

LOWER WISCONSIN STATE RIVERWAY BOARD

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MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 10, 2022, RIVERWAY BOARD MEETING

The Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Board (LWSRB) met on Thursday, November 10, 2022, at the Avoca Village Hall. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Vice-Chair Steve Wetter. All members were present with the exceptions of Gigi La Budde 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 Meredith Beckman, seconded by Kim Cates. **MOTION CARRIED.** A motion to approve the minutes of the October 13, 2022, meeting was made by Beckman, seconded by Cates. **MOTION CARRIED.**

The Executive Committee report was presented by Acting Chair Wetter. Correspondence was discussed. Cupp reported he had met with Francis Schelfhout, Department of Transportation (DOT) Planner to review proposed minor design changes to the STH 130 bridge project at Lone Rock. Cupp said he approved the modifications. Cupp said he also replied to DOT regarding a repaving project on STH 130 in the Town of Clyde, Iowa County, east of the Lone Rock bridge. A small portion of the beamguard near the Otter Creek boat landing will be replaced. The new beamguard will be painted green to be consistent with the beamguard to the west. Cupp said he requested DOT place a note in the file that the beamguard be painted brown the next time replacement of the section from the bridge to the boat landing is replaced.

Cupp said he spoke to a group in Wausau who is working to establish the Great Pinery Heritage Water Trail on the upper reaches of the Wisconsin River. He encouraged the group to reach out to FLOW and the Kickapoo Reserve Management Board for information on their projects. He noted an open house on the latest draft of the new Riverway cultural and natural resources map was held at the LWSRB office on October 29th. An online version is accessible via the LWSRB website.

Discussion on meeting dates and times ensued. Cupp noted the LWSRB had held monthly meetings on the second Thursday of the month at 5:00 p.m. since the first meeting was held on November 1, 1989. Cupp noted there had been difficulties obtaining a quorum in recent months and asked for input from board members regarding the meeting time/date as a constraint on attendance. He noted options are available for virtual attendance except in the case of the Avoca location. Comments were heard suggesting that a hybrid of in-person and virtual is undesirable because Zoom participants have difficulty hearing. In an all-virtual meeting, everyone can hear much better. An earlier or later start was considered but concerns with travel at night with a later start were expressed. Going with an every other month schedule in the winter was proposed. Cupp asked board members to give the matter more thought for discussion at the December 8th meeting. He said additional equipment is needed to enhance the agency's technical capabilities for virtual meetings and noted the limitation on meeting locations if a virtual option is deemed a requirement.

The Operations Committee report was presented by Chair Wetter. Permit extensions and two new permit requests were considered for activities on Department of Natural Resources (DNR) managed lands. The presenters were Travis Anderson, DNR Wildlife Biologist, and Nick Morehouse, DNR Forester. Anderson reviewed managed activities for which extensions were requested at sites in Dane, Sauk and Iowa counties; specifically, locations in the Mazomanie Unit, Wyoming Bluff Unit, Bakken's Pond Unit and Avoca Unit. He described ongoing work to address invasive species control and removal of undesirable woody vegetation

for the purpose of restoring native plant communities; namely, prairie and oak savanna habitat types. The sites are not visible from the Wisconsin River during leaf-on conditions. A motion to approve two-year extensions to the permits was made by Ritchie Brown, seconded by Beckman. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Anderson then described two permit applications submitted by Savanna Hartman, DNR Wildlife Biologist based in Boscobel for sites in Richland and Grant counties. One site is located west of the Blue River Sand Barrens State Natural Area and will involve restoration of the barrens habitat type. The site is not visible from the river. The Richland County sites are located in the Town of Orion and include a bottomland location where the focus will be on black locust removal and treatment. The site is not visible from the river. The other sites are upland prairie remnants, mostly not visible from the river, where brush removal will occur to enhance the existing prairies. A motion to approve two-year management permits for these sites was made by Brown, seconded by Beckman. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Cupp said he assisted a landowner in the Town of Spring Green, Sauk County, with a question on removal of dead trees visible from the river and a landowner in the Town of Clyde, Iowa County regarding repairs to a barn damaged by a tree fall near the Otter Creek boat landing. He met with DOT officials regarding the proposed replacement of the CTH T spans over the Wisconsin River between Grant and Richland counties between Blue River and Port Andrew. The project is scheduled for 2027-2028. Cupp said he issued a management permit extension to Steve Williamson for a timber stand improvement project in the Town of Eagle, Richland County.

The Budget Committee report was presented by Chair Beckman who reviewed the status of FY 23 budget.

The Personnel Committee reported was presented by Cupp who said staff continue to pursue Equity and Inclusion training online. Board member training may occur either online or in-person prior to a board meeting at a future date.

Under Executive Director's report, Cupp reviewed materials in the board members' packets related to activities and correspondence and river flow.

The DNR report was presented by Jesse Kellogg, DNR Riverway Manager, who said the crew is working on preparing sites for fall hunting seasons and closing down areas for winter. Mike Finlay, Forestry Team Leader, reported on fall burning opportunities.

During the public comment session, comments were heard regarding reports of PFA contamination in upstream impoundments on the Wisconsin River; concerns with the Roth Feeder CAFO permit process; and citizen water testing.

A motion to adjourn was made by Beckman, seconded by Cates. **MOTION CARRIED.**