

Joint Counties

Natural Resources Board

Aitkin ~ Beltrami ~ Clearwater ~ Koochiching ~ Lake of the Woods ~ Mahnomen ~
Marshall ~ Roseau

Beltrami County Conference Room
701 Minnesota Avenue, NW
Bemidji, MN 56601

www.jointcountiesnaturalresourcesboard.com

Executive Summary 2014

Purpose: *The purpose of the Joint Counties Natural Resources Board shall be to gather information on and formulate policies for the development, utilization and protection of natural resources in northern Minnesota, and to ensure that there is an interrelated plan for the use and protection of both public and private resources.*

Board Members:

Gary Kiesow – Marshall	Brian Napstad – Aitkin
Jerry Dahl – Mahnomen	Joe Vene – Beltrami
Daniel Stenseng – Clearwater	Wayne Skoe – Koochiching
Ken Moorman – Lake of the Woods	Todd Miller – Roseau

Alternate Board Members

Roger Falk – Roseau	Tim Sumner – Beltrami
Buck Nordlof – Lake of the Woods	Brian McBride – Koochiching

Board Meetings

Meets the Fourth Monday of Most Months
Meets at the Beltrami County Conference Room
Meetings begin at 10:00 a.m.
All Commissioners Are Invited to Attend
Most Meetings Include a Special Guest and DNR Updates

Dues Structure

Dues are discussed each year by the Counties involved and are based upon
Board and County Budgets

Website

www.jointcountiesnaturalresourcesboard.com was created in 2013.

There you will find meeting dates, proposed agenda for the upcoming meeting, past minutes, board members with contact information, other topics and discussions presented during the meetings.

February

The Board conducted their routine business which included an update from the DNR, discussion on conservation easements, Enbridge Pipeline and financial discussions. At the November 2013 meeting the Board elected Commissioner Kiesow Chairman for the 2014 fiscal year and Commissioner Dan Stenseng Vice President.

All counties are in the process of approving a resolution regarding the \$300,000 allocation of ConCon Lands. Scott Peters, Marshall County Auditor/Treasurer will collect the information, review the invoices and send to the DNR who will in turn distribute to the Department of Revenue for payment to the Counties.

RESOLUTION FOR DISTRIBUTION OF ANNUAL \$300,000 STATE CONSOLIDATED CONSERVATION AREA

WHEREAS: Consolidated Conservation area lands provide diverse conservation, agricultural and infrastructure values for Minnesota and are critical assets for the economic stability of the state,

WHEREAS: Counties, through their Ditch Authority, have responsibility to maintain ditch systems as well as assure financial viability of such ditch systems through assessments to all owners on the ditch system,

WHEREAS: Legislative annual appropriation of \$300,000, passed during the 2013 session is intended to pay for ditch assessments for DNR administered land in the Consolidated Conservation Area,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: Counties containing Consolidated Conservation area lands hereby agree to a formula that provides a share of the \$300,000 payment as defined here: individual county assessment divided by the aggregate assessment of all involved counties, times \$300,000.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: Each county agrees to submit DNR Ditch Assessments for lands in the Consolidated Conservation Area, and only in the Consolidated Conservation Area, to the Joint Powers Board for compilation and dissemination to the Department of Natural Resources on an annual basis, to be used for calculation and payment of each county's proportionate share.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: Counties will settle the total payment received from the state to the ditches in the same proportion as the aggregate assessment of each ditch was to the DNR ConCon ditch assessment total. Counties will consider all current year State of Minnesota payments on said ConCon ditches completed upon receipt of the payment.

The DNR has completed the 2015 Elk management plan. The Plan covers such topics as a strategic vision, management goals, and objectives. A hard copy is on file and on the website.

Further information on these topics and more may be found on the Joint Counties website at www.jointcountiesnaturalresourcesboard.com.

March

The Board conducted their routine business which included approval of the 2014 budget with additional line items for conflict resolution, miscellaneous expense and expenses for the website domain name and hosting. They also discussed financial items, DNR update and a Forestry Road Gas Tax.

All of the counties have approved the proposed resolution on the language for disbursement of the \$300,000 allocated for State Consolidated Conservation Lands.

Commissioner Napstad gave a BSWR update (House Bill 2021, Wetland provisions required and rulemaking required) and discussion about House File 2733.

Further information on these topics and more may be found on the Joint Counties website at www.jointcountiesnaturalresourcesboard.com.

April

The Board conducted their routine business which included an update from the DNR, a BSWR update from Commissioner Napstad and financial discussions.

ConCon Legislation language has been approved however, it will read *calendar year* instead of June 30. A unified reporting form will be drafted for the counties so everyone is reporting the same way.

The DNR reported that the Beaver season has been extended to May 14 instead of the end of April.

Further information on these topics and more may be found on the Joint Counties website at www.jointcountiesnaturalresourcesboard.com.

May

The Board conducted their routine business which included financial discussions and a Motion by Napstad, seconded by Vene to keep the 2014 membership dues at the same rate as the 2013 dues. \$1000 for each county with the exception of Mahnomen and Clearwater at \$500 and a BSWR update was given.

