



**ACME TOWNSHIP**  
**YUBA CREEK NATURAL AREA STEERING COMMITTEE**  
**Wednesday, July 21, 2004, 7:00 p.m.**  
**Acme Township Hall**  
**6042 Acme Road, Williamsburg MI 49690**

**Meeting called to Order at 7:21 p.m.**

**Members present:** D. Morrison (Chair), Bob Carstens, Voss Guntzviller, John Heiam, Jason Hullman, Stan Malaski, Ron Reinhold (7:27 p.m.)

**Members excused:** Matt McDonough

**Staff present:** S. Corpe, Recording Secretary  
T. Henkel, Parks & Maintenance Supervisor

**A. Discuss budget items approved by township to YCNA:** Henkel reports that all requested funds were approved except for asphalt removal on Yuba Road.

**B. Kiosks:**

- 1. Place order:** Morrison reported that he contacted the supplier for a firm price, and prices have gone up. He says we can remain \$50 under budget if we change plans and order one three-sided kiosk and two two-sided kiosks. The group felt this would work for a beginning, and that additional space can be added later as needed. Normally the kiosks are constructed during the wintertime, but the supplier can create the two smaller ones by the opening of small game season (September 15) and the larger one by November 15. They will be supplier-installed. Reinhold observed that the budget includes funds to engineer and permit the overlook area but not to have a survey performed for kiosk placement. He also says that Chuck Walter may have a contact at the Road Commission who can provide entrance apron specifications at a relatively low price.
- 2. Locations:** The larger kiosk will be placed at the US 31 overlook, immediately adjacent to the connection between the future parking area and the future pathway. The smaller kiosks will be placed at the Yuba Road and Bennett Road access sites. Morrison asked if the group would like to meet on-site to decide precise kiosk placement; the group felt this would not be necessary. Henkel will likely supervise installation.
- 3. Information to post:** Carstens observed that during non-hunting seasons, dogs are supposed to be leashed. He has noticed infractions and mentioned it to the dog owners in question. He noted an absence of several customary species during his birding outings in this area this year. Hullman observed that this could be due in part to the local coyotes, but Carstens feels strongly that loose pets are also responsible. Guntzviller also believes that the nesting season this year has been poor due to the cold and damp, and perhaps there has been a low survival rate.

In general, the group felt it would be appropriate to post the general state laws, along with a “no baiting” statement and a comment about lease laws. There was some discussion about people trimming foliage to create shooting/visual lanes while hunting, which is also discouraged. Hullman mentioned that he would do some careful pruning during the winter to maintain “official” pathways in a natural manner.

Henkel raised a question about the pond on site. He is concerned with liability issues, and believes it may be necessary to fence it off. The group was not generally in favor of this idea for aesthetic reasons. Guntzviller mentioned that liability may be managed by a state natural area trespass act. Henkel stated that we would have to fence the pond if the township's insurance company required it. The group generally felt that notice posted near the edge stating that swimming is discouraged and possibly dangerous might be in order. This is a man-made pond with a fairly steep bank. There is old fencing nearby, but it's difficult to determine whether it was to contain cattle or related to orchard spraying issues. Henkel will research the insurance company's requirements and report back to the group.

Information about the eagle nesting habitat and the general bird species should also be posted, along with information about which ones are endangered. Malaski pointed out that there is usually a trail map. Hullman added that there is usually a statement asking people to pack out everything with which they entered. Corpe suggested a statement regarding trespassing on adjacent private properties, and Henkel said that a legend for the various markers in use would be included.

Reinhold asked the group to consider a proposed vision statement he prepared. Morrison read a DNR mission statement on the back of a business card which formed the basis for the proposed statement. Matt McDonough assisted as well. Ideas were brought in from statements in use by the DNR, the Brown Bridge Natural Area and other similar locations, which Reinhold read. He also read the proposed vision statement in parts, offering explanations for the formulation after each. He said that the first portion was crafted with Carstens in mind, as he keeps the group aware of the fact that there are multiple environments contained within the property. The second sentence was deemed self-explanatory. The third and final sentence mentions hunting first in the list of uses, as he believes that it will be the most under pressure to be reduced or extinguished over the coming years. Hullman said he thought it was a better statement than its progenitors. Heiam suggested "by providing a place for public recreation and environmental education..." for the second sentence to shorten up one clause. Hullman would like to keep the message about connectivity of place and self because it conveys an increasingly rare feeling and a lofty but worthwhile goal. Henkel suggested "help connect people to nature, self and others..." rather than repeating the word "place" twice. The phrase "low-impact" was relocated from the third sentence to take the place of "public" in the first sentence.

