

VNP Clean Water Joint Powers Board Meeting

Wednesday January 14, 2015

10:00 p.m.

St. Louis County Land Office

AGENDA

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Public comments
3. Approve minutes of the December 17, 2014 JPB meeting
6. S.E.H. and Advisory Board Representative Updates
 - A. Kabetogama
 - B. Ash River
 - C. Crane Lake
 - D. Koochiching
 - E. VNP
 - F. DNR
 - G. MPCA
 - H. Bear Island Association
7. Project Funding Status
8. Other
9. Next meeting date



MEMORANDUM

TO: Voyageur's National Park Clean Water Joint Powers Board (VNPCWJPB)

FROM: Sara Christenson, Randy Jenniges, and Gary Cerkvnik

DATE: January 14, 2015

RE: VNPCWJPB Update Information - January 2015
Koochiching and St. Louis Counties, Minnesota
STLCO 121718

Board Meetings

The last meeting held was at 1:00 P.M. at the St. Louis County Land Department building on December 17, 2014. See the attached draft meeting minutes for details.

Action Requested: Motion to approve the minutes of the December meeting.

Kabetogama

The bid opening was December 17, 2014 at 10:00 AM. The bids came in a total of \$208,215 higher than the previous bids.

- **Collection System Bid:**
Low Bidder: Wagner Construction - \$1,540,496.00
- **Treatment System Bid:**
Low Bidder: Magney Construction - \$2,047,400.00
- **Project Total:**
Collection: \$1,540,496.00
Treatment: \$2,047,400.00
TOTAL: \$3,587,896.00

The township has decided to rebid as three separate projects: collection, treatment, and mounds. To spare costs of advertisement, the project(s) will be advertised in only one newspaper, and on the various websites. Advertisement will most likely be in February and bid in March.

Ash River

Another meeting with the DNR will need to be schedule. Randy to comment.

Crane Lake

Randy to comment.

Island View

Randy to comment.

Project Funding Status

- Working with Rep. Nolan's office, we have found that the new House of Representatives may consider individual projects (earmarks) if they are supported/sponsored by local governments and part of a state request. So we may need to get the MPCA or the DNR to "sponsor" our request. I put together the memo for Nolan (attached) that requests \$5 million in WRDA funds. If we are fortunate to receive it, it would cover Island View and perhaps some additional money for other project areas.
- Gary informed Rep. Dill and Sen. Bakk about our shortfalls and we are working to find other funding sources.

Advisory Board Representative Updates

- Voyageurs National Park
- Department of Natural Resources
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
- Bear Island Association

Meeting Dates

- Action Requested: Propose and approve an upcoming meeting date.

If you have any questions regarding these items, please do not hesitate to contact any of us.

Sara Christenson 218.360.0463 schristenson@sehinc.com	Randy Jenniges 320.229.4378 rjenniges@sehinc.com	Mike Larson 218.305.4722 mlarson@sehinc.com	Gary Cerkenik 218.741.0139 gcerk@me.com
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Cc: VNPCWJPB Advisory Committee, Koochiching and St. Louis County Environmental Services staff, Project Area residents (upon request)

Att: VNPCWJPB Minutes from December 17, 2014, SEH Invoice, The Costin Group Invoice, Memo for Nolan

VNP CLEAN WATER JOINT POWERS BOARD MEETING December 17, 2014

The monthly meeting of the VNP Clean Water Powers Board was held at the Saint Louis County Land Office on December 17, 2014. The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Commissioner Rob Ecklund. Commissioner Forsman was also present and Commissioner Pavleck was added to the meeting via phone. There were no comments from the public.

A motion was made by Commissioner Forsman and seconded by Commissioner Pavleck to approve the October 22 meeting minutes. All voted in favor.

Kabetogama: The bids were discussed by S.E.H. The treatment plant was around \$500,000 high and the collection system around the same. Kabetogama to work with their financial advisor on how best to proceed.

Ash River: DNR has preliminary figured one of the three parcels would work best for the treatment plant. There was a question regarding if the parcel was school trust fund land.

