

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

April 21st, 2021 10:00am

Conference Call Only



Members Present (on phone): Bill Rice (Dickinson Conservation District), Amber Butterfield (Dickinson CD Manager), Steve Kircher (Forest County Conservation Dept.), Scott Goodwin (Florence County LCD), Dick Peterson (Lake Township, Menominee Co), Aaron McCullough (WDNR-Marinette)

Members Absent: Justin Bournoville (USFS), Tracy Beckman (Lumberjack RC&D)

Guests: Nick Cassel (UPRC&D), Steve Mulka (Breitung Township), Charlene Peterson

Staff: Lindsay Peterson (Coordinator), Kyle Hafeman (Project Manager); Katherine Mentel (Project Manager)

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. Kircher/A. McCullough.
Motion carried.

- 2. Approval of Minutes** – Minutes from the December 2nd, 2020 Meeting were presented. S. Kircher/ B. Rice moved to accept the minutes as presented. *Motion carried.*

- 3. Grants & Treasurer's Report** – A. Butterfield led this portion of the meeting. She stated that reporting for all WRISC grants was just completed, and we are now just waiting for reimbursements. Currently, only the EPA grant has been reimbursed. Overall, WRISC is on track for spending, but is keeping a close eye on the grants as some are nearing completion. A. Butterfield will send the total undesignated funds after the meeting. WRISC has not spent anything from the fund but has received multiple donations. Motion to put the grant/treasurer's report on file was made by B. Rice/ A. McCullough. *Motion carried.*

4. Project Updates/Reports

- a. L. Peterson led this portion of the meeting. Since the last board meeting, L. Peterson co-hosted a forest health webinar with the DCD and ABC. This event was well received and garnered over 100 participants. Other events include a school forest workday with the Iron Mountain Environmental Club, attendance at the Home and Garden show at the Marinette Expo Center, and virtual attendance at the WI AIS Webinar. WRISC was also supposed to attend a Kid Expo at the Marinette Expo Center, but it was postponed until August. The next big event WRISC will help with is the DCD Annual Tree Sale.
- b. The MISGP received a formal extension in July 2020. With this project, the big part left to do is the work with the Children's Museum, which is coming along. With setbacks from Covid-19, both the Strike Team funding and PL Project were not spent down much in 2020. Much of the remaining EPA funds are for vDASH work this summer, and then that project will be wrapping up. The CBCW19 project will be finishing this year, and the CBCW 2020 grant funding will be starting. L. Peterson and A. Butterfield are keeping a close eye on these grants so they stay on track. The HWA project was extended until April 2022. WRISC has completed the survey deliverables for the grant, but still has education and outreach deliverables that need to be completed. The Phragmites grant through the UPRC&D is going to be spent down this year. With the funding pause in MI last year, WRISC was not able to treat as much Phragmites in Menominee County. While spending down the MISGP Phrag, WRISC is looking to extend the SOGL Phragmites Grant. Looking into the summer, the Loose Leaf Loosestrife grant needs a lot of work. Due to staffing shortages, WePIC was able to run a survey on their stretch of river, but L2L CISMA was not able to complete any survey efforts. The MISGP Core grant was resumed in January and has greatly aided

CISMA operations. This grant also has set funding for Wild Parsnip work, so WRISC will be focusing on doing a lot of WP outreach and management this summer. The GLRI-CWMA grant may be extended, as WRISC was not able to host the intended number of workdays and events in 2020 as specified by the grant. The project agreement for the GLRI-Pathways grant was just wrapped up and WRISC will likely begin work on the project in the off-season. The SOGL project WRISC was partnered on with the DNR was just awarded. For this project, WRISC will be focusing on monitoring buffer areas around State Natural Areas, like the Spread-Eagle Barrens. L. Peterson has attended the initial meetings for this project but will know more soon. As for the MEF Pathways grant, WRISC plans to utilize the funding to complete inland lake surveys and fund Strike Team efforts. WRISC also received a MISGP Frog-bit early detection grant through the UPRC&D, which calls for some survey efforts and outreach events.

