

**Boardman River Dams Committee Meeting  
Tuesday, February 26, 2008  
Grand Traverse County Civic Center**

**Statement of purpose:** *To engage all interests in assessing and recommending the fate of the dams on the main stem of the Boardman River based upon a thorough analysis of options, including long and short-term economic, social, environmental, aesthetic, transportation and ecological impacts upon the community, individuals and riparian owners.*

- I. Introductions**
- II. Review of Agenda**
- III. Approve or Amend January Minutes**  
January minutes approved as written.

**IV. Scoping Team Update and Recommendations for Options – Mike Donahue**

Mike reiterated action items listed in the handout, stating the team's specific charge was to make recommendations on which of the 81 total options to focus for the Feasibility Study. The team suggested six options to begin the discussion, and received over 95 responses over the three week time period. The original six Scoping Team recommendations were supported by 80 respondents, and 31 additional options were identified with at least a single vote each. Mike walked through the seven recommendations listed, which were selected for detailed analysis, while stating this does not preclude any of the remaining options from consideration. The Scoping Team listed an additional five items for the BRDC to consider, provided in the handout. If the BRDC approved of the options and additional items, the Scoping Team would work with ECT as soon as possible to move to the conclusion of the Feasibility Study this year.

*Discussion:* In reviewing the seven recommended options, it looks as if they run the gamut, and are not a long way into eliminating or narrowing down our options? Correct, this covers both ends of the continuum; by looking at implications, this will shed light on other options, too. As this list is further refined, other options may come into focus. If there were no objections, the Scoping Team would assume the BRDC is comfortable with pursuing the seven recommendations as they stand. No objections were voiced by the group.

**V. Bottomlands Management/Property Owners Issues Team Update – Todd Kalish**

Todd stated the Bottomlands Management/Property Owners Issues Team had a joint meeting with the Scoping Team, to glean expertise from both groups on integral issues, brainstorm potential options for Boardman Pond bottomlands disposition and management, and have all options on the table. The next step is to include potential bottomland options for Brown Bridge and Sabin in the event that these dams would be removed. Todd reiterated the meetings are open to everyone. The meeting evaluation at the end of the joint meeting included a roundtable comment session, and more than one person brought up Todd's frequent talks about The Process. As a result, Todd will be speaking less on The Process...

*Discussion:* Was the goal to develop recommendations? (Todd) The goal was to eventually finalize options (not by March), to make recommendations and get BRDC input into options to recommend. Who is responsible for the sediments if they are found to be contaminated? (Don Tilton) The sediment results are being analyzed by ECT, with results forthcoming. I thought the sediments were already analyzed by DEQ? Yes, but

ECT is reviewing them for completeness. The ECT report will include what it means if contaminants exceed allowable limits, and if it is a localized or regional problem – for example, if selenium levels are very high, but all soils in the region are high in selenium, that would not make selenium a contaminant we would have to address. I want something more recent than 2005 (when the DEQ samples were taken) so are these sediments going to be re-sampled? And who's responsible for re-sampling? ECT is evaluating the samples to see if we need to re-sample, so I don't know anything till that analysis is finished. Wasn't the first report a consensus of samples? Yes, but some exceeded the holding time. So ECT is evaluating do we need to re-sample because those exceeded the holding time. What about pesticides in the sediments? When we evaluate the samples, we need to know the criteria for screening – ecological criteria for evaluation showed high arsenic levels, but we know statewide natural levels of arsenic in the soil are high. We have to know which criteria to use if we dredge, what those sediments can release – and part of this ECT evaluation is determining which yardsticks to use. We will identify which yardsticks to use in our March report on sediment sampling and analysis. Are there any reports on transportation of contaminated sediments as the pond was drawn down? None specific for the Boardman. We know some sediment transport occurred during the drawdown, we know there are chemical contaminants present in some of these sediments – do we need a sediment transport effects study? Or re-sampling because those contaminated sediments moved? Some samples were taken in areas in which no transportation occurred. There was one sample in an area in which the river cut down into sediments – but the sediment remained within the pond. The potentially contaminated sediments are just in a different location, but they did not leave the pond. Do we have to worry about any airborne potential once these sediments are exposed? No. Hydrocarbons can be released when exposed, but the contaminants in these sediments are mostly metals, and metals will not volatilize when exposed to air. Next month's report – is it a real time analysis, or a model based on hypothetical computer programs? This is an analysis of the 2005 sampling, looking at the chemical analysis against our criteria (yardsticks). The data is old relative to today, but sediment contamination does not change in a short time period. Can we look at the sediments now, not three years ago? ECT will provide a discussion on this at the March meeting, and the BRDC can decide whether we should re-sample or not. Don sees no evidence of midnight dumping or suspicious unknown activities which would change any contaminants in the water/sediments. Did the BRDC not authorize re-sampling at an earlier meeting? No, we approved the evaluation of the 2005 samples, but not re-sampling.

