

## Natural Education Reserve Advisory Committee Regular Quarterly Meeting

Wednesday, August 10, 2022

Boardman River Nature Center – Oleson Pavilion

**Members Present:** Jim Kure, Chair; Judy Reich, Vice-Chair; Ken Gregory; Duke Elsner; Joe Underwood (GT County Road Commission Representative); Jim Chrestensen; John Chase (Director of GT County Parks & Recreation).

**Members Absent:** Mike Foley; Frank Dituri (City of Traverse City Representative); Chuck Korn (Charter Township of Garfield Representative).

**Others Present:** Reb Ratliff and Luke Kreykes (Grand Traverse Conservation District staff).

**I Call to order:** Meeting was called to order at 5:37 pm.

**A. 1<sup>st</sup> Public Comment:** No public comment. John Chase, Director of Parks and Recreation, was introduced.

**B. Approval of Agenda:**

- **Motioned** by Elsner to approve the Agenda as amended; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Chrestensen. Approved unanimously.

**C. Approval of Minutes from 4/13/22:**

- **Motioned** by Kure to approve the Minutes as presented; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Reich. Approved unanimously.

**II Action Item Review** – Kreykes updated the Committee on the Action Item from the meeting on 4/13, and that the subsequent site visit held on 6/2 will be briefed under the Project Updates section of the agenda.

**Action Item 4-1 (2022):** District staff will send out a doodle poll to the Committee to set up a site visit at the “Boy Scout Boardwalk” for the second or third week of May. **Done.**

**III Project Updates (GTCD staff)**

**Spring Planting Recap:** Ratliff briefed the Committee on the results of the planting events held in the Spring, including the public workbee on Arbor Day in conjunction with Keep Michigan Beautiful, a planting day attended by over 60 students from Cherry Knoll Elementary, trees planted at Jack’s Landing purchased with donation money from Bethlehem Church, and the ~8,000 seedlings planted through the MOA between Conservation Resource Alliance (CRA) and Grand Traverse Band (GTB) using various contractors.

**Grants:**

- **National Parks Service – Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance (RTCA):** Kreykes updated the Committee on the award for assistance from the NPS to facilitate and coordinate the development of a wayfinding plan for the NER and Medalie Park, including Garfield Township’s Boardman Valley Nature Preserve. Kure gave a brief update on a partner meeting that was held with various stakeholders, as well as a subsequent questionnaire that was created to garner partner input on the development process. The questionnaire is to be completed and sent in by the end of August, and it was suggested that it be shared with the entirety of the Committee.

**NEW Action Item 8-1 (2022):** District staff will forward the NPS – RTCA questionnaire to the Committee.

- **Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (tree plantings) – Fall 2022:** Funding (\$10k large stock, \$1k small stock) from GLRI is split between the NER and Brown Bridge Quiet Area. Fall plantings will include large potted stock and ball & burlap trees.
- **MDNR Fisheries Habitat Grant application; USFWS/GLFWRA Grant Program application (bank restoration) – Denied:** GTCD was *not* selected for either grant programs, and it was noted that recent past awards of these programs may have been a factor in this round’s denials. Discussions ensued on the status of the failing banks along Keystone Rapids trail, and the District’s plan to

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potentially reroute the trail in that area to avoid any further erosion and alleviate safety issues that may arise.

- **Beetle Release:** An explanation was given to the Committee on the status of invasive purple loosestrife in the bottomlands areas of the NER and the release of leaf-eating beetles to control the spread. Loosestrife is a big concern due to the speed in which it spreads, and the fact that it is becoming too prolific in the bottomlands areas to adequately control. Kreykes informed the Committee that more aggressive means of control such as herbicide and manual removal may need to be considered. Reich suggested looking into the NPS' attempts of control/eradication in the Platte River vicinity.
- **Monarch Watch:** Kreykes informed the Committee on the award received from Monarch Watch for 1,600 native milkweed plugs that were planted during a public workbee on 6/10. The value of the award was over \$4,400. Two flats of milkweed from this award were planted in the pollinator field of the Great Lakes Incubator Farm (GLIF).
- **Playscape Update:** Kreykes updated the Committee on the status of the Nature Center's Nature Playscape, which is now open to the public. Various elements, signs, sculptures, and interactive areas were installed in early Summer ahead of the ribbon cutting event, which was held on 7/25 and was attended by various partners & donors to the District.
- **Sabin Trail Plans & Boyscout Boardwalk Site Visit Recap:** Following the Committee's visit to the "boyscout boardwalk" and "flooded boardwalk" sections of the NER in June, it was recapped that the Committee's recommendation is to remove the boyscout boardwalk trail spur due to its limited value to the parkland & associated cost (and impact) of the alternative option - reconstruction, and to modify the flooded boardwalk as to not allow public use yet continue access for District Environmental Education use. The Committee was also informed that the upcoming replacement of the lower Sabin loop boardwalk as well as construction of the GLIF connector boardwalks is scheduled to commence later this field season.

### IV River Road Roundabout - Oleson Bridge Trailhead:

- **Keep Closed Until Next Spring:** Kreykes and Ratliff informed the Committee that the fourth leg of the River/Keystone/Beitner Road roundabout will remain closed until next Spring when the option for construction of a new trailhead, combining Oleson Bridge and Keystone Rapids trailheads, can be reassessed since funding is not currently available. Underwood stated that there is an upcoming open house for the new roundabouts. Underwood also stated that the road commission is planning on replacing the culverts at Beitner Landing in the future, and the Committee subsequently suggested that pedestrian and bike traffic accommodations should be considered due to the Boardman River Trail's current requirement for users to cross Beitner Road and walk along the bridge in order to continue to Hoosier Valley Road.
- **TCL&P Solar Project:** The Committee was informed that Traverse City Light & Power may consider the City-owned Keystone Dam parcel of the NER (where the River Road roundabout is located) for placement of a new solar project, due to the property's original use being for electricity generation. Evaluations are underway for this project's feasibility.

### V Review of NEW Action Items

(New) Action Item 8-1 (2022): District staff will forward the NPS – RTCA questionnaire to the Committee.

VI **2<sup>nd</sup> Public Comment/Meeting Review** – No public comment. Chase thanked the group for their stewardship of the NER.

VII **Adjournment** – **Motioned** by Reich to adjourn at 6:32 pm, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Chrestensen. Unanimously approved.

**NEXT MEETING: WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12TH, 2022 @ 5:30 PM**  
**LOCATION: BOARDMAN RIVER NATURE CENTER**

Minutes prepared and respectfully submitted by Luke Kreykes