



MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

Minutes of December 2, 2020
Virtual Webinar Meeting
9:00 AM



Dan Lord, Grants Management Section Manager, Department of Natural Resources (DNR), provided an overview to all participants on how the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Board's virtual webinar meeting will be conducted and how to navigate the screens.

Chair Rustem called the meeting of the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) Board of Trustees (Board) to order at 9:02 a.m., Wednesday, December 2, 2020. He announced the Board would immediately move to and take action on item III. – Open Meetings Act Amendment (see below for details).

I. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FOR MEETING OF OCTOBER 14, 2020

Chair Rustem called for adoption of the minutes for the October 14, 2020 MNRTF Board meeting.

**MOVED BY CUMMINGS, SUPPORTED BY HAMP, TO ADOPT THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 14, 2020 MNRTF BOARD MEETING.
MOTION PASSED WITHOUT DISSENTING VOTE.**

II. ADOPTION OF AGENDA FOR MEETING OF DECEMBER 2, 2020

Chair Rustem amended the December 2, 2020 agenda to reflect:

- Item III – Open Meetings Act Amendment, has been addressed;
- Item V – Public Comment, Jason Aric Jones has postponed his public comment to the next Board meeting; and
- Item V – Public Comment, add three-minute public comments from James Gallagher, Village Manager of Dimondale; Jack Smiley, Founder of Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy; and Dave Coulter, Oakland County Executive.

Chair Rustem called for the adoption of the amended agenda for the December 2, 2020 MNRTF Board meeting.

**MOVED BY EICHINGER, SUPPORTED BY HAMP, TO ADOPT THE AGENDA WITH AMENDMENTS FOR THE DECEMBER 2, 2020 MNRTF BOARD MEETING.
MOTION PASSED WITHOUT DISSENTING VOTE.**

III. OPEN MEETINGS ACT AMENDMENT, SB 1108, PA 228 OF 2020

Trevor VanDyke, DNR Legislative and Legal Affairs Director, announced recent changes that have been made to the Open Meetings Act, Public Act 228 of 2020, to allow public bodies to conduct virtual/electronic meetings as long as that public body establishes a policy to conduct public virtual meetings. The DNR created a policy that meets all requirements of the amended Open Meetings Act for all its boards, committees, council, and other public bodies that are part of the department.

DNR Policy 17.01-07 – Open Meetings Act Electronic Participation, issued November 10, 2020, was presented to the Board for their review. This policy was recently adopted by the Natural Resources Commission. It was presented to the Board for adoption to be in compliance with the amended Open Meetings Act before proceeding with the meeting.

Chair Rustem called for a motion to adopt DNR Policy 17.01-07 to comply with Public Act 228 of 2020.

**MOVED BY McDONOUGH, SUPPORTED BY HAMP, TO ADOPT DNR
POLICY 17.01-07 – OPEN MEETINGS ACT ELECTRONIC PARTICIPATION.
MOTION PASSED WITHOUT DISSENTING VOTE.**

IV. INTRODUCTIONS

The following Board members remotely participated in this meeting, as permitted under Public Act 228 of 2020 and DNR Policy 17.01-07, from the following locations in the State of Michigan:

Bill Rustem, Chair; Alaieton Township, Ingham County
Erin McDonough, Vice Chair; City of Williamston, Ingham County
Sam Cummings; City of Grand Rapids, Kent County
Steve Hamp; City of Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County
Dan Eichinger, DNR Director; Village of Lake Isabella, Isabella County

Dan Lord introduced himself and Grants Management staff: Jon Mayes, Recreation Unit and MNRTF Grants Program Manager; Mike Chuff, MNRTF Financial Specialist; Merrie Carlock, Lindsay Ross and Andrea Stay, Grant Coordinators; and Yolanda Taylor, interim Administrative Assistant to staff and the Board. He also introduced Erik Eklund, Chief Budget Officer, Finance and Operations Division, who will address the MNRTF Financial Update and other budget questions.

