

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes



October 7th, 2020

10:00am

Conference Call Only

Members Present (on phone): Bill Rice (Dickinson Conservation District), Justin Bournoville (USFS), Aaron McCullough (WDNR-Marquette), Amber Butterfield (Dickinson CD Manager), Scott Goodwin (Florence County LCD), Dick Peterson (Lake Township, Menominee Co), Tracy Beckman (Lumberjack RC&D)

Members Absent: Steve Kircher (Forest County Conservation Dept.)

Guests: Charlene Peterson, Craig Aho

Staff: Lindsay Peterson (Coordinator)

Meeting called to order at 10:05 am by S. Goodwin

Board of Directors Meeting

1. Approval of Agenda – Motion to approve the agenda as presented was made by D. Peterson/T. Beckman. **Motion carried.**

2. Approval of Minutes – Minutes from the August 5th, 2020 Meeting were presented. D. Peterson/J. Bournoville moved to accept the minutes as presented. **Motion carried.**

3. Grants & Treasurer's Report – A. Butterfield led the financial discussion of current grant status and updates. The updated grant report is based off October 1st values. Several invoices for grant requests were just sent out in the last couple days, and a total of \$22,300 is expected in reimbursements. After several months, all MISGP grants are fully resumed. WRISC worked with grant technical contacts to obtain an extension on the MISGP Strategic Management Plan grant until July 2021. WRISC also chose to delay the WRISC Core Funding award and run that grant in 2021. Overall, the books and in-house budgets are on track. The Undesignated Fund sits at \$3,683.85 to date. L. Peterson stated that WRISC received some donations this summer through CBCW activities, partner donations, and supportive landowners. Motion to put the grant/treasurer's report on file was made by B. Rice/D. Peterson. **Motion carried.**

4. Project Updates/Reports

- a. L. Peterson led a discussion of current projects. Since the last BOD Meeting, WRISC has not participated in or hosted any public events or workshops. Ongoing at the time was the NAISMA conference, which started October 6th. L. Peterson did present on some CISMA items. The conference has been completely online, but easy to use and informative so far. The only upcoming event will be the UMISC conference in early November, which will also be hosted on an online platform. L. Peterson will be presenting three times at the event. One presentation is about WRISC's Volunteer Program, and the other is about the Pathways Guide project with WHIP and TIP. The other is part of a lightning talk session with other CISMAs. There may be a school workday next Friday, but it is not for sure yet due to COVID-19 concerns and school closings. Depending on how it goes, WRISC may seek to do other school workdays as this is a specific grant deliverable. WRISC will also be looking at doing some online webinars to help meet outreach deliverables.
- b. Grant updates
 - i. The MISGP Strategic Management Plan project has been formally extended to July 2021. WRISC received approval to resume spending on this grant, but there were some budget discrepancies on both ends (WRISC and State of Michigan), which were recently resolved. Therefore, WRISC will resume spending. The State is going to allow WRISC an advance on the money, up to the last 10% they usually withhold, in order to assist with the cashflow and to get the project up and

running. After the advance, WRISC will go back to monthly invoices. Some of the big remaining purchases will be for the Children's Museum and in-house equipment.

- ii. The WE Energies CCC grant is like most of the grants this year, being a bit behind on spending because WRISC was not able to hire extra field technicians due to Covid-19. WRISC will be looking at doing a short-term extension to help spend the grant down. Otherwise, the deliverables are on track. Despite everything, WRISC has still been doing a good number of treatments this year. Most of the treatments were follow-up, due to the high number of new sites treated in 2019. WRISC did not have the time or capacity to treat new sites that weren't EDRR this year. Next year, WRISC will target more new sites.
- iii. The EPA grant is going well. WRISC got the vDASH out multiple times this summer. WRISC was able to work out any operational snags, fine tune the systems, and eventually get divers out to pull Milfoil. Again, as with other grants, WRISC has a lot of field wages left because we were unable to hire extra field technicians. K. Mentel and K. Hafeman used the designated PM money, so use of tech wages were low. WRISC will be looking to extend this grant.
- iv. CBCW projects have been going well. Despite a slow start to the season, it has been a great summer for boatwash work. WRISC has followed Covid-19 guidelines for inspections, and made a short video explaining these guidelines at the beginning of the summer. A lot of groups shared the video. Boating season was busy and WRISC recorded strong numbers for the season despite its challenges, especially reduced staffing.
- v. WI Seagrass CBCW—WRISC assisted WI SeaGrant group with their boatwash inspections this year. The group gave WRISC about \$4,000 to help with coverage of landings in southern Marinette and northern Oconto Counties. Working at these landings was super successful, as they were busy and many of the people WRISC spoke to had never been contacted about the CBCW program before. CBCW work has been wrapped up, and WRISC is working on winterizing the units and putting them in storage.
- vi. The HWA MISGP grant project was also fully resumed. The grant was extended into 2021, as project teams were not able to implement any of the educational components during the pandemic. Survey work will resume soon, which usually goes from late November through February.
- vii. The Life After Phrag grants from SOGL and MISGP proved to be a little more hassle than usual this year. When planning was happening in the spring for these grants, MISGP funding was frozen, so the focus was on SOGL. Which for WRISC meant putting a lot of effort into starting up the cost-share program in WI. When MISGP resumed, the grantors and UPRC&D wanted the focus to shift back to spending down the MISGP funding. However, the MISGP funding does not cover WRISC's work in WI, therefore WRISC had to work hard to balance the spending and keep both grants separate. Other than that, treatments went well and WRISC had generated some good involvement in the program. Shout out to John in Marinette who went door to door in his area and helped us get a lot of people signed up for the treatment program.
- viii. The MEF Loose the Loosestrife partner project struggled this year. None of the project partners were really able to hire field crews, so not a lot of work got done. Lake2Lake CISMA was unable to do any work on their section of the river. WePIC was able to do two runs on their stretch, but they encountered troubles with their volunteers. A. Butterfield helped WRISC do a run of our assigned section of the river. WE Energies did their own run on the lower section of the river without WRISC's assistance as it was determined it was safer for the crews not to interact due to COVID-19 concerns. WE Energies did report major improvement on the lower river stretch.
- ix. The MISGP Core funding was resumed, but WRISC opted to bump the grant to the new year. It is a one-year project, which has many seasonal components and it was easier to delay the grant as opposed to reworking the workplan and timeline. This project will now start in January 2021.

