

MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

Minutes of June 15, 2005

City of Big Rapids, Commission Chambers, 226 N. Michigan Avenue, Big Rapids  
9:00 AM

The meeting of the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) Board of Trustees commenced at 9:10 AM.

The following Board members were present:

Bob Garner  
Lana Pollack  
Frank Torre  
Sam Washington

Due to a prior commitment, Board Member Hamp was unable to attend the meeting.

Also in attendance were various staff members of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and other interested parties.

At this point, Chairperson Washington introduced Mr. Frank Torre to the audience and welcomed him to the MNRTF Board. Mr. Torre replaced Mr. Thompson on the Board. Chairperson Washington also introduced the other Board members.

I. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FOR MEETING OF APRIL 20, 2005.

Chairperson Washington called for the adoption of the April 20, 2005 Board meeting minutes.

**MOVED BY MR. GARNER, SUPPORTED BY MS. POLLACK, TO APPROVE  
THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 20, 2005 MNRTF BOARD MEETING. PASSED.**

II. ADOPTION OF AGENDA FOR MEETING OF JUNE 15, 2005.

**MOVED BY MR. GARNER, SUPPORTED BY MS. POLLACK, TO APPROVE  
THE AGENDA FOR THE JUNE 15, 2005 MNRTF BOARD MEETING. PASSED.**

III. PUBLIC APPEARANCES.

Mr. Mike Powers, Chairman, Recreation Board, City of Manistique – 05-109, Manistique Central Park Improvements.

Mr. Mike Powers, Chairman of the Recreation Board for the City of Manistique, provided a PowerPoint presentation in support of 05-109, Manistique Central Park Improvements, a development application the city has submitted for possible funding.

The project is for the development of an entrance road, parking, skate park, multi-purpose trail network, baseball field and tennis courts, area upgrades and restroom building at Manistique

Central Park. The city does not have the facilities for summer and winter recreation programs. They would like to offer a swimming and fishing program, as there is no swimming within ten miles and fishing within five miles of the city.

The City of Manistique has a population of 3,583 and is in the middle of Schoolcraft County. The population of the county is 8,900. It is 100 miles from the City of Marquette and the Mackinaw Bridge.

The centerpiece of the grant is to create a 40-acre recreation site around the six-acre Quarry Lake. This area has the potential to provide fishing, swimming, picnicking, hiking, nature education and nonmotorized boating, such as canoeing and kayaking. Fishing would take place at the south end. The grant would provide for three fishing platforms. Thousands of bluegills have been planted in the quarry in the last three years. Accessibility is a problem. The grant would provide universal accessibility. Swimming would take place on the north end of the quarry.

Development would also include a circular drive which would allow visitors to come up to the beach area. In addition, there is a lot of land around the quarry that would be used for nature trails which would merge into a larger trail system going through the northeast part of the 40-acre recreation center. Signage would be used to provide information and educate users. In the winter the nature trails become ski/sledding hills, bike paths used for cross-country skiing and the quarry for ice fishing.

The existing bandshell in Central Park fell into disrepair and a local youth group repaired it four years ago and now there are concerts performed every Thursday night. The park playground is used regularly. The only problem is they are not used as much as they could be as a result of limited access—roads do not go to all the areas. There is very limited parking. The grant would provide a parking area.

Maintenance of the grant is a high priority. If the city is successful in obtaining the grant, they have contracted with the Schoolcraft County Fishing Association (fishing), Youth Entertaining Teen Interests (swimming and picnic areas), Softball Association (softball fields) and others for maintenance. If these groups cannot follow through on their commitments, the City of Manistique and Schoolcraft County will provide maintenance of the park. All of the townships in the county support this project.

Mr. Garner stated that Schoolcraft County is a huge county. He asked if the only school district in the county was in the City of Manistique. Mr. Powers responded yes. Children are on the bus for a long time to get to school. About 97% of students come to the City of Manistique's school district.

Mr. Garner asked where the quarry was located and if it was in the city limits. Mr. Powers responded that it was within the city limits. The whole 40-acre site is within the city limits and is kitty-corner from the school system. In addition, it is close to government housing and other residential districts. Mr. Garner wondered if there was any point along the quarry where it hooked up to the river. Mr. Powers responded that it is completely self-contained. Mr. Garner asked the depth of the quarry. Mr. Powers responded approximately 35-40 feet in the south end where the fishing would be.

Mr. Torre asked what the acreage was of the quarry. Mr. Powers responded a little more than six acres of the area. The nature trail is another six acres.

Ms. Christine Hilton, City Planner/Zoning Administrator, City of Coldwater – 05-067, South Lake Waterfront Park Acquisition.

Ms. Christine Hilton, City Planner/Zoning Administrator for the City of Coldwater, provided a PowerPoint presentation in support of 05-067, South Lake Waterfront Park Acquisition.

Ms. Hilton advised the Board that Branch County's population is 45,787, and land use is primarily agriculture. There are 114 lakes, 16 public access boat launches and two public beaches in the county. The current recreation in the county benefits higher income households that can afford watercraft and/or lakefront property. According to the 2000 Census, 45 percent of the City of Coldwater's residents are low income.

The lake access at the two existing public parks do not meet barrier-free regulations, and the majority of the lakefront property in the county is privately owned and already developed. The property proposed for acquisition is 30 acres in size, with 1,950 feet of shoreline and a 1.5-acre pond. To the north, eight acres are wooded with grass covering the remainder, with mature trees dotting the landscape.

Ms. Hilton explained various features of the proposed acquisition via photographs of the site.

Ms. Hilton further stated that there is a tremendous amount of community support for this project as it will provide lake access to the county's underserved population as well as the general public. In addition, Coldwater Township, which is adjacent to the city, has offered to provide financial support for the acquisition of the property, pending grant approval.

Chairperson Washington asked if there would be a boat ramp on the property. Ms. Hilton responded there is a long enough length of shoreline that this could be accomplished.