Also participating were various staff members of the DNR and other interested parties.

V. PUBLIC APPEARANCES

Chris Bunch, Executive Director, Six Rivers Land Conservancy

Chris Bunch relayed his congratulations to the Board on the passage of Proposal 1. He offered his support and assistance in making adjustments to implement the new protocols under Proposal 1. He also commented that the Land Conservancy will continue to work towards expanding the public land footprint by increasing public recreation in southeast Michigan, especially the larger tract opportunities such as the expansion of game areas. They also provided comments on the Land Strategy and believe that, with adjustments to the scoring criteria and priorities, they may be able to move forward on some projects that have been in a holding pattern.

Bunch also commented in support of TF20-0150, Macomb Township Nature Park Acquisition.

Glen Chown, Executive Director, Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy

Glen Chown also congratulated the Board on the passage of Proposal 1 and commented in support of TF20-0140, Railroad Point Natural Area Addition, commonly known as the Cole property (Benzie County). The natural area is located on the shores of Crystal Lake and straddles the Betsie Valley trail in Benzie County. Protection of this natural area spans 23 years and has taken place in three phases, encompassing nine different individual acquisitions and more than 200 acres of land. This particular property up for consideration was already approved for funding in the Phase III acquisition grant but, unfortunately, the landowner had a change in circumstances and was not ready to sell at

that time. This is the very last waterfront parcel slated for acquisition at Railroad Point. At less than ten acres with 230 feet of pristine lake frontage, it is one of the smallest of the original high priority parcels identified 23 years ago. Although this project scored low, size should not be the best gauge for what is truly significant. Acquiring this property links three publicly owned and protected waterfront parcels spanning 4,300 feet of contiguous shoreline from the Crystal Lake outlet to the east end of the county road commission property. Should this property be developed, it would diminish the recreational amenities.

Chown further commented that the MNRTF has invested \$3.2 million to date in acquiring Railroad Point properties, and another \$1 million for the department to acquire the outlet. Purchasing this last parcel would be the capstone to the preservation of this natural area and the board's investment thus far. It is their hope that the Board will approve this final acquisition as a reflection on the successful partnership between Benzie County, the MNRTF Board, the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, and the Betsie Valley trail.

Hamp congratulated Glen Chown on their dedication to preserving this natural area and working on these projects over the years.

Beth Friend, East Bay Charter Township Supervisor

Beth Friend commented in support of TF20-0074, Arbutus Lake #5 Park (Grand Traverse County). She first thanked staff for their thoroughness and professionalism. They have been an excellent resource during the trust fund process, especially during this pandemic. They have much to be proud of. The park was transferred from the State of Michigan to the township in 1997. This development project will better accommodate increased park use, provide universal access, and improve sustainability. The project includes an accessible canoe/kayak launch, fishing pier, access paths, benches, picnic areas, an accessible beach mat, shoreline improvement and a rain garden to filter and slow stormwater runoff into the lake. This project will provide universal access and environmental improvement opportunities to the community.

Friend asked the Board to support their request for \$300,000; matching the townships \$300,000.

Melinda Milos-Dale, Oakland Township Parks and Recreation Director

Melinda Milos-Dale commented in support of TF20-0206, Lost Lake Nature Park Expansion (Oakland County). The township's goal is to expand the 58-acre Lost Lake Nature Park to 293 acres to buffer protected natural areas, protect new natural areas, and expand outdoor recreation.

The township is asking for \$3,081,000; matching their \$1,027,000.

Jason Aric Jones, Advocacy Director, Michigan Mountain Biking Association

Jason Aric Jones was unable to attend and asked that his comments on Funding Natural Surface Non-Motorized Single-Track Trail Projects be postponed until the next Board meeting.

