

**Boardman River Dams Committee
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 25, 2007; 6:00 – 8:00 PM**

Boardman River Dams Committee 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. Attendance: Dennis Aloia, Ron Alpers, Amy Beyer, Susanne Biteman, Chris Buday, Bruce Carpenter, Beverly Cuthbert, Brandon Donahue, Mike Donahue, Becky Ewing, Brett Fessell, Margaret Forgione, Carole Groves, Jim Harvey, Bruce Hooper, Meral Jackson, Jennifer Jay, Todd Kalish, Joe Kaltenbach, Bob Kaufman, Pat Kelly, Bill Lane, Steve Largent, Herb Lemcool, Richard Lewis, Ed Martel, Ann Martin, Adrian Meli, Chris Olds, Scott Parker, Jim Pawloski, Carl Platz, Jim Pryor, Jack Robbins, Tom Rozich, Bill Scharf, Jim Schramm, Tim Schreiner, Jim Selegean, Bruce Stoker, John Tilley, Marilyn Tilley, Rick Westerhoff, Sonny Wheelock, John Wyrwas, Peter Zirnhelt,

II. Introductions Todd Kalish facilitated this meeting and began with introductions, asking those in attendance for their names and best Halloween costume or a recent fishing story. These replies were not captured (regrettably).

III. Review of Agenda – The agenda was modified to reflect that due to a current lawsuit against the DEQ, Jim Pawloski is unable to answer questions at this time.

IV. Approve or Amend August Minutes: August minutes were amended to reflect Peter Zirnhelt’s attendance.

Other: Public comment period is open for the three Engineering and Feasibility Study reports that are available; Jennifer will add dates of end of comment period to the blog portion of the website

V. Baseline river survey and sediment characterization – Jim Selegean

Jim Selegean, Detroit office of the Army Corps of Engineers presented his findings which were primarily focused on sediment characterization to show how sediment might act with various options for the dams. The full PowerPoint presentation, along with the final report (as soon as it is complete) will be available on the website: <http://theboardman.org/project/doc/efs/>, or by request they can be mailed. Jim emphasized that they are still collecting data. Their work is focused on how the river will respond to the various options for the dams. They will be using computer modeling but right now are still collecting data. To date the Corps has conducted geomorphic surveys at 4 sites (2 above Brown Bridge; 2 downstream of Brown Bridge). Their work will serve as a permanent baseline for the river. Tasks have included cross sections; longitudinal profile; river pattern, sinuosity, and scour chains. Additionally, there has been quantifying of the sediment in each reservoir for model calibration/validation and to understand sediments dynamics, Jim Selegean is seeking old maps with topography, photos or drawings that will help recreate what the river looked like many years ago. They also did a pebble count to determine bed gradation at riffle; used point bars to

determine gradation of active bed. More information and details can be found in the full Power Point presentation which will be added to the website. **Discussion:** *How long will it take for the river to find its natural course at the upstream mouth of Boardman Pond?* Not sure, but perhaps will have a better idea in 6 months or so when data collection is complete. *Were cross sections taken at Boardman Pond prior to the drawdown?* Yes, in order to know how sediment is moving there, you would compare the cross section work done about a year ago to data today. They will finish data collection in October, then put together a hydraulic and hydrologic appendix for the report that the Corps will put out. *Where did the dredging that was referenced happen?* Steve Largent replied that it was just downstream of Sabin where it has been straightened and dredged in order to pass water. *When will results of analysis be available in print?* Sometime this winter. *Will we not know what makes up the sediment until then?* The gradation samples will show percentage of sand vs. gravel; those will be sent for analysis within the month. *How often will you repeat cross sections?* No current plans; this is baseline assessment documenting current conditions. If the Corps is still involved in coming years, they will likely do this work again; the areas are marked and noted. They do want to go through a spring and then reexamine the scour chains. *Do you feel that you can take this data and produce a computer model that will, with some degree of accuracy, predict what would happen with dam removal, or other options?* Yes, there are 2 computer models and they will predict the changes. *Do you have the ability to look at topographic features and see bottlenecks and predict how much energy is going into the river?* (A lot of questions relate to the drawdown and we want to know if you can predict bottlenecks or storage capacity within the watershed in the event of the flood condition that the dam is held to.) Mary Weidel from the Corps is working on mapping out a 100 year flood condition. *Can we have that information?* When she's done with her work, yes, it will be included in the report. Her timeframe is likely within the next few months. *Do you think your cross sections done a year ago have been compromised because of the drawdown?* No. The cross section areas were not influenced by the drawdown at all.

