

# LOWER WISCONSIN STATE RIVERWAY BOARD

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## MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 13, 2014, RIVERWAY BOARD MEETING

The Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Board (LWSRB) met on Thursday, February 13, 2014, at the Muscodia village hall to conduct a regular monthly business meeting. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Chair Don Greenwood. All members were present with the exceptions of Fred Madison, Ron Leys and Jerry Dorscheid. Acknowledgment that the meeting was properly noticed was provided by Mark E. Cupp, Executive Director. A motion to approve the agenda was made by Melody Moore, seconded by George Arimond. **MOTION CARRIED.** A motion to approve the minutes of the January 9, 2014, meeting was made by Moore, seconded by Ritchie Brown. **MOTION CARRIED.**

The Executive Committee report was presented by Chairman Greenwood. Travis Anderson, Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Wildlife Biologist was introduced as the guest speaker for the meeting. Anderson spoke about Riverway wildlife, including unusual or rare sightings of large mammals such as bears, wolves, bobcats and cougars. He also discussed bald eagle and osprey nesting survey results, trumpeter swans nesting in the Riverway, and wood duck banding near Spring Green/Lone Rock. He noted migrating whooping cranes were seen in the Riverway last year and snowy owls have been seen this winter.

Greenwood said the Friends of the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway (FLOW) was applying for another grant and requested a letter of support from the LWSRB. The grant would assist with educational outreach, recreational user surveys and aquatic invasive species (AIS) monitoring. A motion was made by Dave Martin, seconded by Arimond, to send a letter of support for the grant applications. **MOTION CARRIED.**

The Year of the Riverway was discussed. Cupp said the policy of the current administration is to avoid proclamations for the "Year of...", so a proclamation for the Year of the Riverway in recognition of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the project will not be forthcoming from the Executive branch. He said a "Day of..." proclamation or commendation is more likely. Cupp said he continues to work with DNR representatives and others on joint events to celebrate the 25-year anniversary. A date for a formal ceremony or event to commemorate enactment of the Riverway law has not been set but will be in late summer or early fall. Cupp asked if the board would like him to reach out to local governments with an offer to speak or give a presentation on the Riverway. He suggested letters be sent to county, town, village and city officials. A motion directing Cupp to proceed with the local government outreach project was made by Bob Cary, seconded by Moore. **MOTION CARRIED.** Arimond suggested paddlesport organizations also be contacted about Year of the Riverway events.

Cupp provided an update on the petition for judicial review of the board's decision to deny nonmetallic mining permits to the Pattison Sand Company (PSC) and four Town of Bridgeport landowners, as filed in Crawford County Circuit Court by the company. Cupp said the original date for oral arguments was March 20<sup>th</sup> but the PSC attorney had requested a delay, which had been agreed to be Assistant Attorney General Mark Bromley as the LWSRB's representative. A new date has not been announced.

Greenwood said the board should make a decision on distribution of the draft report to the Legislature on nonmetallic mining in the Riverway, as reviewed at previous meetings. He asked Cupp for his recommendation on distribution. Cupp said the report should be distributed to Riverway legislators and Governor Scott Walker with the understanding that legislation to implement the recommendation would not

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occur until the next legislative session which will convene in January. A motion to approve the report and the distribution model outlined by Cupp was made by Moore, seconded by Arimond. **MOTION CARRIED.** Greenwood instructed Cupp to post the report on the website following distribution to the Riverway delegation and Governor Walker.

The Operations Committee report was presented by Cupp. A permit extension for management activities on the Mark and Peggy Timmerman property in the Town of Buena Vista, Richland County, was considered. Cupp said the activity involves tree and woody vegetation removal for the purpose of maintaining a known archeological site, a group of Indian mounds including one large conical mound atop the bluff near the intersection of CTH TB and STH 60. A field inspection was conducted by Cupp on February 11<sup>th</sup>. Nick Morehouse, DNR Riverway Forester, and Steve Williamson, DNR Fire Technician, and Ms. Timmerman also were present for the field inspection. The activity was determined to comply with the applicable performance standards and was deemed appropriate for the site. Cupp recommended a two-year extension to the permit, which had expired prior to any work being done at the site. A motion to approve a two-year extension with retention of the original permit conditions was made by Brown, seconded by Cary. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Cupp said a permit application had been received from Phil Limmex for a timber harvest and timber stand improvement (TSI) project in the Town of Wyoming, Iowa County. He said the harvest would be under a Managed Forest Law (MFL) plan. Portions of the parcel are visible from the Wisconsin River during leaf-on conditions. The landowner wishes to expedite processing of the LWSRB permit to take advantage of frozen ground conditions and a good acorn crop from the fall of 2013. Cupp noted he and Morehouse hoped to visit the site in the near future. He said there would be some clear-cutting in the Riverview Zone and Resource Management Zone. Cupp requested board authorization to proceed with issuance of the permit if the proposed activity was found to be consistent with the applicable performance standards following a field inspection at the site. Arimond asked about limitations on clear-cuts in the Riverway. Cupp reviewed the performance standards cited in Chapter NR 37, Wisconsin Administrative Code, which limit the size and location of small regeneration cuts. A motion authorizing Cupp to proceed with permit issuance following the site visit was made by Martin, seconded by Brown. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Cupp said he had attended a meeting at the Federal Highway Administration office in Madison regarding the STH 23 project in Iowa County. He indicated the board's interest in aesthetic protection at the south end of the STH 23 Bridge near Spring Green would be addressed. The beamguard side facing the river will be painted brown and planting of screening vegetation will occur. Cupp said he, Morehouse and DNR Conservation Warden David Youngquist had met with Terry Askevold at this property on the river in the Town of Arena, Iowa County. Trees had been removed at the campground for safety reasons. Cupp said Askevold had agreed to contact Cupp or Morehouse before doing further tree removal at the site. Cupp said he met with Tom Waltz at a site near Woodman to discuss possible improvements. The installation of a dock or pier on the backwater slough will be the only potential LWSRB involvement if the property is purchased. He noted Taliesin Preservation officials had contacted him about additional tree removal for firewood use. Cupp said he will review the existing permits held by Taliesin and act accordingly prior to the next meeting.

