

# Board of Directors Meeting Minutes



February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023

11:00am

Florence Natural Resource Center  
5638 Forestry Dr  
Florence, WI 54121

Invasive Species Coalition

**Members Present:** Bill Rice (Dickinson Conservation District, on phone), Steve Kircher (Forest County Conservation Dept., on phone), Larry Sommer (Lumberjack RC&D/FCAL), Sheri Denowski (Marinette County, on phone), Scott Goodwin (Florence County LCD)

**Members Absent:** Tracy Beckman (Lumberjack RC&D), Aaron McCullough (WDNR-Marinette), Justin Bournoville (USFS)

**Guests:** Jerry Piche (Menominee County)

**Staff:** Lindsay Peterson (Coordinator), Katherine Mentel (Project Manager), Tyler Norris (Project Manager), Amber Butterfield (DCD)

**Meeting called to order** at 11:02 am by S. Goodwin.

## Board of Directors Meeting

1. **Approval of Agenda** – Motion to approve the agenda as presented was made by L. Sommer/ S. Denowski.  
*Motion carried.*
2. **Approval of Minutes** – Minutes from the December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022 meeting were presented. S. Denowski noted that there was a staff member missing from the attendance. S. Kircher/L. Sommer moved to accept the minutes as amended. *Motion carried.*
3. **Grants & Treasurer's Report** – A. Butterfield led this portion of the meeting. The grant report reflects the current fiscal year spending, and everything is up to date. The SOGL Phrag and GLRI CWMA grants closed out in December. The undesignated funds are currently at \$8,564.16. The spending from the undesignated funds was used for event booth space and event supplies. Motion to put the grant report on file made by B. Rice/ L. Sommer. *Motion carried.*
4. **Project Updates/Reports**
  - a. **Events:** L. Peterson led this portion of the meeting. Since the last BOD meeting, WRISC held a successful Forest Health Workshop at Bay College in Iron Mountain, and there were around 60 people that attended. Last week, WRISC staff also traveled to Gaylord, MI to attend the MISC Annual Conference. It was a great chance to network with other coordinators in Michigan and learn about the new updates from state organizations. L. Peterson presented at this conference. L. Peterson also presented to the Niagara 5<sup>th</sup> grade class last Friday, and it was a fun and successful presentation! Looking forward, WRISC has an event each weekend in February and staff will be attending the NMU Job fair during the second week in February. Jumping ahead, WRISC will also likely be attending the WI Lakes and Rivers Convention in April.
  - b. **Grants:**

- i. The MEF Pathways grant was extended through the end of December 2023, and the MISGP 19 grant was extended until the end of March.
  - ii. Coming up, WRISC will be starting the GLRI Buffer zone project, which targets survey and treatment of invasive species around state and federal forest land.
  - iii. WRISC has a new MEF Cost-Share grant starting that will help WRISC set up our cost-share program. This project will also fund WRISC setting up a PL beetle rearing station for biocontrol. This will be based primarily on how Golden Sands RC&D does their stations, and the work will be ramping up this spring.
  - iv. WRISC should hear about the MISGP 22 grant funding by the end of March. There are four separate funds requested: one is the CORE funding, another is survey funding for Oriental Bittersweet, another is continued survey and management of European Frog Bit in Menominee Co., and the last includes treatment money for Wild Parsnip.
  - v. WRISC also applied for a small MI CBCW fund. This would help fund EFB signage in Menominee county and to do some outreach.
  - vi. WRISC is working on a SOGL proposal, with pre-proposals due Feb 14<sup>th</sup>.
- c. **Outreach:** social media has been going well, and our following is consistently growing.
- d. **Questions/Comments:** J. Piche asked for more information about European Frog-bit and what type of signage WRISC was planning to put out at the Menominee Co. parks. L. Peterson explained it would be identification, what to do if you find EFB, and a link to decontamination videos. S. Denowski asked what type of videos they would be, with L. Peterson clarifying they would focus on waterfowl hunting, paddle sports, and angling. WRISC has money through a GLRI Education grant to also work on decontamination videos. S. Goodwin asked if there was concern about WRISC having a TikTok with the restrictions being put in place in the State of WI, and K. Mentel said it was on her personal phone. L. Peterson stated that maybe WRISC could make a social media policy next year if the BOD wanted. S. Denowski stated that in Marinette nobody was allowed to use TikTok on the office network. For now WRISC will continue to utilize TikTok but will make note of the concerns and can readdress this issues at a later time if it becomes a problem.