- c. For pending grants, L. Peterson submitted one SOGL proposal last night, and will find out in September if we were awarded it. The grant would run for four years. L. Peterson also stated that the other grant WRISC partnered on with the WI DNR was denied. Lastly, WRISC is waiting to hear about another CBCW grant, a GLRI Grant that WRISC partnered on with UPRC&D, and an EDRR grant.
- d. WRISC social media outreach has been doing great. There have also been some articles in the newspapers. As for the WRISC commercial, it is finished, but WRISC is waiting to air them until PCG week in June. D. Peterson asked if the overall funding is good for 2021, and L. Peterson said WRISC is on track for funding until 2023 at least. Because of the ample funding, WRISC may also be able to refresh some old equipment. S. Mulka ask about the milfoil efforts being done in Dickinson County. L. Peterson said that WRISC will be utilizing the vDASH for milfoil work in all of our counties, and the MEF Pathways grant does have some vDASH money written into it. For right now, the main concern with the vDASH is completing the prioritization guide for treatment. L. Peterson also mentioned that many lakes have experienced an increase in the cost of herbicide treatments for milfoil on their lakes, which is largely due to the increase in the cost of the herbicide used and Covid-19. S. Goodwin asked about the acreage deliverables for the vDASH work. L. Peterson said the EPA is flexible with the management acreage, and mostly wants us to be able to operate it efficiently. Looking toward the summer, S. Goodwin also asked what lakes L. Peterson is looking at for treatment. L. Peterson did not name any specific lakes but did say that she had some in mind and would finalize vDASH plans after Summer Staff training was complete.
- e. A. McCullough asked about the SOGL Buffer project and if we had connected with Carly Lapin. L. Peterson said she has been in contact with both Carly and Jason Granberg and looking at who owns property around the DNR areas. L. Peterson said she will share the notes from their meeting to A. McCullough, who will join the next meeting.
- f. S. Kircher asked about the WRISC PSA's and what market WRISC will air them in. The project itself started two years ago, and WRISC experienced setbacks due to COVID-19. WRISC will air the commercials on our social media, movie theaters, and also local TV channels.

5. Old Business

- a. **Partner Signatory Page Update-** WRISC has received 36 pages back, but still needs 38. The goal is to get them by the Annual Meeting. S. Goodwin said Florence Co. just approved theirs, and D. Peterson said Lake Township also approved theirs and would be sending it back.
- b. **CISMA Cost-Share/For-Hire Discussion-** After the last meeting, L. Peterson had sent out a survey regarding the cost-share/for-hire work, and the results were posted on the website. While the survey was a good start, the discussion will not be done by the Annual Meeting, so L. Peterson is leaning toward starting the work next year. Overall, the response for WRISC doing a mix of cost-share/for-hire work has been positive. L. Peterson will be getting in touch with the sub-committee to talk about the next steps that need to be taken.
- c. **Summer Hiring-** WRISC is slated to hire three Strike Team and two CBCW workers. TV 6 highlighted the job openings at WRISC as part of a UP-wide get-back-to-work campaign. Unfortunately, one Strike Team and one CBCW hires have backed out of the positions, so WRISC is still looking to fill those. L. Peterson

will be following up with some other applicants. However, training for Strike Team will still be the 1st week of May.

