for the tour of the oil and gas wells that occurred prior to the P.R.C.A.C. meeting. Doug stated it was a great chance to get out and explore the forest and see an array of well-site restorations.

### **AGENDA:**

*Bill Loney made the motion to accept the meeting agenda for July 18, 2024, as presented, seconded by Barb Curtis. There being no further additions, deletions or corrections offered, all members present voted in favor to approve the agenda as presented.*

## **MINUTES:**

*Paul Rose made the motion to accept the April 18, 2024, meeting minutes as presented, seconded by Greg Walz. There being no additions, deletions or corrections offered, all members present voted in favor to approve the minutes as presented.*

## **PUBLIC COMMENT (3-minute limit):**

Chair Doug Reeves opened the floor for public comment. Sandy Schmidt had questions regarding the Cornwall Creek Flooding drawdown procedure and the implications of the increase in water temperature.

Chair Doug Reeves asked Lisha Ramsdell to please address the questions during her Cornwall Update and Lisha agreed.

## **VICE-CHAIR VACANCY:**

Chair Doug Reeves stated that there is a Vice-Chair vacancy on the P.R.C.A.C. as Larry Partridge has moved back to Wisconsin. It was requested by Chair Doug Reeves that the P.R.C.A.C. nomination committee, comprised of the standing chairs from each of the five P.R.C.A.C. committees, come together and convey their recommendation for the Vice-Chair vacancy to the full Pigeon River Country Advisory Council at the October 17, 2024, meeting.

Mark Monroe stated that he has been in contact with Jon Steigerwaldt who is the Forest Conservation Director for the Great Lakes and Upper Midwest Region (MN, WI, MI, OH, IN, IL & IA) of the Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS). They are going through a reorganization as Larry Partridge left RGS when he moved to Wisconsin. The plan is to hire a Director for Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio and the new director will be appointing someone to the council.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

### **CORNWALL DAM UPDATE – NEAL GODBY/LISHA RAMSDELL:**

Lisha Ramsdell began the report by responding to the questions that Sandy Schmidt had during the Public Comment period. Lisha stated that she appreciated the fact that Sandy took the temperatures at the various locations. Lisha mentioned that the reason so many groups support keeping the Cornwall Creek Flooding is because there is an abundance of cold ground water coming into Cornwall Creek below the dam in the main stem of the Pigeon River, so that water is actually cooling from that 78° temperature in the flooding to 66° before it enters the Pigeon River. Dams typically generate thermal pollution and that is one of the drawbacks of utilizing them. Years and years ago this situation was assessed by the DNR to discover if they wanted to maintain the flooding for its recreational purposes or if they wanted to remove it in order to increase the health of the Pigeon River. It was decided to keep it because of the cooling effect of the water coming from Cornwall Creek below the dam.

Lisha then addressed the question Sandy Schmidt had regarding the 6-inch-per-day maximum. That

is the maximum that may be drawn down on any given day per the permit. That does not mean that is the actual amount that will be drawn down each day. Much will be dependent upon whether precipitation is received. The drawdown that is being utilized at Cornwall Creek Flooding is a permit drawdown. The actual structure itself must be manipulated; therefore, a permit drawdown was required. The mechanism that could have been used to lower the water levels is no longer operational. Due to the safety concerns that EGLE has posed for the structure itself, the Department determined that a permit drawdown was necessary. A contractor is going to have to bore holes in the concrete dam structure as a means to drawdown the flooding; each wall is 12 inches thick. Lisha stated that she believes the diameter of each core is 8 inches and there will be two or three cores on each side.

While the drawdown is occurring, the plan is to work on securing the permit for phase two of the project which is the renovation of the dam. A second amendment to the existing permit is in the process of being finalized for the design of the new structure to be replaced. There are a couple of items that are being examined in modifying the design. One option involves moving the structure further down the embankment, so it blocks where there is seepage in the berm. There are some pros and cons that need to be examined to make sure the change does not cause any adverse, unintentional consequences in the flooding. Once the permit is in hand, the bids will be requested from the various contractors. The only way we will know if we truly have enough money to proceed with the rebuilding of the structure is to receive the bids back from the contractors. The plan is to hopefully have the flooding down at least 6 feet within the next month so the contractors can get out there in the fall to survey the situation and get their bids together. Ideally, it would be beneficial to have everything solidified this fall so the contractor could start on the renovation in the spring of 2025. Until that point the drawdown of the flooding will remain permanent.