**C. Bronze Plaque:**

- 1. Names to be listed:** Morrison also received a list of donors and donation categories from the GT Regional Land Conservancy. However, he has identified two mistakes/omissions in the list and it should be double-checked. Henkel suggested getting at least two bids for the plaque creation after an exact list of the names to be included is available. Lessard's and The Trophy Trolley were consulted initially. The work is actually done out of town. Corpe asked for the list of names so it can be posted on the township website. This led the group to think about posting as complete a list as possible on the website and in the kiosks, acknowledging the difficulty and asking for public help in completing the list.
- 2. Search for boulder:** Linda Morrison took a picture for the group of a bronze plaque in a boulder at the Pyatt Lake Natural Area. Dan Morrison thought he had a boulder lined up, but it didn't work out. Guntzviller received a quote of \$400 to relocate a boulder to our chosen site, and speculated that it might be possible to do the work ourselves. Rock size is a question, but the final number of names on the plaque will

determine the needed size. The general plan is to place the boulder at the US 31 lookout site, near the beginning of the path to the overlook view. The idea evolved to have the boulder in the middle of the early stage of the trail so that people will walk around it and notice it, and recognize the significant donors without whom the project would not have succeeded. It can be made attractive. Corpe suggested that before the plaque is finally ordered, each donor should receive a personal phone call to let them know it's happening and to verify spelling and format is correct. Once the plaque is placed, a dedication ceremony can be held.

Reinhold asked if a footing would be needed for the boulder to keep it from sinking over time. Henkel suggested that this might be a good idea, although the gravel/clay soil types at the site may support the weight without them. Henkel is more concerned about ensuring that the plaque is applied so that it can't be removed by vandals, perhaps by countersinking it to some degree.

**D. MDOT Engineering for Apron:** Morrison asked if an apron is strictly necessary. Reinhold replied that MDOT will require that asphalt be laid for the full extent of the driveway area within the right-of-way. There was some question as to whether a low-impact use might be excused from this requirement, as well as whether the driveway can be placed precisely where desired due to safe sight distance requirements. Reinhold will follow-up with MDOT. Reinhold will also follow-up with Chuck Walter to see if there is a lower-cost option for obtaining sealed engineering plans than engaging Gourdie-Fraser.

**E. Yuba Creek Restoration:**

1. **Permit process:** Steve Largent indicated it may be necessary to receive permits from the DEQ in order to proceed. Hullman asked if Trout Unlimited is still willing to assist. Guntzviller says they don't have funding available right now, but may have some again in the future and we should stay in touch. Hullman suggested that even some more manpower assistance would be welcome. The group would like Morrison to ask for Largent's assistance in applying for the permit. Henkel mentioned that the US Fish & Wildlife Service has been performing a lamprey study in Yuba Creek.
2. **Order anchors & wire:** To be deferred until the permit process is farther along. Henkel asked where the brush for the fill would be found. Reinhold indicated that Largent recommends using standing deadwood but not deadfall, which serves as a small mammal habitat.

**F. Prep work for spring tree planting:** The piles of cut autumn olive brush need to be removed before planting can begin. Henkel indicated that if the current smaller piles can be combined into two or three large piles, he would support burning them. Henkel asked if the group would like him to do some mowing near US 31. The grass is 3-4' high and conceals deer which come into conflict with cars with little visual warning. Reinhold and Guntzviller suggested inviting the local forester and the champion tree expert in to help decide what species of trees would do best in which areas.

Reinhold posed the question to Carstens of whether or not there is anything unique about the meadow up by US 31 that should be preserved, rather than planting the entire thing in trees. Carstens feels comfortable that there are adequate meadowlands in other portions of the YCNA to fill this niche. Hullman pointed out that part of the reason for planting the uplands in trees was to buffer the area from highway noise.

The group decided to wait until spring to undertake the planting, and use the rest of this year to prepare. There was more discussion about general philosophy on where to plant what types

of trees. Henkel mentioned that species salt-tolerance is an important consideration, even 100' in from the roadway or more. Corpe volunteered to provide a list of desired plant species developed for the M-72 corridor, and has been categorized in part by salt tolerance characteristics. Reinhold suggested that it might be an interesting feature to plant seedlings from the champion trees. Henkel suggested that while we want to stick to native species as much as possible, it might be interesting to use a few species that are exotic, yet well suited to the area and non-invasive. Hullman agreed that attempting to re-introduce some varieties that have largely died out here could be a nice concept.

- G. Approve minutes from May 6 and May 26, 2004 meetings:** Heiam stated that on page 3 of the May 6 minutes, item C should be clarified to say ...”keep current speed up.” On page 4, second line needed “said.” Re: May 26, second page, item C, sixth line remove “at.” Reinhold, next sentence “it would be expensive.”

**Motion by Morrison, support by Guntzviller to approve the minutes of the May 6 and May 26, 2004 meetings as corrected. Motion carried unanimously.**

**Meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.**