

LOWER WISCONSIN STATE RIVERWAY BOARD

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MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 9, 2021, RIVERWAY BOARD MEETING

The Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Board (LWSRB) met on Thursday, December 9, 2021, at the Wintergreen Conference Center in the Town of Wyoming, Iowa County, to conduct a regular monthly business meeting. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Chair Jerry Dorscheid. All members were present with the exception of Lara Czajkowski Higgins. (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 Gigi La Budde, seconded by Randy Poelma. **MOTION CARRIED.** A motion to approve the minutes of the November 11, 2021, meeting was made by Steve Wetter, seconded by La Budde. **MOTION CARRIED.**

The Executive Committee report was presented by Chair Dorscheid. Patrick Michaels, Business Analyst for the Savanna Institute, gave a presentation on the organization. The Savanna Institute recently acquired three farms in the Spring Green area. Agro-forestry is an emphasis of the organization with an eye toward improving water quality, implementing innovative practices, adapting to climate change, an integrated biodiversity of crops, and education and outreach. More information on the group is available at savannainstitute.org.

Cupp then asked the LWSRB to consider support of a noise ordinance proposed by the Town of Clyde, Iowa County, for stretches of STH 133 and STH 130 across the river from Lone Rock. The ordinance will prohibit the use of engine compression braking except in emergency situations in order to reduce noise emanating from the highway. Cupp emphasized the LWSRB action would be advisory only because the Riverway Board does not have jurisdiction over noise. The LWSRB has advocated for noise reduction in the past including a decibel limit on motorized watercraft. La Budde expressed support for the ordinance recognizing the LWSRB has no jurisdiction over noise. Wetter said he is familiar with the noise problems and said the benefit for the trucks is less wear on brakes. However, in Boscobel, the large number of grain trucks using "jake brakes" is a concern because of the noise. Tripp Stroud, a resident of Clyde, said opposition to the proposed ordinance has focused on the hill area heading toward/from Dodgeville. Cupp suggested the LWSRB express support for the ordinance specifically for the portion of STH 133 from the intersection with Bigelow Hill Road to the Lone Rock bridge and the portion of STH 130 from the bridge to the intersection with CTH C. A motion to that effect was made by La Budde, seconded by Wetter. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Cupp said he and the Executive Committee had met with State Senator Howard Marklein and State Representative Todd Novak at Wintergreen to tour the facility and to discuss possible acquisition by the State of Wisconsin. The elected officials were non-committal but said the effort would require a public and private partnership. Marklein suggested a plan be developed with hard figures for cost associated with acquisition as well as long term operations. Cupp told the board he will continue to work on developing a plan.

Cupp said all board members must complete the required training as dictated by the Department of Administration. Members experiencing difficulty with access to the system should work with Marsha Curtis, LWSRB Executive Assistant.

The proposed meeting schedules for the LWSRB and Executive Committee were presented. Cupp noted the schedule is subject to change related to availability of venues due to COVID. The option of meeting virtually will be on the table. A motion to approve the schedules for board and Executive Committee meetings was made by La Budde, seconded by Wetter. **MOTION CARRIED.**

LWSRB Executive Committee
Meetings

January 3, 2022
January 31, 2022
February 28, 2022
April 4, 2022
May 2, 2022
May 31, 2022
July 5, 2022
August 1, 2022
August 29, 2022
October 3, 2022
October 31, 2022
November 28, 2022

LWSRB
Meetings

January 13, 2022
February 10, 2022
March 10, 2022
April 14, 2022
May 12, 2022
June 9, 2022
July 14, 2022
August 11, 2022
September 8, 2022
October 13, 2022
November 10, 2022
December 8, 2022