James Gallagher, Village of Dimondale Manager

James Gallagher commented in support of two projects for the Village of Dimondale (Eaton County); TF20-0187, Danford Island Park Restroom Development, and TF20-0188, Danford Island Park Gazebo Development. He commented that this is their third attempt in four years to secure funding for these projects. They feel that their two projects fly under the radar because they are not flashy, massive projects or require a lot of funding, but they are important to the community. This round they reduced their scope for the restroom project, increased their match to 40% for the restroom and 50% for the gazebo, and included ADA accessible pathways.

Gallagher further commented that it is very clear to the village council that the Board has the difficult job of identifying projects to fund each year. It is their hope that the Board will recognize and not overlook some of the smaller communities that have fewer people in their tax base, or that have smaller projects with lower scoring, as all projects are important to a community.

The village is asking for a total of \$134,000 for both projects with the restroom project as their priority.

Jack Smiley, founder of the Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy and the Superior Greenway
Jack Smiley commented that he is not speaking on behalf of the conservancy but as an individual. He commented in opposition of TF20-0089, Tattan Park All-Inclusive Playground (Wayne County). As a land conservationist and former chair of the City of Westland's Environmental Quality Division, he was very disheartened to learn that the City of Westland is trying to sell 40 acres of wooded parkland that he helped to acquire back in the 70s. He asks that, if the Board approves the Tattan Park project, that it be on the condition that the city cannot sell any parkland. The loss of parkland in urban areas, especially in Wayne County, is troubling. Wayne County has sold over 1,000 acres of parkland since the 1970s when the trust fund was established. The goal should be to acquire or develop more public land, not sell it. He asks that the Board consider adding these conditions to future grants that are awarded.

He also commented on TF20-0135, Nutrient Reduction Through Wetland Restoration Pilot Project (Lenawee County), which is a department project proposing to develop a wetland mitigation bank. This project raises a lot of concern. It is not going to cost \$1.4 million for 30 acres and it appears to be more of a development than an acquisition project. Also, wetland mitigation developers make thousands of dollars and should not be rewarded by buying these wetlands. The dollars should be awarded to purchase other, more desirable, recreational lands.

Chair Rustem asked if the land that is being sold by the City of Westland was purchased with any state funds or is it a conversion. Jack responded that he was unsure, but the land is part of the historic Central City Park. There are restrictions to selling lands that were purchased with state funds.

Director Eichinger responded that the intent of TF20-0135 is not to be a wetland mitigation bank. The department's intent is to acquire the land, develop a marsh complex that is available for public outdoor recreation, is a host site for the state wildlife action plan, and assists with nutrient reduction efforts in the lake watershed.

Dave Coulter, Oakland County Executive

Dave Coulter commented in support of TF20-0206, Lost Lake Nature Park Expansion (Oakland County), to expand the nature park by 235 acres. With a majority of the state's population residing in southeast Michigan, the pressure for outdoor recreation in Oakland County and surrounding counties is on the rise. This project has been a priority for over 30 years and not often do they get the opportunity to work with a landowner on such a large tract of land.

Coulter further commented that protecting connectivity of these natural communities will provide habitat for wildlife and access to outdoor recreation for current and future generations. This land also lends itself to future improvements such as hunting, fishing, hiking trails, wildlife viewing and guided nature programs, and will help nearby schools, neighborhoods, their own county park, and the Bald Mountain Recreation Area.

Coulter thanked the Board for their support of numerous projects in Oakland County and stated that he cannot stress enough the importance of providing outdoor recreation opportunities, especially since this year's pandemic, is critical.

There were no additional requests for public comment.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

Proposal 1 Results and Implementation

Trevor VanDyke reported that Proposal 1 was approved by the voters during the November 2020 election. Article 12, Section 2 of the Michigan Constitution, provides that a ballot proposal to amend the constitution is not in effect "... until the end of 45 days after the date of the election at which it was approved." Proposal 1 will not be in effect until December 18 at the earliest. Therefore, it is the department's advice that the Board must carry out its duties according to the current law that is in effect as it makes its funding recommendations. The new formulas under Proposal 1 will not be in effect until mid-December.

