

LOWER WISCONSIN STATE RIVERWAY BOARD

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MINUTES OF THE APRIL 16, 2015, RIVERWAY BOARD MEETING

The Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Board (LWSRB) met on Thursday, April 16, 2015, at the Sauk City Public Library to conduct a regular monthly business meeting. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Vice-Chair Fred Madison. All members were present with the exceptions of Don Greenwood, Melody Moore and Ron Leys. Acknowledgment that the meeting was properly noticed was provided by Mark E. Cupp, Executive Director. A motion to approve the agenda was made by Jerry Dorscheid, seconded by Dave Martin. **MOTION CARRIED.** A motion to approve the minutes of the March 12, 2015, meeting was made by Bob Cary, seconded by Dorscheid. **MOTION CARRIED.**

The Executive Committee report was presented by Acting Chair Madison. Cupp said a letter of support for the proposed designation of Lower Wisconsin State Riverway as “wetlands of global significance” under the Ramsar Convention had been sent. The board heard a report on the proposal from Jean Unmuth, Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Aquatic Biologist in 2014. The court case involving the Pattison Sand Company (PSC) was discussed. Cupp reported that attorneys from both sides have been unable to reach agreement on the wording of Judge Craig Day’s order. Therefore, LWSRB legal counsel, Assistant Attorney General F. Mark Bromley, asked Judge Day to review the respective interpretations and offer his final verbiage. Judge Day responded with the requested clarification and the LWSRB is waiting for PSC Attorney Peter Conrad to revise the order accordingly. Cupp said a permit with conditions will be issued pursuant to Judge Day’s order. The visual horizon (where the trees meet the sky) will be protected, which was a key element of the conditions of the permit sought by the LWSRB during the court process.

Cupp discussed a report supplied by DNR at his request regarding DNR ownership in the Riverway. The information was requested pursuant to the board’s strategic plan review process, which identified an action item as, “learn more about acquisitions and easements in the Riverway.” The report indicated over 4600 acres are controlled by easement and over 45,600 acres are in fee title ownership. Cupp and George Arimond will discuss the next step in the strategic planning process and report to the board at the May meeting.

Cupp noted the appointments of Dane County representative Melody Moore and Grant County representative Bob Cary would expire on May 1st. Moore has chosen not to seek re-appointment while Cary has agreed to seek appointment to another three year term. Cupp said he had been in contact with the officials from both counties regarding the appointment process. Moore and Cary will continue to serve until a replacement is named. In addition, the appointments of “at-large” members Fred Madison, Ritchie Brown and George Arimond have not been confirmed by the Senate. Cupp has been in contact with Governor Walker’s Appointments Director regarding those slots and each of the members have indicated a desire to continue serving on the board.

The Operations Committee report was presented by Chairman Dorscheid. Nate Fayram, DNR Ecologist, gave a presentation on State Natural Areas (SNA) in the Riverway. Each year, approximately half of the SNA permits for the DNR’s SNAs are reviewed by the LWSRB. Work on the SNAs includes prescribed burning, brush removal and invasive species control. Fayram said invasive species control varies by site but includes reed canary grass, purple loosestrife, garlic mustard, crowned vetch, spotted knapweed, buckthorn, honeysuckle, red cedar, etc. He said the Avoca Unit burn area is one of the largest in the state with the burn unit encompassing 2400 acres. He also highlighted the dedication of volunteers at the Mazomanie Barrens who have logged 265 hours of effort in the last year. Dorscheid asked about the size of Fayram’s crew. He said there are 6 members plus him. Cupp asked about funding. Fayram said virtually all funding comes from grants. A motion to approve two-year extensions for the following management permits was made by Dorscheid, seconded by Cary:

Adiantum Woods SNA (Town of Millville, Grant County)
Avoca Prairie SNA (Town of Avoca, Iowa County)
Blue River Sand Barrens SNA (Town of Watterstown, Grant County)
Ferry Bluff SNA (Town of Prairie du Sac, Sauk County)
Mazomanie Bottoms SNA (Town of Mazomanie, Dane County)
Richwood Bottoms SNA (Town of Richwood, Richland County)
Tower Hill Bottoms SNA (Town of Arena, Iowa County)
Wauzeka Bottoms SNA (Town of Wauzeka, Crawford County)
Woodman Sand Prairie SNA (Town of Woodman, Grant County)
Wyalusing Hardwoods SNA (Town of Wyalusing, Grant County)
Wyalusing Walnut SNA (Town of Wyalusing, Grant County)

MOTION CARRIED.