6. New Business

- a. **Annual Meeting Planning-** L. Peterson asked for thoughts on holding an in-person event this year. S. Goodwin did not think it was a good idea, even though Camp Daniel had an outdoor set-up. D. Peterson agrees that holding an in-person event would not be wise and does not know what WRISC would gain from it. L. Peterson did state it was a way to engage with Partners, and WRISC could offer small trainings, demonstrations of the vDASH and other equipment, and invasive ID and management. D. Peterson said it was a good idea and may be better to do next year when COVID-19 is not as much of a concern. L. Peterson mentioned the option of postponing it until August like in 2020. S. Kircher said he will be attending an in-person event at Keyes Peak, and has attended other in-person events. S. Goodwin has also attended in-person events, and says people wearing masks has been an issue. Overall, S. Goodwin thinks the Annual Meeting should be cancelled. D. Peterson said if the board delayed the decision, planning of the meeting would be rushed. L. Peterson agreed that the meeting should be cancelled and not just postponed. S. Kircher asked if the demos could be recorded and offered to the public virtually. L. Peterson said we could pre-record some invasive ID and management. D. Peterson agreed with the idea of still doing virtual trainings and demonstrations in place of in-person trainings. After taking suggestions on what to record, the final thoughts included video highlights about the vDASH, the WRISC Annual Update, plant ID, and management demos. The WRISC Board was in consensus to cancel the in-person Annual Meeting and offer virtual recordings instead.
- b. **Board of Directors Election-** L. Peterson said she would be sending out the same Google Forms "Ballot" that was used to elect the board of directors last year. The positions up for re-election include S. Goodwin, A. McCullough, D. Peterson, and S. Kircher. There are two vacant seats and one of those seats has a 1-year term left on it. L. Peterson told the BOD to reach out to people that may be interested, but to keep in mind that they must be a WRISC Partner.
- c. **Annual Work Plan Update-** L. Peterson posted to the Annual Work Plan on the documents page of the WRISC website. L. Peterson will be updating the work-plan every quarter, especially as treatment deliverables start to pick up this summer.
- d. **Strategic Management Plan Review-** L. Peterson said that it was time to do the annual review of the management plan and make sure WRISC is on track. This is also the time to make changes to the plan. Further discussion of the Strategic Management Plan will be done at the Annual Meeting. In the meantime, L. Peterson will be sending it out with a form attached for comments.

7. Round Robin

- a. A. Butterfield stated that the DCD Annual tree sale is coming up next week, and sales have been going very well.
- b. K. Hafeman did not have any updates. K. Mentel said she would be going on maternity leave in early July.
- c. S. Kircher said they rehired an AIS Coordinator. The new coordinator will work with FLOW, which covers the Florence, Langlade, Oconto area. They are also in the process of hiring a new technician. S. Kircher hopes to get new signage out at boat landings, as they had a problem with boaters tearing up the shoreline last year.
- d. N. Cassel said L. Peterson covered a lot of the work they had been doing. Historically, UPRC&D has been known for their Phragmites work, and even though that work is going to continue, they are looking at doing new conservation practices beyond just invasive species.
- e. D. Peterson said Shakey Lakes is looking to see how the water levels will affect shoreline vegetation this summer, specifically the amount of AIS present. D. Peterson also stated this is the earliest the ice has been off the water in a long time. Looking ahead to summer, D. Peterson predicts that camping reservations will continue to be high.

- f. A. McCullough said they are still short-staffed. It is down to him and 2 other people. Just recently, they were mapping Phragmites on Lake Noquebay, which turned out to be Native. A. McCullough and his crew are also completing prescribed burns in the Peshtigo area and are going to be planting trees they purchased from the DCD.
 - g. B. Rice said the WRISC and DCD staff covered everything he had to say. The big event coming up is tree sale.
 - h. S. Goodwin said they rehired their AIS Coordinator, who is currently in quarantine. They are doing CBCW and CLMP grants. S. Goodwin is looking to hire 7-8 people for CBCW this summer. Coming up, S. Goodwin will be going out to an Emerald Ash Borer site to get drone footage of stressed trees.
8. **Other Business:** The next WRISC board meeting will be the WRISC Annual Meeting on June 2nd, 2021 at 10:00AM. The meeting will be call-in only.
9. **Future Agenda Items:** There were no future agenda items discussed at this time.
10. **Adjourn.** Motion by B. Rice/D. Peterson to adjourn at 11:17AM. ***Motion carried.***

Minutes compiled and submitted by Katherine Mentel & Lindsay Peterson

Motion to approve minutes as presented by B. Rice/D. Peterson. Motion carried. June 2nd, 2021