Mr. Garner asked what the grant amount would be. Ms. Hilton responded \$225,000.

Ms. Claire Pirozzo, Village of DeTour Village – 05-084, DeTour Waterfront Property Acquisition.

Ms. Claire Pirozzo from the Village of DeTour Village, provided a PowerPoint presentation in support of 05-084, DeTour Waterfront Property Acquisition. The site will be developed into a park which will include fishing, picnicking, kayak access and viewing of the DeTour Reef Lighthouse. This project will not only be acquired for the Village of DeTour Village residents to enjoy, but the surrounding areas and all the eastern Upper Peninsula.

The Village of DeTour Village is located on the eastern tip of the Upper Peninsula and is surrounded on three sides by water, and is a ferry boat ride away from Drummond Island.

The proposed acquisition is one of the last pieces of waterfront property available to the village. Mr. Lynn Carr, the owner, is not only willing to sell this property to the village, but also will donate the match money to help the community. The property consists of approximately two acres with 800 feet of water frontage on the DeTour Passage, St. Mary's River mouth at Lake Huron.

In the early 1900s, the property was used as a landing dock for the village. In later years the Daroshie family purchased the property and built the White building, which was used as a machine repair shop for freighters. In more recent years a pole barn was added and used for boat storage. The village would use this pole barn for recreational equipment and park storage.

The ramp would be used for kayaks and canoes. All of the old dockage will be removed and a new boardwalk and fishing pier that will follow the shoreline will be constructed. There will be several spots for boats to moor, some of which will be used to take visitors out to the lighthouse. The adjacent building on the property is not part of the acquisition. Mr. Carr will donate it to the DeTour Reef Lighthouse Preservation Society (DRLPS). This will be restored to use as an interpretive center, gift shop and relocate the DeTour Passage Historical Museum. The building will also house public restrooms. This is the only public place in the village that you can see an easy glimpse of the lighthouse.

Development of the building and property should provide a great draw of visitors. Whitefish Point attracts 80,000 visitors a year. It is felt that with acquisition of this project, it would attract more visitors and provide an economic boost not only for the village, but surrounding areas and eastern Upper Peninsula. In addition, the village is working in cooperation with DRLPS to make the "Maritime Heritage Trail" a unique experience.

Ms. Pirozzo further pointed out that the water around the site is approximately 20 feet deep and there is no other public place in the village where you can fish off the shore. She invited staff and Board members to visit the site to see the beauty and uniqueness of this waterfront property. This project will create a travel destination with an economic impact for an area that needs new businesses and jobs.

Mr. Torre asked the cost of this project. Ms. Pirozzo responded the property is \$660,000 (MNRTF grant amount \$495,000).

Chairperson Washington asked where the property was in relation to the ferry dock. Ms. Pirozzo responded that if you were standing on the dock looking towards Drummond Island, it would be to the right.

Ms. Pollack had a concern with the size of the property. She felt it was an ambitious plan for two acres. Whitefish Point handles a large number of visitors and wondered how this property would compare. Ms. Pirozzo responded that the grounds area before going out to the beach on Whitefish Point is the same size as the proposed acquisition. What is appealing to this property is the 800-foot water frontage, as it is a unique set-up that the water follows around the dock.

Mr. Garner asked if there was a hard appraisal done on the property. Ms. Pirozzo responded at this time there was not.

Mr. Garner stated he has received a lot of correspondence from residents in the village asking about development of a fish cleaning station in the village. Ms. Pirozzo stated that it is up and running. Possibly in the future, if the village is able to acquire this acquisition, the fish cleaning station will be moved to this location.

Mr. Don Keith, Commissioner, Board of Commissioners, Keweenaw County; and Mr. John Griffith, President, North Woods Conservancy – 05-078, Gratiot River County Park Addition, Keweenaw County.

Mr. Don Keith, Commissioner for the Keweenaw Board of Commissioners; and Mr. John Griffith, President, North Woods Conservancy, made a PowerPoint presentation in support of 05-078, Gratiot River County Park Addition, Keweenaw County.

Mr. Keith advised the Board that, if this acquisition project is approved, it would double the size of the current mouth of the Gratiot River County Park. The county is very appreciative and thankful to the DNR, with the help of The Nature Conservancy, in acquiring lands which more than tripled the amount of public access. The county has relatively low access land for recreational purposes. Of all the 83 counties in Michigan, Keweenaw is the most dependent on tourism. In addition, it is the most densely populated county in the State and has the lowest per capita income.

At this point, Mr. Griffiths proceeded with the PowerPoint presentation. There has been tremendous support for this acquisition project—townships, villages, legislators, school districts, community programs and conservation organizations, as well as private individuals and families.

Mr. Griffiths stated that the entire peninsula has been designated by the Michigan Natural Features Inventory as a mega site because of the unique geological and natural history. The coastal portions of the peninsula have been designated as a priority action site by The Nature Conservancy. In addition, the county is known as the “Copper Country” from the rich copper mining and timber history. Both of these events are celebrated by the Keweenaw National Historical Park.

Mr. Griffiths stated that there is very little public land in the county (approximately 12%). In Allouez Township, where this project is located, it is less than two percent. What is happening is timberland that has been enrolled in CFA and used for generations as public land is now being subdivided, sold and developed.

In 1999, the county was awarded a 75 percent MNRTF grant. In addition, the county, with assistance of the North Woods Conservancy, received a 25 percent North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant for the acquisition. It took three years to acquire the property. The property that was acquired was 100 acres, 4,000 feet of Lake Superior and 2,500 feet of Gratiot River shorelines. This area is currently used for fishing, hunting, picnics, camping, kayaking, agate-hunting and swimming.

The property being proposed for acquisition includes an additional 100 acres and 4,000 feet of Lake Superior shoreline. In 2003, it was acquired on an interim basis by the North Woods Conservancy as it was about to be sold and developed. Access to that parcel would be an easement through the existing county park, which would include a bridge across the Gratiot River and twelve homes along the lakeshore. The conservancy made a commitment to protect this land for three years and expires in March of 2006.

