

## **Minutes of the meeting of the Popular River Management Board**

Date: March 2, 2006, Time 12:00 p.m.

Venue: Caribou Highlands Lodge

Chaired by: Charles Skinner

Present:

Wayne Seidel Cook County Soil and Water Conservation District

Tom Rider, Lutsen Mountains

Marland Hansen, Lutsen Township

Don Sivertson, Cook County Soil and Water Conservation District

Charles Skinner, Lutsen Mountains

Scott Harrison, Lutsen Resort

Mike Davies, Superior National

Curt Sparks, North American Wetland Engineering

Bruce Martinson, County Commissioner

Andy Woodrick, Caribou Highlands Lodge

Melissa Dressely, Caribou Highlands Lodge

1. The meeting commenced with the handing out of an agenda of items to be discussed including: a draft press release, information on free web hosting from Boreal Access, and minutes from the last Cook County Soil and Water Conservation District's last meeting (as an FYI).
2. The first agenda item was approval of minutes from the prior meeting of the Board. By unanimous vote, the minutes of the meeting of the PRMB meeting held on February 6, 2006 were approved.
3. A discussion of the TMDL process focused on how much input land owners, the public, and the PRMB may have on developing protocol for the study, especially developing turbidity criteria. According to Curt Sparks, MPCA will not hear input from land owners or the public prior to information being released for public comment, however they may give PRMB input some consideration prior to the public comment period. Curt has been working with the MPCA to obtain the TMDL work plan and turbidity criteria as soon as they are available, and he will draft a letter from the Board identifying us as stake holders and expressing the Board's issues and concerns.

Wayne Seidel added that the same concerns are going on with the Knife River study, and when their protocol comes out for public comment in July/August, we'll learn more and be able to ask questions.

To determine the protocol and turbidity criteria, the MPCA collects data by measuring slumps, moisture contents, historical records, and looks at scientific studies to determine what is naturally occurring, and what is not. As there are not enough MPCA professionals to collect the data, they are using EPA contractors.

Charles Skinner asked if we could use the Caribou River as a basis of comparison when determining the TMDL protocol. Curt's response was that there are no flow measurements done of that river, and the MPCA is not interested enough to obtain them. As taking samples as private citizens is not recommended, and funding through Cook Co. SWCD is not available, Curt suggested that NRRI may be able to obtain the samples.

4. Wayne Seidel gave an update on the Cook County Storm Water Ordinance: The SWCD met on 2/28/06 to take public comments into account. As a result, the ordinance was revised to increase the threshold of disturbed area, to be able to build on slopes greater than 18% (provided certain criteria are met), and the landscape preservation standard was removed. Revised ordinance will go to planning commission next week.
5. Curt Sparks gave an update on the AUAR: The County received copies today. Government entities get copies, and the PRMB could get copies if we want. The Board suggested one copy per land owner. The AUAR will be released for public comment in about a week; there is a 30-day comment period, followed by a 10-day mitigation period.
6. It was decided that PRMB would submit a grant application to the Great Lakes Commission's Great Lakes Basin Program for Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control. Awards range from small scale: \$40,000, large scale: \$75,000, and watershed: \$125,000. The Board will submit an application for a watershed project to fix slumps. Wayne added that this grant gears towards demonstration projects, and ours would be a great example. It was also added that NRRI may be interested in partnering for this project. The cost for submitting the application is \$1,500 - \$2,000; a post meeting of Board members was proposed to determine how this would be funded. The application is due on March 15, 2006.

We can call on Monday to see whether our application for the Costal Program Grant was recommended for approval.

7. Melissa Dressely announced that Boreal Access sometimes grants non-profits free web hosting, and a letter of request is being submitted. It needs to be determined who/how a website will be designed. Melissa offered that Microsoft Word may have a mechanism to develop a simple website, which she can figure out, but we will need FTP software to load it to a server. Other options are to find someone to donate their design service, for the Board to purchase design service, or for the Board to purchase its own web development software. The aforementioned post meeting of Board members added website funding to its discussion items.

The press release announcing the formation of the PRMB, its purpose, and actions thus far was approved as amended. It will be sent to local & regional newspapers, partnering organizations, and organizations that may be interested in the Board's actions.

8. The budget will be part of next meeting's agenda.
9. The next meeting of the PRMB was schedule for April 20, at noon, at Caribou Highlands Lodge. The meeting was later rescheduled to April 18.