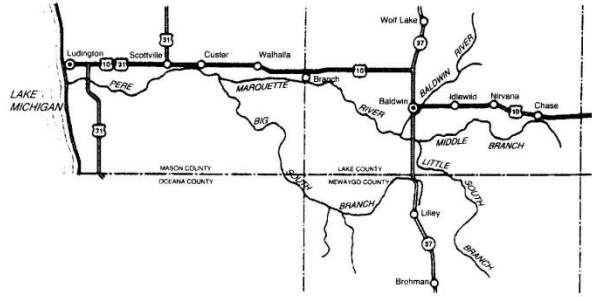


Pere Marquette Watershed Council, Inc.

P.O. Box 212, Baldwin, Michigan 49304



Board of Directors' Meeting 9:00 A.M. March 5, 2016 Lake-Osceola State Bank, Baldwin Meeting Minutes

Administrative

1. Meeting was called to order by President, Paul Bigford at 9:05 a.m.
2. Attendance: Wayne Andersen, Paul Bigford, Jay Barnhart, Jim Bos, Jeff Carpenter, Marty Corson, Dave Gabrielson, Marv Hanna, Michael Hoag, John Karakashian, Scott Lachniet, Chuck Turk
Excused: Mike Batcke, Mark Raven, Tom Seroczynski
Absent:
Guests: Pam Repp, USFS
3. Minutes of the February 6, 2016 meeting of the PMWC. Motion to approve the minutes was made by Jim Bos and seconded by Jay Barnhart – minutes were approved.
4. President's Notices:
 - A. Welcome Guest: President Bigford welcomed Pam Repp to the meeting.
 - B. The Volunteer meeting has been set for April 22, 2016 at the Frederic Township Hall in Frederic Michigan.
 - C. Trout Unlimited is expecting to sponsor a symposium on the New Zealand Mud Snail had to be postponed due to weather and a new date will be set.

Old Business

5. Financial Integrity:
 - A. The treasurer's report was made by Jay Barnhart. The February 29, 2016 financial report was given. Our balance as of 2/29/16 was \$82,320.29. A motion to approve the report was made by Jim Bos and seconded by Wayne Andersen. Motion passed
6. Watershed Restoration/ River Management:
 - A. Restoration Committee:
 - The next meeting is scheduled for 3/22/2016 at 10 AM in the Lake-Osceola State Bank meeting room.
 - B. PMWC project planning document
 - Wayne Anderson passed out the PMWC project planning and progress summary.
 - Current Active projects
 - River Improvement Projects
 - The Forest Service was been invited to the March 2016 meeting to give an update on the Logmark site and others regarding improvements to the launching and landing sites in the area.

Pam Repp's report:

Lower Branch Bridge issue. The USFS is in the process of setting up for public comment on the matter. The USFS has done preliminary investigation and will be following their processes for moving ahead.

1. A letter will go out in April seeking public in-put and this period will last for 30 days once the letter goes out.
2. An environmental assessment of the area will be made.

3. There will be a consideration of alternatives once the public comment period has ended before any final decisions are made as to how to move ahead with the project.

Rail Road Bridge issue. Following a series of meetings with interested parties, a set of documents was sent to the parent rail road company in September. There has been no word back from the rail road. Pam Repp realizes that everyone has tried collaborative processes. She will consider reaching out to the federal rail road safety inspector again since it has been over a year since she last made contact with them regarding the matter. The USFS may have personnel who can assist the PMWC with developing a monitoring strategy to record the progress of erosion at the site.

River Interns. Pam Repp has identified two students interested in the program this summer. One student is from Ferris State University and the other is from Central Michigan University.

The USFS plans to do a survey of the river to map the locations for the New Zealand Mud Snail. The USFS is also looking at a number of sites in the forest that have illegal roads and access sites to the river with the possibility of closing them or placing obstructive barriers.

The following is a copy of Pam's question and answer session regarding the use of water craft permits that was made at a landowner's meeting she attended. This is attached with her permission. The formatting did not copy and I did not try and edit the formatting since they were not my notes and I did not want to make an error in formatting that may have changed any meanings.