The current value of the property is \$4.4 million. It is available to the county for \$2.6 million, with the MNRTF portion being \$1.95 million. The North Woods Conservancy will provide a 25 percent match donation of \$650,000.

The site is listed by the Michigan Natural Features Inventory as agate-rich cobble and basaltic bedrock Lake Superior shoreline, which describe the site as “one of the best-known beaches for agate-collecting in the State” and “one of the most scenic sections of bedrock shoreline in the Keweenaw.” There is also 100 acres of declining wetland habitat supporting several State and federally listed threatened and endangered plant and animal species. In addition, the Gratiot River is the site for a coaster brook trout restoration study with a partnership between the DNR, Michigan Technological University, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Trout Unlimited. The existing county park is open to hunting and fishing.

The project is accessible to 70 percent of the county residents, five miles from Ahmeek/Mohawk and 30 minutes from the center of the Cities of Houghton/Hancock. There is access to the project via a county road and public trail access. If possible through the permitting process, the county would like to put in a pedestrian footbridge and handicapped trail.

With the addition of this parcel, it would provide a critical linkage to the surrounding State Forest, Conservancy and private conservation land. This addition to the county park is the highest priority of the Keweenaw County Board of Commissioners, as well as the highest priority identified in the county's recreation plan. The project would provide 8,000 feet of beach area, some of which is semi-developed.

There are some direct economic benefits to the county. The Keweenaw Trail Running Festival, which is in its 8<sup>th</sup> year, attracts 500 new tourists per year and brings \$272,000 to the county. The first of the race will begin at Gratiot River County Park North, which includes the proposed parcel.

Mr. Garner stated that there were two legislators identified by the county in support of this project. One of them has been very vociferous about selling land in the Upper Peninsula. His staff members have been complaining that we are not selling enough land and we don't want any more bought because the local governments have been complaining about too much State- or government-owned land. He asked Mr. Keith and Mr. Griffiths to get in contact with that legislator and see if there is a way to make this work to enhance public value of land.

Ms. Wendy Ohst, Manager, Department of Employment and Training/Facility Management; and Mr. John Snider, Commissioner, Muskegon County – 05-069, Muskegon YMCA Property.

Ms. Wendy Ohst, Manager of the Department of Employment and Training/Facility Management, Muskegon County; and Mr. John Snider, Commissioner of Muskegon County, provided a PowerPoint presentation in support of 05-069, Muskegon YMCA Property.

Ms. Ohst provided some background information. About 30 years ago the county was able to acquire a piece of property on the south shore of Muskegon Lake (Heritage Landing), which is in the heart of Muskegon County. The lake is in the City of Muskegon and on the west is Lake Michigan. The property acquired had been an old foundry. This property was developed from a brownfield to an urban park. The park is used as an open-access lakefront recreational area. In addition, a premier waterfront music festival venue is held in the park.

Ms. Ohst stated that the county has the opportunity to acquire 4.28 acres adjacent to Heritage Landing to the west, and on the south shore of Muskegon Lake. Downtown redevelopment has been occurring in the City of Muskegon to better utilize the lakeshore, provide community access and promote tourism. Reconstruction also includes Main Street and an urban center to promote walking and biking traffic and a funicular walkway from downtown to the lakefront.

The benefits for acquisition of this property include:

- Opens privately-held inland lake property
- Expands available access to the inland lake
- Assures the property remains in public domain in perpetuity
- Expands urban, lakefront park
- Expands natural resource recreation opportunities – fishing, wildlife habitation and viewing

- Creates additional natural picnic sites
- Substantially increases festival venue – currently over capacity at existing Heritage Landing site

Potential future development of the property includes:

- Connect sites through attractive bridge across lagoon
- Create additional fishing piers
- Create additional wildlife habitations
- Create additional wildlife viewing opportunities – wetland boardwalk and pedestrian shoreline walkways

Ms. Ohst stated that the county is requesting MNRTF funding in the amount of \$973,400, which will be matched by \$324,500 of local funds. Benefits accruing from the acquisition will allow the county to:

- Expand the current urban park for community recreational activities compatible with the rebirth of the central urban area
- Increase public access to one of Muskegon County’s most valuable recreational resources—Muskegon Lake
- Increase recreational opportunities for the entire community
- Expand the festival venue to allow for the expansion of tourism attractions, which is a major part of the county’s economy

Mr. Snider provided some additional comments in support of the acquisition. The property has 1,075 feet of frontage on Muskegon Lake. In addition, the property is a soft shore and does not contain a seawall. It is capable of being cleaned and can be returned to its environmentally original state as close as possible. It would provide fisheries and wildlife habitat. There are a number of community organizations that are willing to support and provide volunteer maintenance and financial support for the property.

Ms. Pollack asked what the condition of the property is relative to historic pollution. Ms. Ohst responded she has had conversations with the property owner, and to her knowledge the property was not used as an industrial site in the past and was not aware of any pollution on it. Mr. Snider further responded that there is a drain that runs into the estuary that has polluted some of the bottom. That would have to be cleaned up. The property on which the YMCA sits and the property proposed for acquisition has never been used, to the best of the county’s knowledge, as an industrial site.

Ms. Pollack asked at what point a survey would be done. Mr. Snider responded that a survey has been made and they are working on the environmental issues right now.

At this time, Chairperson Washington wanted to thank the City of Big Rapids for hosting the MNRTF Board meeting today.

Mr. Jon Noyes, Landscape Designer, Oakland County – 05-032, Highland Township Property Acquisition.

Mr. Jon Noyes, Landscape Designer for the Parks and Recreation Department, Oakland County, provided a PowerPoint presentation in support of 05-032, Highland Township Property Acquisition.

Oakland County has a mission to provide all residents with recreational, leisure and learning experiences; parks, open spaces, facilities; and professional staff and fiscal management, resulting in a comprehensive county park system that enhances the residents' quality of life. The county is the State's second most populous. The Highland Township area is growing at twice the rate as the county on a whole.

