AGENDA:

I. Call to Order
   Meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m.

II. Roll Call
   a. Sign-In Roster
      Council Members Present: Patricia Klein, Mark Hoffman, Tim Holysz, Bob Nagler, Ann Paulson, Cam Vossen, Steve Kohler, Bill Steinmann, Tom Edmonds, Duane Hampton, Paul MacNellis, Tyler Bassett, and Charles Ide
      Guests Present: Dave Lemberg, Cal Mastin, Kay Chase, Steve Malcolm, Brett Johnson, and Chad McDaniel.

III. Adoption of Agenda
   - Paul MacNellis moved to change the agenda. He requested the Project/Special Committee Reports be moved ahead of Old Business.
   - Tom Edmonds moved to adopt the 12 January 2006 meeting agenda with changes. Ann Paulson seconded. All in favor. None opposed.

IV. Approval of 13 October 2005 Meeting Minutes
   - Pat Klein moved to approve the 13 October 2005 meeting minutes. Ann Paulson seconded. All in favor. None opposed.

V. Project/Special Committee Reports
   a. Research/Education Committee
      WMU Dept. of Military Science Leadership Development and Tactical Training
      - ROTC submitted the required Asylum Lake Research & Educational Protocol to the Research & Education Committee for permission to perform tactical training at Asylum Lake.
      - Representatives from the ROTC were present to answer questions.
      - Their protocol mentions a planned exercise for Feb. with 20-30 people and also other trainings periodically throughout the year with as many as 50 people.
      - 20-30 people was acceptable to the committee however there was concern over the ecological impacts of 50 people.
      - There was question as to whether or not ROTC would have to fill out a new protocol for every training, since the number of people will vary.
      - ROTC was asked for more information on the nature of the exercises.
      - The ROTC would like to use Asylum Lake Preserve for those occasions in which it is impractical to go to Fort Custer. Fort Custer is their primary training facility.
      - Exercises are performed primarily on trails however there is also some off trail training. Most training is done in the wooded areas.
There was comment that there was evidence of a project being performed in the wooded area possibly by the Biology Dept. There was concern as to the nature of the study. More interaction between Biology Dept and Council is necessary.

There was question as to whether the Biology Dept has gone through the protocols.

No Council members were aware of any Biology project taking place at Asylum Lake.

It was stated that Cari will look into this issue.

There was concern that the ROTC would seem threatening to families and children at the property.

A more detailed explanation of the ROTC activities was requested.

The ROTC reps. explained that the students are dressed in military uniforms carrying simulated rubber guns. There is no ammo or pyrotechnics involved. They brought in an example of the signs they would post around the property while the trainings are taking place. The signs state that there are cadets training on the property and their rifles are non operational.

There was question as to how this qualifies as passive recreation.

It doesn’t – these activities qualify as education. There is a Dept. of Military Science under Haworth College of Business, WMU. Students can receive a minor in Military Science. Students receive credit for the trainings at Asylum Lake.

There was concern over setting a precedent by approving this type of activity at the preserve.

It was mentioned that ROTC has been using the property for a long time without incident.

It was brought up that as long as they are following the doctrine of the Preserve they should be allowed.

There was question as to why it is necessary for the ROTC to use mock guns.

It was mentioned that these activities are not consistent with the peaceful feel of the property.

There was comment that the council should not be substituting personal judgments for what is education. The ROTC is an academic unit and it is not up to the Council to determine what is necessary to their course and what is not. As long as the public is properly warned of their activities.

It was brought up that the Council is responsible for the use of the property not how the academic course is carried out.

There was question as to whether Asylum Lake will be the primary training spot. No, Asylum Lake will only be used 2-3 times a year. It is used as a backup to Fort Custer.

There was question as to whether the frequency will increase for example 5 years into the future.

It is not expected to. The historical use is what the ROTC anticipates for the future use.

There was question as to how long the training sessions last. 6-7 hours.

There was question as to the time of day this property will be used.

This will vary from early morning to evening. However there will not be any overnight operations.

There was question as to the procedure taken by ROTC when encountering a member of the public on the trails.

Soldiers are informed to greet the public and then notify an instructor to meet with them. A qualified instructor is present at every training.

Soldiers are concentrated in small groups. They move as units. However there may be more than one unit on the property at a time. With a group of 20 soldiers there may be 2 units.

With a group of 50 there are no more than 5 units, each with an instructor. There was reference to the article in the Gazette.

The incident occurred while an instructor was away momentarily. The instructor looked for the pedestrian but was not located.

It was mentioned there had been bad experiences with ROTC on the property before the council was put into place.