VI. Consultant Team Update – Scott Parker, ECT, Inc.

Scott Parker provided and reviewed a new progress tracking sheet which shows the work being accomplished and the partners involved. The determination and documentation of existing condition has been the appropriate focus to date and will help to establish next steps. The wildlife report being prepared by Bill Scharf and Bob Hess will be available very soon; other reports are already available and are open for public comment. Don Tilton will be providing a report to the BRDC at the October or November meeting to accompany the terrestrial habitat report. The Corps has just begun to do structural evaluation and there should be an initial report next month. Work continues on funding proposals and ECT is preparing a recommended work order for the FWS funds that have been received. *Can you put together a project management chart that will show a timeline?* Yes, the contract with BRDC stipulates that we will use work orders as funding is available and we are likely on track for a 2 year study, but we will put together such a visual aid. *Will you be documenting any dredging that was previously done in the river?* Only if it will effect the outcome for any of the options. *Will some of those sediment berms possibly be removed?* ECT will be developing topography and will be looking at the questions of if there is a change what will the river look like, will it meander, what will happen to sediment, etc. *Please add totals to bottom of the progress tracking sheets to help understand. How long will the public comment period be for the reports that are available?* Comment period will be open until the end of October and in the future comment period will be one month.

Discussion: Has anyone discussed that there may be mitigation required? The emphasis right now is to evaluate what is there and the impacts will be included in the options analysis. Hasn't the DEQ discussed mitigation? When the evaluation process begins, those questions will be addressed.

VII. Communications and Outreach Team Update – Susanne Biteman

Susanne pointed out rules/guidelines for the blog in the meeting packet. These rules will be added to the blog area of the website, still working on the technical end of this, but plans include having an "I agree" box that would pop up along with the rules, hopefully you will only have to agree to abide by the policies once, but that is a technical issue and Jennifer is working on this. Until the technical issues are resolved, the policies will be up with the condition that all bloggers agree to the policies before adding a comment. It is pointed out that these guidelines really could easily apply to our monthly meetings. These are there to encourage healthy, intelligent discussions. There have been comments received by the public that first timers are offended by some of the blogs and these policies are a direct response to that as we wish to engage and involve a broader audience, not offend newcomers. Susanne asked for any questions or comments. There were none; the policy was thereby accepted and will be posted.

VIII. Scoping Team and Alternatives Analysis Update – Michael Donahue

Mike reviewed a new proposed process to evaluate dams disposition alternatives. This form outlines that this is a very public process and we actively seek input. The evaluations will be centered around the same 4 criteria that the BRDC decided were the important factors to consider for the entire study. There will be multiple public meetings scheduled to assist with gathering and completing evaluations. There are still some changes to be made to these forms, and more information will be shared at the October BRDC meeting. We will begin by putting the most likely 8 – 10 options on the website to get the discussion going. If other options are identified they will be added to those being considered. Please look over thoroughly and provide comments.

Discussion: *Would you accept another alternative if I provided rationale? Would I need to come up with rationale?* Yes, other alternatives are welcome, simply bring the idea forward and provide a sentence or two of rationale. There may end up being a number of options that simply aren't sound and will not be extensively studied, but we are all likely to narrow it down to a manageable number. *Could you please add the schematic to each of the options to reflect modifications; the drawings are very useful.* Yes. *Have any other communities gone through a similar process regarding dam studies?* Not to Mike's knowledge; the BRDC is by far the most comprehensive to date; this is both an experiment and a model, especially because we are looking at multiple dams on the same system. Bruce Stoker points that the Elwha dam study considered 2 dams and was about a 20 year process, but the BRDC public process is very mature and very worthy of the complexity of the issues. Mike states that the EPA is hosting the State of Lake Michigan Forum and Friday morning, October 5th there is a special session on dams disposition and Todd is going to speak to the Boardman process; someone from American Rivers will be here to speak to the issues of dam disposition. We will put info on the website about this opportunity and Mike is trying to get registration fee waived for BRDC to attend this one speaker.