Watercraft Permit and PM River Plan Questions Riparian Landowner Permits 1. Is the annual watercraft permit process for riparian landowners in the 2006 river plan in effect? Various USFS reps have provided different direction (if your name is in the card file you don't need to re-apply for example) and will this change? How can we facilitate this so we don't have to come in each year? 5. Is there a fee for landowner permits? 8. What is the procedure to obtain a landowner permit? 15. What is the "annual use report requirement"? 16. In past practice riparian landowners on the Middle, South and the Baldwin have been issued permits. If this will no longer be possible how will that be communicated? Response: The 1983 Comprehensive River Management Plan (CRMP) and the 1990 amendment contained no information or direction on the issue of riparian landowner permits. Until the 2008 CRMP, we had an informal landowner permit system. The 2008 CRMP, however, includes specific management direction for riparian landowner permits which includes (2008 PM CRMP, pg. 26): 1) Permits will be available to landowners between the Forks to Indian Bridge access site. 2) Permits issued prior to 2007 will be void and landowners will be required to obtain a new landowner permit. 3) Riparian landowner permits will be issued annually and have an annual use report requirement. 4) One permit will be provided to each tax parcel or in the case of property associations, one permit will be provided for each permanent dwelling. 5) The permit will be transferable between watercraft. One permit equals 1 canoe or, 1 driftboat, 1 inner tube, or 2 solo kayaks, or 1 of any other type of watercraft. To date only #5 has been implemented; since 2008 riparian owners have received 2 permits that could be transferred between watercraft and allow for the personal use of up to 2 kayaks or inner tubes. Beginning in 2016, all of the above direction will be implemented and any permits, including "lifetime" or permits on any tributaries, issued in prior years will be void. Riparian owners in the Pere Marquette River corridor (#1 above) will be mailed a set of permits for personal use that are unique to their property. They will be free of charge and have an expiration date of December 31, 2016. Included with the permits will be a short form asking about their use of the river during the year. This will provide the Forest Service with information on how often and what activities riparian landowners engage in, information that is currently lacking and LCRPOA Board Meeting 09/2015 Page 2 crucial for making informed decisions on the management of the river. When the form is returned at the end of each year a new set of permits for the subsequent year will be mailed. We will post this information on the Huron-Manistee National Forests website and work with the Lake County Riverside Property Owners and the Pere Marquette Watershed Council to include information on riparian landowner permits in their respective newsletters. 6. So, a landowner with 4 small lots gets 4 landowner permits, but a landowner with 80 acres gets one and his family can't canoe together without paying for a permit? Response: The intent is to issue each riparian landowner, regardless of the size of their property, one set of permits for their personal use. In the case of property associations the number of permits issued will be based on the number of permanent dwellings on the property. Additional watercraft permits are available on-line for \$2/each, plus a transaction fee of \$6 for up to 8 watercraft permits. 7. Define