## 5. Old Business

- a. **Leave of Absence (update):** L. Peterson stated that not much has changed since her initial email. L. Peterson plans to be back at the office Monday April 3rd. WRISC staff will be having planning meetings next week. L. Peterson will have Tues/Thurs time blocked out if people need to reach her. Starting February 9<sup>th</sup>, L. Peterson will be completely unreachable for two weeks. S. Goodwin was saying that Lyme Timber is having a professional breakfast at the beginning of March, and they would like an invasive species component. L. Peterson should still be able to attend or send K. Mentel or T. Norris in her place.
- b. **Annual Meeting 2023:** WRISC reserved the IM City Park Building booked for June 7<sup>th</sup>, and the park fee was waived at the City Council meeting January 16<sup>th</sup>. We will start reaching out to speakers/panelists. Some of the people/topics suggested were presented at the last meeting. The BOD meeting will follow the annual meeting and will include board elections.

- c. **DASH Subcommittee Report:** L. Peterson met with S. Goodwin and S. Kircher in December. The meeting was successful. The subcommittee discussed prioritization and barriers to success. Funding and staff were the two biggest barriers, but they explored doing short-term contract employees due to the window of time for the work. They are going to start pulling together policy and procedures to put together. They will likely schedule another meeting for March.
- d. **Undesignated Fund Spending Subcommittee (action):** T. Beckman said she would help with this committee. L. Peterson opened the committee to other board members too. L. Peterson feels it is pertinent to develop a policy on spending parameters for the undesignated funds. A policy would include guidance on spending approval, spending limit, accepting money, appropriate expenditures, etc. It's good to have a contingency plan in place. S. Goodwin and A. Butterfield said they will join the committee as well. L. Peterson will look to schedule a subcommittee meeting soon.
- e. **2023 Hiring & Wage Structuring:** WRISC is looking to post seasonal jobs, and would like to make the recommendation to the Dickinson CD board that the seasonal wage be increased to \$18/hr. WRISC is looking to hire two watercraft inspectors and will give hiring preference to Veterans. L. Peterson discussed details of the 2023 hiring plan, including that WRISC would also like to hire 2-4 Strike Team employees for survey and treatment work. The season runs from May 1<sup>st</sup> to the end of October. At the latest, WRISC wants everyone to be on by June 1<sup>st</sup>, but the end of season is more flexible. There is usually the opportunity during the mid-season reviews for staff to get a \$0.50 raise. The reviews usually happen the week after July 4<sup>th</sup>. L. Peterson requests a recommendation to the DCD BOD that the seasonal wage rate be raised to \$18/hr. for the 2023 field season. **S. Denowski made a motion to raise the rate for seasonal employees to \$18/hr., seconded by L. Sommer. Motion carried.** L. Peterson will write up the recommendation and S. Goodwin will sign it.  
In regards to the full-time WRISC staff, this wage increase recommendation will be discussed at the March DCD BOD meeting. A. Butterfield discussed that compared to the rest of the region, staff are underpaid. L. Peterson is awaiting data from the other CISMA rates in the state of MI. L. Peterson is one of the longest standing CISMA coordinators but also has one of the lowest pay rates. The WRISC budgets could be amended and would sustain the adjustment if WRISC were to raise the full-time staff rate. As new grants have been applied for, L. Peterson has been including a higher wage rate anticipating this change. The WRISC BOD will have to hold a special meeting in March to decide on a recommendation for the WRISC full-time staff wage rate. S. Goodwin will attend the DCD Board meeting in March to represent WRISC.

## 6. New Business

- a. **Event Assistance:** As mentioned before, WRISC has a lot of upcoming events. These are also great opportunities for partners to assist and be represented. L. Peterson shared details about the upcoming events, including the Youth Fishing Derby, Outdoor Expo at the Marinette Rec Center, and the Menominee Outdoor Show. L. Sommer brought up that Marinette was again included as part of the Lumberjack RC&D region, so they could possibly come to some of these events, and he would bring it up at their next meeting. L. Peterson will email the event details to the BOD.
- b. **Strategic Management Plan**
  - i. **Draft Review:** WRISC has completed a DRAFT for the new SMP plan for early review. This review is carried out every five years, and the WRISC staff have been working on it for the last couple of

months. There will be a survey going out to all partners based on the old SMP and on goal review. The draft will be updated and sent out to the BOD members to review prior to the April meeting. L. Peterson noted that this plan is formatted differently than the previous plan, as it's more specific and the goals are more measurable. The board questioned whether a strategic plan was a required document for the CISMA to have. While a SMP is not required, it is highly recommended, and grantors often request that projects align with strategic plan goals. The only document required for WRISC is our Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the USFS. The SMP helps guide the organization and keeps goals on track. WRISC added two new overall goals to the SMP, which were Communication and Funding.

