

LOWER WISCONSIN STATE RIVERWAY BOARD

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MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 9, 2023, RIVERWAY BOARD MEETING

The Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Board (LWSRB) met on Thursday, November 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 with the exception of 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 Bob Cary, seconded by Dan Hillberry. **MOTION CARRIED.** A motion to approve the minutes of the September 14, 2023, meeting was made by Hillberry, seconded by Cary. **MOTION CARRIED.**

The Executive Committee report was presented by La Budde. The guest speaker was Mike Finlay, Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Forestry Supervisor, who gave a presentation entitled, "A Look at Forest Health Issues in the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway for Private Landowners and Public Land Managers." Finlay provided updates on insect infestations related to spongy moth, emerald ash borer and two-lined chestnut borer and diseases such as armillaria and oak wilt.

Eric Canania, DNR Wildlife Biologist for Richland and Grant counties, then provided an update on the Cruson Slough dike construction project. Canania said the Cruson Slough area encompasses about 145 acres while the Smith Slough area is about 397 acres. The dike construction in the 1970s was focused on waterfowl habitat and was not a fishery-oriented project. The new dike repair project will begin in December and will take about a week.

The proposed meeting schedules for the LWSRB and Executive Committee were presented. 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 Ritchie Brown, seconded by Hillberry. **MOTION CARRIED.**

2024 BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE

January 11, 2024	Business Meeting	Muscodia - LWSRB Office
March 14, 2024	Business Meeting	Muscodia - LWSRB Office
May 9, 2024	Business Meeting	Sauk Prairie – Ruth Culver Community Library
July 11, 2024	Business Meeting	Muscodia - LWSRB Office
September 12, 2024	Business Meeting	Spring Green – Community Library
November 14, 2024	Business Meeting	Muscodia - LWSRB Office

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING SCHEDULE

January 2, 2024
January 29, 2024
March 4, 2024
April 1, 2024
April 29, 2024
June 3, 2024
July 1, 2024
July 29, 2024
September 3, 2024
September 30, 2024
November 4, 2024
December 2, 2024

Cupp noted George Brandt withdrew his name from consideration for appointment as a recreational user representative to the LWSRB. Brandt cited his lack of use of computer technology, particularly e-mail, as a major factor in his decision. As a result, the Executive Committee proposed a shuffling of committee assignments on an interim basis until a replacement is named. A motion to adopt Interim Committee Appointments for FY 24 was made by Cary, seconded by Hillberry. **MOTION CARRIED.**

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

Gigi La Budde (Chair)
Randy Poelma (Vice-Chair)
Meredith Beckman (Secretary)

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE:

Dan Hillberry (Chair)
Randy Poelma
Ritchie Brown
Bob Cary (Alternate)

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE:

Ritchie Brown (Chair)
Lara Czajkowski Higgins
Kim Cates
Bob Cary (Alternate)

BUDGET & OFFICE COMMITTEE:

Meredith Beckman (Chair)
Bob Cary
Kim Cates
Lara Czajkowski Higgins (Alternate)

Cupp noted his term as a member of the Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Board (LWCB) will expire on May 1, 2024. He was originally appointed by former Governor Tommy Thompson in December of 2000 and confirmed by the Senate in May of 2001. He has been re-appointed by subsequent Governors for four-year terms and re-confirmed by the Senate since that time. Cupp fills the slot reserved for a government official involved in river protection and has served as LWCB Chair for several years. Cupp said Governor Tony Evers appointments staff has requested an updated resume for re-appointment and Cupp requested support from the LWSRB. A motion of support from the Riverway Board was made by Brown and seconded by La Budde. **MOTION CARRIED.**

The Operations Committee report was presented by Chair Hillberry who noted the Lone Rock bridge project continues to progress nicely. Cupp said STH 133 west of the bridge in Iowa County is slated to be open by November 17th. Work will continue throughout the winter as weather conditions allow.

