

Little Missouri Scenic River Commission Meeting Minutes

September 7, 2021

Roosevelt Grand Dakota Lodge – Dickinson ND

Chair Schettler called the meeting to order at 2:10 pm MT and asked all committee members to introduce themselves.

In attendance:

Chair, Joe Schettler, Dunn County;

Vice Chair, Pam Hestekin, Bowman County;

Secretary, Paul Taylor, ND Parks and Recreation Department;

David Creighton, McKenzie County

John Hanson, Slope County;

George Weinreis, Golden Valley County;

Pete Wax, Department of Environmental Quality;

Bryce Klasen, Department of Water Resources

Absent:

Patrick Weir, Billings County

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

Motion to approve the agenda as presented made by John Hanson. Second by David Creighton. Motion carried.

Chair called for an approval of the September 11, 2020 Minutes. No changes were identified.

Motion to approve the minutes as printed made by Pam Hestekin. Second by George Weinreis. Motion carried.

Election of officers

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

Chair asked for nominations for the position of Vice Chair. John Hanson nominated George Weinreis. George declined the nomination and nominated John Hanson. Second by Pam. There were no other nominations. ***John Hanson was elected vice chair by unanimous vote.***

It was noted that due to statute, ND Parks and Recreation Director will remain as secretary.

Reports

ND Department of Water Resources

Bryce Klasen provided a report from the newly named ND Department of Water Resources including the gauges and the drought disaster livestock water supply project assistance. John Hansen asked why the drought disaster livestock water supply project is associated only with new projects. Many ranchers and farmers have existing systems that may need improvements to better function under current conditions for which they may need financial assistance. Mary Massad, SW Water Authority provided information about the other programs and their funding. George Weinreis inquired about the activity of the fund to which Bryce indicated all original funds have been used and additional funds have been added. Mary indicated these programs have run for several years in the past. John Hanson commented that perhaps more emphasis should be ongoing and not just when there is a crisis. Bryce will take this information back to the ND Department of Water Resources.

There was an industrial use permit in McKenzie County that was exceeding its allowed taking from the flow of the Little Missouri River. The permit was revoked and the individuals fined. Bryce indicated there must always be flow to meet downstream superior water rights. He also indicated that people are able to fill reservoir sites during high flow and spring periods to help with ongoing needs later in the season.

John Hanson asked if there had been any inquiries about ND water being diverted to the SW of the country. Mary indicated that there were studies in the 1980s on that topic and that unless we enact measures to protect our water that can become a contentious point. Mary Massad indicated that the state of Missouri has taken legislative action to protect its water rights. The topic of protecting ND water deserves further discussion. Pam Hestekin agreed that we need to voice an opinion. John requested that for next year's meeting there should be a presentation of water rights, and the issue of potential transfer of water out of state.

ND Department of Transportation (DOT)

Long X Bridge

Dan Schneider from AECOM Engineering, reporting on behalf of NDDOT reported the 2 year construction project was completed in July 2021 with an overall cost of nearly \$40 million and included a wildlife crossing and architectural finishing consisting of a stained stone look. More than 150,000 cubic yards of dirt was excavated over the life of the project. A paleontologist was on site the entire time and numerous bones aging from 5,000 to 10,000 year old - mostly bison - bones were uncovered. The 800 foot long bridge consisted of 4 piers in between the abutments with extensive footings, and ground anchors to avoid the effects of ground slumping. Pre-stressed concrete beams from plants in both MN and ND were used. The bridge deck was completed in three 18 hr. concrete pours using concrete from a firm from Watford City. The old bridge was demolished with the exception of the south 150 feet that was purchased by a private individual in Linton, ND. Cameras from the Game & Fish Department are scheduled to be installed later this year to monitor wildlife movement through the Wildlife Crossing Tunnel, as well as directional fencing to funnel animals away from the highway and towards the crossing.

ND Parks and Recreation

Interim Director Paul Taylor provided an update of the Sully Creek and Little Missouri State Parks. Sully Creek is popular with equestrians and will become a full time year round park in the coming months with a full time ranger on staff. Little Missouri State Park is a lesser used park but is also popular with equestrians. A master plan will be developed for both parks in the next 12-18 months. NDPRD will be meeting with landowners in the next few weeks with respect to renewals of leases for trails. OHV use has greatly increased state-wide as has use of all state parks. Almost \$600,000 in federal grant funding has gone to the Maah Daah Hey Trail over the last five years. A project is underway to map all of the property in the NDPRD inventory. Discussion continued on what the impacts of the increased use of Sully Creek State Park will be from visitors to the future Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library, the Theodore Roosevelt National Park and other Medora area attractions.

Next meeting September 6, 2022 at 2:00pm MT.

Other Business

2021 Commissioner Vacancies

Motion made by Pam Hestiken to direct the Secretary to send written correspondence to the Billings and McKenzie County Commissions for appointments for representation on the committee as the current representatives, Pat Weir and David Crighton's terms are expiring, Second by John Hanson. Motion carried.

Public Comments

There were no members of the general public in attendance, John Hanson commented that the meetings should be more conducive to time and place as to be more convenient for the general public.

Chair Schettler asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion made by George Weinreis. Second by Pete Wax. Motion carried

Meeting adjourned at 3:46 pm MT