“permanent dwelling” Response: A roofed and walled building used as a personal dwelling. 10. In past practice a private landowner who puts in on their property and takes out on their property has not been required to get a permit and could float the river after the public use hours. Do you plan to change that and why? 11. How about a put in at a state landing and take out on private? Response: Special order R904-14-14, signed by Forest Supervisor Leslie Auriemmo dated October 27, 2014, requires a permit and adherence to river hours when entering, leaving, being on or going upon National Forest System lands from the Friday of Memorial Day to the Monday of Labor Day. If you stop and exit your watercraft to fish, stop to use a restroom or to picnic, or simply tie up a watercraft to or on National Forest you must comply with this order. The hours of 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. during the summer watercraft season are not “public use” hours. These hours were established to manage watercraft use to reduce user conflicts and to allow “quiet time” for fishing. Section 10(d) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to use statutory authorities when managing a Wild and Scenic River. The authority is codified in regulation, 36 CFR, Part 261. If regulation of use is necessary to protect river values, Section 261.58(z) allows the Forest Service to prohibit by order “entering or being on lands or waters within the boundaries of a component of the National Wild and Scenic River System.” Watercraft Permits 2. Why is the public only allocated 13 to 21% of the permits on a given day? Must a riparian rent a canoe when he has several in his garage? LCRPOA Board Meeting 09/2015 Page 3 Response: These percentages are based on historic and current use and the goal of developing a watercraft allocation system that recognizes the commercial interests and future social/economic interests of the area (1983 CRMP). In 2014 the combined gross revenues of the two permitted liveries was over \$290,000, a portion of which goes back to the Forest Service to manage the river. It is not necessary for a riparian owner to rent if they plan to use more watercraft at one time than can be covered by their permits, up to 2 kayaks or tubes, and there are permits available. In 2014 the Forest Service made all public watercraft permits available on-line making obtaining additional permits for family or guests convenient. The cost for a permit is \$2 and there is a \$6 transaction fee. Ninety-five percent of the permit fee is returned to the Forest and is used to pay staff that maintain the facilities and make visitor contacts and to make improvements in the river corridor. In 2014, the watercraft permits generated \$8,000 and 2015’s estimate is \$8,500. 9. Now that there is only one canoe livery in town shouldn’t the allocation be changed to reflect that so more permits are available for riparian landowners on a daily basis? Response: The Forest Service annually tracks the number of permits used by the special use permittee and the general public. The information is used to make decisions on whether or not changes in permit allocations need to be considered. An analysis of data for 2014 and 2015 indicate that permits remained for use by the general public (which includes riparian owners) every day of the permit season except for July 3rd in 2015. In 2015 there were 4 days (3 holidays/Saturdays and 1 Friday) when all permits for segments 1 and 2 were allocated. Highest use of the river is on Saturdays and holidays in July and August and on segment 1 which correlates with the peak use by the public renting watercraft from Baldwin Canoe. The 2008 CRMP allows for pooling of watercraft permits between the Forest Service and the liveries Monday through Friday (excluding holidays). Until 2014 there was not a system in place that provided an efficient and cost effective way to implement pooling. With the advent of the on-line permit system we now have the needed tool to implement pooling if annual monitoring indicates use of weekday permits by the public has increased. Note: All watercraft permits are for public use whether allocated by a special use permit to Baldwin Canoe or available to someone with their own watercraft that obtains a permit through the Forest Service permit system. 3. Note: a tube with one person “costs” one permit. A raft with six people “costs” only two permits. Is this meant to encourage rafts? 12. If a commercial available rubber raft carrying up to six people requires only one permit how does that fit with the equation of 1 permit equals 1 canoe (2-4 people max); 1 inner tube or two solo kayaks? Response: The summer watercraft capacity formula was reviewed and determined to be a valid method for determining capacity in the 2007 Pere Marquette River Environmental Assessment. The original capacity determination (1983 PM CRMP) assumed that close to 100 percent of the LCRPOA Board Meeting 09/2015 Page 4 watercraft use in the summer would be canoes holding two or more people. Today a wider variety of boats, such as kayaks and rafts, are available and affordable and their use has increased while canoe use has decreased. In response the definition of a watercraft was modified to better match a watercraft’s capacity in the 2008 CRMP: a canoe, driftboat, or tandem kayak uses 1 permit; a raft uses 2 permits; a tube or solo kayak uses a half permit. In addition, the 2008 CRMP capped commercially available raft numbers at 29 and the size to no more than a six-person raft to protect aquatic habitat by reducing the need for wider large wood clearing for navigation. River Management 4. Why are we building more parking spaces, since this seems to lead to more permits, 80% of which are commercial (see table 4b) Response: Five

alternatives for management of the Pere Marquette River were developed and analyzed in the 2007 Environmental Assessment. The alternatives were developed in response to the Key Issues of 1) River Access and Facilities and 2) Recreation Use and Capacity synthesized from comments from the public, MDNR, Tribes, local governments, commercial river users, and riparian landowners. Alternative 5 was selected for implementation and is the basis of the 2008 Pere Marquette CRMP. Under Alternative 5 a seasonal parking lot at Gleason's Landing and Rainbow Rapids would be constructed to accommodate spring and fall fishing. The lot has been constructed at Gleason's Landing and is used for 4-6 weeks each spring and fall. An expansion of the existing parking areas at Maple Leaf and an access site at Lower Branch Bridge are also planned. We are currently developing a Proposed Action for these sites and plan to initiate scoping early in 2016. These projects would accommodate use by all river users. The number of fishing guides or boats under permit or the percentage of watercraft permits allocated to the liveries has not changed under the 2008 CRMP and would not change as a result of improved parking.

