

# LOWER WISCONSIN STATE RIVERWAY BOARD

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## MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 14, 2008, RIVERWAY BOARD MEETING

The Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Board (LWSRB) met on Thursday, August 14, 2008, at Wyalusing State Park to conduct a regular monthly business meeting. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Chairman Bill Lundberg. All members were present with the exception of Melody Moore. Acknowledgment that the meeting was properly noticed was provided by Mark E. Cupp, Executive Director. A motion to approve the agenda was made by Fred Madison, seconded by Nick Nice. **MOTION CARRIED.** The minutes of the July 10, 2008, meeting then were considered. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Ron Leys, seconded by Madison. **MOTION CARRIED.**

The Executive Committee report was presented by Chairman Lundberg. Lundberg said the committee had discussed a proposal by Cupp to contact Governor Jim Doyle and request that 2009 be declared the Year of the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway in recognition of the twenty year anniversary of the project. Cupp said the concept would be to have a series of special events and speakers to commemorate the twenty year milestone. A motion directing Cupp to proceed was made by Don Greenwood, seconded by Leys. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Updates on flooding events affecting Riverway communities were provided. Greg Greenheck said the flooding in the Spring Green and Lone Rock areas caused millions of dollars of damage and affected many people. He said some areas are beginning to dry out but other spots remain submerged. Greenheck said ditching to relieve flooding of fields has helped in the Bear Creek watershed. Greenwood said FEMA inspectors finally have begun visiting flooded homes to assess damage with many homes declared total losses. He said the high water table resulted in minimal capacity for absorption of water resulting in floodwaters pooling in low lying areas. Leys noted it was interesting to see a field that was partially flooded also being irrigated. Greenwood said it is representative of the subtle differences in topography that result in one part of a field being high and dry while another part is low and wet.

Cupp asked for information on the meetings that had been held to discuss a long term solution to the flooding problem. Greenwood said it was too early to answer that question because there are several ideas under discussion. He said a study is needed to determine if there is a feasible way to minimize damage in a similar situation in the future, such as by ditching. He noted the Town of Spring Green is eager to have a study initiated. Madison noted the problem is related to groundwater. Leys asked if the area had been flooded before. Greenwood responded in the affirmative noting there was a major flood event in 1993. He added that the flooded area is not considered to be in the floodplain.

Cupp said he attended a meeting in Avoca to discuss the flooding event in that community. He noted Dana White-Quam, Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Riverway Manager, also was in attendance and asked her to provide an update. White-Quam described the flooding impacts to the agriculture lands south of STH 133 and to the village. She said sediment removal is planned under the highway and railroad bridges. White-Quam noted a large culvert had been plugged by plywood without permission from any governmental authority. She said the area north of the railroad tracks is partially owned by DNR, partially eased by DNR and partially in private ownership. Trees and debris in the creek will be removed once land ownership issues are resolved. White-Quam said there was an incredible amount of water in the area and said some estimates are that it was a 2000 year event. Cupp asked if the plugged culvert contributed to the flooding problems in the village. White-Quam said the effects are

being evaluated. Cupp said it is important that folks who are looking at ways to ameliorate future flooding to take a watershed approach and evaluate conservation practices by farmers and opportunities for placement of flood control structures upstream of Avoca. He noted Morrey Creek was channelized by settlers in the late 1800's.

A presentation was given by Larry Koshkee of Monroe, a former Town of Millville resident and unofficial Millville historian. Koshkee had requested time to discuss the proposed Millville Uplands State Natural Area (SNA). He began with an overview of settlement era history and discussed the historic landscape based on surveyor's notes and early photographs. He said there were far fewer trees and large areas of prairie and oak savanna. Koshkee said he was concerned the proposed SNA would be managed for interior songbird habitat at the expense of prairie and oak savanna. He said he favored a diverse approach to protecting the landscape that includes forest interior habitat on the north slope with restoration efforts toward prairie and oak savanna on the south and west slopes along with retention of grassland habitat in the old agricultural fields. Koshkee said the onsite meeting with LWSRB members and DNR officials had alleviated many of his concerns. He said he looked forward to working with Matt Zine, DNR SNA Manager, and the LWSRB on future plans for the site. He said communication with local officials and Millville residents will be important.

Greenwood complimented Koshkee on his well-researched presentation and said it was excellent. Leys said he supported Koshkee's point of view and asked Brad Hutnik, DNR Riverway Forester, to comment. Hutnik said there should be ways to accommodate diverse habitat types and said burning would be appropriate in some areas but not in others. Zine noted that the pre-settlement landscape largely was prairie and oak savanna due to fire on the landscape and was not well suited for forest interior songbirds. He said the SNA crew is concentrating on large scale burns for efficiency purposes and noted that the north slope of the Millville Unit would not have to be burned. Hutnik said some folks may advocate for large scale tree planting but he said it will unlikely occur on the site. Madison asked if there was a Master Plan for the site. Zine said the wildlife biologist, who technically is the property manager, has to agree to the proposed management concepts before a detailed Master Plan is developed. Hutnik noted Cupp has long advocated a revised Master Plan for the Riverway to create and implement integrated landscape scale management concepts. Leys asked for a definition of the board's role in the process for the proposed Millville Uplands SNA designation. Cupp said the board would be involved via the management permit process for management of a native plant community that likely would include removal of trees and woody vegetation. Lundberg added the board could take a position of advocacy for the project.