The main focus is on Wild Parsnip, so WRISC will be doing some targeted education and outreach on that. WRISC is hoping to get some priority ROW sites done too.

- x. The GLRI-CWMA grant is progressing slowly. WRISC has been working on it a little bit with some control efforts. A big focus of grant was in-person workdays, so WRISC is going to do some planning to perhaps offer some online trainings instead. WRISC is still hoping to do some field workdays next year.
 - xi. WRISC still needs to complete the operating plan and finalize the contract for the GLRI-Pathways grant. This was delayed to allow for a delay in the funding which will be more useful in the next couple of years.
 - xii. The SOGL grant WRISC is partnered on with the WI DNR was awarded! Over the next few months, WRISC will connect with the WI DNR to go over planning for the project. For this grant, WRISC is going to help assist with invasive species management in a buffer zone around the DNR natural areas.
 - xiii. WRISC was awarded a new MEF grant from WE Energies. This is a 2-year grant (2021-2020) for \$91,000. WRISC is awaiting final documents. This grant will help fund strike team efforts, focused efforts on inland lake management, and includes some funding for the vDASH. WRISC will also be targeting private landscaped areas, and WRISC is going to host some invasive trade-in events, which will help WRISC move toward more restoration projects. Education and outreach will also be a component of the grant.
- c. Staffing—WRISC did not hire a summer crew. K. Mentel and K. Hafeman have been working hard this season at about $\frac{3}{4}$ -full-time.
 - d. L. Peterson is working on a fall newsletter that should be out next week.
 - e. WRISC's website and social media updates have been moderate. There have been some issues with posting to Facebook which is slowly being resolved. However, WRISC is still gaining followers and sees good reach when updates are shared.

5. Old Business

- a. **Partner Signatory Update**-- L. Peterson has not had a chance to do a lot of follow-up on this yet. She will do more after reporting is done, starting in November. WRISC will be sending out information on resigning for the MOU around January.

6. New Business

- a. **Winter Storage**— L. Peterson stated that WRISC is hoping to put the DASH in storage on Friday in the rented storage unit. As for the boatwashes, WRISC is hoping to store two of the units at Shakey Lakes Park in the pole barn, which is what WRISC did last year. C. Peterson said that the county is voting on the measure next Tuesday and will let L. Peterson know what is decided. As for the other two boatwashes, L. Peterson said WRISC is going to try to put them at the Florence office. They will be winterized beforehand. WRISC will still be using the ATV for late-season surveying but that will be winterized and stored as well when no longer in use. S. Goodwin offered to help with the vDASH storage if needed.
- b. **Program Memberships (MIPN, NAISMA)**— L. Peterson said that the program memberships for MIPN and NAISMA both expired this month. Both programs have been valuable resources for WRISC and include access to programs such as Play Clean Go and WIGL. The renewal cost for NAISMA at the advocate level WRISC was at is \$300 annually. L. Peterson recommends that WRISC continue at the advocate level. For the MIPN membership, WRISC was paying \$50 a year. L. Peterson recommends WRISC does the 2-year membership for MIPN, which is \$90. The memberships will be funded from grants as this is a fee generally written in to the budgets. Motion to approve the payment for membership renewals made by T. Beckman/A. McCullough. **Motion carried.**