The Board agreed and confirmed that they will proceed with funding recommendations under the current law.

Cummings offered a motion on behalf of the Board to express their enthusiasm and appreciation to all who advocated for Proposal 1, including those who were instrumental and worked tirelessly in getting Proposal 1 passed.

MOVED BY RUSTEM, SUPPORTED BY HAMP, TO EXPRESS THE BOARD'S APPRECIATION TO ALL WHO ADVOCATED FOR AND WERE INSTRUMENTAL IN THE PASSAGE OF PROPOSAL 1. MOTION PASSED WITHOUT DISSENTING VOTE.

Recap of Consensus Meeting Pursuant to MCL 324.1907

Chair Rustem stated that, by law, the Board is required to meet with the Legislature on how to approach expenditures each year. Chair Rustem attended, representing himself, and Director Eichinger attended, representing the Governor's Office. They met with the two appropriation committee chairs and the Department of Treasury. In the consensus meeting it was also agreed that the Board should operate this year under the existing language of the constitution and not under Proposal 1. The system will change in accordance with the formulas under Proposal 1 next year. All Board members received the consensus letter.

The Department of Treasury recommended \$21 million (no more than 25%) in total expenditures for development grants this year. The Board representatives relied very heavily on the Department of Treasury's recommendation.

Director Eichinger added that, based on the guidance they received from the Department of Treasury, the expenditures recommended were an acceptable amount of risk for grant spending based on the status of the fund and the \$500 million corpus. For projects that were withdrawn this year, those returned funds can also be layered on top of what is made available for grant funding. He expressed his appreciation to Senator Stamas, Representative Albert, the Department of Treasury and their staff for working toward this consensus.

Withdrawal of Projects

Jon Mayes, DNR Recreation Grants Unit Manager, gave a brief overview of the following project withdrawal requests:

- TF19-0168, Hopkins Park Development – Village of Bear Lake, Manistee County; Grant Amount: \$28,000.00

The Village of Bear Lake's Council voted not to proceed with this development project at this time, but they intend to seek grant funding in the future.

- TF19-0212, Ludington State Park Acquisition Phase 2 – DNR Parks and Recreation Division, Mason County; Grant Amount: \$5,300,000.00

After months of unsuccessful negotiations with the owner, the DNR Parks and Recreation Division and Real Estate Services Section recommended withdrawal of this land acquisition.

Both withdrawals total \$5,328,000.00.

Hamp and Cummings both expressed their disappointment regarding the withdrawal of the Sargent Sand – Ludington State Park acquisition. Cummings expressed his support to the DNR and their efforts in attempting to negotiate with the property owners. Any purchase agreement must have a willing seller and a willing buyer at an appraised value that is acceptable by both parties. Unfortunately, sometimes a party must walk away but, hopefully, the opportunity will come up again.

Chair Rustem agreed that the parties were too far apart on the property value.

Director Eichinger expressed his appreciation to those that worked very hard on getting to this point. It is a quality project and, although it is disappointing, it does not foreclose the opportunity for both parties to come back to the table again. Staff will continue to work with partners in that area to be ready if that window opens again.

Chair Rustem called for a motion to accept withdrawal of both applications.

MOVED BY McDONOUGH, SUPPORTED BY HAMP, TO ADOPT WITHDRAWAL OF TF19-0168, HOPKINS PARK DEVELOPMENT; AND TF19-0212, LUDINGTON STATE PARK ACQUISITION PHASE 2. MOTION PASSED WITHOUT DISSENTING VOTE.

Funding Projections and Overall Investment Fund Management Update

Woodrow Tyler, Senior Investment Manager, Michigan Department of Treasury, gave the Board a financial market update, an update on the MNRTF portfolio, and covered the MNRTF spending scenarios that were also discussed at the consensus meeting.

