

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes



April 5th, 2023

10:00am

*Conference Call-In option

Members Present: Bill Rice (Dickinson Conservation District, on phone), Steve Kircher (Forest County Conservation Dept., on phone), Larry Sommer (Lumberjack RC&D, on-phone), Sheri Denowski (Marinette County, on-phone), Scott Goodwin (Florence County LCD, on-phone), Tracy Beckman (Lumberjack RC&D, on-phone), Aaron McCullough (WDNR-Marinette, on-phone)

Members Absent: none

Guests: Amanda Pyke (USDA Forest Service), Jeff Carlson (Menominee County), Casey Allen (USFS Tech), Nick Cassell (UPRC&D)

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

Meeting called to order at 10:00 am by S. Goodwin.

Board of Directors Meeting

1. **Approval of Agenda** – Motion to approve the agenda as presented was made by S. Denowski/B. Rice. **Motion carried.**
2. **Approval of Minutes** – Meeting Minutes from the February 1st, 2023, meeting were presented. S. Kircher/B. Rice moved to accept the minutes as presented. **Motion carried.** Meeting Minutes from the special meeting on March 14th, 2023 were also presented. S. Denowski/A.Pyke moved to accept the minutes as presented. **Motion carried.**
3. **Grants & Treasurer's Report** – A. Butterfield led this portion of the meeting. All grants are on track except the WE Energies MEF PL grant, which is underspent due to lack of staffing during COVID. MEF Cost-share and the GLRI Buffer Zone projects have started. SOGL Phrag and GLRI CWMA are closed out and EFB is almost closed out. The undesignated fund balance is currently at \$8,564.16, which has not changed since the February meeting. Motion to put the grant report on file made by S. Denowski/S. Kircher. **Motion carried.**
4. **Project Updates/Reports**
 - a. **Events:** L. Peterson led this portion of the meeting. Since the last BOD meeting, WRISC has attended a number of events. Overall, all events were successful. L. Peterson will be heading to downstate MI next week for a Spotted Lanternfly workshop. L. Peterson will also be presenting at the WHIP Annual Meeting at the end of April.
 - b. **Grants:**
 - i. The MISGP 19 and EFB projects are in the process of closing out. WRISC was awarded a new round of MISGP Core Funding, with additional survey and treatment funds. These two funds will expand the EFB work and initiate Oriental Bittersweet surveying.
 1. A. McCullough mentioned that we should reach out to him and Dave Halfmann. They have done control work on state lands along the Bay of Green Bay for Oriental Bittersweet.

- ii. WRISC also applied for a small MI CBCW fund for some EFB signage, however this was not awarded. We were recommended to check out a larger fund through the Great Lakes Commission.
- iii. WRISC did not submit a SOGL project during this past round of funding, as the project funding categories were different this year and our anticipated project idea didn't fit as well to be competitive. WRISC will continue to look for additional funding sources and will revisit SOGL next year.
- iv. All other grants are on track.
- c. Hiring: WRISC is expected to be fully staffed this year and will likely be done with hiring this week.
- d. Outreach: Social Media outreach has continued to grow consistently.
- e. Questions/Comments: L. Peterson asked T. Beckman if WRISC could still place some materials out at the Sustainable Forestry Conference, to which T. Beckman agreed that would be a good idea and should be fine.

5. Old Business

- a. **Leave of Absence (update):** L. Peterson plans to be back in the office next week, but it could still be another week or two. There will be one or two more follow-up appointments in the near future.
- b. **Annual Meeting 2023:** The next board meeting will be June 7th at Iron Mountain City Park, which will be the Annual Meeting. The location rental fee is waived, and the down-payment will be refunded. We are still looking for panel speakers and are open to more suggestions.
- c. **2023 Hiring & Wage Structuring Update:** This is an update from the special March meeting. The DCD approved the WRISC staff wage increases and those went into effect April 1st. Hiring is going well, even though it is taking longer than anticipated. We are expected to have a full crew.
- d. **Strategic Management Plan Update:** L. Peterson sent out the Priority Invasive Species survey and is looking forward to having those surveys done ASAP. WRISC wants to cut the list down to the top 10-12 species for AIS, TIS, and EDRR. This survey can be distributed to anyone in our five counties. For the SMP review survey, we got a few responses. We received some good comments but would still like more feedback. The draft plan will be sent out end of April/early May for final approval at the Annual Meeting.

