PINE COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING-COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

District 1  Commissioner Hallan
District 2  Commissioner Mohr
District 3  Commissioner Chaffee
District 4  Commissioner Mikrot
District 5  Commissioner Ludwig

September 24, 2019, 8:30 a.m.
North Pine Government Center
1602 Hwy. 23 No.
Sandstone, Minnesota

Agenda

1. Call to order
2. Review schedule
3. Land Tour
4. Discussion / Next Steps
5. Adjourn
PINE COUNTY
LAND
DEPARTMENT

FIELD TOUR
2019

September 24, 2019
9 AM – Sandstone Highway Garage
1610 Hwy 23 N.
9:00 AM-- Sandstone 1610 Hwy. 23 N (Highway Department- parking lot)

9:30 AM--SITE #1 – Munch Township: Sections 9, 10, 15, 16, 21, and 22
Some 400 acres received in a land exchange with the DNR, along with adjoining County tax-
forfeited properties, makes up roughly 1,120 acres of County managed properties. This block of
property has been classified as “Pine County Memorial Forest”, identifying the property for
long term management of forestry, wildlife, and recreational purposes. The property contains
an estimated 300 acres of mature to over-mature aspen stands containing 5,500 cords valued at
$165,000(+/-); with another 250 acres of immature stands of aspen. There may also be a gravel
resource.

Access to the property in the past was not an issue, as an old road along the section line was
available for forest/timber management and public use. Although no documents are known to
exist, old maps and local lore tell of an old road (possibly township) that served to access a
homestead at one time. At some point in the recent past, a gate was erected prohibiting access,
except for selected individuals.

A recent Court Decision granted Pine County public access utilizing the old road. Although
legal actions are not finalized, the cost of the easement has currently been determined to be
$29,500.

Viewings
1. Easement Road/Gate
2. Corduroy Road
3. Questionable Gravel Resource
4. 4-mile swamp road
5. Timber Resources
6. Parking Area
**10:50 AM-- SITE #2 – Arlone Township: Bear Creek**

1,400 acre block of property classified as “Pine County Memorial Forest”. Previously landlocked property, an easement was purchased in January 2000. County Board Policy restriction public ATV use.

**Viewings**
1. Low Water Crossing
2. Recent logging site (traditional “round-wood” logging)
3. Aspen Age Classes

![Map of Arlone Township: Bear Creek](image)

**12:00 Noon--Back to Sandstone -15 minute break**

**12:45 PM--SITE #3 – Sturgeon Lake Township: Soo Line Tressel**

Soo Line purchased in February 1992. (Total $300,000; Pine County’s share $17,200)

Approximately 13.6 miles in Pine County. Trail runs from Genola, MN to Superior, WI Maintenance through Pine Riders Snowmobile Club as a GIA Snowmobile/Recreational Trail. Administration through the Pine County Highway and Land Department.

![Map of Sturgeon Lake Township: Soo Line Tressel](image)
1:30 to 2:15 PM: Lunch at Bear’s Den in Bruno

2:35 PM--SITE #4 – New Dosey/Fleming Townships
Over 16,000 plus acre of Memorial Forest Lands are in Fleming (T.43-R.18) and New Dosey Township (T.43-R.17). Multiple forest access.

Viewings
1. Gravel
2. Oak Management
3. Forest Inventory

Time Permitting

Partridge Township: Sand Creek Crossing
Previous 330 acres of tax-forfeit land along with 640 acres of State land received in a land exchange make up this 970-acre block of property classified as “Conservation Lands”.

Viewings
1. Parking/Forest Road
2. Sand Creek Low Water Crossing

Discussion
1. Land Classifications (conservation/conservation-memorial forest/non-conservation)
2. Land Exchanges (access and land consolidation)
   Private: 8- representing 2,076 acres (ranging from 6 acres to 680 acres)
   State: 2-representing 6,571 acres (1,300 acres and 5,271 acres)
3. Access
   - typography (forest roads, stream crossings)
   - temporary/semi-permanent agreements- “hand shake”, cooperative access, logger access fees, etc.
-permanent legal (land purchases/exchanges; easement purchases/exchange)
4 land purchases total of 125 acres
12 easements

4:00 to 4:30 PM- RETURN TO SANDSTONE
Since 2015, Pine County has had some aspect of Parks, Trails, or Outdoor Recreation identified as a county board strategic priority or goal. Below are the goal statements over that time:

2019—Outdoor Recreation
2018—Trails/Outdoor recreation
2017—Trails (Oberstar segment and comprehensive trail plan)
2016—Trails/Outdoor Recreation
2015—Outdoor Recreation

- Inventory of current public land assets
- Develop access and usage opportunities to memorial forest lands
- Work in partnership with others such as ATV clubs
- Internal staffing/organization/support of outdoor recreation planning

We have made some progress during the past five years in advocating for trails, raising awareness of the county’s natural resources, holding conversations on various park, trail, and recreational topics, and making trails a consideration in county highway projects. We have also partnered with the city of Pine City on the trail near the high school and in 2019, extending the trail to Cross Lake Preserve.