Crane Lake: The Crane Lake expansion project will be submitted as one package that includes the grand funds from the State and Legacy. It will include running a force main pipe to the DNR landing, expanding sewer management to Bear Island, and doing a CAR on Bear Island and Handberg Road.

Koochiching: There continues to be work on identifying the best way to proceed with the Island View project given the funding challenges. There is an estimated 30% increase in construction costs from the 2010 estimate. Gary Cerkvenik feels that to complete the project Federal funds need to be made available.

Project Funding. Gary Cerkvenik discussed an approach to get Federal funds. He recommended drafting correspondence to set up a meeting with the Interior Department and to draft a bill for legislation to support the VNP Clean Water Project. There representative from Congressman Nolan's office and Senator Klobuchar's office at the meeting. Commissioner Pavleck discussed how critical Federal funds are to the completion of the project. A motion was made by Commissioner Pavleck and second by Commissioner Forsman to correspond the respectful offices to start the process. All voted in favor. Gary also stated how beneficial Jim Anderson, MPCA in his work with the Crane Lake expansion project. A motion was made by Commissioner Forsman and second by Commissioner Pavleck to send a letter to MPCA. All voted in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:06. The next meeting is set for 10:00 on January 14th at the County Land Office in Cook.

Submitted by: Rob Scott, secretary

Voyageurs National Park Clean Water Joint Powers Board

Voyageurs National Park Clean Water Project

Purpose:

To build a comprehensive sanitary sewage treatment system for the significant housing, recreational, and resort developments surrounding the Voyageurs National Park in order to address increasingly critical water quality issues effecting the ecology of the nation's only water based national park.

Description:

Voyageurs National Park (VNP) is a mosaic of land and water, a place of interconnected waterways that flow west and north into the Rainy River and eventually into the arctic watershed of Hudson's Bay in Canada. It is a place of transition, between upland and aquatic systems, southern boreal and northern hardwoods forest types, and both wild and developed areas. VNP is the nation's only water based national park, with 84,389 acres of water and 134,265 acres of land. You must leave your car and take to the water to fully explore and experience the lakes, islands, and shorelines of the Park.

The interconnected waterways of the Park provide an unparalleled opportunity to explore the north woods lake country. Forests cover the land, thriving on a thin layer of soil that has formed since the last glaciers melted around 10,000 years ago. Rocks that formed when the earth was young are exposed here. In VNP, a person can touch some of the most ancient rock on earth and watch light reflect on the lake. The waters are blue during the long summer days and bright white when frozen beneath a blanket of snow in the winter.

Preserving the water quality of the Park is the focus of this request. The rationale is that this is a federal issue, affecting a federal crown jewel in the national park system whose waters flow through the borderland from the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness to the Quetico Provincial Park to the Arctic. The soils are thin, the rocks are ancient, the development clearly creating problems for the ecosystems in the Park. The remoteness and cost lead to the call for the national government to live up to the long-term promise that the Park would provide economic opportunities for local residents while preserving a national treasure and providing recreational and educational opportunities for our citizens across the USA.

The foundation of the Park's landscape was sculpted by a series of glaciers that have scoured and carved the area over hundreds of thousand of years. The most recent period of glaciations ended just over 10,000 years ago, exposing ancient Precambrian

rocks that formed over two billion years ago. The forests that now drape the upland portions of the park exist on a thin layer of soil. In these forests, one can hear the distant howl of a wolf, the snaps of branches as a white-tailed deer, a moose, or a black bear moves—sounds that remind us that we are visitors here and we have a special obligation to limit our impact on the Park and its precious waters.

Nearly 200 years ago, voyageurs paddled birch bark canoes full of animal pelts and trade goods through this area on their way to Lake Athabaska in Canada. Today people explore the park by canoes, kayaks, houseboats, and motorboats. Water is the defining feature of VNP.

