Location: Traverse City Governmental Center, Commission Chambers
400 Boardman Avenue
Traverse City, MI 49684

Boardman River Dams Implementation Team

Grand Traverse County City of Traverse City
Traverse City Light and Power Department Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians
Michigan Hydro Relicensing Coalition US Fish and Wildlife Service
Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment
Grand Traverse Conservation District (Ex officio) Conservation Resource Alliance (Ex officio)
Rotary Camps and Services (Ex officio) Watershed Center Grand Traverse Bay (Ex officio)

Meeting Minutes

Date: March 18, 2010

Facilitator: Todd Kalish, Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment

Notes: Tape recording and hand written notes by Nate Winkler, Conservation Resource Alliance

Present:
John Sych (Grand Traverse County)
Jim Pawloski (Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment)
Nate Winkler, Amy Beyer (Conservation Resource Alliance)
Jim Schramm (Michigan Hydro Relicensing Coalition) (via telephone)
Andy Knott (Watershed Center Grand Traverse Bay)
Todd Kalish (Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment)
Mark Rollenhagen (Traverse City Light and Power Department)
Becky Ewing (Rotary Camps and Services)
Lew Coulter (Grand Traverse Conservation District)

Absent
Brett Fessell (Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians)
Ben Bifoss (City of Traverse City)
Rick Westerhof (US Fish and Wildlife Service)
1:00-1:05 Introduction
Introductions were made around the chambers by those in attendance.

1:05-1:20 Public Comment
Todd Kalish opened up the floor to public comment. Mr. Norbert Tutlis commented on his concerns regarding the dam removal project including an archeological study of the project area that he’s not seen addressed and project funding.

1:20 Additions/deletions to the agenda (Todd)
There were no members of the IT that had any additions or deletions to the agenda.

1:20-1:25 Review and potential approval of the February 18, 2010 meeting minutes: decision item
There were no suggested changes to the draft meeting minutes by the IT and subsequently were approved by consensus.

1:25-1:30 Update regarding bottomlands management plan: discussion (Nate)
Nate Winkler related that the Grand Traverse Conservation District would be preparing the initial portion of the initial bottomlands plan including invasive species and erosion management. With the growing season eminent and the possibility of further drawdown actions, it was determined by the Bottomlands Working Group that the District would be well positioned to do the preliminary work on the plan especially with regard to timing issues related to permit applications. Jim Pawloski inquired as to when the work would be completed by the Conservation District, Steve Largent responded this phase would be completed “soon”.

1:30-1:40 Update of draft communications plan: discussion (Nate)
Nate Winkler provided a brief overview of draft communications plans, both short and long term, generated by Chuck Lombardo of CML with assistance from CRA. Winkler indicated the need to have the IT meet for a working group session with Mr. Lombardo to finalize at least the short term plan for eminent implementation. Amy Beyer indicated that adoption by the IT of the short term management plan was anticipated to occur during the April IT meeting and is the reason for the meeting early in April for finalizing the plan.

1:40-1:45 Army Corps update: discussion (Nate)
Nate Winkler related that a conference call between himself, Brett Fessell, and Jim Galloway of the Army Corps was held on March 3rd. Mr. Galloway indicated during the call that the Army Corps had selected Carl Platz as its project manager for the Boardman dams project. In addition, Mr. Galloway related that an ID/IQ firm was preparing to sign a contract with the Army Corps to do the preliminary work task of gathering information regarding all work that’s been done on the Boardman Dams project to date in an effort to establish a jumping off point for the project going forward. According to Mr. Galloway, the second work task will be to begin the NEPA process. Jim Pawloski asked if the Army Corps was going to indeed be taking on the lead role in the project with Todd Kalish responded in the affirmative.
1:45-1:50  Presentation and discussion of fundraising activity report: discussion (Amy)
Amy Beyer provided a brief update on grant funding as well as putting in context the different potential funding sources relative to what the Army Corps is committing to do and how to best mesh them together. Beyer related that many proposals written earlier in the year and late in 2009 are still pending. Becky Ewing indicated that the final report for the Great Lakes Fish Trust grant for the project from 2006 had been submitted and was posted on the Fish Trust website. In addition, the Fish Trust was looking at securing an April date for a small funder meeting. Ewing also indicated that she would be checking to see if the Rotary Charities planning grant was a possibility for the communications plan. Todd Kalish related that he had spoken with Ed Rice and that the TCLP proposals had not all been reviewed.