Lisha stated that in the spring of 2024 the project received another \$250,000 via a grant from EGLE. The \$750,000 from the DNR that was committed to the project has been received. The goal has been attained based on the projected estimates. Once the drawdown commences, the second phase of the project will be set into motion. It will be time to acquire bids for the redesign of the dam. The construction numbers are all over the board, but unless something drastic happens or we have to do a significant change to the current design of the dam, Lisha feels like the monies that have been appropriated will be sufficient.

Jeff Clarke conveyed that the dam does need to be closed down while the work on Cornwall Creek Flooding is being done. Gates will be used to block off the trail, they will remain locked, but the access site will remain open. There is a reroute in place for the equestrian trails that utilizes mostly roads. The Cheboygan County Road Commission (CHCRC) has been contacted regarding the grading of the road and assisting with additional signage on behalf of the equestrian riders to alert motorists. Jeff Clarke has also worked with Katherine Benedict on additional signage and reached out and notified the equestrian groups of the trail reroute.

The drawdown is still planned to start on August 12, 2024. There will be a preconstruction meeting on the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> of August with the engineer, the contractor, our staff, and the Department. The main topic of discussion will be getting the site ready for the contractor as there is going to be quite a bit of equipment out there.

## PROPERTY UPDATE – KERRY HECKMAN (via Teams):

Kerry Heckman stated that there has been some really good progress on some of the projects going on in the PRCSE. There were four projects that were reviewed by Kerry.

The first acquisition that was reviewed was the Hoobler property, also known as, Camp Pishtining. This was an acquisition of just over 400 acres and over 4,800 feet of Pigeon River frontage. The property was acquired in early December 2023.

The second acquisition that was reviewed was the Sturgeon River Corridor, also known as, the Noa property. This included the acquisition of 440 acres, and just over 4,400 feet of Sturgeon River Corridor. The property may be accessed from Old Vanderbilt Road, and it was acquired on June 12, 2024.

The third project Kerry reviewed was the Doe Lake property, also known as, the Stanley property or Elk Run. This project includes the acquisition of 556 acres which is comprised of two different parcels. There is a 313-acre parcel known as Doe Lake that actually contains the lake itself. The second parcel is immediately west of Doe Lake, and it is known as Elk Run. These two parcels are in the process of being acquired through various funding sources and are currently being held for the State by Little Traverse Conservancy and Huron Pines.

The fourth and final project that was discussed was the Black River Ranch which will be an acquisition of just over 8,840 acres. This expanse of land includes over 14 miles of the Black River, the East Branch of the Black River, and Stewart Creek. The property also includes three lakes; one of which is, Silver Lake which is 150 acres. This acquisition is extremely complex and includes several funding sources such as a grant from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, the Forest Legacy Program grant, private funding, and a bargain sale with the landowner. The private funding has been contributed by the Little Traverse Conservancy, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, and The Nature Conservancy. There is a lease on this property that the owners of the property filed suit to terminate. A settlement on that was reached in June 2024, and as part of the settlement, the lease will terminate on December 1, 2025 and the State plans on closing on the property before the end of December 2025.

Kerry Heckman prepared some acquisition statistics for all of the aforementioned projects. Just over 10,244 acres will all be managed as part of the PRCSE. There will be an addition of 4,800 feet on the Pigeon River, 4,400 feet on the Sturgeon River, and over 14 miles on the Black River, the East Branch of the Black River, and Stewart Creek. The funding totals are equally impressive. \$10.9 million has been received from the federal Forest Legacy Program. The Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund contributed over \$8.1 million, and the private funds donated are over \$2 million. A total of over \$21,100,000 have been contributed to support property projects within the PRCSE.

Mark Monroe stated that all of the newly acquired property will become part of the Annexed Area and will be covered by the Concept of Management.

Kerry Heckman also addressed the misconception regarding the State of Michigan purchasing land and taking it off of the tax rolls. When the state acquires land through a purchase, full ad valorem taxes are paid on the purchase, as well as, special assessments when they are levied. The only tax

that the State does not pay on a purchase is the State Education Tax because that would be the State paying the State. Furthermore, Kerry stated that the purchase of the land may prove to be more beneficial to the local units of government, because it tends to draw people to the surrounding communities. Additionally, the State does not require the same level of services that private landowners may require from the townships or counties.

