



Protect-Preserve-Enjoy **Little Manistee Watershed Conservation Council**

Minutes of the LMWCC 23rd Annual Meeting July 6, 2019
at Skinner Park Irons, Michigan

EXECUTIVE ACTIONS:

President Tim Phillips called the meeting to order at 10:12 AM as members and guests were still arriving.

Trustees present were introduced including *emeritus* trustee, and founding member, John Gorys.

2017 Annual Meeting minutes were approved unanimously

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Council treasurer, Dan Sernick, reported a checking account balance with the Lake/Osceola State Bank of \$55,197.04 as of June 30th. He also reported a balance of \$3,622.79 in the Howard Roberts Fund, monies designated exclusively for in-stream work.

Projected expenditures for 2019 total \$20,976.

Dan affirmed that the books were balanced — assets and up-to-date expenditures are reconciled.

PROJECTS:

President Tim Phillips stated that all severe and moderate erosion sites will have been remediated by the end of 2020 with the exception of those on federal lands. National Forest Service will allow work to be done on 5% of lands under its jurisdiction.

The Syers dam project is underway. The de-watering process of the lake behind the occluded berm has begun, and completion of the removal and replacement of the culvert and berm should be completed by mid-August.

Nate Winkler of CRA is looking at a stretch of river in Section II and one in section I as potential sites for a habitat improvement project.

Interns with CRA will undertake a road crossing survey this summer, and LMWCC is looking for the means to have those posted on the state's web site.



MACRO-INVERTEBRATE & WATER QUALITY REPORT:

Joyce Durdell discussed the relationship between the water quality analysis conducted yearly and the macro-invertebrate survey, also an annual occurrence. She stated that the results of this spring's "bug study" indicate a healthy riverine environment. Joyce and her team will conduct the Water Quality study on Monday, July 8th.

Vicki Sawicki, of the North Country Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area talked about the programs of financial assistance available to property owners for the eradication of invasive species.

WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN:

Armas Soorus delivered an overview of the progress of the Watershed Management Plan. Networks Northwest, the consultants hired to write the plan, have submitted the final draft to MDEQ for review including suggested changes or additions. Pending that process MDEQ will then approve the plan and submit it to the EPA for its approval. It is hoped that the process will be completed by year's end.

Armas discussed the financial structures in place to cover the total cost of the drafting of the Plan, as well as monies set aside to begin its implementation.

RIVER STEWARDS:

David Spruance asked for volunteers to become River Stewards in an attempt to revitalize the River Steward program

Salmon-in-the Classroom:

Evelyn Furman reported that there is a need for a new aquarium to be placed outside of the kindergarten classroom of the KND school system. This spring students released 150 fry at Tippy Dam.

The following trustees were unanimously re-elected to two year terms: Tim Phillips and Dale Downes.

President Tim Phillips introduced guest speaker **Brian Bury**, Natural Rivers Administrator for the DNR.

Brian's presentation focused on the purpose of the Natural River Act, passed in 1970 by the Michigan legislature. He said that the goal is to regulate development on designated rivers to protect them from unwise land use. Governing all regulatory decisions is the need to preserve ten essential values: its free-flowing condition, and its fish, wildlife, boating, scenic, aesthetic, floodplain, ecologic, historic, and recreational values and uses. The program allows for reasonable use and development of public and private



land, and all regulations enacted will cover a riparian zone of 400 feet on either side of the river.

Rules and regulations will be developed by the DNR in consultation with members of local governmental bodies and concerned private citizens. Once zoning rules have been agreed to by all involved in the process of their development, and the designation has been made, the majority of regulatory decisions are made by “Local Zoning Review Boards,” comprised of average citizens, local government representatives, and regional resource experts, such as those from the Conservation District. The DNR staff person, who manages regular permits and minor variances, is the zoning review board’s assistant and has no vote on the major variances the local boards consider. This insures that all zoning matters are **PLACE BASED REGULATIONS**. It is important to remember that zoning regulations are **NEVER RETROACTIVE** — all existing structures, improvements, and amenities are grand-fathered in perpetuity. Brian finished his presentation by listing the Pro’s and acknowledged Con’s of the program:

PRO’S

Significant standards
Perpetuity
Authority
Consistency
History of success

CON’S

Government intrusion
Lack of state staff leading to failed expectations
Not all zoning/development issues are addressed

Following his presentation there was a question and answer exchange.

An informal/advisory vote was taken with a majority of those voting supporting a Natural River designation for the Little Manistee River.

Lunch was provided by members of the Indian Club, and the raffle drawing and bucket raffle were conducted thereafter.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:13PM.

Respectfully submitted by David L. Spruance July 10, 2019