

# Joint Meeting Two

June 3, 2024 | 11:00 a.m.–2:15 p.m.

Norman Township Hall  
1273 Seaman Rd  
Wellston, MI 49689

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## Attendees

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|--------------------------------|--|
| AES (facilitator)              | John Roth, Dist. 104 Michigan State Representative |
| Alliance for Economic Success  | Little River Band of Ottawa Indians                |
| Big Bear Sportsman Lodge       | Manistee Chamber Economic Dev.                     |
| Cadillac Area Land Conservancy | Manistee County Commission                         |
| Cadillac Area Visitor’s Bureau | Manistee Tourism Authority                         |
| Conservation Resource Alliance | Michigan Hydro Relicensing Coalition               |
| Consumers Energy               | Michigan Trout Unlimited                           |
| DNR Fisheries                  | Public Sector Consultants                          |
| Great Lakes Fishery Commission | Wexford County Administrator                       |
| JKND School District           | Wexford County Commission                          |

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## Welcome/Introductions

- Mark Lagerwey welcomed the attendees and reviewed the day’s agenda. Attendees who had not attended the April 8 meeting introduced themselves and discussed their hopes for a successful outcome of these meetings. Those who had attended the previous meeting then also reintroduced themselves.

## Review of April 8 meeting

- Lagerwey led the group in a review of the April 8 meeting, at which participants divided into four groups—two for each dam—and developed lists of the known assets and “strengths” in the respective communities. These assets were mapped under three broad categories:

# Planning for Prosperity in River Hydro Communities

## Manistee River Group: Hodenpyl and Tippy

1. Nature/environment
  2. Economy
  3. People/culture
- Lagerwey reviewed communication ground rules established at the April 8 meeting. They are honesty, respect, and openness to each other's ideas and opinions, having the freedom to think freely and out loud, and also the discipline to listen and keep emotions to a minimum. All ideas will be valued.
  - Lagerwey reviewed a timeline outlining the goals of conveners' groups during a minimum of four 2024 meetings to develop a Community Prosperity Plan that provides two possible roadmaps for Consumers Energy, which are listed below.
    1. Consumers Energy relicenses the dams to continue operating as status quo under one of two possible scenarios:
      - a. Consumers Energy relicenses and continues to own and operate the dams
      - b. Consumers Energy sells the dams and enters a power purchase agreement with the new owners
    2. Consumers Energy exits the hydro business and the dams are removed

## Guest Speaker: Dam Removal Case Study

Kim Balke from the Conservation Resource Alliance presented a 60-minute overview of the 15-year Boardman-Ottaway dam removal operation. The project is the largest such removal effort in Michigan history and removed three dams: Brown Bridge, Boardman, and Sabin. The project reconnected 160 miles of river and tributaries that were fragmented by dams for 126 years. The project was long, complex, and included partnership and funding from more than 40 partners, including U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Great Lakes Restoration Initiative of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, and multiple government entities, foundations, service organizations, and environmental groups. Collectively, the project blended \$25 million in funding from 30 sources.

## Group Discussions—Opportunities

Shari Spoelman facilitated group discussions, dividing those present into two groups—one for each dam—providing the lists of known assets developed at the April 8 meeting, and tasking the groups to brainstorm opportunities while answering the following questions:

1. Which strengths/assets can we build upon if the dam is removed?
2. Which strengths/assets can we build upon if the dam continues operation?

# Planning for Prosperity in River Hydro Communities

## Manistee River Group: Hodenpyl and Tippy

### Hodenpyl Dam is Removed

#### Primary Themes

1. Transformation from an impoundment-based to a river-based recreational economy that incorporates open space and environment
2. Increase of tax base if bottomlands and adjacent land are sold to private entities and/or developed
3. Removal of aging infrastructure and maintenance and responsibilities of relicensing, and removal of fear of dam failure
4. Invasive species and sedimentation stabilization will be addressed

#### Related Themes

- ADA recreation could be incorporated and a nature center could be developed
- Increase in paddle sports opportunities
- Changes in fish and wildlife species that need flowing river and colder water to thrive
- New opportunities for local businesses that are currently dependent on impoundments for viability
- Potential for creation of local unites of government owned and operated campgrounds and parks
- Manistee and Lake County ORV trails could be linked

### Hodenpyl Dam Continues Operations

#### Primary Themes

1. Retain the status quo
  - a. Waterfront property ownership remains unchanged and private businesses could expand
  - b. All existing campgrounds stay in business under Consumers Energy property lease agreements
  - c. Local economy is unchanged
  - d. Boating and other impoundment recreational opportunities continue
  - e. Fears about what to expect with new ownership are alleviated
2. Gains from last relicensing requirements will be renewed and unchanged if Consumers Energy remains owner
3. Michigan Public Service Commission cost recovery continues if Consumers Energy remains the owner

# Planning for Prosperity in River Hydro Communities

## Manistee River Group: Hodenpyl and Tippy

### Related Themes

- Status quo means the aging structures will be maintained according to FERC relicensing requirements
- Open space preservation would stay the way it is

### Tippy Dam Is Removed

1. Year-round recreational opportunities upstream and downstream from current dam locations will be expanded including:
  - a. Expanded ecotourism (fishing, hiking, paddling)
  - b. Changed and new recreational opportunities with river's changing character
  - c. More connectivity across the river with pedestrian and recreational crossings
2. A free-flowing river will change/improve fisheries and habitat differently than present
  - a. Coldwater fisheries improve overall
  - b. Fish stocking expenses can be eliminated
3. Development of bottomlands will be well thought out
  - a. Floodplain will feature new grasslands and flora

### Tippy Dam Continues Operations

1. The status quo remains
  - a. Fishing opportunities continue below the dam
  - b. Taxable values remain unchanged
  - c. Opportunities increase for improved marketing for existing conditions
  - d. Diversity of backwater impoundment/lake remains unchanged
2. Sea lamprey barrier remains, also stopping other invasive species
3. 20,000 federally endangered brown bats may continue to thrive in the bat hibernaculum found in the dam spillway.