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)

Grand Traverse County Road Commission (Ex officio)

Meeting Minutes

Date: May 20, 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:
Ben Bifoss (City of Traverse City)
Steve Largent (Grand Traverse Conservation District)
Nate Winkler, Amy Beyer (Conservation Resource Alliance)
Jim Schramm (Michigan Hydro Relicensing Coalition)
Rick Westerhof (US Fish and Wildlife Service)
Todd Kalish (Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment)
Mark Rollenhagen (Traverse City Light and Power Department)
Becky Ewing (Rotary Camps and Services)
Jim Pawloski (Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment)
Brett Fessell (Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians)
Andy Knott (Watershed Center Grand Traverse Bay)
Heather Jamison (Grand Traverse County Road Commission)

Absent
Dennis Aloia (Grand Traverse County)
Introduction
Introductions were made around the chambers by those in attendance.

Public Comment
Todd Kalish opened up the floor to public comment. Mr. Norbert Tutlis of the Boardman Valley Preservation Society made comment regarding several issues. These included ramifications of retaining the Union Street dam, potential failure of the upper three dams, and the warming effect that Boardman Lake has downstream of the Boardman River’s outlet. Mr. Tutlis also handed out a document describing his concerns prior to the meeting beginning. Mr. Robin Beardsley expressed his concerns about loss of use of Boardman Pond due to drawn down conditions and thought perhaps Sabin and Brown Bridge ponds should not be drawn down until a firm plan was in place.

Additions/deletions to the agenda
Nate Winkler indicated that Carl Platz would not be able to provide an Army Corps update via conference call due to unforeseen circumstances and that he (Winkler) would provide the update. Todd Kalish suggested that because Dennis Aloia was not present, the issue regarding Boardman Pond bottomlands ownership should be postponed until the following (June) meeting.

Review and potential approval of the April 15, 2010 meeting minutes: decision item
There were no recommendations for additions, deletions or edits with regard to the April 15th draft minutes and were subsequently approved.

Review of CRA quarterly invoice for project management: discussion/decision item
Steve Largent inquired as whether or not the in-kind services rendered indicated on the invoice were described in more detail elsewhere. The question was answered in the affirmative by Nate Winkler and Amy Beyer. Hearing no further questions, the invoice was considered approved for payment.

Discussion regarding key messages and short term communications plan: discussion/decision (Chuck Lombardo)
Mr. Chuck Lombardo of CML Marketing (the communications and marketing firm under contract by CRA) gave an overview of the development of a suite of key messages and the need to keep them short and easily repeatable. The level of detail required to elaborate on the key messages would then be found in the next level of the “information pyramid” in documents such as a “frequently asked questions” sheet(s). Mr. Lombardo subsequently opened the floor to the IT for discussion.

Becky Ewing commented that the key messages should include enough detail so that the messages are given with context. Andy Knott had a cost estimate question which
was in fact changed accordingly prior to the meeting packets being sent out. Knott also had a question regarding the Corps’ use of semantics related to reports and studies already completed in the process. Ben Bifoss indicated that the issue of hydroelectric production should be addressed with Mr. Lombardo responding that he was still teasing out the distinction between the IT’s role as an implementation body and a decision making body. Bifoss followed up that the first question asked of him by constituents was “why the dams aren’t being used for hydroelectric generation”. Mr. Lombardo indicated that the question should then be addressed in the key messages. Knott noted that many on the IT have been involved with the process since the beginning and many in the community are not as educated on the project as they are quite new to it. Mr. Lombardo indicated that the issue of hydroelectric generation would be placed front and center noting also that Traverse City Light and Power and the owners of the dams (Grand Traverse County and the City of Traverse City) should be in lockstep with the IT regarding the issue of why hydroelectric power generation is no longer economically feasible at those facilities.

Amy Beyer noted that the next “big thing” in the community not necessarily focused on the dams but related in some way to them might cause the key messages to change accordingly. Mr. Lombardo indicated that the key messages themselves would remain somewhat static but talking points would be modified over time due to potential situational changes and would be emanating from a living document.