17. Is there a plan to install stantions and cleats the Green Cottage and Gleasons where launch and disembark can be difficult? Response: We have not previously had a request for these at either location.

19. Carry in, carry out restrictions are required and posted on other federal scenic rivers. When will this be put in place on the PM? Response: Pack it in and pack it out is promoted by the Forest Service on the river. Trashcans and recycle line boxes are provided at major river access points. The Pere Marquette River brochure also includes the "Pack it in, Pack it out" statement.

20. As a scenic river the intent is to maintain wild and scenic attributes; party boats are not a fit. Shouldn't this be communicated/posted along with the carry in/carry out requirements? LCRPOA Board Meeting 09/2015 Page 5 Response: Annually, in partnership with the Pere Marquette Watershed Council and the Lake County Riverside Property Owner's Association, the Forest Service recruits and trains two river interns. During the summer watercraft season these interns make contacts at the landings, M-37 and Bowman Bridge, and check for watercraft permits and provide an overview on river use and ethics. Some of the key points of their contact include reminding visitors that most of the river corridor is in private ownership and that they need to ensure they are on public land before exiting their watercraft, noise travels, that no glass or Styrofoam is permitted, that they need to be off the river by 6:00 p.m., and to pack out what they bring with them. In the afternoon they kayak a portion of the river making educational contacts and offering assistance to anyone in need. They do not have the training or authority to issue warnings or violation notices; however they are in contact with other Forest Service personnel who can. Also, the Forest Service has developed a new sign that includes a map and information on appropriate behavior while on the river. We are in the process of constructing new bulletin boards at all of our access points that will display this sign. The project will be completed over the next two years. The Pere Marquette River brochure also addresses river etiquette.

21. The AuSable and other rivers are enacting a nominal fee (\$1-2) for commercial vessels to be allocated for habitat repair. Will this be enacted on the PM? Response: The Forest Service's authority to enact and collect fees is very limited and authorized by statute. The Forest Service collects an annual fee from all fishing guides and liveries under special-use permit under the authority of the Recreation Enhancement Act. There are currently 23 permitted guides with a total of 36 boats authorized and one canoe livery under special use permit on the Pere Marquette. In 2014 we collected \$21,000 and 95% of that was returned to the Forest for permit administration.

22. The Memorandum of Understanding signed in 1980 directs a joint management plan by the USFS and the Michigan DNR. Will this plan ever be developed and shouldn't the USFS take the lead to make this happen? Response: The 1980 Memorandum of Understanding states, "The responsibility for developing and implementing the federal river management plan was given to the United States Forest Service with the intent that it be accomplished after consultation with State and local governments and the interested public." The 1983, the 1990 amendment, and the 2008 CRMP, included extensive input from and consultation with the MDNR. One of the priorities of the current CRMP is unified management of the facilities and lands within the Wild and Scenic River corridor by the USFS and MDNR. Discussions between the agencies on unified management have occurred and are ongoing.

23. Now that the sheriff department no longer responds to calls when a property owner has an out of control situation involving the public on the river what/who should be notified and what response/action can the property owner expect? Response: You should call 911. Depending on the situation they can direct the appropriate officer; County, Michigan DNR, or Forest Service.

LCRPOA Board Meeting 09/2015 Page 6 13. Why is the spring season based on available parking capacity (660 when expansion is complete) which is not easily identified and whose number far exceeds the summer season number? 14. Why would permits not be required during the week in the fall season when there is heavy commercial use of the river? 18. The "flies only stretch" is considered blue ribbon fishing water and one of the only where wading is

possible. Why are there not smaller limits to commercial drift boats in this stretch? 24. The PM Water Management Plan was finished in 2016. Are there plans to revise the plan in 2016? Response: There is no required revision frequency established by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The current Pere Marquette CRMP, approved in 2008, is an adaptive plan that provides for change in management if monitoring indicates repeated instances of unacceptable impacts to the river's free-flow, water quality or Outstandingly Remarkable Values of Fisheries, Recreation, Scenery, and Heritage (2008 PM CRMP, Chapter 5).