Tyler explained that the markets, of course, are relying on the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine and the rate of recovery. Most economists are optimistic that the markets may see an uptick in the second half of 2021. The critical months will be December through early Spring. Another factor involves the leveling off in employment growth. In February, the unemployment rate was at 3.5%, but it spiked to over 20% by mid-April. The unemployment rate is currently at 6.9% so it is plateauing, but it will take time to recover, mostly in the hotel, entertainment, restaurant, and travel-related industries. Also, moving into the flu season over the next 3-4 months could also have a toll, but it is anticipated that in 2021 recovery will pick up momentum through the year with the distribution of the vaccine.

Lower interest rates will also be a challenge in managing the MNRTF portfolio for the next year or two. It will require riskier investments to realize the rate of return the portfolio was receiving historically. The outlook for future returns on bonds is low. The stock market also had a steep decline in March, but by September 2020, the stock market recovered and was up about 5.6%. Moving into 2021, there may have a more broad-base recovery in equity markets. The estimated investment income for the MNRTF portfolio over the next 12 months is expected to come in just below \$20 million.

The investment objectives for the MNRTF portfolio include generating returns that are high enough to meet the annual spending needs of the fund (i.e., grants and administrative costs), liquidity to meet open grant commitments, payments in-lieu of taxes and administrative costs, and safety by investing in a way that preserves and protects the entire \$500 million principal. Looking to get a long-term return of 5.5%, with an estimated risk measure of 7.8%.

After reviewing the current investments versus long-term investments, Tyler moved into the MNRTF portfolio and recommended expenditures for this round of grant funding.

Chair Rustem asked, and Woody confirmed, that if the Board expends \$21 million per year over the next ten years, it will raise the risk profile from approximately 5% to a 9% risk of going below \$500 million because the market is doing well; however, \$21 million will also keep the fund on a path of trying to have a stable projection for future outlay.

Director Eichinger also confirmed that expenditures already take into consideration outstanding grant obligations, new grant spending, payments in-lieu of taxes and administrative costs, which reflects the total spending that was included in the consensus letter. It does not consider the withdrawal of projects.

Cummings and other Board members expressed their appreciation to Woody Tyler and his staff for doing a terrific job managing the portfolio.

Chair Rustem addressed the fact that the Board missed the adoption of the Minutes. The Board took action on the Minutes as reflected under item I. on the agenda.

Chair Rustem called for a brief adjournment at 10:32 a.m.; the Board reconvened at 10:40 a.m.

Funding Available for Grant Awards – Erik Eklund, Chief Budget Officer

Erik Eklund, Chief Budget Officer, DNR Finance and Operations Division, commented that typically throughout the year they provide estimates on the MNRTF financial report, but every December they provide actual data. However, the state is still in the process of closing its books for fiscal year ending September 30, 2020 so the data in the Financial Update are preliminary, unaudited, and potentially subject to change. He will highlight the changes since last month's report but, for the purpose of the value of investments, they take a snapshot in time of the market value of the investments which, for this report, means September 30, 2020.

Eklund covered the monthly MNRTF Financial Update and changes that have occurred since the last report. The Board's total expenditures for this period (fiscal year 2020-21) equals \$41.6 million, with \$10.4 million for development grants (25%), \$10.4 million for acquisition grants (25%) plus any remaining funds toward acquisition for a total of \$27 million, and \$4.2 million for operating expenditures. These figures align with the recommendation and the figures that were discussed at the consensus meeting and are contained within the consensus letter.

Director Eichinger asked if the investment balance is net of outstanding grant obligations. Eklund confirmed that the \$617.9 million investment balance includes the \$500 million corpus, plus prior year investment earnings that have been reinvested in the fund to mitigate future investment fluctuations.

