

**Joint Counties Natural Resources Board  
February 26, 2018  
Beltrami County Conference Room  
10:00 AM**

**MINUTES**

**Attendance:** Commissioners:

Tim Summer – Beltrami	Gary Kiesow – Marshall
Russell Walker – Roseau	Wayne Skoe – Koochiching
Bill Pratt – Aitkin	Roger Falk - Roseau

**Absent:** Daniel Stenseng - Clearwater                      Scott McCollum – Mahnomen  
Ken Moorman – Lake of the Woods

**DNR:** Rita Albrecht – DNR NW Regional Director

**Guests:** Scott Peters, Marshall County Auditor/Treasurer; Kay Mack, Beltrami County Administrator; JoDee Tweet, Beltrami County Auditor/Treasurer

**Other:** Kallie Briggs; Coordinator

**Call to Order:** Chairman Commissioner Pratt called the Joint Counties Natural Resources Board to order at 10:08 AM on Monday, February 26, 2018 in the Beltrami County Conference Room.

**Agenda: Motion by Kiesow, second by Walker to approve the agenda as presented.** Motion carries unanimously.

**Guests:** Scott, Kay and JoDee were invited to the meeting to talk about Con Con Assessment Back Taxes. Scott began by giving a brief history saying this process was brought on by two laws (84A and 103) that contradicted each other. Law 84A says every ditch has a base and there should be a tax on it however, county commissioners disagree, which created law 103. This has been very convoluted and controversial over the years which prompted Roseau County to get Senator Skoe involved. He was able to get legislation passed which said State ditch owned land tax was approximately \$300,000. That would be given back to counties affected by Con Con ditch assessments. As the ditch fund at the State level continues to grow, more money on a percent basis is handed down to the counties. Leading to the discussion of should counties put an effort forth to get and inflation percentage on top of the current formula. Scott gave the Board a print out of statistics of past payments to counties as he and Kay went through it and made comments. A copy is on file. A discussion of the board was as follows:

- Counties can levy \$1000 per mile based on benefited areas. Koochiching and Aitkin choose not to assess their ditches.
- Roseau County has had a 120% increase in their reporting since 2013. Beltrami has reduced theirs by 114%.
- Are there counties who could abandon ditches on State Con Con lands and some board members questioned if abandonment would be a better way to address the situation?
- Representative Fabian has said there is a Bill being drafted that would change the rules of determination. The way the rules of determination are now, it is too costly for counties to do.

After the discussion, the Board's consensus was to leave the back taxes alone because it is not worth risking the \$300,000. The Board also decided to look at this again in 1 year.

**Minutes: Motion by Falk, second by Walker to approve the minutes from the January 22, 2018 meeting with changes.** Ken Moorman and Scott McCollum were not at the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

**Financial Discussions:**

- Administration/Office Expenses: Motion by Walker second by Falk to approve the January administration/office expenses. Motion carried unanimously.
- Miscellaneous Expenses: Motion by Kiesow, second by Falk to approve the \$9.99 miscellaneous expenses for rolls. Motion carried.
- Account Activity Report: The February Account Activity Report submitted by Marshall County and distributed by Coordinator Briggs was approved. Motion was made by Walker, second by Falk to approve the February Account Activity Report. Motion carried unanimously.

**Old Business:** The following discussions took place:

- Wetland Mitigation Alternatives: Wayne updated the Board telling them about a concern NCLUCB has. In talking with BSWR it seems they do not want any representatives from NCLUCB on the advisory committee. Even though the counties represented on NCLUCB have 80% of all wetland areas, they would rather go through AMC. There will be a joint meeting between JCNRB and NCLUCB during the AMC conference. This will be a part of the discussion.
- Beaver Bill: Nothing new to report other than there will most likely not be any dollars allocated towards beaver control this session.
- Beaver Control Dollars Spent by Counties: Bill has been compiling the dollars spent on beaver control for each county on the Board. He shared the information to date and asked other commissioners to get their numbers to him. The information will then be able to be shared with local legislators. As of now, there is only \$8,000 allocated by the DNR statewide for beaver control and counties believe there should be more.
- Update on AMC Wetland Bill: This subject is one of AMC's top priorities however, it is uncertain if there is an actual Bill written.
- MPCA and Demolition Permitting: Wayne told the Board that the LOW Engineer sent out a letter regarding leakage at demolition sites and how BSWR wants to change the permitting and re-permitting laws. He will get Kallie a copy of the letter so she can forward it on.

**New Business:** The following was discussed:

- Editorial in MN Volunteer Magazine: The editorial that appeared in the November/December issue of MN's Volunteer magazine "no net gain" was brought up. Along with the editorial, was a response piece written by former commissioner Mike Hanson. Kallie will send this out to Board members.

**DNR Update:** Rita gave the DNR update. A complete copy is on file and some of the topics she touched on are:

- The Sustainable Timber Harvest Analysis will be released March 1.
- Ecological Water Resources: Well testing is not yet 100% completed and farmers are anxious to get their seeds so they can meet their irrigator's goals.
- The DNR is participating in the Yellow Ribbon program and will target veterans once a month at local workforce centers across the region as part of their commitment.

**Next Meeting Date:** The next scheduled meeting will be on Monday, March 26, 2018. Russell will try to secure a speaker.

**Adjourn:** The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 AM.

Minutes submitted by Kallie Briggs-Administrative Coordinator