Also in 2019, the county applied for bonding for 1.9 miles of trail along county road 9 as part of the Oberstar Segment of the Munger Trail. Our project was included in the House Capital Investment Committee’s tour.

The commissioner tour of public lands is intended to give commissioners an opportunity to view some of the county’s public lands and provide commissioners a forum to provide emphasis, clarity and direction on the topic of parks, trails, and outdoor recreation.

The county is currently working with the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs to gather some base data on the county’s land and recreational resources. The scope of work for the project is attached.
Also attached are 7 pages from the 2017-2030 county comprehensive plan. The extract includes the portion related to outdoor recreation and includes goals, recommendations, and some of the survey data.

Funding is a necessary component to any outdoor recreation development. Specific projects may have specific funding sources. Generally, in addition to General Fund money, the county can access state funds such as state bonding, legacy amendment funding through the Greater Minnesota Parks and Trails Commission, and under Minnesota Statutes §282.08, up to 30% for forest development and up to 20% for acquisition and maintenance of county parks or recreation areas.
(1) PROJECT BACKGROUND *(Identify problem or opportunity to be addressed.)*

While Pine County is rich with outdoor recreational opportunities, there is an abundance of public land that is not being utilized. The County would like to employ its local land resources (tax forfeited lands) to foster improved community health, quality of life, and tourism.

Pine County is home to approximately 243,000 acres of public land. Approximately 56,000 of which is tax forfeited land, managed by the Pine County Land Department. While the County allows public use of the tax forfeited land base for hunting, hiking, etc., there is currently no infrastructure to accommodate recreation. There are no parking lots, signage, bathrooms, maintained trails, etc. This presents an opportunity to make these lands more usable to the public.

One challenge for the tax forfeited land supporting quality of life of the community, is that most of the larger tracts of tax forfeited lands are located in areas far away from the County’s population centers. Opportunities to foster greater outdoor recreational opportunities closer to the population centers would be helpful.

(2) PROJECT DESCRIPTION *(General description of what the students will do.)*

The County has identified a lack of outdoor recreational opportunities for persons living in the County’s population centers. The County has also identified 56,000 acres of tax forfeited parcels that are underutilized and could be used as potential outdoor recreational opportunities for these residents. Pine County seeks to determine if and in what way these tax forfeited parcels could be used as outdoor recreation amenities for use primarily, but not exclusively, by Pine County residents; the County also hopes to attract tourists to the outdoor recreational opportunities. To that end, Pine County seeks the answer to the following questions:

a. What Pine County communities have the greatest need for improved access to outdoor recreation?

b. Which tax forfeited land parcels provide the best opportunity to be used for outdoor recreation; or in the event the tax forfeited parcels do not provide a reasonable opportunity for outdoor recreation, which state or private parcels?

c. Which outdoor recreational amenities and related site improvements are most suitable for outdoor recreation?
d. What are some examples of relevant and effective public/private partnerships for outdoor recreation that could be pursued by Pine County?

(3) PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES *(List the intended goals, objectives or outcomes of the project as they related to the Client’s needs and interests)*

a. Identify and map Pine County communities and their demographic characteristics.

b. Identify and map location of existing county and city outdoor recreational areas and related amenities in relation to Pine County communities.

c. Identify and map tax forfeited land parcels or other parcels (state or private) that could potentially be used for outdoor recreational development.

d. Identify the potential universe of outdoor recreational opportunities and compare the universe to what is currently offered.

e. Evaluate and prioritize the tax forfeited parcels to determine those most suited for outdoor recreation.

f. Recommend outdoor recreational amenities and related site improvements for tax forfeited parcels identified as suitable for outdoor recreation.

g. Recommend models for public/private partnership for outdoor recreation. For example, are there counties that have leased county land to private operators of campgrounds, horse camps, ski clubs, disc golf courses, mountain biking, hunting preserves, etc.?