Cummings commented that he appreciates the Department of Treasury's guidance and it appears that the fund is in a slightly better position than it was earlier in the year. The \$41.6 million allows the Board to meet the consensus without significantly adding risk to future spending capacity. In his opinion, he is comfortable with the recommended \$41.6 million as a reasonable number that still allows for about a 2.8% fluctuation toward future spending capacity.

Chair Rustem called for a motion to set the MNRTF Board expenditures for grant funding.

MOVED BY CUMMINGS, SUPPORTED BY McDONOUGH, TO RECOMMEND BETWEEN \$41 AND \$42 MILLION IN TOTAL GRANT AWARDS FOR THIS ROUND OF FUNDING (FISCAL YEAR 2020-21). MOTION PASSED WITHOUT DISSENTING VOTE.

The Chair commented that the motion is open to amendment after the Board reviews the list of acquisition and development grant applications.

2020 MNRTF ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

The Board spent the next hour reviewing the acquisition and development grant applications and deliberating on which applications to recommend for funding.

Acquisition Grants

There was significant discussion about TF20-0124, the Nugent Sands Acquisition in Muskegon County. The Board agreed to cut the grant amount to 50% of the asking amount and approve it for purchase of the south parcel. The county can come back to the Board to pursue acquisition of the remaining property to the north.

Chair Rustem pointed out that the Board received several letters and comments in opposition to TF20-0070, Oshtemo Township Land Acquisition for Future Fruitbelt Trail in Kalamazoo County. It is the Board's position that if the township board cannot come to an agreement with the seller of the land, the dollars will come back to the fund but, at this time, the Board recommends the application be funded.

Director Eichinger commented that TF20-0205, DNR Forest Resources Black River Ranch Acquisition in Cheboygan County, is an exciting project. It reflects a great partnership between the Forest Legacy Fund and the MNRTF to fund this acquisition, including the notable partnership and assistance of the Little Traverse Conservancy.

The Board also applauds TF20-0135, the DNR Wildlife Division Nutrient Reduction Through Wetland Restoration Pilot Project in Lenawee County. It is a very innovative pilot project that may provide an opportunity to replicate it and will have a positive impact on Lake Erie.

The Board also expressed their concerns with TF20-0093, the Hamburg Township Herndon Lake Park and Nature Reserve Acquisition in Livingston County. The Board does not feel that purchasing an existing golf course is a good use of MNRTF dollars, especially with the maintenance, private sector competition and large dollar amount. The Board declined to approve the application.

The Board agreed to allocate \$27,289,600 toward acquisition grants.

Development Grants

The Board then deliberated on the development grant applications.

McDonough asked that the Board keep in mind that funding should be distributed fairly, geographically, and to communities that have not received funding in the past.

Cummings asked if the Board could increase the amounts. It was concurred that the Board could increase the total funding, but it can only be increased on the acquisition side. Chair Rustem confirmed that they must remain within 25% on the development side.

The Board agreed to allocate \$10,500,000 (25%) toward development grants.

Chair Rustem asked for a motion to approve the expenditures for both acquisition and development grant projects during this grant cycle.

CUMMINGS MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE EXPENDITURE OF \$27,289,600 FOR ACQUISITION GRANT PROJECTS, AND \$10,500,000 FOR DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROJECTS; TOTALING \$37,789,600 IN GRANT EXPENDITURES FOR THIS GRANT CYCLE; HAMP SUPPORTED. MOTION PASSED WITHOUT DISSENTING VOTE.

Grant expenditures total \$37,789,600, plus \$4,210,400 for operating expenditures, totaling \$42 million which meets the recommendation contained in the consensus letter.

Hamp indicated he had to leave the meeting; Chair Rustem excused him from the meeting.

Chair Rustem called for a brief adjournment at 12:03 p.m.; the Board reconvened at 12:13 p.m.

Dan Lord asked the Board to revisit the ranked lists one more time as this is how they will be presented to the Legislature. The Board confirmed that both the acquisition and development grant lists are as they were selected and approved by the Board.