Mr. Noyes outlined the proposed Highland Township acquisition project (proposed as Highland Oaks County Park). This would be centrally located in the county and would be to acquire 260 acres. Currently, less than 17 percent of parcels in the county are larger than 10 acres. Development of the park would include focusing on wildlife recreation, which could take advantage of the best qualities of the property and its rural setting. In addition, visitors would be able to traverse a variety of upland and wetland habitats through a network of trails, boardwalks and viewing platforms. It would also provide opportunities for wildlife recreation and education.

Highland Oaks County Park could also host hiking, mountain biking, picnicking, horseback riding, and wildlife viewing, and would be linked to other recreational areas via the county-wide trail network. As a trail systems hub, Highland Oaks would link up to the following:

- Rose Oaks County Park
- Buckhorn Lake Complex
- Camp Has-O-Rec
- Springfield Oaks County Park
- Indian Springs Metro Park
- Pontiac Lake State Recreation Area
- Camp Ohiyesa
- Highland Township Park

Mr. Noyes further stated that Highland Township was dedicated as the first equestrian township in the State of Michigan. The property was first proposed to the county by equestrian groups and land conservancies in Highland Township.

Over 30 percent of the site is covered by wetlands and has been identified by the Michigan Natural Features Inventory as a priority area for detailed ecological survey. Large contiguous tracts of natural area serve as important wildlife corridors and are the focus of recent efforts to promote Green Infrastructure Planning. It is also located within the Shiawassee Headwaters. The wetlands of the property are part of the Buckhorn Lake Complex. Development in headwater areas has been identified as one of the greatest threats to water quality in many Oakland County watersheds.

The Michigan Natural Features Inventory has also identified the Highland property as having a high probability of the presence of rare animals, plants or natural communities. They have been commissioned to provide detailed ecological surveys of nearby Rose Oaks for the development of long-term natural resource management plans.

Oakland County Parks have been implementing a system-wide natural resources stewardship program to appropriately identify and manage parkland resources and to provide accurate information to park visitors and neighbors. A Stewardship Action Group of park staff has been formed to address the issues of invasive species control and habitat improvement.

Mr. Noyes stated that the cost for this acquisition project is \$3.6 million. The county is asking for a 40 percent grant (\$1,440,000) from the MNRTF and will provide a local match of 60 percent (\$2,160,000).

Chairperson Washington asked if the county has entrance fees for their parks and, if so, what are they. Mr. Noyes responded yes. The entry fee is \$10.00 per day, with a discounted rate for county residents. Yearly passes are \$43.00. Not all parks require entry fees. It depends on the current usage. The Highland Oaks County Park would require a sticker in order to park. Pedestrian and bicycle access is free. There would be no full-time staff person available at the entrance. Chairperson Washington further asked for all Oakland County parks, do you have to pay an admission fee to be on-site. Mr. Noyes responded it depends on the facilities that are available at the park. For example, Waterford Oaks, which has walking trails and a water park, no entry fee is required. There is, however, a fee for the water park.

Chairperson Washington further stated that it appears the only way a resident of Oakland County can recreate on “public land” is to go to a State Park, County Park, or Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority Park—all of which charge a fee. There would not be many options for less fortunate citizens to use these facilities other than to pay the fees. Mr. Noyes responded unfortunately that is correct, if you want vehicular access to the sites. All sites are open to pedestrians and, in some cases, equestrian uses.

Ms. Pollack commented that there are not too many less fortunate people who ride horses these days. She asked if there were any public busses to the Highland Oaks County Park site. Mr. Noyes responded there is no public transportation within the area.

Ms. Pollack asked the previous presenters if fees are charged to entry their facilities. All presenters indicated no fees were charged. She suggested that perhaps at some point the Board may want to discuss this policy. It is Ms. Pollack’s feeling that this is public money and it should not exclude people who do not have the funds to pay entry fees.

Discussion ensued regarding entry fees charged for Oakland County parks.

Mr. Garner mentioned that there are State Recreation Areas in the immediate vicinity and most of them charge a daily fee. The State has gone to great lengths to allow some hunting on their lands. Oakland County has not looked at hunting as a viable form of recreation. He wondered if there were plans for hunting on the Highland Oaks property. Mr. Noyes responded that the County Park Board has indicated there would be managed hunting. Mr. Garner wondered if there would be waterfowl hunting. Mr. Noyes responded at the present time, no. Goose hunting was explored at one of the other county parks. The county does recognize hunting as an important form of appropriate management of wildlife, however, they need to figure out a way to incorporate responsible hunting.

Mr. Tom Freeman, Superintendent of Park Planning, Washtenaw County – 05-053, Independence Lake County Park Addition.

Mr. Tom Freeman, Superintendent of Park Planning for Washtenaw County, provided a PowerPoint presentation in support of 05-053, Independence Lake County Park Addition. Independence Park was the first park in the county. Visitors have increased to the point that the county cannot meet the demand.

Mr. Freeman stated it is the mission of the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission to enhance the quality of life in the county by promoting healthy lifestyles, providing high quality facilities and programs reflective of current and anticipated recreational needs of county residents and visitors, with particular emphasis on preserving fragile lands, water quality, wildlife habitat, creating pedestrian and greenway connections and providing high quality services to those of all backgrounds.

In 2003, the county began the process of updating their five-year parks and recreation master plan. At that time, the county conducted a survey of community needs and priorities. Three of the top priorities expressed the need to purchase land for conservation, parks and active recreation, as well as to develop more outdoor activities. In addition, the number one action item identified in the parks and recreation plan for Independence Lake County Park is to “increase and develop year-round use at the site.”