(4) PROJECT DATA NEEDS *(Data and other material needs from the Client or other community partners required to complete the project. The project lead is responsible for ensuring all data listed are available to students through on the first day of class.)*

a. GIS files are available for mapping current recreational assets such as: state parks, state forests, state trails, private resorts and campgrounds, and county owned land.

b. In the County’s 2017 Comprehensive Plan, residents were surveyed for their interests in new recreational opportunities (see page 48 of the comp plan). A recreation inventory map is provided on page 33 of the County Comprehensive Plan.

c. Census Data [https://factfinder.census.gov](https://factfinder.census.gov) (population, households, income, age, children and other characteristics)

d. National Recreation and Park Association (NRPAA)
   i. 2018 American’s Engagement with Parks Report
   ii. 2019 NRPA Agency Performance Review
   iii. Economic Impact of Local Parks

LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PA5511
STREETAR
iv. Promoting Parks and Recreation in Economic Development  
v. Building Awareness and Use of Parks and Programming  

(5) PROJECT DELIVERABLES (Identify the specific deliverables/work product required. This may include presentations, survey data, reports or other similar deliverables. (Formal Report – See report guidelines)  

- Final Report  
- Class Presentation with PowerPoint  

(6) PROJECT TIMELINE  
- Project Kick-off; Overview and Assignment (4 September; In Class) *  
- Client Project Lead Meeting; Review scope of work. (11 September; In Class) *  
- Mid Semester Project Check In (23 October; In Class)  
- Final Presentation (4 or 11 December; In Class)**  
- Final Report; Submit to instructor (17 December)  
- Final Report; Submit to Client Project Lead (by 31 December)  

*Client project leads will attend either the meeting on the 4 or 11 of September to meet their group and review project. **Client project leads will attend the final class presentation of final report  

(7) PROJECT BUDGET  
-$0-  

(8) INSTRUCTOR RESPONSIBILITIES  
- Supervise student coursework to ensure high-quality project deliverables/work products that meet the project goals/objectives.  
- Maintain regular communication with Client staff as needed throughout the project to ensure collaborative working relationship.  
- If student teams will be in direct communication with Client project lead, identify one primary student contact for the project from each student team.  
- Communicate to Instructor in a timely manner any issues or concerns regarding the project that cannot be directly resolved with the project lead.  

(9) CLIENT RESPONSIBILITIES  
- Convene all Client staff necessary to facilitate project development and completion.  
- Engage external community partners and stakeholders as needed to support project development and completion.  
- Provide in a timely fashion any data, reports, or other documents that are relevant to the project and scope of work.  
- Respond in a timely manner to project-related inquiries from faculty and students.  
- Help to facilitate student field trips, as needed.  
- Have at least one Client staff member present at the final student presentation on the U of MN campus (if applicable) to comment on student work.  
- Schedule and coordinate final presentation to community (if applicable).
Communicate to Instructor in a timely manner regarding any issues related to the project.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

Client Project Lead: Name: Caleb Anderson  
Email:  
Telephone:

Student Contact: Name: TBD  
Email:  
Telephone:

Name: TBD  
Email:  
Telephone:

Instructor: Name: Robert Streetar, DPA  
Email: streetarbob@gmail.com  
Telephone: 612-834-3056

**COURSE INFORMATION**

Course: PA5511 Economic Development  
Fall 2019  
Wednesday, 6:00 – 8:45 PM  
Hubert H. Humphrey Center 20  
Humphrey School of Public Affairs (West Bank, Minneapolis)

**APPROVAL**

Project Lead, Caleb Anderson  
Date

Instructor, Robert Streetar, DPA  
Date
"Productivity is never an accident. It is always the result of a commitment to excellence, intelligent planning, and focused effort."

- Paul J. Meyer

Prepared by:

Pine County Planning and Zoning Department
635 Northridge Dr. Ste 250 Pine City, MN 555063
PH: 320-216-4220
Chapter One- Executive Summary

The goal of this plan is to convey Pine County's vision for the future and lay out steps to reach that vision. The residents and stakeholders vocalized their vision through surveys, public meetings, and focus group meetings. A steering committee appointed by the County Board of Commissioners and representative of the county's geographical areas directed Pine County Planning and Zoning staff through the project.

Pine County's goals for the next 15 years include:

- Foster a diverse, productive, and sustainable agricultural industry including: crops, livestock, forestry, ag support services, small to large farms, value added producers, and opportunities for new farmers.
- Enhance community and economic opportunities by improving access to broadband internet, higher wage jobs, and affordable housing.
- Promote property stewardship and management in order to accommodate tourism and attract new large employment businesses such as industrial manufacturing.
- Support small businesses and entrepreneurship.
- Reduce crime and prevalence of drugs in order to maintain a safe community.
- Offer effective community services while keeping tax rates affordable.
- Identify, support, and promote existing recreational assets for tourism development and resident education.
- Develop and maintain trails for all user types.
- Create recreational opportunities on county lands to maximize their potential.
- Manage natural resources to optimize environmental and economic benefits in perpetuity.
- Ensure that development protects natural areas as well as water quality and habitat.
- Reduce solid waste being landfilled by providing residents and businesses education and opportunities to reduce, reuse, and recycle.
- Support lifelong learning for citizenship, a competent workforce, and a high quality of life by improving access to broadband, K12 integrated job training, and adult job training.
- Maintain a strong base of infrastructure for the community including: quality roads and bridges, public transportation, broadband internet, and non-emergency medical transportation.
Recreation

Goals

1.) Identify, support, and promote existing recreational assets for tourism development and resident education.

