

Beaver Island Natural Resources and Eco-Tourism Steering Committee

**Draft** of Minutes

January 16, 2012 @7 p.m. at the Peaine Township Hall

Archived information on: [www.peaine.org](http://www.peaine.org)

**Mission Statement:** *The Beaver Island Natural Resources and Eco-tourism Steering Committee is committed to understanding and preserving our natural resources and promoting opportunities for their appreciation and enjoyment.*

**In attendance:** Sandy Birdsall, Bill Cashman, Jim Gillingham, Pam Grassmick, Paul Johnson, Bill Markey, Dan Martell, Pete Plastrik, Jeff Powers, Doug Tilly, and Ed Wojan. **On conference call:** Archie Kiogima, Seamus Norgaard, and Bill Parsons **Guest:** John Beck

1. **Call to order:** The meeting was called to order by Chair, Plastrik at 7:04 p.m.
2. **Changes to the agenda:** 3 items were added to the agenda: NRESC website development, letter of support from townships for the CRA State of the Great Lakes' grant, and a proposal for an Easement and Acquisition subcommittee.
3. **Adoption of Minutes:** Minutes of the November 21, 2011 and December 10, 2011 were circulated to members via electronic mail. Motion by Cashman/Gillingham to accept the minutes as written. Unanimously adopted.
4. **Round Table Discussion from Members:** Birdsall remarked no comments from Peaine Township. Cashman updated the Historical Society's work regarding the train acquisition from Port Huron to Beaver Island. Grassmick commented on the upcoming invasive species coordinating meeting on January 27 from 11-2 p.m. in Gaylord with participating off island organizations. John Bedford from the Michigan Department of Agriculture will update the island on the status of future Emerald Ash Borer trap funding for 2012 near the end of February. The Grand Traverse Conservation District's 2012 Plant Week is May 5-12. Charlevoix County is included. If any members wish to participate in activities, contact Grassmick. Planning is still underway for BIA's June 14 Invasive Species Summit. Tilly announced that the Peaine Township Parks and Trail's Committee will develop a draft of the Recreation Plan for Peaine Township. He will be in contact with other organizations for participation. Johnson had no updates from the Chamber. Wojan will discuss the Easement and Acquisition proposal later. Markey was appointed to NRESC by the Peaine Planning Commission. Gillingham is reviewing Beaver Island's plant floristic quality index and the quality of species. Plastik commented that he has received 15 comments on the St. James Recreation Plan. He intends to release those comments next week for the public to review. Following that he will send a briefing to the St. James Township board for a public meeting to take place at their next

meeting in February. Powers reported on the Wildlife Clubs plans for preliminary plans on fisheries work and habitat work related to food plots. They would also like to place a small dock on Fox Lake for fishing. Powers went onto say that he had been recommended for a position on the DEQ's Great Lakes Aquatic Species Advisory Board. A motion by Birdsall/Tilly to authorized Plastrik to send a letter of support on behalf of the NRESC for Powers' placement on the board. (Exhibit A) Bill Parsons commented that the Odawa tribe is working with Phyllis Higman from MNFI on their research/biodiversity report on High and Garden Islands. Jackie Pilette is working on a proposal through GLRI monies via the Bureau of Tribal Affairs for invasive species work due February 3<sup>rd</sup>. Norgaard had nothing further to report at this time.

5. **Action Items: a)** Plastrik opened the discussion on the MSU facilitated planning process by reviewing the draft of proposed plan development process which was electronically e-mailed to NRESC members. (Exhibit B) The document discussed a series of dates for meetings to occur every 2 months and activities to be completed between meetings. Plastrik turned the meeting over to John Beck at this point. Beck described the four major face to face meetings with the first being scheduled February 18, 2012. This meeting is intended to build knowledge and understanding about the current state of BI natural resources and ecotourism. Many of the questions submitted to the MSU facilitators dealt with the role of the DNR/Wildlife Division on Beaver Island and restrictions or policies on state held lands. On February 18, Brian Mastenbrook is to present his department's position on natural resource policy and allow for Q &A. Beck presented his thoughts on the questions submitted and expressed that some of the questions, although valuable, may not need answers at this time when planning for 5-10 years out. He felt that we should be focusing on those tactical areas where we could have immediate impact or outcomes. "The further out we plan, the more controversial those actions may be." He offered that we should balance out those and come to strong consensus and conclusions fairly quickly on areas such as accessing natural resources on the island to take advantage of bird watching, hunting, or a list the NRESC puts together. Birdsall interjected that another alternative is to identify those items where we need more information and deeper discussion and put that in the plan. Beck said that the vision for the plan will need to come from clarification of assumptions/restrictions directed to the DNR and is a key piece to resolve so that we can move forward with the plan. Norgaard suggested that Mastenbrook be approached to bring a member from the Forest Division to help answer additional questions that may arise and supported by Parsons. Beck expects that in addition to Mastenbrook's presentation, we are to start the practical visioning process, goals and objectives, and develop a communication plan for reaching the larger island property owners at the February meeting. Beck is suggesting that we schedule multiple forums occurring over a number of months with