Independence Lake County Park is 312 acres in size. About 200 acres consist of the lake. There is not a lot of dry land to meet recreation needs. Of the dry land, a big portion actually is wetlands. This area is utilized through use of nature trails, observation tower and boardwalk; however, it does constrain the use of active recreation in the area. Current active recreation includes a beach, boat rental site, fishing docks, and a separate boat launch, which is used year-round. Also, there are hard-surface trails used for biking and walking and soft-surface nature trails.

Mr. Freeman further stated that the proposed acquisition is 82.9 acres. There are some contiguous property lines that would allow the county to connect the property internally with Independence Lake County Park. The property includes wetlands, upland woods and old fields. Opportunities for use of the property would be for recreation, land preservation and education. The northern part of the property includes the University of Michigan Mud Lake Bog. If this property was acquired, it would continue this preservation and provide additional buffer. In addition, the nature trail could be extended. This would provide a 650-acre wetland complex. On the western side is Gosline Preserve, which is a 40-acre parcel that was purchased in collaboration with the Washtenaw Land Trust. There was a conservation easement donated on the property.

Mr. Freeman stated that the county has not offered year-round camping in any of their parks. With the addition of this property, the county is interested in offering this recreation opportunity. Also, the county runs a number of nature education programs through its park system, and employs two naturalists. Interpretive signs have been added for further information for the nature education programs.

Mr. Garner mentioned that there was an inholding between the proposed acquisition and the park and wondered if that has been investigated. Mr. Freeman responded that the county is conversing with the landowners at the time. There are actually two parcels, one 40 acres and the other 10 acres. The owner of the 40-acre parcel wants to wait and see if the county is able to acquire the 82.9-acre site. The 10-acre parcel, which has a restored farmhouse on the property, is currently for sale and they are asking \$650,000. It would provide additional land, but not necessarily land that would add to the county’s ability to provide recreation at the site.

Ms. Pollack asked if Washtenaw County had any programs for low-income citizens to access the parks at a reduced or no fee. Mr. Freeman responded the majority of the parks do not charge a fee. There is a fee charged for the golf course. The recreation center does charge a membership or daily fee. There are programs at the recreation center that are targeted for low-

income citizens. Vehicle entrance fees are \$4.00 for residents. The county runs twelve parks and six nature preserves that do not charge an entry fee. Ms. Pollack asked if there was a county millage that supports the parks. Mr. Freeman responded yes, and allows the county to not charge an entrance fee at a lot of the parks. For the parks that do charge, the revenues from fees help to offset the cost of operation.

Mr. Garner asked what facilities in Livingston County were close to this property and wondered if there would be any benefit to having this property so close. Mr. Freeman responded that there is a Huron-Clinton Metropark (Huron Meadows) which is located within 15 miles. That park does not have a big day-use area and is largely a golf course. Livingston County does not have a county-wide parks and recreation system.

Mr. Tim Schreiner, Director of Parks and Recreation, Grand Traverse County.

Mr. Tim Schreiner, Director of Parks and Recreation for Grand Traverse County, and representing the Michigan Recreation and Park Association (MRPA), presented the MNRTF Board with the 2004 Grand Award from the MRPA's annual conference held in February of this year in Traverse City. Some Board members and DNR staff were able to attend the conference, where the award was first presented. Mr. Schreiner wanted to represent the award for Board members who were not in attendance. This award is given to agencies that support parks and recreation in the State of Michigan.

He read the statement from the original presentation of the award into the record.

Mr. Garner was at the conference in Traverse City and wished to express his appreciation for this award. He briefly outlined how the MNRTF was established and how important it has been for recreation and preservation of land.

Mr. Brian Price, Executive Director, Leelanau Conservancy – 05-147, Lighthouse West Property, Parks and Recreation Division, DNR.

Mr. Brian Price, Executive Director of the Leelanau Conservancy, stated that there would not be the opportunities for land protection if it were not for the MNRTF. The successes of conservancies are due in large part by the MNRTF funding being available.

Mr. Price welcomed Mr. Torre to the Board.

At this point, Mr. Price made a presentation in support of 05-147, Lighthouse West Property, an acquisition application submitted by the Parks and Recreation Division of the DNR. This is a privately-owned piece of property located between two units of the Leelanau State Park. The property primarily is critical dunes, trails and parking.

The property is 42 acres of prime migratory bird stopover habitat with 640 feet of Lake Michigan shoreline. It is used by over 100 species of songbirds, raptors and waterfowl. The property is within the vicinity of DNR State Park lands.

The property was purchased by the Leelanau Conservancy in 2004 for \$1.8 million via a five-year contract. The conservation and access easement was sold to the DNR's Parks and Recreation Division. In December 2004, the MNRTF Board approved an initial grant of \$630,000 toward the purchase of a conservation easement. The DNR's Parks and Recreation Division are asking for \$632,000 from the MNRTF to complete the conservation easement. A

draft conservation easement has been completed. An appraisal has been ordered of the property. If funding is approved, the project would be completed by September 2006.

#### IV. OLD BUSINESS.

##### 2005 Application Review – Notebook.

Mr. James Wood, Chief, Grants, Contracts and Customer Systems, DNR, outlined the MNRTF application review notebook that the Board had received. The notebook contains descriptions of each application, including scope items (development projects), acreage (acquisition projects), grant amount requested, need statements, location and site maps.

##### Proposed Change in MNRTF Board Rules of Procedures (Bylaws) – tabled from April 20, 2005 Meeting.

**MOVED BY MR. GARNER, SUPPORTED BY MS. POLLACK, TO TABLE THE PROPOSED CHANGE IN MNRTF BOARD RULES OF PROCEDURES (BYLAWS) UNTIL ALL BOARD MEMBERS ARE PRESENT FOR DISCUSSION. PASSED.**

#### V. NEW BUSINESS.

##### TF00-312, Clinton River Trail, City of Rochester – PROJECT CONVERSION REQUEST and TF02-043, Clinton River Trail, City of Rochester (development project) – PROJECT CHANGE REQUEST.

Mr. Wood outlined the project conversion request for TF00-312, Clinton River Trail, City of Rochester; and project change request for TF02-043, Clinton River Trail, City of Rochester, for the Board's information.

