

Cultural Sub-Committee

Minutes June 30 2017 Minutes

Attending: Alvin LaFreniere, Kitty McNamara, via phone: Wes Andrews, Terry Bussey, Lee Boisvert

Absent: Pam Grassmick

Meeting was facilitated by Lee Boisvert, who also took notes in Pam Grassmick's absence.

The meeting began at 7:05 pm.

Action items

1. We agreed to continue with the definition of Cultural Resources as agreed at the last meeting, and amend as needs arise.

2. Kitty explained that both townships on Beaver have just engaged the Land Access Development Association to help Beaver Island develop a unified and effective Master Plan.

3. Lee admitted that she now accepts that this "marathon" has a pace and life of its own, instead of being a "sprint".

4. As 1/3 of Beaver is state land, and much of it undeveloped and unexplored in recent years, much care needs to be taken to preserve and protect both known and unknown cultural resources.

5. Wes will continue on as member of Landscape Level Planning Committee, and will work to establish more timely and useful communication between the two committee. Wes also explained that black ash trees, a valuable cultural resource for basket making, were cut down a few years ago in the opening up of state land for wildlife habitat. Two areas were cleared, one 20 acres and another 8-9 acres in size. He also explained that cross-hybrids between green ash and black ash are actually better for basket making, so are also important to protect.

Terri shared the information that a large patch of sweet grass was found on state land a while back. We agreed that the location will not be made public. It is our hope this valuable cultural resource can be included in the Core Wildlife Areas being worked on by the Landscape Level Planning Committee. Terri will research its location further. Wes suggested that maybe a Sweet Grass Preserve could be established. This idea was met with approval.

New Business

When Lee asked the rest of the committee about searching for outside funding to hire a Cultural Resources Manager to develop and then implement a Cultural Resources Management Plan for the Islands, Wes expressed some concerns.

1. Wes: securing funding would take time, maybe more than we have, and that hiring the right person would require even more time to implement. He explained that he is now working on a Cultural Landscape Inventory for all the Beaver Island Archipelago and has already hired Misty Jackson, PhD Anthropologist in the Lansing area to work closely with researching archeological sites-both terrestrial and underwater. He also hopes to hire Sara Evans who is also a very experienced PhD in Archeology. She is doing landscape studies in Benzie County right now. This work they are doing includes historic structures. Many sites are known, while many others are not known, but an accurate estimate of additional sites can be extrapolated from what is known. In addition, Wes was originally only to do this work for Charlevoix, Cheboygan and Emmett counties on the mainland, but has added the Beaver Island Archipelago to his cultural resource surveys.
2. Wes also explained that there are legal restrictions on the information that he and his team are researching and that the specifics of what they find cannot be shared with anyone
 2. Alvin reports that Dr. _____ plans to spend either 2017 or 2018 on Beaver Island to search and research.
3. The committee agrees that we need signed contracts from all who research and find artifacts- of any kind. These contracts will require detailed listing of what and where items are found, and require that all these items be returned to Beaver Island after they have been researched. But then the challenge of storing, curating, and properly displaying more-perhaps many more, than the BIHS already is responsible for could be overwhelming. Perhaps the museum expansion might make keeping artifacts on Beaver more possible. Kitty will research contract language for this committee to consider.

Wes: We don't need more lists and data, we know what is there. We do need to have concrete goals and timelines.

Kitty: Wes, do you think these restrictions from the state will hinder our documentation?

Wes: No.

Kitty: Do we feel we have a good idea of what the cultural resources are?

Wes: We are almost ready with the Cultural Resources data. In a month it should be ready.

Lee will provide Wes with the Garden Island Cultural Resources that she is aware of, and work in learning from other members of MKD what she doesn't know.

There was discussion as to how we might involve GTB in this committee and in the work of the Islands Collaborative as a whole. Wes suggested that Lee write an invitation to the Natural Resource Department of GTB, rather than calling, and everyone else supports this approach. Lee agreed to do this.

Wes talked about cultural resources being the responsibility of us all- not euro or native American, but all. "Together we are stewards of the land and together we need to cooperate toward these common goals. This way we support and enrich each other."

Wes then went on to explain that there are many ways of looking at religion among his people. There are Mide', Wabeno, Native American Church and various Christian denominations.

Being conservative, among Native people, is different than in main society. Conservative means traditional.

Lee has been in contact with Seth DePasqual from Isle Royale National Park who has spent the last 6 years in the development of their CRMP, which he is the manager of. Their CRMP will be available for public perusal this fall. Lee is encouraged because much of the preparation needed for a successful Cultural Resource Management Plan has been done in the last 6 years- such as the Beaver Island Ecotourism Steering Committee work, the ongoing protection and preservation work by the DNR, the townships and Charlevoix County, the contributions of: Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, Michigan Natural Features Inventory, The Nature Conservancy and many other individuals and groups.

Alvin: It is important that we have in writing that which protects all new discoveries. Any new discoveries must be assessed by this committee, or the CRMP manager.

Alvin shared some of the history of these islands: 90% of travel was by water. And for 7,000 years at least half of the copper found in the UP traveled down Lake Michigan to Chicago and then transported down the Mississippi. The other half was canoed down Lake Huron, then down the St. Mary's River. The men mining copper couldn't grow their own food. The food they ate was grown on Beaver and Garden Islands, and in Cross Village. Mississippians had gardens around Fox Lake.

As we discussed more how to best preserve and protect future items, it was pointed out that all items found on private property belong to the owner of that property.

In looking at how universities deal with this, Wes shared that most of the universities strongly encourage property owners to donate to the university for long term curation. It is best to loan to a museum, not to donate.

It was also brought up that the BI Museum is not secure, but perhaps the new edition will make curation and protection of museum items possible.

Lee read a list of the basics that Cultural Resource Management Plans include:

1. Describe cultural resources within the project area
2. Define operational and preservation goals and priorities
3. Provide a mechanism for integrating the plan with other planning documents
4. Identify project effects and mitigation/management measures for cultural resource properties
5. Establish procedures for conducting subsequent identification and evaluation studies in advance of new projects or in the event of unanticipated discoveries
6. Provide a schedule for the implementation of plan activities

Final question: Does everyone support asking the DNR for funding to hire a CRMP manager? It was agreed to pursue this course of action. Lee will write a working proposal of this request to present to this Sub-Committee for the Committee's input.

We will try to have a meeting for those who can attend on Beaver Island July 11 before the Amik Circle Society Meeting at 4 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 pm.