**VI. Fisheries Habitat Survey Report – Bryan Burroughs**

Due to the snowstorm downstate, Bryan could not make the meeting. The full report is available on the BRDC website and Dr Burroughs will present at the March meeting.

**VII. ECT Update – Don Tilton**

Don gave a progress report on the scope of work by highlighting the report provided in the meeting packet. The dams are being evaluated as to cultural value, historical designation; there are people doing an interpretation of the structures and evaluating their designation. The engineering firm is giving the cost estimate for retaining, repairing, or modifying Boardman and Brown Bridge. They are busy populating the database of socioeconomic data from the region, as well as some recreational user information and change in use patterns. The sediment quality information and yardsticks to use for evaluation, and recommendations to move forward will be presented at the March meeting.

### **VIII. Update Regarding Hydro Equipment Purchase / Future Plans – Charles Peterson**

Charles' letter to the County was provided in the meeting packet. It is a letter of intent to the county, since they own and control the Sabin and Boardman dams. Charles described his background and stated his company sees purchasing of the Boardman hydropower equipment as an opportunity to work with the community to meet the needs of the looming energy crisis using a renewable, viable source of energy. He stated there would be the possibility of revenue sharing with TCL&P, and the possibility to share with the county and city. It would be the same process with Brown Bridge. Mr. Peterson asked the BRDC if they would be willing to form a task team to thoroughly evaluate the Brown Bridge, Boardman, and Sabin dam's hydroelectric power potential.

*Discussion:* Isn't this [hydropower evaluation] part of the ECT study? It is one of the alternatives chosen for analysis this evening. Isn't evaluating hydropower shortcutting the process? No, we aren't proposing any shortcutting, we just prefer that all four dams stay and produce power. The comment was made that disposal options for Union Street dam do not affect the level of Boardman Lake, there is only ten feet of head, it's an easy rapids construction. So changing the Union Street dam will not necessarily change Boardman Lake levels. Charles stated that saving the dams for hydropower is not changed by any decisions on the Union Street dam. When asked about his overtures on the hydro equipment, Charles replied his intent is to keep the equipment in place and under consideration, but there is no licensing money allocated yet; he asked that the county/city seek relicensing, based on what happened with Antrim County's dam and a private enterprise applying for licensing. It was stated that relicensing can run anywhere from \$500,000 to one million dollars; the costs can be extensive. Charles stated that with all the studies being done for dam disposition analysis, the relicensing could piggyback on that information since it would be a part of the relicensing process, and will have already been done by the BRDC. This could keep costs down. So you're asking a private company to piggyback on a publically funded project? But this is a larger community effort, the BRDC could set up a nonprofit fund for R&D, because the ownership, licensing, operation is all a community effort. We (Peterson Machinery) are a machinery company, but that leaves a lot open for community participation, such as maintenance. Is new hydropower part of the Governor's Clean Energy pact? New, no, but relicensing could be. With the energy crunch, so many people say hydropower needs to be part of renewable energy, but there is no data to support that. We need solid data that hydroelectricity, and the three dams, are economically viable when TCL&P said it was NOT economically viable. Charles said that they had to base their calculations on amortization on equipment and other things that a private enterprise would not have, which may make it economically feasible by capitalizing it. With the impending rate hikes, it is hard to understand why TCL&P can stop generating hydropower and raise rates without a good reason? Charles reiterated that the overhead and amortization made it too expensive, and that a private group won't have those issues. The company is banking on lower operating costs than the city incurred. How many hydroelectric dams do you own? None. We are a small industrial machinery company, but from a machinery standpoint, we see it as a very simple operation. How can you assume it is simple without FERC licensing with requirements which won't be exempt? We're coming at this from a mechanical approach. It would be integral to work with the city/county on this, with community participation. Aren't there significant alterations in the infrastructure for a new license? We intend to have input from a task team to evaluate the structural integrity of the dams, because that's going to be the biggest cost. What percentage of power demand can the dams produce at maximum

