

LOWER WISCONSIN STATE RIVERWAY BOARD

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MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 14, 2024, RIVERWAY BOARD MEETING

The Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Board (LWSRB) met on Thursday, November 14, 2024. 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 Rich Ten Pas and 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 Dan Hillberry, seconded by Ritchie Brown. **MOTION CARRIED.** A motion to approve the minutes of the September 12, 2024, meeting was made by Randy Poelma, seconded by Hillberry. **MOTION CARRIED.**

The Executive Committee report was presented by La Budde. Under correspondence, Cupp reviewed the October 27th event to celebrate the Riverway's 35th anniversary. He thanked all who participated in a successful event. Cupp said dedication of the new Lone Rock bridge (STH 130) was held on November 11th. Cupp was among the speakers at the bridge dedication.

The 2025 meeting schedule was considered. Cupp reviewed the proposed schedule of board meetings. He then asked Marsha Curtis, LWSRB Executive Assistant, to review issues and concerns with adequate Wi-Fi connections at venues when the Riverway Board meets at locations other than the board office. Curtis said the unreliability of the connection makes it difficult to assure a Zoom option will be available. The September LWSRB meeting at the Spring Green Community Library was an example where inadequate band width caused disruptions in the connection and eventually made it impossible to maintain the Zoom connection. Cupp said the board should determine the importance of maintaining a Zoom option for meetings as well as maintaining the "show on the road" scheduling of meetings outside of Muscodia. Meredith Beckman said maintaining a Zoom option is important for board members who live some distance away and in case of inclement weather or other potential attendance restrictions if in-person was the only option. Kim Cates favored retaining the Zoom option and said focusing on all meetings in Muscodia would ensure consistent access to Wi-Fi. Timm Zumm, President of the Friends of the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway (FLOW), noted the board still does get to other places via the field trip schedule that includes sites from Prairie du Sac to Prairie du Chien.

A motion to hold all regular board meetings at the Muscodia LWSRB office with retention of the Zoom option for 2025 with the following schedule was made by Poelma, seconded by Cates. **MOTION CARRIED.**

2025 BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE

January 9, 2025	Business Meeting	Muscodia - LWSRB Office
March 13, 2025	Business Meeting	Muscodia - LWSRB Office
May 8, 2025	Business Meeting	Muscodia - LWSRB Office
July 10, 2025	Business Meeting	Muscodia - LWSRB Office
September 11, 2025	Business Meeting	Muscodia - LWSRB Office
November 13, 2025	Business Meeting	Muscodia - LWSRB Office

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING SCHEDULE

December 30, 2024
February 3, 2025
March 3, 2025
March 31, 2025
April 28, 2025
June 2, 2025
June 30, 2025
August 4, 2025
September 2, 2025
September 29, 2025
November 3, 2025
December 1, 2025

Cupp then asked the board to discontinue publication of the board public meeting notice in the official state newspaper. Curtis described the requirements for publicly noticing a meeting via the state and board websites, noting publication in the Wisconsin State Journal is not required and the LWSRB is one of the few agencies continuing to use that format for meeting notices. Cupp recommended discontinuing publication in the official state newspaper. He added staff will continue to meet the legal requirements for publications as well as broad distribution of board and committee meeting notices and press releases regarding board activities, including board meetings. A motion to discontinue publication of the LWSRB meeting notices in the official state newspaper was made by Hillberry, seconded by Brown. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Cupp presented a proposed “Land Acknowledgement Statement” for consideration by the board. He said the language is based on the statement used by the Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Board and other agencies. The statement acknowledges the long tenure and attachment to lands within Wisconsin’s borders by indigenous peoples. Beckman said the statement should recognize our waterways as well as our lands. Brown said the board may wish to individually list the federally recognized Nations instead of the generic reference to a number. LaBudde said she liked the simplicity of the statement. She said the statement captures the desire to educate others about the importance of those who have called these lands and waters “home” in the past. Beckman volunteered to Chair a subcommittee to present an alternative with Brown agreeing to serve on the ad hoc committee. A motion to table any action on the item until the January 9, 2025, meeting was made by LaBudde, seconded by Hillberry. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Cupp said he had received correspondence from the Department of Transportation that the reconstruction of STH 60 from Gotham to Muscoda now is slated for 2027-2028.

The Operations Committee report was presented by Chair Hillberry. Cupp said an application was not received from Eric Rapp’s consultant so no action would be taken. A number of timber harvests and management permit applications submitted by Mike Finlay, DNR Forester, were considered. Background information on each parcel and the associated activities were reviewed.

A motion to approve issuance of a timber harvest permit with standard conditions for the parcel in the Town of Richwood, Richland County, was made by Poelma, seconded by La Budde. **MOTION CARRIED.**

A motion to approve issuance of a management permit with standard conditions for the parcel in the Town of Richwood, Richland County, was made by Brown, seconded by La Budde. **MOTION CARRIED.**

A motion to approve issuance of a timber harvest permit with standard conditions for the parcel in the Town of Pulaski, Iowa County, was made by La Budde, seconded by Poelma. **MOTION CARRIED.**

A motion to approve issuance of a management permit with standard conditions for the parcel in the Town of Pulaski, Iowa County, was made by La Budde, seconded by Brown. **MOTION CARRIED.**

A motion to approve issuance of a timber harvest permit with standard conditions for the parcel in the Town of Arena, Iowa County, was made by La Budde, seconded by Poelma. **MOTION CARRIED.**

A motion to approve issuance of a management permit with standard conditions for the parcel in the Town of Arena, Iowa County, was made by La Budde, seconded by Cates. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Cupp noted demolition of the Lone Rock bridge continues. Trestles and piers continue to be removed. The small pony truss bridge at the outlet of Long Lake will be the last bridge to go. Work will continue through the winter months.

Cupp reported the following permits had been issued since the last board meeting:

- Williamson (management/extension)(Town Eagle, Richland County);
- Clutter (management/extension)(Town of Troy, Sauk County); and,
- DNR/Finlay (management)(Town of Millville, Grant County).

Cupp described the actions as follows: an extension to a management permit with standard conditions for a timber stand improvement project on lands not visible from the river in the Town of Eagle, Richland County, to Steve Williamson; a management permit extension was issued to Dave Clutter for a prairie restoration on lands not visible from the river in Town of Troy, Sauk County; and, a management permit for timber stand improvement project was issued to Mike Finlay on behalf of the DNR in the Town of Millville, Grant County.

The Budget Committee report was presented by Chair Beckman who reviewed the status of FY 25 budget.

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.

During the DNR report, Harrison Stone, DNR Riverway Park Manager, reported on activities the Riverway crew was engaged in related to preparing for winter. Finlay provided a harvest update on the Mathews tract in the Town of Clyde, Iowa County; the Shea tract in the Town of Millville, Grant County; and the Fish Trap Flowage site in the Towns of Muscoda/Watterstown, Grant County.

During the public comment period, Steve Simpson of Spring Green expressed concern regarding flow management at the Prairie du Sac dam. Zumm discussed the work of the River Alliance of Wisconsin, the Cultural Landscape Legacies annual tour at the Black Hawk Unit's Battle of Wisconsin Heights site, and the 35th anniversary celebration.

Forest Jahnke of the Crawford Stewardship Project updated the board on the group's new organizational structure and thanked the LWSRB for a successful 35 years in administering the Riverway law.

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