Nate Winkler inquired as to whether the IT’s mission might be revisited as an implementation body as opposed to the decision-making body who’s assessment of the fate of the dams was their removal. Bifoss opined that this was akin to a “distinction without a difference”. Mr. Lombardo indicated that there would not be a lot of value in that tack and could be misconstrued as ducking behind the IT’s mission to skirt the issue of hydroelectric generation.

Mr. Lombardo wrapped up the presentation by indicating that generation of press releases would continue but those regarding the tribal grant awards would be postponed until details are squared up. Mr. Lombardo also noted that the frequently asked question and backgrounder sheets were currently being constructed as well as the updating of the website.

Rick Westerhof went back to the issue of the key messages and asked whether or not the information was available on the issue. Todd Kalish answered in the affirmative and that he would forward the information to Mr. Lombardo. Mr. Lombardo indicated this information among other details would be incorporated by the end of following week.

Winkler asked Mr. Lombardo if he could speak to the roles of the owners of the dams and the communications effort. Mr. Lombardo indicated that Kalish would remain the
spokesperson for the project with Beyer following up with the comment that the IT should stand in unison to answer the question regarding hydroelectric production regardless of the agency representation.

1:55-2:00 Army Corps update: discussion (Nate)
Nate Winkler presented information related to him by Carl Platz of the US Army Corps of Engineers regarding the status of their particular roles in the project. Winkler indicated that the information relayed to him included the hiring of URS-Baird (a joint venture) to prepare a preliminary management plan which will describe the remaining tasks to finish the feasibility stage per Army Corps policy. A “50%” draft of this document has been submitted to the Army Corps for review and comment and will be turned back to URS-Baird for completion of a “95%” draft within two weeks and return this to the Army Corps. The target date for the final product is the first week of July (2010). Funds may be used for this part of the project from the Great Restoration Initiative but are not guaranteed.

2:00-2:10 Presentation of fundraising activity report and fundraising updates: discussion (Amy)
Amy Beyer reviewed the fundraising activity report materials that were included in the IT meeting packet. Beyer indicated that it has been very helpful for some submitting proposals to forward them to her for inclusion in the fundraising reporting table.

Beyer also inquired of Becky Ewing whether or not the “Case Statement” had been finalized. Ewing indicated that a draft had been completed but would have Carl Ferguson work toward getting it closer to completion for review and comment. Beyer followed up by mentioning that she had heard the day prior that the Great Lakes Fishery Trust would be in the area the following day in part to review the Boardman River Dams Project and potential funding opportunities. Ewing responded in the affirmative and would discuss allowing CRA staff to participate in a planned site visit to the Boardman River with Great Lakes Fishery Trust personnel.

2:10-2:15 Project manager monthly report: discussion (Nate)
Nate Winkler referenced the one page monthly report included in the meeting packet which described CRAs activities for the past month.

2:15-2:20 Agenda items for the next meeting and meeting review: discussion/decision item (Todd, Nate)
Kalish suggested that the status of the ownership of bottomlands at Boardman Pond be included on the next meeting’s agenda. Amy Beyer inquired of Mark Rollenhagen if more information was available at his shop for hydroelectric generation feasibility. Rollenhagen indicated that he was not aware of what exactly was available at Traverse City Light and Power but if more information was needed than what Kalish could provide then he (Rollenhagen) could be contacted.
2:20-2:35  Public comment
Mr. Norbert Tutlis presented information regarding a presentation that was to occur in Elk Rapids later that evening regarding the generation of power at the dam on the Elk River. Mr. Tutlis also noted that the Grand Vision was quoted in the key messaging and wondered if they had been consulted regarding that beforehand. Mr. Tutlis also indicated that citations needed to be included in the fact sheet(s) as well as consideration of the Cass Road bridge and mitigation of contaminated sediments in the impoundments and that there should be an investigation of rates charged for hydroelectric power as opposed to other forms to find the actual costs associated with hydropower generation.

Mr. John Porter commented on the potential losses and gains related to recreation associated with the Boardman River impoundments. Mr. Porter indicated that it would be very expensive to build a dam and create a situation such as the one that currently exists at the impoundments.

Mr. Robin Beardsley made comment related to the discrepancy in information he received about the cost of biomass production from Traverse City Light and Power. Mr. Beardsley indicated that facts and figures related to the Boardman River Dams Project should be acquired from a variety of sources for a complete and accurate picture.

2:35  Meeting Adjourned