- ii. **Priority Species List Update:** The current SMP includes a list of priority species for WRISC. This is an extensive list that was last reviewed five years ago. With the update of the SMP, L. Peterson is looking to update the priority list of species as well. Ideally, the list would be more functional if it identified the "top 10" priority invasives or top concerns for each county. This would include survey and treatment priorities and will guide which species WRISC pursues funding for.
- iii. **Surveys:** L. Peterson will send the draft out before she goes on leave and needs dedicated feedback from the BOD before the April Meeting. After the April draft, it will be sent out to all Partners for review and then in May a final Draft will be made to present at the WRISC Annual Meeting in June, when the new plan will be approved. A few different surveys will be distributed to the board and partners relating to the plan. One will be the assessment survey of the previous strategic plan and how successful WRISC has been at implementing that plan. Additionally there will be a survey for the priority species list review as well. Further down the line, there will be a survey accompanying the new draft plan.
- c. **Board Member Positions:** J. Piche and J. Bournoville are no longer able to sit on the WRISC BOD. J. Bournoville has left his position with the Chequamegon-Nicolet and has appointed his alternate, Amanda Pyke, to assume the position until his position is re-hired. According to the WRISC By-Laws, the person leaving can appoint an alternate representative from their MOU Partner agency to assume their seat on the board until the next voting period. J. Piche is no longer on the Menominee County BOD, so technically is no longer eligible to serve as an official WRISC BOD member. L. Peterson has talked with Sherry Dupont, County Clerk from Menominee County, who is going to bring the information to the next Menominee County Board meeting to see if there are any current members interested in joining the WRISC Board. In June, S. Goodwin, A. McCullough, S. Kircher, and L. Sommer's positions are up for election. B. Rice's position, which was appointed as a limited one-year term last year, is also up for election in June. Therefore, before that meeting, L. Peterson will need an official communication stating each member's intent, whether they intend to continue on the board or not. Several members indicated their willingness to continue at this point and they will submit formal communication prior to the June meeting.
- d. **2023 Board Meeting Schedule:** L. Peterson added the 2023 meeting schedule to the WRISC website. Some locations are not yet confirmed, so L. Peterson requested that respective county representatives assist in booking rooms for upcoming meetings.

## 7. Round Robin (Chance for WRISC partners to share updates)

- a. L. Sommer (Lumberjack RC&D): Lumberjack grant meeting will be tomorrow to determine funding awards. Seven counties have requested 12 grants, which is a little over \$90,000 dollars. The grant fund budget is \$60,000, so they will have to discuss which projects to fund. L. Sommer will report the findings at the next WRISC meeting. FCAL has not had any recent meetings, but the Mole Lake Tribe gave FCAL a \$3,000 grant. In total, the tribe gave away \$80,000. All the smaller lakes received some money. Usually, the money is used for CBCW efforts.
  - b. S. Kircher (Forest Co. LWCD): Steve will be working with Derek to set up the beetle cages for Purple Loosestrife. They will also be following up with the phragmites sites that WRISC helped treat in the fall.
  - c. B. Rice (Dickinson CD): DCD is discussing the salary structures. They are also working with MACD to advocate for designated funding from the state for CDs. A share of the money could be used toward benefits, which would help with employee retention. The DCD also recently hired a fundraising coordinator.
  - d. A. Butterfield (Dickinson CD): Added that the Fundraising Coordinator is named Andrew Finkel, and he will be focusing on improving the Tree Sale fundraiser and exploring new opportunities to help build capacity through funding. The DCD is partnering with CUPPAD on NextCycle to help develop a plan to tackle curbside recycling in Dickinson County. A. Butterfield has already spoken with a lot of local contacts and has many on board. Also, the DCD is looking at funding for vertical farming, and spoke with the Iron Mountain DDA about this project.
  - e. J. Piche (Menominee County): He reported that there are four new Menominee County Board Members, and hopefully one of the new members would be interested in being on the WRISC BOD.
  - f. K. Mentel updated that she is officially back in school and will be off on Mondays to accommodate classes.
  - g. T. Norris was able to wrap up the DCD MEF Stream Monitoring grant, which was a very messy project when he came in. T. Norris has also been doing updates to the WRISC website.
  - h. S. Goodwin (Florence Co LCD): He stated that there is a big erosion control project happening at Fay Lake with a lot of native planting restoration going on. Also, they will be doing a culvert replacement with \$190,000 dollars to work with. Florence County allowed them to buy some cool equipment, including a US-Made drone for \$14,000 dollars. S. Goodwin also got a wide-format printer, so WRISC may have the opportunity to produce large prints on vinyl. This printer will primarily be used to update all county boat launch kiosks and coordinate the messaging and information provided to be consistent throughout the county. S. Goodwin will be discussing hiring with his BOD/committee, and they are currently only paying \$13/hr., so he will bring up what everyone else is paying in comparison.
8. **Other Business:** None discussed at this time. Next meeting will be April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023, in Marinette, WI at the Wausaukee Ranger Station.
  9. **Future Agenda Items:** The strategic management plan will be discussed again at the next meeting.
  10. **Adjourn.** S. Goodwin adjourned the meeting at 12:52 pm.

*Minutes compiled and submitted by Katherine Mentel & Lindsay Peterson*

*Minutes approved April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Motion to approve the minutes made by S.Denowski/A.Pyke. Motion carried.*