Kerry stated that she surmises that some confusion exists on this issue because some of the land becomes property of the State due to non-payment of taxes. In these situations, the State is still required to pay a PILT (payment in lieu of taxes), but this is at a much lower rate than ad valorem taxes. The PILT is more than double what it was 10-15 years ago. The PILT increases by the rate of inflation or 5% whichever is less.

## **STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

### **AQUATIC RESOURCES & FISHERIES MANAGEMENT – GREG WALZ:**

Greg Walz reported that the committee has not met since the last council meeting. Greg stated that as of the April 18, 2024 meeting, the plan was for Headwaters TU to purchase two temperature loggers and Carl Saunders was going to work in conjunction with Neal Godby to ensure the temperature loggers were properly placed. Lastly, Greg mentioned that it is not anticipated that there will be a huge increase in the temperature of the flooding once the drawdown begins, but the temp loggers will be able to provide data on this process and inform other dam removal projects in the future.

### **FOREST COVER & WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT – RIQUE CAMPA:**

Prof. Rique Campa stated that a Forest Cover and Wildlife Management Committee meeting was held on June 20, 2024. There were two primary agenda items. The first was to discuss three stands that will exceed the 40-acre clear cut limit conveyed in the Concept of Management. Discussion ensued on the importance of the diversity in size of early successional patches and the dependence of wildlife on some of these larger treatments. The committee unanimously supported Mark and Shelby's proposals and thought that the proposed clear cuts would be a nice addition to the PCRSF.

The second item on the agenda was to discuss a collaborative aspen initiative between the Pigeon River Country Forest Management Unit and the Atlanta Forest Management Unit that could help both units meet some of their forest and wildlife objectives. This pertained to elk herbivory and some of the impacts it has had on aspen regeneration particularly bigtooth aspen and resulted in the postponement of several treatments in the southern end of both management units. This pilot study initiative would coordinate harvesting aspen between the two units in a 2-3-year time frame within 8 identified compartments.

The two management units are having discussions and trying to build a project using the current information and projections at their disposal. It was agreed upon that providing this information to the Forest Cover and Wildlife Management Committee would be an appropriate place to start. Once the group collectively feels like the pilot project will work, the data, information, and findings will be presented once again to the Committee for approval or non-approval. Mark stated that this project is definitely worth implementing if it can be coordinated.

Mark Monroe mentioned that right now the elk population is slightly over goal, and the Wildlife Division (WLD) has agreed to try to ask for additional tags to be issued to bring the elk population down further to meet the goal. There is hope that with the decrease in population and the food options increasing that the browse pressure will be more dispersed.

Prof. Rique Campa mentioned that in the 1980s when his group started some of the browsing studies in the PRCSF, many of the clear-cut areas were centrally located in the PRCSF. At the time, the clear-cut areas were small and the bigtooth aspen stands, especially in the mild winters, were getting consumed by the elk. As the foresters got a little more aggressive with more and larger clear cuts, even though the elk population was going up, the browsing pressure became more dispersed. Rick stated that during mild winters, especially, small clear cuts that are not "blocky" in shape, will be devoured by the elk. The shape of the cut is very important to reduce the edge effect to assist in dispersing the browse pressure. If the shape of the cut is long and linear and full of vegetation the elk will be drawn to it, even if it is 600 acres.

#### RESOURCE USE & EXTRACTION – SANDY FRANZ/MARK MONROE:

Mark Monroe reported that the committee has not met since the last council meeting. Mark Monroe mentioned that there is not a definitive answer yet from the Attorney General's (AG) office regarding the permit requested by Core Energy. At the last meeting it was mentioned that Core Energy plans to petition EGLE to drill two CO<sub>2</sub> injection wells, and two oil-producing wells in the Annexed Area. This is a complicated situation which will require some time to sort out because while the surface activity where the rigs are is in the Annexed Area, the bottom holes penetrate an oil and gas reef that is contained in the Consent Area. Many questions about the proposed work will require review by EGLE, by the DNR's Mineral Management Section, and by the Attorney General's office. Mark Monroe stated that as far as he knows per Matt Fry, even though a response was submitted by the Attorney General regarding the Core Energy permit issue, there are still conversations to be conducted between the AG and EGLE and the AG and the Director of the DNR. At this juncture, all of the agencies are still waiting and there will be more information to come.

Questions were raised regarding carbon sequestration, any potential impacts it may have on the PRCSF, and how it may interface with the Concept of Management.

Steve Buyze further clarified the current regulations on the classification of carbon sequestration wells.