The Operations Committee report was presented by Chairman Dorscheid. The request of Brad Hutnik on behalf of the Department of Natural Resources for a management permit in the Town of Boscobel, Grant County, was considered. Dorscheid noted the original field inspection was conducted by Cupp in conjunction with the recent timber harvest at the site. Hutnik said plans call for vegetative removal to accommodate swamp white oak seed collection. He said the areas are not visible from the Wisconsin River during leaf-on conditions.

A motion to approve issuance of a two-year permit with standard permit conditions was made by Dorscheid, seconded by Madison. Conditions of the permit include:

- The activity shall not result in an existing structure becoming visible from the river;
- The LWSRB shall approve any modifications to the plans, as submitted;
- The landowner or his/her agent shall notify the LWSRB upon initiation and completion of the project.

**MOTION CARRIED.**

The Crystal/Fish/Mud Lake District pumping project in the Town of Roxbury, Dane County, was discussed. White-Quam said the present emergency order has been extended until September 30<sup>th</sup> to allow pumping with direct discharge to the river. She said the amount of algae in the water had plugged the test cell so that infiltration was not occurring. She said a more permanent solution is being sought. White-Quam said the pumping under the earlier emergency order resulted in erosion damage to the trails as well as pooling and stagnation of algae waters that created an odor problem. She said the Lake District is responsible for water quality sampling and other data collection. Leys asked if the water was being filtered before reaching the river. White-Quam said some infiltration does occur but that there also is direct overland discharge to the river. Dorscheid asked if there has been any effect on lake levels from the pumping. White-Quam said there has been a minor decrease in lake levels but it is a slow process. Madison said the USGS model should be re-examined. Greenwood asked how long it would take for the algae to decompose. White-Quam said the algae has been there for weeks and has turned from green to black but she didn't know a time frame for decomposition. Leys asked if it was a malodorous situation to which White-Quam replied in the affirmative. Madison noted the algae will plug the sand and affect infiltration. Hutnik asked if the test cell was determined to have worked. White-Quam said the lake district would prefer to do direct pumping. Greenwood said it is obvious the test cell failed to achieve the desired infiltration.

White-Quam then reported that repairs to the ravine near the Dingman mound group in the Town of Eagle, Richland County, would be done by the second bidder since the low bidder expressed concerns about equipment egress. The new contractor will begin work within a few weeks.

Cupp said he has issued two general permits since the last meeting. Both permits were issued to Angela Miley; one for construction of a shed and one for a timber harvest in a pine plantation. The activities are on a parcel in the Town of Mazomanie, Dane County.

The Budget Committee report was presented by Chairman Nice who reviewed the final report for FY 08. Nice then reviewed the status of the FY 09 budget. A motion to accept the budget report was made by Greenwood, seconded by Madison. **MOTION CARRIED.** Cupp said the LWSRB budget request for the 2009-2011 biennium would be presented to the board at the September meeting.

There was no report from the Personnel Committee report.

The Executive Director's report was given by Cupp who reviewed the materials in the board members' packets. Cupp recognized Timm Zumm and the Friends of the Lower Wisconsin (FLOW) for the many volunteer hours spent in assisting flood victims. He said FLOW was instrumental in the Living Lands and Waters organization receiving the state contract for debris removal associated with the Lake Delton disaster.

The DNR report was presented by White-Quam who said John DiFulvio, former DNR Parks and Recreation Specialist, was no longer employed by the department. She said the river clean-up with Living Lands and Waters, in cooperation with FLOW, would start shortly. Hutnik said the Upper Mississippi River Bottomlands Working Group had met in Spring Green and toured sites in the Riverway. He thanked Cupp for the presentation made to the group. Brian Hefty, Wyalusing State Park Superintendent, was in attendance and was recognized by Lundberg for hosting the meeting. Cupp asked Hefty if the park had sustained additional damage from the summer floods. Hefty said the park fared well and said the repairs done last year, particularly to culverts, probably thwarted many of the problems that would have

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been encountered this year. Dorscheid asked about trail repairs and closures. Hefty said about 1/3 of the trails remain closed. An effort is being made to evaluate all trails with possible implementation of a sustainable trails concept.

A motion to adjourn until September 11<sup>th</sup> when the meeting will be held at the Spring Green Public Library was made by Madison, seconded by Greenheck. **MOTION CARRIED.**

END

For further information, corrections, additions or deletions to the minutes, contact Mark Cupp, Executive Director, at (608) 739-3188 or 1-800-221-3792.

Minutes submitted by:

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Mark E. Cupp, Executive Director  
Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Board