2.) Develop and maintain trails for all user types.

3.) Create recreation opportunities on county lands to maximize their potential.

Economic Facts and Concerns:

- Tourism is an important source of revenue from public lands.
- Leisure and Hospitality is the largest industry within Pine County (Graph 5, Appendix C).
- Pine County has approximately 243,000 acres of public land with numerous recreational opportunities.

Economic Recommendations

1.) Consider adoption of a countywide zoning ordinance to address scattered residential development, incompatible uses, and orderly development supported by existing infrastructure to ensure opportunities for tourism and recreation.

2.) Develop a Countywide recreational (parks and trails) plan.

3.) Support development of the Oberstar segment of the Munger Trail, which is the missing segment from the Twin Cities to the Twin Ports.

4.) Increase information on the County website about existing recreational opportunities.

Willard Munger Trail, Hinckley. This 70 mile trail extends from Hinckley northward through Sturgeon Lake and on to Duluth.
Social Well-Being Facts and Concerns:

- Public (federal, state, local government) land use is the second largest land use within the county (Map 2 and Table 7, Appendix A).
- The current active recreational opportunities within the county revolve around water resources or motorized vehicles (Map 3, Appendix A). In the community survey, 56.9% and 54.7% of the respondents stated they would like to see more youth-oriented facilities and hiking/biking trails provided (Question 7, Appendix D). Additionally, it was noted in the public input meetings that there are only 3 public beaches in the county, the Pine City Beach, St. Croix State Park, and Dago Lake.
- There are currently 33,971 acres of County Conservation and Memorial Forest lands designated within Pine County, which are generally undeveloped (Information per the Pine County Website).
- The 2015-2020 Kanabec-Pine Community Health Assessment identifies obesity as a priority issue. Local recreational opportunities can increase the probabilities of being active.

Social Well-Being Recommendations

1.) Implement a countywide recreation plan with a focus on physical activity.

2.) Develop a public land use policy to provide the framework for acceptable uses of county owned land.

3.) Seek opportunities to increase public outdoor recreational areas in close proximity to residential areas, particularly in the Hinckley and Pine City areas where public land accessibility is more limited (Map 2, Appendix A).

Kettle River, Sandstone. The Kettle enters Pine County in Sturgeon Lake Township on the north end of the county and flows to the St. Croix River in the Chengwatana State Forest.
Map 3: Pine County Recreation Inventory Map (MN DNR, Pine County Land Services Dept.)

Appendix A– Community Profile
**Question 5:** What one thing do you think should be done in the next five years to make Pine County a better place? (Responses were manually categorized.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count Of Category</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic Development</td>
<td>91</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reduce drugs and crime</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase recreation</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower taxes</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fix blight</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Better access to high speed internet</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protect Environment</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support youth and education</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>improved transportation</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>housing services</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>improve public health</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Govt. criticism</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NLX Support</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement county wide zoning</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less regulation</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less welfare</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work together</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain rural character</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase tourism</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>close the casino</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve Infrastructure</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Limit billboards</td>
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<tr>
<td>support public representatives</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Support townships</td>
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<td>Be more friendly to new people</td>
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<td>Enhance Recycling</td>
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<td>Increase amenities</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>increase tax base</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less Government Spending</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintain agriculture</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>NLX opposition</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oppose county wide zoning</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promote Natural resources</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promote uniqueness</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulate railroads</td>
<td>1</td>
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Appendix D– Community Survey Results
Question 6: Looking ahead 20 years, which of the following goals should Pine County be preparing for? 4=High, 3=Medium, 2=Low, 1=Bad idea.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Primary Goal</th>
<th>Secondary Goal</th>
<th>Minor Goal</th>
<th>Bad Idea</th>
<th>Rating Average</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Be an economic engine with living-wage jobs</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>430</td>
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<td>Strengthen Pine County’s Sustainability</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>86</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protect natural areas and water quality</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthen Pine County’s rural atmosphere</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>429</td>
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<tr>
<td>Be a center for tourism and recreation</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>429</td>
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<td>Become a &quot;second home&quot; market for visitors</td>
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<td>138</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>417</td>
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<td>Other (please specify)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 7.

Which of the following new public (County or government owned) recreational facilities would you like to see provided in Pine County? [Check all that apply]

Appendix D– Community Survey Results