#### RECREATION & ACCESS – PAUL ROSE:

Paul stated that the only thing that had come up since the last meeting was that Chair Doug Reeves and Paul Rose had both been contacted by Mark Kunitzer, who is the lead volunteer for the Friends of the High Country Pathway group, with concerns about the maintenance and restoration, post timber harvest activities, of the High Country Pathway (HCP).

Jeff Clarke conveyed that there was a meeting with several individuals from the Parks and Recreation Division (PRD), the PRC FMU, the Atlanta FMU, and Mark Kunitzer. Mark Kunitzer's frustrations were centered around the lack of help from other entities, and Jeff Clake stated that he will now be the primary contact for the entire HCP. Jeff's team assigned to the PRCSF have been

trying to assist on the HCP as much as time allows. They have been updating and clearing trails. Mark Monroe and Matt Foster from the Atlanta Forest Management Unit have assured Mark Kunitzer that they will do their very best to actively communicate with those harvesting the timber sales and convey that they need to leave things as they found them.

Jeff Clarke stated that the PRD staff assigned to the PRCSF have been working in conjunction with Mark Monroe, Paige Perry, and Katherine Benedict to come up with a plan to add some signage to the HCP. All parties are being very careful to not put up too much signage, but there will be more to come on the signage situation. Jeff also stated that another area that will be a focus of the HCP for Mark Kunitzer will be hopefully replacing the boardwalks that are on the trail. Jeff stated that his crew will assist as much as they can with that. The goal of the interdivisional understanding is for those utilizing the trail to have a better and safer experience. The key is that all parties involved are now working together on this huge undertaking, Jeff Clarke is now the point of contact for the HCP project, and things are moving collectively in a positive direction.

Paul Rose stated the only other piece of information that came out of the conversation with Chair Doug Reeves was an update on the Black River Bridge. Paul recounted from past meetings that there had been a request through the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund for a little over \$1 million to complete the design and proceed with construction of the bridge across the Black River. The proposed design was a barrier free, ADA-compliant design which contributed significantly to the cost. Considering that nothing up to the bridge or after the bridge is barrier free or ADA compliant, is it possible to get some sort of variance so the project cost of \$1.3 million could be decreased. Jeff Clarke stated that he would be happy to answer to the best of his ability on behalf of Paige Perry. Jeff has been told time and time again by Paige that if federal dollars are being utilized for any trail funding, the trail must be ADA compliant. He also stated that he has observed that anytime the DNR builds anything new, they like to make it ADA compliant.

#### **EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT – BILL WOOD:**

Conan Smith reported on behalf of Bill Wood that the committee has not met since the last council meeting.

#### **SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

##### **DISCOVERY CENTER – SANDY FRANZ/LISHA RAMSDELL:**

Lisha Ramsdell reported on behalf of Sandy Franz. Things are going really well at the Discovery Center. Four of the eight formal programs have been conducted and there has been a great response to them. The Discovery Center continues to try to educate the public on the value of the Pigeon River Country, the history of the space, and the management practices of the PRCSF over the years.

The Discovery Center requires RSVPs for the formal programs and there have been some challenges encountered with individuals not showing up. So, the focus has been to try to get people to report when they are not going to be able to attend the program so another person may take the vacant spot. There was a brief discussion with the board members to see if a fee should be implemented for the programming, but the consensus was that the board did not want money to be a barrier for people to participate in the programs.



Several updates have been made to the Discovery Center. The kiosks have been updated, there is a brand-new map, a new mini theater, and a sixty-second snake program that the DNR produced. Another exciting new event that has been headed by Katherine, is on Sundays Katherine is holding Make and Take sessions with families. Lisha mentioned that the hands-on learning is such a powerful way to engage with young folks and their families.

Lisha stated there is continued interest in the Discovery Center; each year there are about 2,000 to 2,100 visitors that come through the center. The success of the Discovery Center is completely dependent upon the donations received and the volunteers that donate their time. The board is already going into planning and fundraising mode for next year. If there is a topic, an interesting idea for a program, or if you would like to offer your services, please let the board know.

#### PIGEON RIVER COUNTRY EQUESTRIAN COMMITTEE – BARB CURTIS:

Barb Curtis reported that the committee has not met since the last council meeting. Mark Monroe stated that the location of the hitching post has been agreed upon. Paige Perry was able to enter the hitching post project in the system very recently. The project will now need to be approved by archaeological and then approved by the various managers in the system.

Barb Curtis stated that there have been many communications on Facebook from horseback riders complaining that there have been four wheelers in the PRCFS, but the posts on Facebook have not been specific as to the location that the four wheelers have been seen.