The Voyageurs National Park Clean Water Joint Powers Board seeks a total of approximately \$30 million to complete the engineering, design, and construction for this comprehensive and multi-year water protection and sanitary sewage project. The federal authorization would cover about 16% of the cost, with 84% from non-federal sources. Thus, the federal authorization request would be for \$5 million through the WRDA. The result will be comprehensive sanitary sewage treatment facilities or plans for the four distinct development areas adjacent to the Park: Kabetogama, Ash River, Rainy Lake, and Crane Lake. The project will be phased in over multiple years.

The prime project sponsor will be the VNP Clean Water Joint Powers Board with support from Koochiching and St. Louis Counties. The VNP Superintendent and staff and the Minnesota DNR are serving in an advisory capacity.

To define the problem, design a governance structure, and to complete preliminary estimates and communications with residents/businesses, \$300,000 in cash and in-kind resources have been committed by St. Louis County, Koochiching County, Kabetogama Township, Iron Range Resources Agency, and the Crane Lake Water and Sanitary Sewer District. These resources have been used to estimate the costs for the four areas of the project, to form the Joint Powers Board, and to communicate with residents and businesses through several open houses/informational sessions.

Further, \$250,000 has been secured to complete part of the systems need in the Crane Lake Water and Sanitary District. The process is nearing completion of securing \$1,500,000 in grants and loans from the Minnesota Public Facilities Authority for the Puck's Point subdistrict of Kabetogama Township. Over \$400,000 has been invested by Koochiching County to complete the preliminary engineering for the Rainy Lake portion of the project. Over \$250,000 has been secured through the State of Minnesota in the most recent bonding bill. Significant sources of money have been sought and secured to provide for the non-federal project match.

Further funding has been committed to the project in 2013/14. \$750,000 was secured from the IRRRB, \$750,000 from Minnesota General Obligation Bonding, and \$1.5 million from Minnesota Legacy funding for the Crane Lake Water and Sanitary District

(CLWSD). In addition, \$15.8 million has been secured from Koochiching County and Minnesota General Obligation Bonding for the Island View portion of the project.

To complete the Island View Project and further work at CLWSD and Ash River, the Board is requesting \$5 million from WRDA.

Individual septic system testing has proven that there are significant failures along the coast of the park among the hundreds of systems currently handling the sewage load. A recent estimate in one area of the Park showed 94% of these individual systems were failing. This suggests a significant negative impact on the water quality in the Park, which threatens the long-term health of the ecosystem and the economic health of the tourism industry upon which the local economy is based. Water is the defining feature of the park, as people explore it by canoe, kayak, boat, and houseboats. Visitors access the park through private resorts and public landings. Preserving the water quality of the park is the focus of this request.

This project is designed to use state of the art technology to meet the sanitary sewage treatment needs of remote residents, recreational users, and resorts while preserving the Park, enhancing access, and saving its waters for future generations.



Resolution
of the
Board of County Commissioners
St. Louis County, Minnesota
Adopted on: January 6, 2015 Resolution No. 15-17
Offered by Commissioner: Jewell

**Appointment to the Conservation and Management of Clean Water –
Voyageurs National Park**

RESOLVED That the St. Louis County Board hereby appoints the following as their representative to the **Conservation and Management of Clean Water – Voyageurs National Park** for an on-going position:

Commissioner Rukavina, Representative

Commissioner Jewell moved the adoption of the Resolution and it was declared adopted upon the following vote:
Yeas – Commissioners Jewell, Boyle, Dahlberg, Rukavina, Nelson, Raukar and Chair Stauber - 7
Nays – None

STATE OF MINNESOTA
Office of County Auditor, ss.
County of St. Louis

I, **DONALD DICKLICH**, Auditor of the County of St. Louis, do hereby certify that I have compared the foregoing with the original resolution filed in my office on the 6th day of January, A.D. 2015, and that this is a true and correct copy.

WITNESS MY HAND AND SEAL OF OFFICE at Duluth, Minnesota, this 6th day of January, A.D., 2015.

DONALD DICKLICH, COUNTY AUDITOR

By

Deputy Auditor/Clerk of the County Board