

MINUTES DRAFT  
Of the August 11, 2009  
Woods Bay/Bigfork 440 Working Group  
Held at 7:30am Harvest Foods, Bigfork

Present are: Chairman George Darrow, Jim Frizzel, Greg Poncin (DNRC), Kevin Gownley, Tracy Reiling, Clarice Ryan.

Minutes of the July 16<sup>th</sup> meeting were reviewed and with one grammar change, motion made to accept as otherwise written, was approved.

George Darrow opened the meeting with discussion on the costs of access road construction. DNRC typically pays for roads through timber sales, although some road costs can be paid for out of the Forest Improvement Account. In the case where road construction is part of the timber sale contract the bid price reflects that higher cost and therefore the beneficiary (School of Mines) would realistically receive less revenue than if the road were already there.

As a follow up to the creation of a non-profit entity that would be able to take monetary donations, Jim Frizzell reported he had contacted Gerry Bygren with the Community for a Better Bigfork. Gerry was receptive to the idea of creating a separate account for use by the 440. Before entering a Fiscal Sponsorship Grant Agreement with Community for a Better Bigfork a lease would need to be in place. This could be used in the interim of us perusing starting a completely stand alone tax exempt organization to be used for the life of the lease. There is the issue of this organization to be keep up with and CFABB already having longevity. The only discussion with Gerry at this time was using them for accepting tax exempt donations not managing the lease in anyway.

Greg Poncin updated us on the meeting last week between himself and the Delaro Ranch Homeowners. The out come of the meeting was that permanent access would be denied but the homeowners would offer, as they have in the past, temporary access. This would be open ended but with the ability to deny if agreements were not being followed by DNRC. They are afraid they will lose control of the access with giving permanent. Greg explained there would always be a public comment period before any harvesting work would be authorized but this did not include general management work, like incidental road maintenance, or law enforcement patrols. The homeowners are not interested in giving the permanent and also against punching another road. Kevin wondered how spending over \$100,000.00 on a road when that amount could be used over many years time to satisfy the Chancellor of the School of mines. George asked about the available timber and Greg thought a rough estimate would be about 500,000 board feet that could be retrieved from approximately 120 acres, estimating the work could be 2 – 3 years out.

Ron Corban joined our discussion for a short time informing of the history of the Gravel Pit road off of Shore Acres. Greg notes that Shore Acres is not a viable route for any kind of logging trucks because of the combination of narrow width, tight corners, and being in a residential neighborhood.

Greg informed us he would not be pursuing the easement through the homeowners and will look to go through the park access point.

Clarice Ryan feels all Concerned Citizens should form a group and buy the land outright. Thereby taking over all responsibilities and oversee any public access or not. After discussion it was decided the best interest of the 440 would be to get it away from the DNRC but finding a proper buyer will be

the challenge. The DNRC now has the responsibility and right to manage the land and the public has the responsibility to let the DNRC fulfill theirs. At this time, there has been no buyer found.

Greg has made one more effort to talk with Dave Landstrom of FWP about a possible land swap in the Swan. At this meeting it was made clear FWP are in no position to attempt anything and would not.

We started with the land banking and it did not work, the land exchange is not going to work. For now the DNRC will keep the property and manage it until a buyer is found. DNRC will need to fulfill the commitment to the school and therefore will pursue access through the county. Greg will try to meet with Commissioner Trussler before the next meeting and report the outcome.

Greg said fair market value will be used to come up with terms for a lease and now the community needs to organize and get the word out that we are pursuing a recreational lease license. An organization must be found or formed to take on the lease. The DNRC is working with the Whitefish community on a similar concept, but is still very much a pilot project at this point. Determining the full market value for a recreational lease and what the public is willing to pay will be the challenge. In speaking with the Rocky Mtn Elk Foundation, Kevin said they were interested in purchasing but only with a take out buyer within 18 months, again we have no buyer.

Clarice wondered if the homeowners were obstructing the timber harvest and Greg explained the homeowners are well within their rights to deny as there was no access established at the time of their purchases. This is DNRC property and is a problem they will solve. Again Kevin stressed the homeowners are not against the harvest or management and in fact very much want it. What they don't want is to give unlimited and forever access. With it will come lower property values and the likelihood of the public using the access with very unfavorable results.

Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday September 15<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 am at Harvest Foods (IGA) Cafeteria.  
Meeting adjourned