This is the end of the Q&A notes from Pam Repp.

The following material is a reproduction of a project list that the USFS is considering. Since no scanning equipment was available, it has been manually reproduced for these minutes and as a consequence may have unintended errors from the document drafted by the USFS.

Huron-Manistee National Forests
Baldwin and White Cloud Ranger Districts
Pere Marquette National Scenic River
River Access and Bank Stabilization Projects

The Huron-Manistee National Forests is developing a project proposal for the Pere Marquette River from Lower Branch Bridge downstream to Maple Leaf. The purpose of the project is to implement the management actions from the 2008 Pere Marquette Comprehensive River Management Plan (CRMP) for Lower Branch Bridge, Logmark, and Maple Leaf recreation sites and complete riparian restoration and stabilization activities. The management actions for these sites were developed in response to public comment during the CRMP update and within the framework of protecting free flow, water quality and the river's Outstanding Remarkable Values (ORVs). The project proposal will include:

- Construction of a back-in boat launch downstream from the existing walk-in access at **Lower Branch Bridge**, a parking area for up to 10 vehicles and a toilet on the hill above the river, and steps to provide access from the parking area to the river. The existing access site would be closed and rehabilitated and the National Forest lands within the river corridor at this location would be closed to camping. The site is located in the SW1/4, Section 24, T18 N, R15W, Branch Township, Mason County, Michigan.
- Establishment of 2-4 canoe-in campsites on the river and 4 motor-vehicle accessible campsites at Logmark. The river and upland camp sites would be numbered and have established fire rings. The upland sites would also have a lantern post and picnic table. A toilet may be constructed. Camping outside of these designated sites in the river corridor would not be permitted at this location. The site is located in the N1/2 SW1/4, Section 23, T18N, R15W, Branch Township, Mason County, Michigan.
- Expand the existing parking area at Maple Leaf (walk-in) River Access Site to accommodate an additional 20 vehicles. The site is located in the SE1/4, Section 22, T18N, R15W, Branch Township, Mason County, Michigan.
- Stabilize and rehabilitate streambank erosion sites between Logmark and Maple Leaf Recreation Area. Sites would be treated with a variety of techniques and materials that would be based on each site's characteristics. Native plants and seeds would be used for any revegetation needs. The site is located in Sections 22 and 23, T18N, R15W, Branch Township, Mason County, Michigan.
- Creation of a sustainable angler trail along the Pere Marquette River between Logmark and Maple Leaf Recreation Area by, where needed, reconstructing or closing user-created trails. A variety of techniques such as physical barriers and signing, and materials, such as raised walkways and gravel would be used based on each location's features. The site is located in Sections 22 and 23, T18N, R15W, Branch Township, Mason County, Michigan.

We will be seeking public comment on these proposed projects and will be sending out a scoping letter in February 2016. If you would like to receive a copy of the scoping letter please contact Kathy Bietau, at the Baldwin Ranger district, 650 N Michigan Ave., Baldwin, MI 49304, or (231) 745-4631, or kbietau@fs.fed.us by January 31, 2016.

End of reproduction of USFS project list.

- Policy, Legal, Engineering, and Management
 - The next TFM application is set for 2017
- Future Projects

- Wayne Anderson reported that he now has the materials for doing tributary testing to determine phosphorus levels as baseline data for future projects and will begin collecting the data to see if further in-depth study is warranted.
- River Improvement Projects
- Policy, Legal, Engineering, and Management

D. Natural Rivers Zoning Review Board – No meeting is currently scheduled.

7. Communication and Information

The Mainstream was sent out December 2, 2015.

It was noted that the website is being updated. Mike Batcke is still working with our tech consultant to develop strategies for keeping the site current.

8. Public Comment: None

New Business

9. New business –

- A. A resolution was made for the PMWC to prepare a Special Liquor License Application for the annual banquet that will be held on 7/16/16. Motion to prepare the application and submit for the license was made by Wayne Andersen and seconded by Marv Hanna. The motion passed with unanimous support.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 AM

Next meeting will be held April 2, 2016 at Lake-Osceola State Bank at 9AM.

Minutes submitted by Dave Gabrielson