- c. **Amazon Smile Account for WRISC**— L. Peterson said she looked at the program per S. Goodwin’s request at the previous meeting and it looked easy to set up. T. Beckman said it seemed like a good idea and it was super easy to set up. Even if WRISC gets a small amount of money, it can help cover annual meeting costs. T. Beckman suggested to remind the group with every communication so people will help donate to WRISC. L. Peterson is going to move forward with making an account.
- d. **CISMA Cost-Share/For-Hire Framework**—This was an initial discussion about WRISC potentially doing more for-hire/cost-share work. L. Peterson framed the discussion by highlighting the funding freezes experienced during 2020 and how adding a for-hire or cost-share component to WRISC could help diversify funding and increase stability for the CISMA through increased work opportunities. This could also help with having on-hand money to help with cash-flow. Overall, it could give WRISC a safety net if similar situations were to persist or present themselves again. L. Peterson had made calls out to other CISMAs to see how they run similar programs. L. Peterson plans to bring more information to December’s meeting but wanted to open the discussion to the board now. S. Goodwin said he is not opposed to discussing it more. He suggests that it would probably be easier to discuss at an in-person meeting. T. Beckman asked what kind of services WRISC would offer. L. Peterson said a lot of it would likely be inventory and treatment work but this is flexible and open to suggestions. WRISC gets asked to do invasive species inventories on private property quite often, but it is hard to get grant-funding for those private lands. WRISC already has a good framework for inventories. Treatment would be for certain species and could include chemical treatments. T. Beckman asked about liability insurance, which L. Peterson confirmed WRISC has. S. Goodwin said this type of framework could apply to the use of the vDASH unit too. J. Bournoville expressed that his initial thought was in the middle. He said WRISC may ultimately have to make trade-offs, in terms of people and tools. He is nervous about WRISC going from priority work to non-priority work. L. Peterson thanked the Board for their initial discussion points and will compile some additional information for the December meeting.
- e. **Off-season/Winter Planning**—L. Peterson said the season is wrapping up, and the crew is out treating a few remaining sites. There are a few more days of trail surveying and potential school workdays to do, but that is the last of the field work for a while. November/December involve data-entry and end of year reporting. There will be a lot of planning for L. Peterson’s maternity leave. K. Mentel and K. Hafeman will still both be on. The board congratulated L. Peterson on the news! L. Peterson will likely be gone for the February meeting, which can be discussed more in December. The HWA project will also be a big part of work this winter, and mailings will start going out in November. WRISC also partnered with UPRC&D to develop a grant proposal for a U.P wide HWA survey effort. This grant did not get approved this round, but the group was encouraged to reapply and may seek alternative funding sources. S. Goodwin said he has come across information about drone use for HWA work.

7. Round Robin

- a. Scott Goodwin (Florence Co LCD): said that their CBCW season was very busy and they contacted 2,000 more people than they usually do, for a total of around 8,000 contacts. Florence has wrapped up their lake monitoring, which covered 39 lakes. There was a possible scare about Brazilian Waterweed in the Pine River flowage. Scott’s staff collected samples for analysis and review. The sample was brought to Rhinelander, where the DNR thought it to be a native elodea. Next season, Florence staff are going to look more intensely at the area. Florence County was also trying to reenergize the Citizen Water Monitoring Network, which only has a few volunteers left. With COVID, it had fallen through this year. Florence is also looking at ordering bar coasters with AIS prevention information. The new AIS coordinator is helping the Florence County LCD set up an Instagram as well.

- b. Dick Peterson (Menominee Co): Dick mentioned that camping numbers continued to be strong into October. The revenue stream was up 15% from what they had projected. As far as the lakes are concerned, the Shakey Lakes Chain and Menominee River water levels are finally back down towards normal levels.
 - c. Tracy Beckman (Lumberjack RC&D): Tracy reported that not much is going on at LIRC&D. The council had an in-person meeting in July and have since postponed upcoming meetings. The CISMAS (WHIP & TIP) have still been able to operate under their grants.
 - d. Craig Aho (NRCS – Stephenson Office): Craig wanted to say hello and was glad to hear projects were still going on. He also mentioned that EQIP funding through NRCS was still available for invasive species control projects on private land.
 - e. Justin Bournoville (USFS): Justin said this year's camping revenues exceeded expectations. As for the weed program, they were still able to treat a lot and had a good year even if it was less than years previous. Justin said they had less staff and some staffing issues but were eventually able to hire a permanent seasonal staff member in September.
 - f. Aaron McCullough (WDNR): Aaron provided a brief update that they were focusing a lot on CWD sampling at the time and had done some invasives work on county forest openings. They are still short a wildlife biologist and the hiring freeze continues.
 - g. Bill Rice (Dickinson CD): Bill did not have anything to add, saying A. Butterfield and L. Peterson covered the updates very well
8. **Other Business:** The next WRISC board meeting will be December 2nd, 2020. The meeting will most likely be virtual due to COVID-19 concern.
9. **Future Agenda Items:** L. Peterson will include Cost-Share/For-Hire Work Continued Discussion on the next agenda.
10. **Adjourn.** Motion by D. Peterson/J. Bournoville to adjourn at 11:18AM. **Motion carried.**

Minutes compiled and submitted by Katherine Mentel & Lindsay Peterson

Minutes approved December 2, 2020. T. Beckman/ D. Peterson moved to accept the minutes as presented.