capacity? Three to four percent of the total demand. We anticipate increasing production by doing things such as utilizing available penstocks. Is there much incentive to do this? The dams produce 100 kilowatts, which is a contribution. Do not diminish the contribution just because it is small. If it is not feasible to produce hydropower, do you have a Plan B? Not at that price, not for the resale value. If the best we can do is a return on investment, we will still do it as an investment in the community. A task team to study your proposition: can the BRDC create a committee to support the goals of a private company? We are already evaluating the potential for hydropower as part of ECT's work, so can the public support a private entity? We are holding the equipment in place; all other bidders were going to remove it. So our bid is holding the equipment in place till the final decision. The city can buy back the equipment if they want. Didn't the commission require the equipment be left on-site? They specified the equipment for maintenance be left on site, not the turbines, etc. The questions were then directed to the BRDC. The windmill is efficient, it provides 125 homes with power, 15% efficient; the dams provided 450 homes with power, and doesn't fluctuate like the wind; why are we saying this can't be done? Hydro is clean regarding greenhouse gases, but it does have adverse effects such as fish passage issues, water quality. It is not a no-impact resource. The comment was made that the BRDC is an open process, and that four of the seven options being carried forward for evaluation leave open the possibility of generating hydropower. The structure of future BRDC meetings are allowing a one-hour focus on specific topics. This may be a topic for a future meeting; it is too focused for our current discussions. This issue is the jurisdiction of the Scoping Team; they just haven't addressed it yet. Generating hydropower is an option being explored. The general comments of the BRDC then focused on the fact that evaluating hydropower should be brought to the Scoping Team, to then be presented to the BRDC.

**IX. Communications Team Update – Sandra Sroonian**

Sandra brought two items to attention: the meeting questionnaire on the tables and the upcoming survey. She gave an update of the meeting with Don Tilton and the goals of the survey. She mentioned that we would be looking to the American Rivers survey as an example for the BRDC to follow.

*Discussion:* American Rivers – aren't they all about dam removal? If we use their survey, aren't we supporting dam removal? We would only be looking to their survey as an example, we won't be using their survey. American Rivers is there to assist, not make recommendations. It was brought up that the purpose of the Hydro Relicensing Coalition insures that in evaluating, the needs are balanced (operational and development needs), not that they advocate dam removal.

**X. Finance and Fund Development Team Update – Mark Breederland**

Mark referred to their meeting minutes in the BRDC packet. He said we're in a marathon; we're mid-stream, and trying not to lose momentum. The BRDC did not get the 2% funding from the Tribe, so in the short term, our cash flow is not optimal. They are submitting proposals, including one to Rotary Charities, and hope to go back to the Tribe in June to reapply for the 2%. Mark stated there is a need for part-time assistance for Jennifer, and they are investigating resources for that, while wrapping up the rest of the calendar year projects.

*Discussion:* If NMC is the fiduciary, who actually approves expenditure? Marguerite Cotto, the Vice President and in charge of the WSI, signs off on approvals. Payment for the EFS is approved by the full BRDC, and are documented. The rest are public

process. Jennifer signs off on purchase orders from grants and then presents those to Marguerite Cotto for her additional approval. NMC provides monthly finance reports in greater detail now, which has made BRDC reporting easier. What does the last column in the packet represent? That is the actual YTD, cumulative amounts of all grants received by NMC. Money from the Tribe is handled by Brett Fessel, so that's not included. Same with the Army Corp of Engineers; they handle their own accounting and so do not show up in this report. Expenditures internal to those agencies are within their records. One person requested a consolidated statement of all agencies/expenditures. The reply was that was given in January's meeting, and is available on the website. Jennifer is willing to email it directly to anyone interested in a copy. There was a request that there should be an accounting document showing everything in and everything out, not just information on the website. The finance team will continue to work toward that goal.

**XI. General Q&A and Call for Agenda Items for March Meetings**

There was a request for the BRDC's stance on a specialized meeting on the fisheries management report, since it could fill a two hour meeting. The BRDC were directed to fill out the meeting questionnaire and comment specifically on that subject. There was a debate whether hydropower is a renewable resource based on the Governor Granholm's initiative. Todd Kalish talked about the Facilitation Training offered last year, and that another training would be held April 12<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> at a time TBD. Any interested persons should contact Jennifer. It needs a minimum of 10 participants or will be cancelled. Todd asked for any comments on meeting content, and one person said they like the idea of planning meetings in advance, with topics set for the next 4-5 months with the special topics format. That way people know ahead of time which meetings they want to attend.

**XII. Meeting Adjourned at 8pm**