

Little Missouri Scenic River Commission Meeting Minutes

September 11, 2020

Virtual Meeting Held with Microsoft Teams

Chair Schettler called the meeting to order at 3:01 pm CT and asked all committee members to introduce themselves.

Those in attendance were: Chair Joe Schettler, Dunn County; Secretary Andrea Travnicek, director of ND Parks and Recreation; John Packowski, interim state engineer of ND State Water Commission; John Hanson, Slope County; Pam Hestekin, Bowman County; David Crighton, McKenzie County; David Glatt, director of ND Dept Environmental Quality. George Weinreis, Golden Valley County had difficulty connecting but later joined the meeting.

Chair called for approval of the agenda and entertained a motion to accept the agenda.

Motion to approve the agenda made by John Packowski. Second by Pam Hestekin. Motion carried.

Chair called for an approval of the September 10, 2019 Minutes. No changes were identified.

Motion to approve the minutes as printed was made by David Crighton. Second by Dave Glatt. Motion carried.

Elections were pushed back as IT worked to connect George Weinreis.

To keep the meeting moving forward, Bryce Klasen, surface water hydrologist of ND State Water Commission provided his report and presentation on previous year's flow conditions at the three gauges on the Little Missouri River, water permitting, State Water Commission's presence and the levels at Lake Sakakawea. The first USGS gauge is in Marmarth, the second in Medora, and the third is at the Long X Bridge.

Water flow is lower this year than last year's median value flow during the months of March through August due to the dryer conditions this year. The minimum flow conditions which would require regulatory action downstream of the Long X Bridge cutoff is 30 cfs. Water levels are significantly lower this year, however not as low as 2017 and currently no regulatory action has been required.

Temporary surface water use applications are at about half of the previous year. Temporary water permits allow use of water for up to 12 months and do not accrue a water right. Construction and industrial water depot are the most uses in the region. This may be a reflection of the low oil prices.

Conditional water permits establish a water right and are mostly for irrigation and 2/3 of the permits are in the upper reaches of the Little Missouri River on tributaries or instream reservoirs.

Bryce reviewed the gauging network which includes USGS gauges as well as approved and prospective presence gauges from the State Water Commission. A study on the presence gauges include drilling of a well to see if the well gauges will mirror the flow of the river.

The elevation of Lake Sakakawea is around average for this year.

Chair Schettler asked if the network for presence gauges will be increased based on the outcome of the well study. Bryce indicated that is a possibility as the presence gauges will be expanded as they are relatively easy to deploy, but if a well is dug, this may take more time.

Matt Linneman with the Dept of Transportation introduced Dan Schneider, AECOM project engineer who provided a report and presentation on the Long X Bridge. The contract date was June 10, 2019 with construction starting July 29, 2019. Completion date is July 15, 2021. Contract amount was just short of \$34 million. The wildlife crossing is complete and all substructure piers and abutments are completed. Plans are to switch traffic onto 2 lanes of the new bridge and remove the old bridge by November 2020.

There were several environmental commitments for the project which resulted in numerous paleontologist finds. 1500 tons of reinforcing steel has been placed in the substructure of the bridge. 60 beams of 160 feet in length have been placed for the roadbed using 2 cranes at all times. Deck placement has begun. Erosion control along the roadway slopes was also done.

John Hanson asked if there has been communication with Mr. Dietz and have his concerns been addressed. Dan indicated he has been in continuous contact with him informing him of any developments that will substantially affect him and keeping him up to date.

Mary Massad, meeting attendee, posed the question of a ribbon cutting event when the bridge is completed. The answer provided was that it was being discussed at DOT.

At this time George Weinreis was able to fully join the meeting with audio capabilities. He had been listening to the meeting up to this point was not able to join the conversation.

George presented questions on the water monitoring devices on how the data is collected and communicated on the presence devices. Bryce indicated the data is sent via satellite and it is also stored on the data in the event it could not be sent via satellite. He also asked about the water quality in the past compared to the water quality now. The department of environmental quality has a large collection of the water quality. Dave Glatt indicated they do keep a database of the water quality and indicated he can reach out to George on how to access that data.

Election of officers was held. Positions open are the Chair and Vice Chair.

Chair Schettler asked for nominations for the position of chair. John Hanson nominated Joe Schettler to remain as chair. Second by Pam Hestekin. Chair called for any other nominations. There were no other nominations. ***Joe Schettler was elected chair by unanimous voice vote.***

Chair Schettler asked for nominations for the position of vice chair. John Hanson nominated Pam Hestekin to remain as vice chair. Second by David Crighton. Chair called for any other nominations. There were no other nominations. ***Pam Hestiken was elected vice chair by unanimous voice vote.***

Andrea Travnicek provided an update and presentation on her experience and her role as director of ND Parks and Recreation and an update on the values of the department and recent developments of the parks in the vicinity of the Little Missouri River.

Sully Creek State Park has completed an electricity project for 20 sites, adding additional corrals for 2021, as well as installation of a WiFi registration station.

The Little Missouri State Park has trail work improvements including culverts and potential power and water expansions for 2021.

The next meeting date was set for September 7, 2021.

Public comments received online were read by Audrey Kroll, ND Parks and Recreation. Public comments included:

Mary Massad requested a copy of Dan Schneider's presentation for her board of directors. She also commented that the contractor is doing a beautiful job.

Jack Dura with the Bismarck Tribune requested a copy of the artist's rendering of the Long X Bridge.

John Hanson asked how public comments were being received through the virtual meeting. Audrey provided information on how those comments and questions are recorded.

Audrey requested copies of the presentations be provided to her to include with the draft of the meeting minutes. Draft minutes and presentations will be uploaded onto the LMSRC website.

Chair Schettler called for motion to adjourn. Motion by Pam Hestekin. Second by David Crighton. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 4:15 pm CT.