Cupp reported he had approved extensions to two permits since the last meeting. An extension was approved for mounds maintenance activities on state owned lands at the Bloyer/Twin Lizard mound group in the Town of Orion, Richland County. An extension was granted to Steve Williamson for TSI work and timber harvesting in the Town of Eagle, Richland County.

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The Budget & Office Committee report was presented by Chair Cary who reviewed the FY 14 budget. Cary said Cupp had requested approval for purchase of new computers, a printer and software upgrades. The existing LWSRB computers have passed their "swap out" times by years and Cupp's printer is twelve years old. The cost of new computers, a printer and the software upgrades will be \$2400-\$2800. A motion to approve the computer related purchases was made by Cary, seconded by Brown. **MOTION CARRIED.**

The Personnel Committee report was given by Chair Moore who said the committee recommended the board seek a Discretionary Merit Compensation (DMC) lump sum award for Office Associate Marsha Nachtigal. Moore said the award would be issued in recognition of the extra workload associated with the LWSRB review of the Bridgeport nonmetallic mining permit applications. A motion to pursue the DMC award for Nachtigal was made by Moore, seconded by Cary. **MOTION CARRIED.** Moore noted the annual performance evaluation for the Executive Director had been completed with 8 of 9 board members submitting evaluation forms. She said Cupp received an excellent rating and noted the committee will meet in March to consider DMC award potential for Cupp.

The Executive Director's report was presented by Cupp who reviewed the materials in the board members' packets. He said the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Wisconsin River Water Quality Symposium would be held on February 14<sup>th</sup>, which he would attend, and said it was a privilege to be on the planning committee for the event. He noted that he, Greenwood and Dorscheid had attended the FLOW winter event at Cedar Valley Lodge and said he was honored to be able to recognize Dave Erickson of Spring Green as the FLOW River Champion for 2013. Cupp expressed appreciation for the DNR personnel who turned out for a work day at the Bloyer mound group and noted the bulk of the tree removal has been completed at the site. He said a volunteer work day will be held at the property later this winter or early spring.

Under board members' business, Brown said he was pleased to report that elk will return to the forest in the Black River Falls area in 2015. Arimond encouraged the board to continue with efforts to revise the strategic plan with Greenwood concurring and noting the item will be on the board's agenda for March and probably several meetings thereafter.

The DNR report was presented by Brian Hefty, DNR Facilities and Lands Property Supervisor, who said the River Alliance of Wisconsin will assist with posting signage about the New England Mud Snail, which was discovered in Black Earth Creek recently. Hefty inquired about the purpose and utility of the recreational user survey proposed under the FLOW grant application. Cupp said it would be helpful to learn about things the users like or don't like. Greenwood said there is concern about overuse. Hefty noted education is an important part of the DNR's mission and he supports the educational outreach component of the grant application. Hefty said the Master Planning process for the Riverway continues and said information on public participation in that process will be forthcoming. Arimond said the LWSRB should have an opportunity to see a draft of the public participation process the DNR intends to use for the Master Planning effort. Hefty said the DNR's protocols for public participation in planning are outlined in NR 44. Arimond said a broad, general survey of users is fine but a more specific survey is required for a segment of a river. He reviewed his professional experience in working with recreational user surveys and suggested there are UW professors and other volunteers available to assist with a survey.

Morehouse noted the DNR harvest at the Burnt Squirrel tract in the Town of Buena Vista, Richland County, was nearing completion. He said the activity will enhance wildlife habitat in the Cruson Slough area. The landscape was altered dramatically in an effort to restore the native plant community.

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During the public comment session, Mike Weidner of Boscobel discussed his experience as a trapper along much of the lower Wisconsin River. He said muskrat numbers are down as are opossum and beaver. He suggested the drought followed by intense flooding had hurt populations. He noted otter numbers are up and mink populations appear good. He noted more attention should be paid to user conflicts at boat landings.

Timm Zumm, FLOW President, said thanked Cupp and the board members who attended the FLOW winter event. He noted FLOW will have a booth at Canoecopia in March.

A motion to adjourn was made by Brown, seconded by Moore. **MOTION CARRIED.**

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