Mr. Wood advised the Board that the City of Rochester is proposing to reroute an approximately 1,200-foot long, 60-foot wide section of the Clinton River Trail, placing it closer to the Clinton River. The portion of the trail proposed for rerouting begins east to an existing pedestrian bridge over Paint Creek. The city proposes to exchange the trail corridor acquired under TF00-312 for a strip of land varying between 30 to 75 feet in width immediately adjacent to the Clinton River.

This rerouting of the trail has been proposed by the city at the request of Trident Properties, Inc. This would allow the company to combine property holdings to the north and south of the existing trail corridor. Appraisals have been conducted on the proposed conversion and replacement properties and have been approved by the DNR's Office of Land and Facilities. The fair market value of the conversion property (1.7 acres) has been approved at \$116,000, while the replacement property (2.6 acres) has been appraised at \$142,000.

Grants, Contracts and Customer Systems have received several messages and letters opposing the conversion. The most frequently cited concerns were:

- The two properties have been improperly appraised for value and the existing trail section should be assigned a higher value than the proposed replacement property.
- The relocation of the trail will move it off the raised original railroad corridor into the floodplain. This will result in the trail being flooded and unusable at times. It will also mean that the city will surface this portion of the trail with concrete.

- The proposed development of the condominiums next to the trail will spoil the natural setting of the trail.

At this point, Chairperson Washington asked Mr. Dan Keifer from Friends of Clinton River Trail, to provide his comments.

Mr. Dan Keifer, Clinton River Watershed Council – TF00-312 and TF02-043, Clinton River Trail, City of Rochester.

Mr. Dan Keifer, representing the Clinton River Watershed Council and an organizer of the Friends of Clinton River Trail, made some comments. He provided background information on the trail for the Board's information.

The trail system is located in Macomb and Oakland counties. The Clinton River Trail is 15 miles in length. There was a substantial amount of MNRTF funds used to purchase an abandoned railroad that was owned by Canadian National. It is currently owned by five cities, going from Sylvan Lake on the west to the City of Rochester on the east. Additionally, it connects to other trail systems (Paint Creek, Polly Ann, and West Bloomfield Trails). A master plan is underway that would include a connection down to a metropark trail out to Lake St. Clair. Proximity to urban areas makes these trails vitally important. The trail also connects other park lands and natural resources in the immediate areas of the City of Rochester, Shelby Township, and Bald Mountain Recreation Area.

The river is equally as important as the trail. Paint Creek Trail has managed a brown trout fishery for over 20 years. In April of this year, the DNR stocked about 15,000 brown trout in Paint Creek. The Clinton River is a managed steelhead fishery. In April, the DNR stocked 34,000 steelhead trout into the river. There has been a partnership formed between the DNR's Fisheries Division and the Clinton River Cold Water Conservation Project to improve the fishery. Representatives of Trout Unlimited, City of Auburn Hills, Oakland County Planning Department and the Watershed Council are also involved with this project.

Mr. Keifer further stated that he has a high regard as to what the City of Rochester is trying to do with the development proposal. Done the correct way it would be great for river, trail and recreation users. It must be done the correct way so it does not harm the trail, river or fishery. His group would support the proposed rerouting of the trail if it is done correctly and if certain conditions are met. Concerns are: 1) trail user safety; 2) protection and restoration of the riparian corridor; and 3) user access for fishermen, anglers, canoeists and kayakers.

Mr. Garner asked if Mr. Keifer was in favor or opposed to the city's proposal. Mr. Keifer responded that if Fisheries Division is required to engineer the stream bank stabilization, his group will be in favor of the proposal.

Chairperson Washington stated that it appears the concerns are that there is no deterioration of the fishery, stream banks and natural setting. Mr. Keifer responded that right now there is 150 years of debris in this area. Development will require removing this. How this is restored is very important to the natural features.

Ms. Alice Tomboulia, Paint Creek Trail Founder – TF00-312 and TF02-043, Clinton River Trail, City of Rochester.

Ms. Alice Tomboulia, Paint Creek Trail Founder, made some comments regarding TF00-312 and TF02-043, Clinton River Trail. She provided photographs of the area for the Board's information.

Ms. Tomboulia is in support of public rail-trails and especially the protection of the Clinton River Trail. She stated she has had discussion with the developer of the project and feels there are some problems that remain to be resolved. She hopes there is a better solution to the city's needs than what is proposed for the land conversion.

Ms. Tomboulia further outlined her concerns via photographs of the area. She emphasized that the Clinton River Trail is not only a trail, but a rail-trail which uses a railroad line built about 130 years ago.

Ms. Tomboulia stated that she does not feel the terms "exchange," "land swap" or "conversion" accurately describe the proposal that is before the Board. It is more of a destruction of public infrastructure and accepting a substitute instead. Based on the price that was paid when the City of Rochester bought 2-1/2 miles of railroad corridor (over \$2 million), the price for this 3/10ths of a mile is \$252,000, with \$186,000 from the MNRTF.

Ms. Tomboulia continued by describing the current conditions of the river via photographs.

Ms. Tomboulia concluded by stating that she feels the MNRTF and the City of Rochester need to ponder very carefully and be aware that the new portion of the trail is going to be very vulnerable to washouts by the river, and as a result, need to be replaced. Replacement would involve more public money, and she is concerned with that. She would like to encourage the Board to consider, if possible, a way that could retain a trail in its safe position away from the power of the water in planning the development.

Chairperson Washington asked when staff prepared the recommendation for project change and conversion if they had all the necessary information from the city. He wondered if the Board would need to make a decision on this matter today, or could this be tabled until the August meeting. Mr. Wood responded that the urgency of approval is on behalf of the developer. This matter could be deferred until the August meeting if the Board chose to do so. The information that has been raised today has been provided to staff to evaluate. Chairperson Washington asked if staff was recommending the project change and conversion. Mr. Wood responded yes, contingent upon making sure the alternative really is viable and acceptable to Fisheries Division.