The Operations Committee report was presented by Chair Wetter. Two management permit extension requests and one new management permit application submitted by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) were considered. Nancy Frost, DNR Wildlife Biologist for Sauk County, requested an extension to a management permit for a site on Beaver Road in the Town of Prairie du Sac, Sauk County. The activity will involve use of a FECON forestry mower to enhance the native plant community by removing unwanted trees and woody vegetation, including invasive species. The site is not visible from the Wisconsin River during leaf-on conditions. Herbicide will not be used because a portion of the DNR ownership is used for organic grazing by cattle. A motion to approve a two-year extension with retention of the exiting permit conditions was made by Wetter, seconded by Poelma. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Trevor Hamdorf, DNR Forester, was present to discuss an extension request and a new permit application. A tree planting on Munz Lane in the Town of Millville, Grant County, requires additional maintenance by removal of woody vegetation and invasive species. The site is not visible from the Wisconsin River during leaf-on conditions. A motion to approve a two-year extension with retention of the exiting permit conditions was made by Wetter, seconded by La Budde. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Hamdorf then described activities with a tree planting project in the Town of Eagle, Richland County. A previous tree planting effort at the site has not responded well so removal of trees and woody vegetation will be necessary prior to a new tree planting at the site, which will take place in the spring of 2022. Species to be planted include white oak, red oak, hackberry and sycamore. 7500 seedlings will be planted. A motion to approve issuance of a management permit with the following standard conditions was made by Wetter, seconded by La Budde:

- No existing structure(s) shall become visible from the river as a result of the activity;
- The LWSRB shall approve of any modification to the plans, as submitted; and,
- The landowner or his/her agent shall notify the LWSRB upon initiation and completion of the activity.

MOTION CARRIED.

Cupp said he met with Levi Plath of the Mississippi Valley Conservancy at their property near Boscobel to review activities associated with a proposed timber harvest and a prairie restoration effort. Cupp said the tornado damage was astonishing. The native plant community restoration is going well. Cupp said he had issued a new management permit for the prairie restoration activity.

Francis Schelfhout, Department of Transportation (DOT) Planner, gave a presentation on proposed retaining walls on the Iowa County terminus of the new Lone Rock bridge. He explained the terminus of the new bridge will be approximately 1000 feet west of the existing bridge. Studies have demonstrated that retaining walls will be necessary at the end of the bridge. A post and panel design will be used. The maximum height will be 25 feet. Schelfhout provided examples (Option 1 and Option 2) for colorization and rustication of the panels. The board discussed the two options with Option 1 being favored. Two motions were made. A motion was made by Wetter, seconded by La Budde, to approve the panels with the same colorization as the bridge. **MOTION CARRIED.** A motion was made by Wetter, seconded by La Budde, to approve use of the same rustication design as used on the piers. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Cupp then reported on permits he had issued since the last meeting. A utility permit for burial of fiber optic cable under the Wisconsin River at the STH 23 bridge near Spring Green was issued to Bug Tussel. A general permit was issued to Joe Friar for a timber harvest on lands not visible from the river in the Town of Woodman, Grant County. A permit was issued to Galen Bremmer for a timber harvest and new logging road in the Town of Orion, Richland County. The harvest will be conducted under a Managed Forest Law (MFL) plan. Also, Tom Bremmer who owns the adjoining parcel, expressed interest in a new logging road. Mike Finlay, DNR Forestry Supervisor, met with both landowners to discuss road location and design as well as harvest plans. Cupp expressed appreciation for Finlay's work with both Galen and Tom Bremmer on road location and design.

The Budget Committee report was presented by Acting Chair Meredith Beckman who reviewed the status of the FY 22 budget.

There was no report from the Personnel Committee.

The Executive Director's report was given by Cupp who reviewed the materials in the board members' packets including activities/correspondence, river flow chart and articles of interest. He noted there will be a solstice sunset observance at Frank's Hill near Muscoda on December 21st.

Under business from board members, Beckman said she recently viewed the Decoding the Driftless documentary, which aired on PBS. Cupp is featured in the documentary discussing Frank's Hill and the effigy mound building culture.

The DNR report was presented by Jesse Kellogg, DNR Riverway Property Manager. Kellogg said the 2021 gun deer season was successful. No major issues in the Riverway.

During the public comment session, Tripp Stroud from the Town of Clyde, Iowa County, introduced himself as a candidate for the 17th Senate District seat currently held by State Senator Howard Marklein. Timm Zumm, Friends of the Lower Wisconsin River (FLOW) Safety Committee, said a new supply of life jackets has been received. New kiosks are being proposed for Avoca Lake and the Wauzeka landing on the Kickapoo River. The new text app is being rolled out to assist river users and emergency responders.

A motion to adjourn was made by Wetter, seconded by Beckman. **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.