Mark stated that he will communicate with the Law Enforcement Division (LED) on it, but it is difficult for the DNR conservation officers as they cannot enforce the ordinance on the Otsego County roads, only the state forest roads. The DNR conservation officers do take the time to stop the individuals and educate them on the various laws. Mark thought that possibly having an increased presence by the conservation officers in the PRCFS might help the situation.

Mark Monroe stated that hopefully getting the signage up at the Cheboygan County line and Otsego County line will alleviate some confusion for those using ORVs. The signs and posts have been purchased, but the Otsego County Road Commission must be the entity to put up the signs because there is a right of way situation. Thirteen spots have been strategically selected where individuals enter the PRCFS and where the ordinance could affect ORV users, but the signs have not been put up yet. This is a busy time of the year for many and there are many things going on at the Otsego County level.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

#### HIGH COUNTRY PATHWAY UPDATES & DISCUSSION – PAIGE PERRY

This discussion was conducted by Jeff Clarke during the Recreation and Access Standing Committee report.

#### EMERGING ISSUES

There were not any emerging issues reported at the P.R.C.A.C. meeting on July 18, 2024.



## **EX-OFFICIO REPORTS:**

### **P.R.C. UNIT REPORT – MARK MONROE:**

Mark Monroe began by introducing Lauren Schagel, the PRC intern serving at the PRC Headquarters for the summer of 2024. Mark very sincerely extended his gratitude to the Pigeon River Country Association (PRCA) for funding this position again for 2024. Mark is hopeful that the partnership will continue for many years to come. Lauren is one of the five individuals living at the PRCSF Bunkhouse for the summer. Mark stated that it took five years to get it to the point where the Bunkhouse was fully operational.

Mark Monroe was asked by Dan Heckman to provide an update on the timeline regarding the State Forest Management Plan as there were some delays. The Public/Stakeholder Review Period starts on September 2, 2024. The public / stakeholder meetings are being held on the following dates and at the following locations:

Sept 9<sup>th</sup> - Rose Lake Shooting Range, East Lansing

Sept 10<sup>th</sup> - Kirtland CC, Grayling

September 12<sup>th</sup> - Marquette Township Hall, Marquette

The inventory for the 2026 compartment is in the final stages of planning. The peer review was completed where the internal co-management discussions and decisions were conducted. The public comment period just ended on July 17, 2024 and the Open House for the public was held on July 17, 2024, as well. The Internal Compartment Review is scheduled for August 15, 2024, at the PRC Headquarters.

Even more progress has been made toward the 2024 Timber Sale Plan of Work for the PRC Forest Management Unit. Approximately 1,660 acres have been put up for sale, and at present, it appears that all goals for the management unit will be met.

Two additional prescribed burns have taken place since the April 18, 2024 meeting. The fourth unit of Joe's Opening and Green Timbers East were completed, and both were very successful.

Fortunately, at present, there has not been a need for any wildfire response as there have not been any wildfires in the PRCSF in 2024.

### **WILDLIFE REPORT – SHELBY ADAMS:**

Mark Monroe presented on behalf of Shelby Adams. Shelby is on maternity leave and will return on January 7, 2025. If anyone has any wildlife questions or concerns during Shelby's absence, please contact her supervisor, Scott Eggeman, or Jessica Marsh who is the Wildlife Technician that covers the PRCSF. Mark stated that each individual may be contacted directly or contact Mark, and he will get in touch with them.

Mark informed the group that Brian Mastenbrook retired at the end of June 2024. Brian was a long-standing Wildlife Biologist for the PRCSF, and he will be greatly missed by the Wildlife Division and the DNR. John Niewoonder is now the acting supervisor from the Southwestern region of Michigan.

Mark stated that he and Chair Doug Reeves have both worked with John and Mark has extreme confidence that John Niewoonder will do a great job in the acting position.

Lisha Ramsdell asked if those attending the meeting could please give a round of applause for Brian Mastenbrook so Brian and all of his work can be memorialized. Lisha stated that Brian Mastenbrook was a huge part of the PRCSF and its legacy.

Mark Monroe stated that the 2024 Elk Hunt Period 1 for elk management unit X is coming up August 27-30, September 13-16, and September 27-30. The 2024 Elk Hunt Period 2 will be December 14-22 for the elk management units H, I, and X. The second hunt period is when the majority of the PRCSF will be opened up to elk hunting.