Chair Rustem also asked that the Board revisit its earlier motion, under Funding Available for Grant Awards, on the total expenditures that have been approved by the Board.

McDONOUGH MOTIONED TO AMEND THEIR PREVIOUS MOTION TO SOLIDIFY THAT THE BOARD HAS AUTHORIZED \$42,000,000 IN FUNDING FOR THIS GRANT CYCLE; CUMMINGS SUPPORTED. MOTION PASSED WITHOUT DISSENTING VOTE.

Dan Lord indicated that both lists (acquisition and development) will now be presented to the Legislature in the order that grants were chosen by the Board. They will also be posted on-line and included in the press release.

The Board thanked everyone, including the public, for their patience throughout this process.

Board Member Panel at the mParks Annual Conference

Dan Lord reported that the mParks Annual Conference is scheduled for February 2-4, 2021. It will be a virtual conference this year. On February 3, from 10:45 to 11:45 a.m., there will be a Michigan

Natural Resources Trust Fund Board Roundtable discussion where two members of the Board will offer their perspectives to timely and relevant topics associated with the Department's largest grant program, which will generally be guided by questions from the audience. Dan asked for two Board member volunteers to sit on the panel.

McDonough and Cummings volunteered; however, they have sat on the panel in the past and would offer up the opportunity to other Board members if interested. Dan asked that they check their calendars and report back to him if anybody besides Erin and Sam are interested and available. He will confirm with the Board members as the date approaches.

Election of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson for 2021

Bill Rustem's term as the Chair expires at the end of 2020. Chair Rustem reminded the Board that next in line would be the vice-chair, Erin McDonough. Also, next in line for vice-chair would be Sam Cummings. There were no objections to either appointment.

Chair Rustem asked for a motion to appoint Erin McDonough as the Chair of the Board, effective January 1, 2021.

**MOVED BY CUMMINGS, SUPPORTED BY EICHINGER, TO APPOINT ERIN
McDONOUGH AS THE CHAIR OF THE MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES
TRUST FUND BOARD.
MOTION PASSED WITHOUT DISSENTING VOTE.**

Erin McDonough will be the new chair, effective January 1, 2021, and will chair the Board's February 17, 2021 meeting.

Chair Rustem then asked for a motion to appoint Sam Cummings as the Vice-Chair of the Board, effective January 1, 2021.

**MOVED BY McDONOUGH, SUPPORTED BY EICHINGER, TO APPOINT
SAM CUMMINGS AS THE VICE-CHAIR OF THE MICHIGAN NATURAL
RESOURCES TRUST FUND BOARD.
MOTION PASSED WITHOUT DISSENTING VOTE.**

Sam Cummings will be the new vice-chair, effective January 1, 2021, and for the February 17, 2021 MNRTF Board meeting.

2021 MNRTF Board Meeting Dates

Dan Lord reminded the Board that proposed meeting dates for 2021 were discussed at the October meeting. Hopefully, all members had time to check their calendars. Dan listed the 2021 proposed meeting dates as February 17, April 21, June 16, August 18, October 20, and December 1, 2021.

Chair Rustem asked if any Board members had a conflict or objection to any of the meeting dates. None were offered. Chair Rustem asked for a motion to adopt the 2021 meetings dates of the Board as listed.

**MOVED BY McDONOUGH, SUPPORTED BY EICHINGER, TO ADOPT
THE 2021 MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BOARD
MEETING DATES AS FEBRUARY 17, APRIL 21, JUNE 16, AUGUST 18,
OCTOBER 20, AND DECEMBER 1, 2021.
MOTION PASSED WITHOUT DISSENTING VOTE.**

Update on MNRTF Staff Activities

Dan Lord reported that 2020 is near its completion and they are already working towards 2021. They are in the process of updating program booklets and finalizing enhancements to the on-line management system, MiRecGrants. The new version of the software will be launched in January. They will set up a webinar to walk users through the look and feel of the new system. Typically, their staff would hit the road in January to conduct regional grant workshops around the state. This year they will be conducting an on-line webinar Grant Workshop on January 21, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. It will be recorded and made available on-line. They are also preparing content for the mParks virtual conference in February. The section is also in the process of finalizing the annual report which should be posted on-line by January 16, 2021.