Several DNR management permit extensions were reviewed. All projects relate to prairie restoration and wildlife habitat efforts. A motion to approve two-year extensions for permits at the following locations was made by Cary, seconded by La Budde. **MOTION CARRIED.**

- DNR/Frost (management/extension)(Town of Prairie du Sac, Sauk County)
- DNR/Frost (management/extension)(Towns of Troy and Prairie du Sac, Sauk County)
- DNR/Anderson (management/extension)(Town of Arena, Iowa County)
- DNR/Anderson (management/extension)(Town of Clyde, Iowa County)

The permit request of Mike Finlay, on behalf of the DNR, for a timber harvest in Town of Prairie du Sac, Sauk County, was considered. The parcel is located at the end of Beaver Road. Cupp has conducted field inspection in conjunction with previous permit activities at the site. Plans call for harvesting of timber using a variety of

methods on land visible and not visible from the Wisconsin River during leaf-on conditions. There will be no harvesting in the River Edge Zone. Harvesting will occur when the ground is frozen or dry. Hand planting of Swamp White Oak, White Oak and Red Oak will follow. Site preparation has been undertaken under a previously issued management permit. Cupp recommended the issuance of a permit with the following conditions and the Operations Committee concurred. A motion to approve issuance of a permit with conditions was made by La Budde, seconded by Cary:

- In the 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 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 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 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 a request was received for an extension to a previously issued permit for Dan Wachter for a timber harvest on a parcel in the Town of Millville, Grant County. The consultant is Don Stram. The harvest area is not visible from the Wisconsin River during leaf-on conditions. A motion to approve a two-year extension was made by Brown, seconded by La Budde. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Cupp said a permit previously issued to Jeffrey Jahns and Jill Metcoff for a timber harvest in the Town of Troy, Sauk County had been amended to reflect additional proposed harvesting in the Riverview Zone. The first attempt at a sale was unsuccessful so more trees were marked and reviewed by Finlay. The area is under a Managed Forest Law (MFL) mandatory harvest prescription. The sale will be re-let by the consultant.

Cupp said he assisted several citizens with information regarding the Riverway regulations, some involved lands within the Riverway boundary but some were on lands outside the formal boundary. In the cases of lands outside the boundary, he emphasized the voluntary compliance with the intent of the law but noted it was not a requirement. In some cases, the citizens were prospective purchasers of property and had questions about potential impacts of the law on future plans for a parcel.

Cupp said he had issued three permits since the September meeting. A utility permit was issued to American Transmission Company for reconstruction of a line in the Town of Arena, Iowa County. The line is located north of the village near the road to the Arena to the boat landing and is not visible from the river during leaf-on conditions. Cupp issued an extension to a timber harvest permit for Tom Bremmer for a parcel in the Town of Orion, Richland County. Harvest plans remain the same as under the previous permit. Cupp issued a general permit to Cyndey Krutchen for a new house in the Town of Troy, Sauk County. The structure is located on Fox Road near the base of the bluff (Jerry Kaufman farm/father).

The Budget Committee report was presented by Chair Beckman who reviewed the status of FY 24 budget.

The Personnel Committee was presented by Cupp who noted board members should complete a mandated training module available online. Marsha Curtis, LWSRB Executive Assistant, is available to answer questions regarding the process.

Under Executive Director's report, Cupp highlighted a speech from the FLOW Science Symposium which discussed the origins of the Riverway project. He noted the inaugural meeting of the Cross Currents Heritage Center, a new nonprofit organization for the Tippesaukee property in the Town of Richwood, Richland County, of which he is President, was recently held. Cupp said he spoke to a sold out gathering at the University of Wisconsin-Madison Friends of the Arboretum regarding effigy mounds of the Riverway. Cupp reviewed an exciting project involving re-surveying of the Giant Ghost Eagle effigy mound near Frank's Hill with the help of Ritchie Brown, Steve Williamson, the Three Eagles Foundation, Cultural Landscape Legacies, and many others. Cupp said he will be speaking to the Arena Historians regarding the 350th anniversary of the Marquette-Joliet expedition. Cupp further commented on river flow and articles of interest in the board members' packets.

Under board members' business, La Budde noted the new trail at Phoebe Point on the grounds of Taliesin has been opened. She said the trail offers a beautiful view of the river and is best seen in leaf-off conditions.

The DNR report was given by Jesse Kellogg, DNR Riverway Property Manager, who announced he will be taking a position outside of the department. Matt Seguin, Natural Resources Supervisor, (former Riverway Manager) will serve in an acting capacity until a replacement is named. Mike Dampf, DNR Wildlife Biologist Supervisor, noted the Bakken's Pond dike repair project will begin in 2024. He said the focus of the wildlife program is on game species! Nancy Frost, DNR Wildlife Biologist for Sauk County, said the Long Lake dike repair project will begin in April- 2024 which will impact Bakken's Pond. An April drawdown is anticipated. Dampf said the plan is to allow nature to take its course to mimic natural water levels.

There were no comments during the public comment period.

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