There was concern by the committee about increasing the number of people with no idea of ecological impact.
- A schedule of the planned dates was requested from ROTC.
- The Feb. ROTC activities have been canceled. They are going to Fort Custer instead. Therefore a decision could be postponed until next meeting.
- There was suggestion that the ROTC consider using the Orchard property.
- The ROTC reps commented that in-operable firearms are necessary for training.
- There was comment that the soldiers are trained to not destroy the foliage.
- There was comment that if the soldiers are not disrupting public recreation or the ecology they should be allowed.
- There was concern that these activities are not consistent with the Decl. Cons. Rest.
- One of the goals of this document is to support research and education. However there was concern over the last line that states, “Such activities should be conducted in a manner that is consistent with and furthers the above-described Conservation Purposes.”
- There was comment that this sentence was included in the document to limit the education and research activities.
- There was concern that ROTC activities do not support conservation.
- There was question as to whether all three document goals have to be met or if one could be ignored.
- There was comment that there should be a balance or compromise between the goals.
- There was comment that if the ROTC is not permitted under that sentence from the Decl. Cons. Rest., there are a lot of activities taking place at the preserve that should be stopped, such as dog walking, and skiing.
- It was stated that these activities are specifically allowed by the document.
- It was mentioned that the research and education projects of Geosciences should not be allowed under that logic.
- It was argued that activities that don’t contradict or inhibit the conservation are allowed.
- It was stated that no research or education would be allowed under this logic.
- It was suggested that it may be easier for the Council to make a list of activities not allowed.
- There was comment that the U.S. Military controls much land. It is good for these students to be exposed to this property and passive recreation in order to value the land they are protecting.
- There was question as to whether it is necessary for ROTC to submit a protocol before every activity.
- There was general agreement that the submission of a protocol every semester along with a schedule would be sufficient.
- There was a request for a written report from the committee.

b. Operations Committee
   Committee has not met.

VI. Old Business
   a. Asylum Lake Preserve Management Plan Progress
      Paul MacNellis
      A draft of the Asylum Lake Preserve Management Plan was passed out.
      This plan includes background information on the preserve as a whole along with management plans for the first management unit, the prairie.
      There was question as to how the problems outlined in the plan will be accomplished.
      There are mitigation strategies included in the plan. However these strategies are general. This plan is to be viewed as a roadmap for any proposed management techniques.
      There was comment that any physical changes made to the preserve would have to be consistent with the management plan.
There was question as to whether changes made to the preserve would be approved by the management plan committee or the Council.
- These decisions will be made by the Council.
- There are eight more management units, 9 total.
- There was comment that this plan could be used to educate the public.
- There was comment that there are a lot of things happening at the property that are hard to manage. There will be difficulty in restricting individuals when trying to use this model.
- There was question as to how the Council would respond to student ecological studies performed at the preserve although they may be viewed as unsightly.
- There was general agreement from the Council that they would support this as long as it is consistent with the Conservation Restrictions Document.
- There was suggestion to place a fenced in area for dogs to run without leashes.
- There was general agreement that this unfinished management plan is a good model the addition of other management units could follow the same format.

VII. New Business
  a. Asylum Lake Group Visit Form

Cari DeLong
- The Asylum Lake Group Visit Form was handed out.
- This form was the product of discussion from the last Council meeting.
- This form includes reference to the Protocol Document, a statement about the purpose of the form, and a short questionnaire.
- The intention of this form is to inform the public of the background and goals of the Preserve and also to inform the Council of group visits to the property.
- It will allow the Council to better understand the usage of the property by the public.
- If approved by the Council it will be posted on the website and also referred to on signage around the property.
- There was concern that the questions on the last half of the form may indicate that these things are allowed.
- It was suggested that it should include statements encouraging visitors to stay on trails and refrain from removing plants and animals.
- It was suggested that the last questions could be changed to things you cannot do on the property.
- It was suggested there should be a timeline for submitting the group visit form.
- It was suggested that the form should define what a group is.
- There was comment that the council should be careful in not discouraging the use of this property since it is open to the public.
- There was suggestion to set up a subcommittee to review all group visit submissions.
- There was suggestion that Cari could be the reviewer.
- There was question as to who will be policing the use of the group visit form. No one.
- There was comment that this document should be used for the information rather than a regulation document.
- It was suggested that a subcommittee should be appointed to look at the potential for enforcement at the property.
- It was suggested that people need to know where to turn it in and how to get it.
- The plan for the form was to add it to the webpage and advertise the webpage on signage at the property.
- There was comment that the signage at the property should be dealt with soon.
- It was suggested that the form include the reason for filling out the form.
b. New Officers...Chair & Vice Chair
Paul MacNellis
Motion: There was a motion to nominate Paul MacNellis as the Chair and Mark Hoffman as the Vice Chair of the Asylum Lake Policy and Management Council. All in favor. None opposed.
  - Pat Klein nominated Paul MacNellis as the Chair and Mark Hoffman as the Vice Chair of the Council. Ann Paulson seconded. Tom Edmonds moved to vote. Tim Holysz seconded.
  - A vote was taken. All in favor. None opposed.

VIII. Public Comments

None.

IX. Council/Staff Comments

  - There was a proposal to discuss dog walking at the next meeting.

X. Adjournment

  - Meeting was adjourned at 8:26 p.m.