There have been some changes to the elk hunting this year. All of the elk harvested will need to be checked at the designated check stations; there will not be any field checking this year. One of the other changes concerning elk hunting this season is that Tuberculosis (TB) testing is mandatory. There is an initiative to test all elk and deer this year for TB. Lastly, The Elk hunt orientation is back online. The DNR received positive feedback on the online orientation as it allows each individual to watch the videos as many times as needed and it offers great flexibility to those individuals that have limited time off from work.

Mark stated that the opening and planting areas have progressed nicely this season. Per Shelby's documentation 71 acres have been planted and 545 acres have been burned. Mark provided some insight as to how the prescribed burns are managed within the DNR. It is normal for the Wildlife Division to fund the prescribed burns and the Forest Resources Division to implement the burns with some help from the Wildlife staff.

Prof. Rique Campa stated that Jessica Marsh and Shelby have been working diligently on organizing the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation work bee which will occur on Saturday, September 7, 2024. The focus of the work bee will be to do some enclosure work. There are some other activities planned depending on how many individuals show up. Mark Monroe stated that if anyone has time to volunteer for the work bee to please contact Rique Campa. The enclosures are a lot of work, and many volunteers are needed to accomplish the task.

#### FISHERIES REPORT – NEAL GODBY:

A report from the Fisheries Division was not able to be provided on July 18, 2024, per Chair Doug Reeves.

#### RECREATION REPORT – JEFF CLARKE:

Jeff Clarke was very excited to announce that the PRCSF is fully staffed. Jordan Hurst is the new DNR Park Ranger for the PRCSF. Jeff stated that Jordan was the AmeriCorps member serving at the PRCSF about three years ago. Jordan loves the PRCSF and was excited to come back as a DNR Park Ranger. Jeff stated that Jordan is doing a prenominal job and if anything is needed, please contact Jordan Hurst, Jacob Vallance, or Jeff Clarke.

Jordan Hurst reported that much of their time so far has involved checking camps. Some painting is planned for the season, placing gravel in all of the campgrounds, and fixing up some of the roads. The Towerman's Watch Interpretive Pathway and the Pickerel Lake Pathway have been completed

from start to finish. Jordan and his group plan on tending to the Shingle Mill Pathway next and then head up to the 80-mile High Country Pathway. Jordan stated there is much work to be done so they are going to split it up in sections. Jordan plans to work collaboratively with Katherine Benedict, the current AmeriCorps member serving in the PRCSF, and Mark Kunitzer to accomplish as much as possible in 2024.

Jeff Clarke reported on some statistics regarding camp nights booked at the PRCSF campgrounds dating back to 2021. Jeff stated that from 2021 through 2023 from January 1<sup>st</sup> through July 18<sup>th</sup> of each year the camp nights have been elevated due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During 2024 the number of camp nights booked have been trending back down to a more normal range. For the aforementioned time period, in 2021 there were approximately 1,500 camp nights booked, in 2022 there were 1,600 camp nights, in 2023 there were 1,600 camp nights, and lastly, for 2024 there have been 1,100 camp nights booked. Jeff is not able to see any date in his system prior to 2021 but explained that he will bring updated numbers for the entire season to the October 17, 2024 meeting.

#### **EGLE REPORT – STEVE BUYZE:**

Steve Buyze provided an update to the council regarding the Charlton 4 CPF cleanup. Since the last meeting EGLE has been waiting for the results of the soil samples. Steve Buyze disclosed at the July 18, 2024 meeting that the consultant provided a sampling plan which was approved by EGLE, the soil samples were submitted, and the soil samples came back clean. As a result, the Charlton 4 CPF well has been closed and the soil has been remediated.

#### **LAW ENFORCEMENT REPORT – LED CONSERVATION OFFICER:**

A report from the Law Enforcement Division was not able to be provided on July 18, 2024, per Chair Doug Reeves.

#### **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS – DOUG REEVES:**

Chair Doug Reeves and Mark Monroe asked Steve Buyze if he would do a joint presentation with Matt Fry regarding carbon sequestration at the October 17, 2024, P.R.C.A.C meeting.

Chair Doug Reeves mentioned to please forward any other future agenda items to Doug Reeves or Mark Monroe, and please copy Raija Claeys.

The next meeting is scheduled for 5:00 p.m., Thursday, October 17, 2024, at the DNR Pigeon River Headquarters.

#### **ADJOURN:**

The meeting adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

**RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,  
MARK MONROE, DNR**