Ms. Pollack responded that she is sympathetic to the developer, but if the Board were to vote on this issue today, she would vote no. She asked Mr. Wood if the DNR talked to the Corps of Engineers regarding this change. She feels Ms. Tomboulia raised some issues that must be addressed. She feels we must protect this public pathway and what will be there five years from now, as well as what the cost would be for maintenance.

Mr. Garner stated that when the Board deals with conversions, they need to know what the conversion is going to be and what the final draft is before it is voted on. In the interest of moving this action along so the Board can get a final look at what the conversion would be, he

asked to table this action until the August meeting. Chairperson Washington added that he feels there is still more information that could be forthcoming on the conversion.

**MOVED BY MR. GARNER, SUPPORTED BY MR. TORRE, TO TABLE ACTION ON THE CONVERSION AND PROJECT CHANGE REQUEST FOR TF00-312, CLINTON RIVER TRAIL ACQUISITION AND TF02-043, CLINTON RIVER TRAIL DEVELOPMENT, CITY OF ROCHESTER, UNTIL THE AUGUST 17, 2005 MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BOARD MEETING. PASSED.**

The developer of the project, Mr. Thomas Turnbull, representing Trident Properties, wondered what more information the Board would like. All information has been provided to the DNR and City of Rochester that had been requested. He has not heard of any new information being requested by either agency. Every concern has been addressed. As to the costs that will be borne by constructing this trail, Trident Properties is bearing and will be meeting the requirements of the city's engineer so the trail is protected. Chairperson Washington responded the Board's concerns are they want to make sure all is in place as there has been a substantial investment made by the MNRTF for this project. It has been raised by some Board members today that perhaps this should be looked at more closely before action is taken.

Ms. Pollack asked who bears the cost of maintenance of the trail. We have seen projects that have been thought to be secure and turned out they were not. Mr. Kenneth Johnson, City Manager for the City of Rochester, stated that the city would accept the responsibility after the conversion and the developer completes the project, subject to review of the city's engineer and the criteria of the DNR. He urged the Board to visit the project before the August meeting.

**TF89-114, Jean Klock Park, City of Benton Harbor – PROPOSED MITIGATION.**

Mr. Wood outlined TF89-114, Jean Klock Park, a proposed mitigation submitted by the City of Benton Harbor. The Board approved a conversion of the project at its June 16, 2004 meeting, contingent upon review and approval by the DNR and Board of adequate mitigation parcels.

The city has provided six parcels that adequately mitigate the loss of some of the upland section of the park. Parcels vary in providing additional water access or recreation opportunities.

At this point, Mr. Geoffrey Fields, attorney for the City of Benton Harbor, provided some additional comments.

**Mr. Geoffrey Fields, Attorney for the City of Benton Harbor – TF89-114, Jean Klock Park, City of Benton Harbor.**

Mr. Geoffrey Fields, attorney for the City of Benton Harbor, outlined some further details for the proposed mitigation of a parcel for TF89-114, Jean Klock Park. He further represents the Cornerstone Alliance, which is the economic development agency in St. Joseph and Benton Harbor.

Mr. Fields stated that the conversion was approved by the Board at the June 2004 meeting, and the mitigation was approved in December of 2004. The city needed to submit surveys so the DNR had accurate information.

Mr. Fields pointed out to the Board that the city has discontinued admission fees to the park. The city has also secured a bid to remove the fence that keeps people from coming into the

park. The city is excavating Grand Boulevard. The project that the Board has before them is only one part of Grand Boulevard. Most of the growth has been buried under sand for some time. It goes along Lake Michigan and when it is open, it allows people to drive down to the beach. As it stands now, there is a parking lot about 100 yards away from the beach. M.C. Smith Associates has been hired to develop a plan for recreation uses for the park and Grand Boulevard.

Mr. Fields continued by describing further proposed developments for the St. Joseph and Paw Paw River areas. Plans are being made to open up the Paw Paw River for boat traffic.

Mr. Fields stated that the biggest mitigation parcel proposed is the Riverview Parcel (3.08 acres) and is right next to the DNR's boat launch. It is the city's hope that DNR will be able to expand the boat launch. The city is prepared to either deed the property to the State or create an easement.

Ms. Pollack asked if there was any local opposition to the mitigation. Mr. Fields responded that there was some initial opposition. There was a lawsuit that was filed by the "Friends of Jean Klock Park." The lawsuit was settled in six months. It was established that the protection that everybody wanted in place for the park would not hold up in court. What the city agreed to do is enter a permanent judgment so except for the narrow four-acre strip and one other parcel on the beach, this park is permanent confined to beach and park use. There is a permanent protection and was part of the deal. There still are people who would rather see nothing done to the park, but it has been quite some time since we have seen letters to the editor of the newspaper about this project.

Ms. Pollack asked if new housing in the City of Benton Harbor is hard to come by and wondered if this mitigation is to allow for new housing. Mr. Fields responded that this would be to allow 27 homes to be built with a lake view. It is the only housing in the city that would be so situated. The city would be getting the majority of the proceeds from the sale. It is estimated that it would increase the State Equalized Value for the residential tax base by over one-third. Ms. Pollack asked if the 27 homes proposed to be built would be gated. Mr. Fields responded no.

