

**MINUTES  
OF  
PINE COUNTY BOARD MEETING  
SPECIAL MEETING  
and  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

**April 30, 2019 – 9:00 a.m.**

**Visitor's Center  
St. Croix State Park  
Hinckley, Minnesota**

Chair Josh Mohr called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Present were Commissioners Steve Hallan, Steve Chaffee, John Mikrot, Jr., and Matt Ludwig Also present was County Administrator David Minke.

Others present: Rick Dunkley, St. Croix State Park Manager; Patty Thielen, NE MN Regional DNR Director; Mark LeBrun, County Engineer; Kathy George, Sandstone City Administrator; Ray Thieling, Ogema Township; Bob Sunstrom, Ogema Township Clerk; Gigi Everetts, Crosby Township Clerk; Cheryl Jones, Crosby Township Treasurer; Katie Draper, Mille Lacs Band Director of Government Affairs; Don Zeman, Hinckley Mayor; Kyle Morrell, Hinckley City Administrator; and Traci LeBrun, media/Pine County Courier.

The pledge of allegiance was said.

Those present introduced themselves.

Motion by Commissioner Hallan to approve the agenda. Second by Commissioner Mikrot. Motion carried 5-0.

Rick Dunkley, St. Croix State Park Manager, welcomed the group.

Chair Mohr called for public comment. Gigi Everetts asked the status of the proposed name change to the St. Croix State Park. Katie Draper thanked the county board for approving Resolution 2019-20 requesting a public input process before renaming St. Croix State Park. Prior to the conclusion of the board meeting, County Administrator David Minke confirmed that the renaming of the St. Croix State Park had been removed from HF 2209.

**NE MN Regional DNR Director Patty Thielen**

Patty Thielen, NE MN Regional DNR Director provided an overview of the divisions of the Department of Natural Resources: Law Enforcement, Ecological & Water Resources, Fisheries and Wildlife, Forestry, Parks & Trails, and Lands & Minerals.

A. **Oberstar Segment of the Munger Trail**

The Oberstar Segment of the Munger trail was discussed. Thielen stated \$350,000 has been appropriated through the state general fund for this project and will be available until spent, though stating this project is not high on the DNR's list of priorities. County Engineer Mark LeBrun reviewed the county's vision for the trail and current and proposed trail work, stating the county would be willing to take the lead on the project. State bonding as a possible funding source was discussed.

B. Sustainable Timber Harvest Report

Timber harvest and reforestation was discussed. One million cords per year was recently requested for harvest. On state lands, within the last 15 years, 800,000 cords per year have been harvested, but 870,000 cords is the targeted number. Due to disease problems in the ash and tamarack trees, an additional 30,000 cords of ash/tamarack will be harvested for the next five years. It will then be scaled back to 870,000 cords per year.

Commissioner Hallan commented that supply does not seem to meet the demand for seedlings. Several years ago, the nursery operation at C.C. Andrews State Forest Nursery was closed. The Badoura State Forest Nursery has the capacity to produce more than 10,000,000 seedlings, but the production is capped at 10,000,000 by legislation.

C. Strategic Land Asset Management (SLAM)

Thielen stated that strategic land asset management is used to look at the DNR's land asset portfolio. SLAM goals were identified: 1) the need for public land to be the best reflection of conservation needs; 2) build a strong collaborative relationship between DNR and its partners; and 3) the need to have a cost-effective management of public land assets.

Recent land exchanges were discussed.

D. Pine County Specific Information

i. Willow River Dam/Bridge Replacement (DNR Permitting for CSAH 61-Willow River Box Culvert Project)

Thielen stated the DNR feels that the current design doesn't provide adequate fish passage flow; the county doesn't agree with that determination. County Engineer Mark LeBrun stated that the county and DNR have been close to agreeing on the project design, only to have the DNR bring additional objections to the project. Currently County Engineer LeBrun stated he feels the county will not be able to meet the requirements as set forth by the DNR without constructing a bridge versus the existing box culverts. Replacing the culverts with a bridge will add several hundred thousand dollars of cost.

ii. Grindstone River Hinckley Dam

Commissioner Chaffee inquired of the status of the Grindstone River Hinckley Dam replacement. Thielen acknowledged receipt of the county's resolution supporting the replacement of the dam, however didn't have any updated information available.

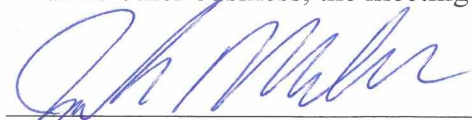
iii. Old Dam Remnants in the Kettle River

Sandstone City Administrator acknowledged Mary Straka, from the DNR Division of Parks and Trails, who attended a recent meeting. Old dam remnants remain a danger in the river at Robinson Park in Sandstone.

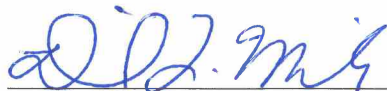
iv. Banning State Park

Grooming of trails in Banning State Park was discussed.

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:33 a.m.



Josh Mohr, Chair  
Board of Commissioners



David J. Minke, Administrator  
Clerk to County Board