Guests Mike Hanson and Rich Cole were at the meeting to talk about “Waters of the United States” and how it will affect the electrical companies. They said some of the regions where electrical lines are located have a substantial amount of wetlands. Open interpretation of the laws will be detrimental to electrical companies because for now, there is only one way to get electricity to people. Brian said even though two-thirds of the folks at NACO support our contingency, the President has given total control of interpretation of Waters of the United States to the EPA and he said electrical rates need to sky rocket. Brian said all waters are not navigable – from ditches to creeks to standing water.

A draft reporting form for counties applying for ConCon allocations was shared with the Board. The main purpose of the form is to reassure county boards of the process and the fact that it will be able to be done rather easily. The formula has been established and counties will only have to insert the numbers on their ditch system. There was also a BSWR update was given by Commissioner Napstad.

Further information on these topics and more may be found on the Joint Counties website at www.jointcountiesnaturalresourcesboard.com.

June

The ongoing discussions and clarifications regarding the ConCon formula and how funds will be dispersed have come to an end. The Board is appreciative of all who worked to get this issue behind us.

Waters of the United States (WOTUS) was the topic of discussion at the AMC District 1 meetings. The Board talked about the potential impact of the proposed regulations and the importance of Minnesota's NACO representatives standing up for this issue. The member counties (Board) urged counties discussing the issue to question NACO's position on this.

Motion by Vene, second by Miller to approve submitting written comment regarding the Joint Counties Natural Resource's position.

Further information on these topics and more may be found on the Joint Counties website at www.jointcountiesnaturalresourcesboard.com.

July

The Board conducted their routine business which included financials, DNR update and general routine business.

Mark Ranweiler; DNR Assistant AIS Specialist and Barry Stratton; Southern District Manager Ecological and Water Resources (DNR) were the guests at the meeting to talk about Aquatic Invasive Species. A power point presentation was shared and is on our website.

The DNR Update talked included the number of wolf licenses being given out, changes in deer season because of the hard winter and herd numbers and a shortage of stumpage Aspen wood which could cause mills to shut down.

There was also a discussion on the Northern Long-eared Bat which could become a problem here. They are a migrate bat that goes where white nose fungus is and it has been showing up in some MN caves. This could have the potential to stop logging for up to 6 months anywhere the bats and/or fungus is found.

Further information on these topics and more may be found on the Joint Counties website at www.jointcountiesnaturalresourcesboard.com.

August

The Board conducted their routine business which included financial items, back taxes on ConCon lands and wetlands.

John Williams was the guest who came to update the Board on the upcoming deer season. He shared a power point presentation. He showed deer permit area designations ranging from 2005 to 2014. He said the 2014 deer season will be a conservative one to help build the deer population. This goal, designed by stakeholders will be looked at again in 2016. He also gave an update and information regarding the wolf population and the Northern long-eared bat.

Representative Dan Fabian was also in attendance and talked about the difficulty in applying for general permits, especially road project permits. He talked about the 404 permitting process being taken out of the hands of the Army Corp and placing it in the hand of the State of Minnesota. He also noted how detrimental "Waters of the U.S." is to the State of Minnesota and how the Association of Minnesota Counties has unanimously passed rejection to the language.

Further information on these topics and more may be found on the Joint Counties website at www.jointcountiesnaturalresourcesboard.com.

September

The Board conducted their routine business which included an update on the Northern long-eared bat, financial discussions and the fact that county boards are not happy with Senator Nolan as he did not support the counties in the "Waters of the US" vote. **Motion by Vene, seconded by Miller to send a letter to Franken and Klobuchar asking for them to block the rule making ability of the EPA in H.R. 5078 and a thank you to Congressman Peterson for his support on H.R. 5078.**

The guest speaker was Dave Schotzko, Area Supervisor of Parks and Trails. He came to speak about ATV trails, issues regarding ATV's, and grant programs for ATV clubs.

Further information on these topics and more may be found on the Joint Counties website at www.jointcountiesnaturalresourcesboard.com.

October

The Board conducted their routine business which included financial discussions, the upcoming AMC Conference, mental health and its high costs to counties, county election races, the Class I Air Quality emissions permit applied for by the Fond Du Lac Tribe which could affect 15-16 counties and their major businesses and a DNR Update.

Kay Mack and Scott Peters were in attendance to lead a discussion reading unpaid ditch taxes on ConCon ditch systems. In question is unpaid ConCon ditch taxes that have gone unpaid from 1993-2012 and do counties want to leave this issue alone or do something to collect the taxes. Some Board members would like to see a compromise, some it does not affect or do not want to address the issue, and some would like to see something done one way or another. Greg will contact Commissioner Landwehr and Scott will contact Senator Skoe to set up a meeting to further discuss the situation.

Further information on these topics and more may be found on the Joint Counties website at www.jointcountiesnaturalresourcesboard.com.

December

The Board conducted their routine business which included financial discussions, ConCon update, and a discussion on wetland legislation. They also approved the 2015 administrative contract with Your Office or Mine, the 2015 meeting dates, and 2015 election of officers. Commissioner Kiesow was elected to another term as President and Commissioner Stenseng was elected to another term of Vice-President. A DNR update was given by Greg Nelson regarding the wolf being put back on the endangered species list and Aquatic Invasive Species.

Commissioner Napstad gave an update on Wetland legislation saying there has been a group of stakeholders who have been meeting to put a bill together for the upcoming legislature. The Bill will have 3 areas of importance and they are; develop a wetland work group, bank service areas and determining high priority areas.

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The Joint Counties Natural Resources Board did not meet in January or November.