

LOWER WISCONSIN STATE RIVERWAY BOARD

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MINUTES OF THE MARCH 9, 2023, RIVERWAY BOARD MEETING

The Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Board (LWSRB) met on Thursday, March 9, 2023. The meeting was conducted in-person at the LWSRB office in Muscodia and via Zoom and was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Chair Gigi La Budde. All members were present. (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 Dan Hillberry, seconded by Steve Wetter. **MOTION CARRIED.** A motion to approve the minutes of the January 13, 2023, meeting was made by Wetter, seconded by Hillberry. **MOTION CARRIED.**

The Executive Committee report was presented by Chair La Budde. Correspondence was discussed. Randy Poelma reported he had appeared before the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy for his confirmation hearing. Cupp noted Ritchie Brown's hearing before the committee will be March 15th. Hillberry and Cupp attended the inaugural event for the 350th anniversary of Marquette-Jolliet journey from Green Bay to Portage up the Fox River and then down the Wisconsin River to the Mississippi River in June of 1673. A dinner and program were held at the Dousman Hotel on St. Feriole in Prairie du Chien. Cupp said the annual report from Pattison Sand Company had been received regarding the nonmetallic mining operation in the Town of Bridgeport, Crawford County. No mining has occurred in the Riverway, and none is expected in 2023. Cupp said he and Marsha Curtis, LWSRB Executive Assistant, have been working with the Department of Transportation (DOT) Scenic Byways Coordinator to enhance and update information regarding the Lower Wisconsin River Road Scenic Byway, STH 60 from Lodi to Prairie du Chien. Cupp attended a meeting in Prairie du Sac regarding construction of the Sauk City recreational bridge as part of the rails to trails program. The new bridge will be designed to mimic the old railroad bridge so there will be no net degradation in the aesthetic integrity of the Riverway. Dark sky compliant lighting will be utilized. Cupp will continue to attend meetings as requested and will monitor progress on the project.

An update on the Lone Rock bridge project (STH 130) was provided by Jake Gregerson of Kraemer North America, Barry Larson of HNTB and Greg Brecka from DOT. The LWSRB was informed of two significant changes from earlier plans. STH 133 west of the current bridge in Iowa County will now be closed for most of the summer months requiring traffic from the terminus of the bridge to Bigelow Hill Road to be detoured. Also, the south channel of the river will be closed to navigation for much, if not all, of the summer. A portage will be established on Long Island for canoes and kayaks, but motorboats and paddlers are to use the north (middle) channel for navigation during the south channel closure. Signage will be placed at boat landings and at the head of Long Island to direct river traffic down the detour route. The Otter Creek boat landing will remain open for motorboat usage and will be functional as a destination for paddlers but not as a launch site unless those users wish to use the portage or paddle upstream to the head of Long Island. Gregerson said the changes to the road closure and the channel closure were necessary because of the challenges with the site and transportation of girders, among other things. Larson there will be an educational outreach program in addition to signage at boat landings. He is working with canoe livery operators and is developing an e-mail distribution list for updates. Timm Zumm, President of the Friends of the Lower Wisconsin Riverway (FLOW), suggested tying into the new text alert system administered through Iowa County. Wetter asked if the causeway will withstand highwater events. Gregerson said Kraemer is prepared to repair damage from highwater should it occur.

A presentation was given by Muscodia area resident Frank Doerre on flora of the Town of Eagle, Richland County. Doerre and his spouse have been owned riverfront property for eleven years but moved there full time upon retirement two years ago. He has catalogued nearly 100 native and non-native plant species, including many at Frank's Hill, and shared slides of the flowering plants from riverbank to wetlands to dry prairie sites.

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The Operations Committee report was presented by Chair Wetter. Nate Fayram, Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Ecologist, gave an update on activities on State Natural Areas (SNA) in the Riverway. Fayram described the habitat restoration ongoing at the many SNA sites and the constant battle against invasive species. He noted the important work of volunteers at sites such as the Blue River Sand Barrens, Mazomanie Oak Barrens and Twin Lizard Mound Group. Fayram said fire is an important tool in managing native plant communities and burns are planned at over 200 acres in the spring of 2023. Extensions to the following permits for two-years were approved following a motion by La Budde and a second by Hillberry:

- >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.

La Budde and Hillberry reported the February 16th field trip led by DNR Forester Scott Lancaster was well attended despite the dubious weather. The tour of the Mazomanie North Unit focused on the timber harvesting and timber stand improvement (TSI) work as part of an overall project to enhance the native plant community. Cupp noted Lancaster did an excellent job in educating the tour attendees on the objectives of the project in both the short and long terms. The April field trip has not been scheduled. Cupp then said he had issued two permit extensions and one new permit since the last meeting. Extensions were issued to The Nature Conservancy for management activities at The Spring Green Preserve and to Mike Finlay on behalf of the DNR for activities at the Mazomanie Unit. Cupp issued a general permit for timber harvesting on lands not visible from the river to Walter Koehlein for a parcel in the Town of Orion, Richland County. The consultant is Rick Livingston. The harvest will be consistent with a Managed Forest Law (MFL) plan.

The Budget Committee report was presented by Chair Beckman who reviewed the status of FY 23 budget. Governor Evers made his budget address to the Wisconsin Legislature and now the budget process is in the hands of the Legislature.

There was no report from the Personnel Committee.

Under Executive Director's report, Cupp reviewed materials in the board members' packets related to activities and correspondence and river flow. He said there will be an observance of the vernal equinox at Frank's Hill, weather permitting.

The DNR report was presented by Jesse Kellogg who thanked Fayram for the SNA crew's help with the Black Hawk Unit project.

During the public comment session, FLOW President Timm Zumm noted Canoeopia will be held in Madison the weekend of March 10-12. Volunteers are needed to work at the FLOW booth.

A motion to adjourn was made by Wetter, seconded by Hillberry. **MOTION CARRIED.**