The permit request of Mike MacEachern for a timber harvest in the Town of Bridgeport, Crawford County, was discussed. Dorscheid said a field inspection was conducted by Cupp on April 6, 2015. Mr. MacEachern was present for the field inspection. Previous field inspections have been conducted by Cupp and the Operations Committee in conjunction with other permit activity at the property. Most recently, Cupp and Nick Morehouse, former DNR Riverway Forester, met with the landowner on October 1, 2014, to discuss the proposed harvest. Plans call for the select harvest of walnut and small patch clearcuts of aspen. The harvest area falls within the Bluff Zone, Riverview Zone and Resource Management Zone. The aspen removal will occur in the Riverview Zone. The trees slated for harvest have been marked and reviewed for compliance with the performance standards by Cupp. There will be a scattered 22-24 walnut trees harvested from the visible area. No new roads will be constructed. The harvest will occur during the times when the ground is frozen or dry and the leaves are off the deciduous trees. Martin asked for clarification of location. Cupp said the property is north and east of the frac sand mine with the major viewshed being upstream of the Pulda property. A motion to approve issuance of a permit with the following standard conditions was made by Dorscheid, seconded by Arimond:

- The harvest shall comply with the basal area limits for the residual stand in the Bluff Zone and Riverview Zone, as detailed in Chapter NR 37, Wisconsin Administrative Code;
- In the Bluff Zone and Riverview Zone, all trees selected for harvest shall be appropriately marked and reviewed by the LWSRB for compliance with the applicable performance standards prior to initiation of the harvest;
- In the Bluff and Riverview Zone, the harvest shall be limited to the times when the ground is frozen or dry and the leaves are off the deciduous trees;
- The LWSRB shall review the location and design of all new logging roads, if any, in the Bluff Zone and Riverview Zone;
- The new logging roads, if any, shall comply with the applicable performance standards regarding grade and erosion control and shall be re-seeded upon completion of the harvest;
- The LWSRB shall review the location and design of all shelterwood or small regeneration cuts, if any, in the Riverview Zone to assure compliance with the applicable performance standards;
- The Bluff Zone and Riverview Zone shall be delineated prior to initiation of the harvest, if necessary;
- The landowner or his/her agent shall notify the LWSRB within 10 working days upon completion of the harvest and, if necessary, the LWSRB shall conduct a post-harvest field inspection; and,
- The LWSRB shall review modification of the plans, as submitted, for compliance with the applicable performance standards.

MOTION CARRIED.

Under other business, Cupp said MacEachern's neighbor to the east, Donald McGuire also will harvest a few walnut trees on lands visible from the river. He is waiting for a permit application from the landowner.

Cupp reviewed an aerial photograph with LWSR boundary overlay for the Gunnar Renner property in the Town of Millville, Grant County, on Munz Lane near Wisconsin Badger Camp. Mr. Renner wishes to construct an addition on the existing old farmhouse. The addition will be a few feet outside the Riverway boundary so compliance with the permit requirements and performance standards of the Riverway law is not required. Cupp noted the river is visible from the site and the new addition will be visible. However, the board has no jurisdiction. He said the Renner property is yet another reason for DNR to conduct a comprehensive boundary review and eventual modification.

Cupp said he completed work on the Marty Braasch timber harvest proposal in the Town of Watterstown, Grant County. The areas visible from the river have been delineated.

He said a general permit will be issued to Sarah Stroik and Dan Miles for modification of a house in the Town of Buena Vista, Richland County. The site is not visible from the Wisconsin River during leaf-on conditions.

Cupp will meet with landowner Tom Bremmer and DNR Richland County Forester Jake Elder on a salvage harvest of oak wilt pockets and storm-damaged trees on property in the Town of Orion, Richland County.

Cupp said he had met with Jon Calloway of American Transmission Company (ATC) regarding the reconstruction of the 69kv line between Boscobel and Lone Rock and the possible creation of a new river crossing near the Lone Rock Railroad Bridge. Cupp said he will continue to work with ATC on the viewshed analysis and assessment of the pros and cons of staying within the existing corridor vs. the proposed new corridor. Cupp said he is working with ATC and Matt Seguin, DNR Riverway Manager, on clearing of woody vegetation to provide access for soil boring equipment at a site on DNR lands in Richland County.

Cupp said he issued a management permit to Greg Schweppe for a timber stand improvement project in the Town of Troy, Sauk County.

The Budget & Office Committee report was presented by Chair Cary who reviewed the FY 15 budget. Cupp said the Legislature's Joint Finance Committee is expected to begin Executive Session actions on the state budget in the immediate future. No date slated for LWSRB budget review by the committee.

There was no report from the Personnel Committee.

The Executive Director's report was presented by Cupp who reviewed the materials in the board members' packets.

Under board members' business, a question was asked about the voyageur replica canoe trips for 2015. Cupp said the schedule would be released in May.

The DNR report was presented by Seguin who reviewed activities of DNR staff. He said fire control has been busy with wildfires. The Bridgeport boat landing is shut down due to a washout. The recently completed aerial survey of eagle nests revealed one new nest in the Sauk Prairie area and 4 new nests in Grant County. He said there have been numerous bear sightings in and around the Riverway.

During the public comment session, Timm Zumm of Spring Green and President of the Friends of the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway (FLOW) said the tragic drowning of the young girl at Gotham is a stark

reminder of how quickly the river can claim a life. He said FLOW continues educational efforts including the “Kids Don’t Float” program whereby life jackets will be placed at boat landings for use by visitors.

A motion to adjourn was made by Ritchie Brown, seconded by Cary. **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.

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