IX. Finance and Fund Development Team Update – Becky Ewing

Becky announced the upcoming EPA webinars and Jennifer will post to the website once the location is confirmed. A new proposal was submitted thanks to support from Mark Johnson of CRA and with the help of Rick Westerhoff. We are also applying for

NOAA funding, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and others. The next meeting will be Tuesday October 16th and will be a working session to finalize the case for support and finish these proposals. Brett Fessell has stepped down as chair of the team but will remain active on the team. Becky Ewing will assume the role of Chairperson but comments that this team is very strong and that everyone on the team is a leader.

Discussion: *Are funders aware that this team may decide to leave the dams in?* Yes, funding is pursued for a feasibility study so there is no way to know the outcome when you are just conducting a study. Additionally, our proposals reflect our scope of work which clearly states that we are pursuing all options. Mike Donahue expresses thanks to Mark Johnson from CRA for his leadership in writing the FWS proposal. It was pointed out that Mark isn't even on the Finance Team and worked over a holiday weekend and really took the ball and ran with it. CRA also has other proposals in and this one may potentially be competing and this is an example of what a great collaboration this project enjoys.

X. Bottomlands Management and Property Owners Issues Team Update – Steve Largent

The water level at Boardman Pond is about 14' – 15' down and will likely stay near there; that is as far as the equipment will allow it to go down without modifying the equipment. The next meeting will focus on coming up with alternatives/options specific to Boardman Dam and the resultant bottomland disposition strategies. This will mirror and complement the process that Mike Donahue presented for the entire study area but will focus on that area. The next meeting will be Tuesday, October 16th at 5:00 at the Civic Center; this is a change to the original schedule. As requested, Jim Pryor has provided comments in writing regarding the importance of maintaining hydro power. Steve received a call at home that the river was obstructed by trees; the District team and a volunteer from the Paddle Club went out and cleared this debris, but they need to continue to monitor the situation. They may place signage telling people to take out in such an event. This is because of the increased flowage caused by the drawdown. Ron Alpers states that there is another area upstream of that area that needs to be addressed. Ron will meet with Steve so that the District will know how to address. Ed Martel comments that again in the Record Eagle the dam is called unsafe. It needs to be clarified that there is only a spillway issue, not a danger with the dams. What has this committee done to attack the rumors that this dam is going to collapse? Could we find out who is doing this? It is brought up that it doesn't matter who is saying this as much as where is the right opportunity to clarify. Communications team will look at using the Boardman Dam as the topic for an upcoming forum to present to the Record Eagle. Communications Team also will review suggestions made by the Bottomlands meeting. Has the report from the risk assessor for the County been received? No. Expect in the next couple of weeks.

XI. Call for agenda items for October meeting – ALL

- Standing Team Updates
- ECT update
- Risk Assessment information from County
- Updated project timeline from ECT

XII. Other discussion – ALL

Jim Pryor mentioned the sediment from Keystone washout (1961); what is the government going to do about the sediment removal that should have been dealt with 35 years ago? Baseline data needs to be finished before this can be addressed. Bruce Stoker refers to the Elwha project and the models similar to those

that Jim Selegean is putting together; details will fill in as you progress in your study. Bruce has sent information to Jennifer regarding the Elwha dam project and she is happy to share it upon request. Ed Martel mentions that there could be a liability issues should mitigation be required due to lost wetlands (in the event that this committee determines to remove dams, will there be required mitigation and what will the cost be?) Jim Pawloski says that when the DEQ issues a permit to remove a dam the impacts on the wetlands are not required to be mitigated. Jim Schramm states that to his knowledge no dam that has been removed has ever had any mitigation required.

Meeting was adjourned at 8pm