The section received department support to hire the vacant Grant Coordinator position; they are waiting on the Office of the State Employer's approval. Jon Mayes, in the meantime, is preparing materials. The position should be posted in January if approved.

Dan expressed his gratitude to Tamara Jorkasky, former grant coordinator, for her assistance in helping the section complete this cycle of grant applications. She has returned to her position and duties full-time in the Executive Office. He also thanked the other grant coordinators, Merrie Carlock, Lindsay Ross and Andrea Stay, for splitting up other regions of the state.

Dan also expressed his appreciation to Mike Chuff, Lindsay Ross, Jon Mayes, and Yolanda Taylor for their continued behind-the-scenes support in planning, coordinating, and running this year's virtual meetings, including all the preparations leading up to each meeting.

Dan closed by commenting that this year has been a challenge. Normally there would be ribbon-cutting ceremonies, in-person meetings with grant applicants and others. Staff has done an exceptional job adjusting to the pandemic this year. He thanked them for their creativeness and flexibility in finding new ways to conduct business and to ensure the programs run smoothly, especially for their constituents.

McDonough commented that the state has seen an upward trend in outdoor recreation this year, with more people accessing the outdoors. It speaks to the importance of this Board more than ever. This could continue well into the future, especially for those that may be new to outdoor recreation but have now developed a taste for it.

Chair Rustem also thanked Mike Chuff for doing a phenomenal job with the technology this year. The Board is grateful for his assistance.

VII. STATUS REPORTS

None.

VIII. BOARD PACKET REFERENCE MATERIALS

Chair Rustem asked Board members if they would like to discuss any of the Board Packet Reference Materials. No discussion of the packet materials was offered.

IX. OTHER MATTERS AS PROPERLY BROUGHT BEFORE THE BOARD

Chair Rustem thanked department staff, the presenters, participants, and members of the public for their presentations and for adjusting to virtual meetings this year.

McDonough asked staff to clean up the list of final recommendations and submit them to the Board. Dan Lord will follow up on this request. He also stated the lists will be posted on the program's website and in the press release, which should be released to the public tomorrow.

Director Eichinger also expressed his gratitude to Dan Lord and his amazing team for their year-long efforts, and for assisting the Board through this year. He also thanked all grant applicants for their patience. This has been a different year under difficult circumstances. It has been a challenging year in a new environment. He expressed his appreciation for everyone's flexibility and resilience.

Chair Rustem closed by stating that the Board received a tremendous number of excellent projects and applications this year. Although they would like to fund more, he asked grant applicants that did not receive funding to not be discouraged and consider applying next year.

X. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Rustem announced that the next meeting of the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Board is scheduled for February 17, 2021, beginning at 9:00 a.m. It will be a virtual meeting and information will be posted on the Board's website.

The Board thanked Bill Rustem for his role as the Chair and for doing an excellent job this year.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Rustem asked for additional comments or discussion. None were offered.

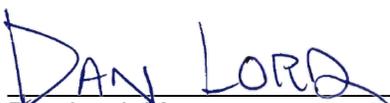
The Chair then asked for a motion to adjourn.

**MOVED BY McDONOUGH, SUPPORTED BY CUMMINGS, TO ADJOURN
THE MEETING.
MOTION PASSED WITHOUT DISSENTING VOTE.**

The meeting adjourned at 12:27 p.m.



Bill Rustem, Chairperson
Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund
Board of Trustees



Dan Lord, Manager
Grants Management Section
Finance and Operations Division

February 17, 2021
DATE