1:50-2:05  Drawdown of Sabin and Brown Bridge Ponds: discussion/decision (Todd)
Todd Kalish gave a brief overview of potential benefits to having the Brown Bridge and Sabin Ponds drawn down in the context of the overall project. Kalish indicated that given the potential funding opportunities on the horizon makes this a pressing issue. Potential benefits related by Kalish include illustration of how the system is going to react to dam removal as well as putting into action various aspects of the project that would otherwise not be possible. In addition, Kalish indicated that granting agencies require discrete deliverables including on the ground work and drawing the ponds down will provide opportunities to provide those deliverables. These activities will, Kalish continued, complement what the Army Corps will be doing in addition to having immediate environmental benefits.

Kalish asked the IT at large what kind of process the IT would like to pursue with developing a recommendation to the City and County for a drawdown, emphasizing that it is a recommendation from the IT and that the City and County would have the final say in the matter. Kalish related that Ben Bifoss asked to defer discussion of Brown Bridge Pond until he could be present. In addition, since Dennis Aloia was not present, Kalish indicated that it might be prudent to postpone the discussion regarding Sabin Pond as well.

Mark Rollenhagen remarked that with respect to Brown Bridge, there may need to be significant expenditure made to make it possible to draw the pond down any farther due to machinery-related issues within the powerhouse that would prevent the ability to release water at will. Kalish responded that he was aware that there might be problem with opening the gates and Ken Gregory of the City’s public works department (in the audience) indicated that it had been approximately 8 years since they had been opened and it occurred with great effort. Lew Coulter inquired as to whether or not the City and County were receptive to a recommendation for drawdown with Kalish responding that he was unsure but that this was not a new subject for them. Coulter indicated that he would like to see the environmental benefits laid out and that the Conservation District would be taking the County and City’s lead.

Andy Knott indicated he would like to continue discussion of potential drawdown as in the event of a drawdown, activities such as bottomlands restoration could be initiated sooner than later. Jim Pawloski agreed that it would be beneficial to have some tangible evidence of progress toward dam removal. Pawloski continued that drawdown would
be the first logical step for the City and County as they have decided to pursue dam removal as it would immediately decrease their liability (i.e. decrease the risk of failure of the dam) in light of their status as “high hazard” dams. Nate Winkler asked Pawloski how big an issue it is that the release mechanism at Brown Bridge may or may not be operable at will, with Pawloski responding that it makes good engineering sense to have those mechanisms operable in the event the pond needs to be evacuated.

Jim Schramm indicated support to pursue a drawdown plan relating it to the Stronach Dam drawdown which took some time. Kalish recommended that a workplan be developed for the April IT meeting for consideration with a cost/benefit analysis with Beyer indicating a desire for timelines and costs. Pawloski indicated he would aid in drafting such a plan with assistance from the IT, with a sequence of events, milestones desired, etc. Beyer indicated that CRA would take the lead on crafting such a plan but would expect to be drawing on the IT for assistance.

2:05-2:10 **Potential ex-officio IT members: discussion (Dennis)**
Todd Kalish drew attention to a letter he had drafted on behalf of the IT to the Grand Traverse County Road Commission inviting them to serve on IT as ex-officio members. Mary Gillis, Road Commission manager, indicated (from the audience) that a response from the Road Commission was forthcoming. Since Dennis Aloia was not present, the discussion regarding potential ex-officio members was postponed.

2:10-2:15 **Presentation of project manager monthly report: discussion item (Nate)**
Nate Winkler read aloud the project manager monthly report that was included in the meeting materials packet.

2:15-2:20 **Agenda items for the next meeting and meeting review: discussion/decision item (Todd, Nate)**
Agenda items in addition to standing project manager items that were discussed include finalization and approval of the short term communications plan, potential drawdown of Sabin and Brown Bridge Ponds, and the postponed topic regarding potential ex-officio IT members.

2:20-2:25 **Public Comment**
Mary Gillis related that the County planning department was planning on having aerial photos shot of Grand Traverse County. Mr. Robin Beardsley made comment on potential loss of recreational access to the areas currently impounded in the event of a drawdown as well as safety concerns.

2:25 **Adjourned**