

# LOWER WISCONSIN STATE RIVERWAY BOARD

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## MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 8, 2020, RIVERWAY BOARD MEETING

The Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Board (LWSRB) met on Thursday, October 8, 2020, via Zoom to conduct a regular monthly business meeting. The meeting was called to order at 5:15 p.m. by Vice-Chair Gigi LaBudde. All members were present with the exceptions of Jerry Dorscheid, Ritchie Brown, and Randy Poelma. (NOTE: One vacancy exists.) Acknowledgment that the meeting was properly noticed was provided by Mark E. Cupp, Executive Director. A motion to approve the agenda was made by Dick McFarlane, seconded by Steve Williamson. **MOTION CARRIED.** A motion to approve the minutes of the September 10, 2020, meeting was made by Williamson, seconded by Steve Wetter. **MOTION CARRIED.**

The Executive Committee report was presented by Vice-Chair LaBudde who asked Cupp to review correspondence. Cupp said the proposed shooting range for the Ringlestetter property in the Town of Troy, Sauk County, has been withdrawn and the parcel has been sold to another buyer. He said a webinar on the social history of the Riverway he presented in concert with the Ramsar designation of the Riverway's Wetlands of International Importance can be seen at the Wisconsin Wetlands Association website. Marsha Curtis, LWSRB Executive Assistant, said the webinar will be posted on the board's website and Facebook page in the near future.

Cupp noted the Lower Wisconsin River Road Scenic Byway recently was recognized by the Saturday Evening Post as one of the ten best scenic drives in the country. Cupp said he is working with Timm Zumm, President of the Friends of the Lower Wisconsin Riverway (FLOW) and DNR Warden Al Erickson on a group tentatively to be known as the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Safety Coalition. The intent is to enhance safety for river users and emergency responders. Cupp also reported the LWSRB continues to follow state guidelines in response to COVID-19.

The Operations Committee report was presented by Cupp. A timber harvest permit application for a Gotham Sands SNA owned by DNR in the Town of Buena Vista, Richland County, was discussed. Plans call for liquidation of a pine plantation at the Gotham Sands State Natural Area. Removal of the pine trees will enhance restoration of the native plant community. A minor portion of the pine plantation is visible from the Wisconsin River during leaf-on conditions.

Because a portion of the harvest area is located within the Riverview Zone and because this will be a commercial sale, there are nuances to the harvest proposal that must be considered. If there was not a commercial aspect of the pine removal, the LWSRB could consider it a management activity and issue a management permit for the ecological restoration objective. However, because the pine trees will be sold, likely to a firewood vendor, that kicks the activity into the commercial timber harvest arena and the regulations for timber harvesting in Chapter NR 37, Wisconsin Administration Code and s.30.44(3), Stats. The visual impact will be negligible, but Cupp wanted to be sure the board is on firm ground before acting on a permit.

A motion to approve issuance of a permit with the following conditions was made by Wetter, seconded by Jim Czajkowski:

- The harvest shall comply with the basal area limits for the residual stand in the River Edge Zone and Riverview Zone, as detailed in Chapter NR 37, Wisconsin Administrative Code;

- In the River Edge 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 River Edge 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 River Edge 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 small regeneration cuts, if any, in the Riverview Zone to assure compliance with the applicable performance standards;
- The River Edge 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.**

Cupp said he was informed of a project by Alliant Energy to place fiber optic cable under the river via directional boring at the USH 18 bridge at Bridgeport. The project will require a utility permit from the LWSRB but there will be no visual impacts. Cupp will process the permit as soon as possible. LaBudde asked about requirements for invasive species Best Management Practices. Cupp said he would have to investigate. Wetter asked if DNR was involved in the permitting process. Cupp replied in the negative.

Cupp said the Hwy. 23 bridge re-decking project was expected to begin soon with bridge closure by the end of the month. He said permit extensions had been granted to Bob Bennett for a timber harvest and a timber stand improvement project in the Town of Clyde, Iowa County.

The Budget Committee report was presented by Chair McFarlane who reviewed the status of the FY 21 budget. Cupp said the LWSRB budget request for the 2021-2023 biennium had been submitted to the Department of Administration. The request will result in a \$3100 increase in each year of the biennium.

Under Personnel Committee business, Cupp said the annual evaluation for LWSRB Executive Assistant Marsha Curtis had been completed. She received an "exceeds expectations" rating for each category of job duties. Cupp complimented Curtis on her willingness to adapt to changes in the COVID-19 workplace environment.

The Executive Director's report was given by Cupp who reviewed materials in the meeting packets.

Under board members business, LaBudde thanked Curtis for the screenshare slides during the meeting. She reminded board members of the State Endangered Resources check off on tax forms.

The DNR report was presented by Jesse Kellogg, DNR Riverway Manager, who asked to be added to the safety coalition membership. DNR Forester Trevor Hamdorf reported the Prairie du Bay timber harvest had begun. He said there will be bid openings for the CTH OO sale and a pine thinning. Williamson said the

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new Riverway signage looks good. LaBudde asked about mowing of trails at the Avoca Prairie. Kellogg said some mowing of firebreaks has been done and a trail to the river for anglers will be done.

During the public comment session, Charles Rathman, FLOW Vice-President, noted FLOW will host a showing of the Rhythm of the River documentary at the Starlite 14 drive-in theater in Richland Center on October 22<sup>nd</sup>.

A motion to adjourn was made by Czajkowski, seconded by McFarlane. **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.