**MOVED BY MR. GARNER, SUPPORTED BY MR. TORRE, TO APPROVE THE MITIGATION FOR TF89-114, JEAN KLOCK PARK, CITY OF BENTON HARBOR, CONSISTING OF SIX PARCELS DESCRIBED AS RIVERVIEW PARCEL (3.08 ACRES), OX CREEK SOUTH (1.56 ACRES), OX CREEK NORTH (0.53 ACRES), CITY CENTER PARCEL (1.35 ACRES), HARBOR TOWN 1 PARCEL (1.64 ACRES), AND LIBERTY THEATER PARCEL (0.41 ACRES), TOTALLING 8.57 ACRES WITHIN THE CITY OF BENTON HARBOR. THE LAND WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF THESE PARCELS WILL BE ENCUMBERED AND ALL OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE MNRTF PROGRAM WILL TRANSFER TO THE MITIGATION PARCELS. PASSED.**

#### Proposed Change in Date for December 2005 Meeting.

Due to a prior commitment, Board member Hamp will be unable to attend the meeting scheduled for December 7. He is available December 6, 8 and 15. It is being requested that the December meeting date be changed to either December 6 or 8. Chairperson Washington suggested Board members submit to Grants staff the date(s) that they would be available. Mr. Garner stated he will be gone on December 9 for ten days. Chairperson Washington asked Board members to look at their schedules to see if they are available either December 6 or 8.

## VI. STATUS REPORTS.

### DNR Real Estate Report.

Mr. Wood outlined the DNR Real Estate Report for the Board's information. Since the last Board meeting the DNR has secured three options—one for purchase of a conservation easement and two for purchase of land with MNRTF assistance.

The conservation easement is for TF02-219 (\$4 million) and TF03-184 (\$3 million), Kamehameha Schools Land. This is Phase I of this project and involves approximately 49,008 acres.

The two options for purchase of land are:

- TF03-198 (\$450,000), State Wildlife Area Lump Sum. This consists of a 130-acre tract and adjoins 1,984 acres of State-owned land administered as the Sanilac State Game Area.
- TF02-201 (\$500,000), Deeryard Acquisitions. This consists of a 120-acre parcel in Dickinson County and is within the Crystal Falls Forest Management Unit.

Chairperson Washington stated that he will wait to ask questions regarding the Kamehameha Schools Land conservation easement until he has had a chance to talk to Ms. Helen Taylor of The Nature Conservancy.

### Local Projects Completion Report.

Mr. Wood advised the Board that there have been two acquisition and three development projects completed since the last Board meeting. Both of the completed acquisition projects are Small Acquisition Grant Initiative (SAGI) projects.

### Financial Report.

Mr. Wood advised the Board that there was no financial report provided for this meeting. There is no new information to report for MNRTF revenue. The Board will be getting an update soon.

Ms. Pollack asked if the reason there was no revenue information to report was because staff was busy or waiting for the Legislature to act. Mr. Wood responded that staff has been busy and the final revenue figures have not been identified.

Mr. Dennis Fedewa, Chief Deputy, DNR, provided more information to the Board regarding revenue figures. He explained that in the budget process quarterly meetings are held with the DNR divisions. Unfortunately, these do not always coincide with the MNRTF Board meetings to provide members with a financial report that is up-to-date. Chairperson Washington asked if the Board will be provided a report in August. Mr. Fedewa responded yes.

Mr. Fedewa added that the House and Senate have completed their version of the Executive recommendation for the DNR. There is a variety of small things, but the larger issue is the House changes to the Executive recommendation, which were a funding switch of forest development funds, taking out General Funds in the amount of \$1,070,000, and fire protection in the Forest, Mineral and Fire Management Division. They also increased the appropriation to

Parks and Recreation Division in the amount of \$3 million for general operational support using Harbor Development funds, which has basically been a Capital Outlay fund. This was reported to the Waterways Commission last week. He feels it is very problematic that Parks and Recreation Division use this fund. It has been openly discussed that the Parks and Recreation Division has a structural deficit and some legislators are aware of this fact. In addition, some legislators are aware of the deficit with the Game and Fish Fund, which is projected to be approximately \$8 million through Fiscal Year 2007.

The Senate took a different route in that they met their General Fund target reduction, not by a funding switch like the House, but rather reduced the General Fund appropriation for PILT. Under the new law, it is a 50-50 match and if there is not enough money that is available for the total tax liabilities of the DNR to pay local units of government, the available funds will be prorated. There was an attempt on the Senate floor to mirror what the House did and basically restore PILT with forest development funds, but it failed.

Also, in the Senate there was an appropriation of \$250,000 using Game and Fish Fund monies to require the DNR to do engineering studies leading up to and including dam removal at the three Kalamazoo/DNR-owned dams. Mr. Fedewa talked to Senator George about this and tried to offer alternative language because of the delicate nature of ongoing negotiations. The language that the DNR offered was not satisfactory, so Senator George put in other language.

When the MNRTF supplemental bill went before the Senate, there was a lot of discussion between legislators, both new and seasoned, as to what the MNRTF is, what the funds are used for and what the Board does. For example, Senator Cropsey wanted to use MNRTF monies to buy the Lyons dam so the State would have the liability of decommissioning it. Chairperson Washington stated that over the years Michigan United Conservation Clubs has had to go to battle over the use of MNRTF monies. Certainly a dam could not be viewed as recreational property. If it gets to the point where dams are being targeted to be obtained with MNRTF monies, there will be a lawsuit attached.

#### Lump Sum Report.

Mr. Wood advised the Board that they received a lump sum report in their Board materials. Efforts are underway to expend these funds.

#### VII. OTHER MATTERS AS ARE PROPERLY BROUGHT BEFORE THE BOARD.

Chairperson Washington again thanked the City of Big Rapids for their hospitality and accommodations for the Board meeting today.

Chairperson Washington stated that the Board had wished to present Mr. Jim Thompson, a former Board member, with a service award honoring his many years of service on the MNRTF Board. Unfortunately, Mr. Thompson had a prior commitment and was unable to attend the meeting today.

#### VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The next meeting of the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Board is scheduled for 9:00 AM, Wednesday, August 17, 2005, Clarion Hotel and Conference Center, 3600 Dunckel Drive, Lansing, Michigan.

IX. ADJOURNMENT.

**MOVED BY MR. GARNER. SUPPORTED BY MR. TORRE, TO  
ADJOURN THE MEETING. PASSED.**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:40 PM.

---

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

---

James Wood, Chief  
Grants, Contracts and Customer Systems

---

DATE