various stakeholder groups such as the school and seasonal residents. The expectation is that from the February meeting until the fall, the NRESC is out to gather input from the community and begin to draft the vision with short and long term goals, objectives, and tasks. The community forums will also allow time for the public to react to the emerging vision. Beck envisions the creation of the final draft of the plan to go to the townships in the fall for approval. Following township approval, we enter into the implementation phase: who needs to do what, what kind of additional resources and partnerships are needed. What does partnership mean in the face of the limited resources of the Wildlife Division? The plan is an exercise in partnerships. People who are closest to the resources and have the greatest amount of decision making and ability to affect that resource. Scheduling of additional meetings culminated with the following recommendation to tentatively hold the next meeting on April 21(fall back is April 14). Stakeholder focus groups or forums will be ongoing from March to September and may be smaller in number with similar interests to balance input into the plan. Further discussion is expected at the February meeting. The group agreed that the next two meetings will solidify the schedule of the plan. The process dates as presented are tentative and no firm date for completion is to be expected. The October completion date is ambitious and although we may strive to meet this date; it may not be obtainable.

**b) May Learning Session:** Motion by Cashman supported by Wojan to schedule a public meeting as part of the May 21 NRESC meeting for a presentation by the DNR Waterfowl Specialist to discuss mute swans as an invasive species. Grassmick to follow-up. Unanimously carried.

**c) Review of EC Actions:** Plastik offered the opportunity for suggestions or concerns about EC activity-none expressed.

6. **At-Large-Posting:** Postings are up for position with a deadline of January 23. Dawn Geoge contacted Platrik but is unable to commit at this time. Position may be filled at a later date.
7. **Website Development:** (Exhibit C) The proposed NRESC website was presented with a schedule for implementation. The resource information compiled on the old NREC site will be copied into the new site. A motion by Martell seconded by Gillingham for Cashman and Platrik to move forward with the development of the website using island photos, maps of sensitive unique areas, and links. Wojan offered his latest map but expressed concern that it not be downloadable. Cashman to investigate. Platrik offered to host the site on his organization's server for the first year. Members are requested to send recommendations for website to Cashman or Platrik. Motion unanimously carried.

8. **Letters of Support:** Plastik and Birdsall were asked to contact their township supervisors for the purpose of securing a letter of support for CRA's for the Sustain Our Great Lakes grant by February 1, 2012. Both will follow-up.
9. **Easements and Acquisition Subcommittee Proposal:** (Exhibit D) Plastrk and Wojan presented a document related to the development of an Easement & Acquisition Subcommittee as a strategy for public education and securing key areas for public access and/or land protection. Markey offered a suggested clarification to the document in purpose and goals (amended in Exhibit D). Motion by Wojan seconded by Birdsall. Unanimously adopted with the revision.
10. **NRESC/Townships' Annual Joint Meeting:** By-laws require a joint presentation to the townships in January. Plastrk and Birdsall will develop a one page document, circulate to the NRESC board for input, and propose to present at a joint township meeting that is already scheduled for January 23<sup>rd</sup>.
11. **Exploring Biodiversity:** (Exhibit E) The learning session on biodiversity was presented by Martell and Plastrk. The presentation was designed to increase our understanding and not agreement on the term with information obtained from many different sources. The presentation offered an opportunity for all present to ask questions and offer input. The comments were favorable and the NRESC expressed their thanks to Martell and Plastik for their biodiversity presentation.
12. **Adjournment:** With no further business, a motion by Cashman and seconded by Tilly to adjourn was unanimously accepted at 9:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Grassmick, Secretary