6. New Business

- a. **Event Planning:** Looking into the spring/summer, WRISC is starting to plan more events. K. Mentel and T. Norris have been working on early-season events, like the Invasive Species Trade-Up Days. Looking for any event suggestions or ideas. WRISC wants to plan ahead so we can get the events scheduled ASAP and have quality promotion. The sooner the better. S. Goodwin said there is an exotic pet surrender event June 17th in Florence Co.
- b. **Survey & Treatment Needs:** L. Peterson offered for WRISC to assist partners with survey and treatment priorities or needs. A. McCullough asked if WRISC is expecting to do Knapweed control around the barrens, so Lindsay will chat with him about doing that.
- c. **Board Member Positions:** Since the next meeting will include board elections, L. Peterson let Scott, Aaron, Bill, Steve, and Larry know they are up for reelection. Jeff Carlson will be formally taking over Jerry's role as the Menominee County representative. Amanda Pyke may fill Justin's position for the year, depending on the hiring process. If people want to run for reelection or run against someone, L. Peterson needs a letter of intent. She needs the letters no later than one week before the meeting.

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

- a. Amanda Pyke (USFS): Introduced their new permanent seasonal technician, Casey Allen. They are in the field planning process, with particular attention to Purple Loosestrife.
- b. Jeff Carlson (Menominee Co.): He is the newly elected county commissioner for district 7. He will be traveling down to Lansing for the MACD conference. Looking forward to learning more.
- c. Tracy Beckman (Lumberjack RC&D): preparing for field season. The Sustainable Forestry Conference is coming up in Florence County. Approved over \$60,000 to 9 different conservation projects.
- d. Steve Kircher (Forest County LWCD): They are about to start putting up PL Beetle cages. Heading to the WI Lakes and Rivers Convention. Getting ready for the field season. S. Goodwin has beetle sources and could possibly help. Also said they'll be looking out for GM aphids.
- e. Sheri Denowski (Marinette County LCD): They started field season and are doing Northern Pike monitoring. Hired three seasonal staff and will be focusing on a lot of EFB work again. Working with K. Mentel on the Invasive Species Trade-Up Days in May. Sheri was approached by someone inquiring about Menominee River AOC follow up management for invasive species. L. Peterson said that WRISC has previously helped with some work on the AOC Island management and has applied for grants to get additional AOC follow up funding but has so far been unsuccessful but would be interested in pursuing this.
- f. Bill Rice (Dickinson CD): The DCD approved salary increases for staff. Tree sale is in full swing. B. Rice will be stepping down from both the WRISC and DCD boards at their Annual Meetings.
- g. Amber Butterfield (Dickinson CD): Tree Sale order deadline is coming up. Hired a fundraising coordinator and he is doing a great job. Looking for a new BOD member. Started planning for DCD annual meeting in August. Getting ready to apply for some new grants.
- h. Aaron McCullough (WI DNR): Has the Wisconsin Conservation Congress and WI DNR Open House tonight in Wausaukee from 6-9 pm. A chance to vote for county CC delegates and hear local updates from DNR staff.
- i. Katherine Mentel (WRISC): Happy to say that we have more greenhouses on board for the Invasive Species Trade Up Day Events.
- j. Tyler Norris (WRISC): Looking forward to Purple Loosestrife work.
- k. Nick Cassell (UP RC&D): Mentioned again that the UP Wide EFB project is closing out shortly. Still working on the Lake Superior Phragmites project. Looking at some small AIS educational funds. There was a county jump in HWA downstate, so UPRC&D is looking to take a proactive approach. Will likely try to do another multi-CISMA/Partner project to include surveys and outreach efforts.
- l. Casey Allen (USFS): new seasonal tech for USFS. Looking forward to learning what the region is like.
- m. Scott Goodwin (Florence County LCD): had good applications for summer hires, but still looking to hire more staff. S. Goodwin was promoted to the county conservationist.

8. Other Business: None discussed at this time.

9. Future Agenda Items: Next meeting will be the WRISC Annual BOD Meeting on June 7th, 2023, in Iron Mountain, MI at Iron Mountain City Park.

10. Adjourn. Motion to end meeting made by A. McCullough/S. Denowski. S. Goodwin adjourned the meeting at 10:45 AM. *Motion carried.*

Minutes compiled and submitted by Katherine Mentel & Lindsay Peterson

Minutes approved on June 7th, 2023. Motion to approve the minutes made by T.Beckman/S.Denowski. Motion carried.