

Board of Directors – Meeting Minutes

December 3, 2025 10:00am USDA Service Center, Kingsford, MI



Members Present: Shawna Dishaw (Florence County LCD), Sheri Denowski (Marinette County), Kayla Littleton (Forest County LWCD), Dana Nelson (Dickinson CD), Aaron McCullough (WI DNR, online), Connie Westrich (Menominee County, online), Sherry Pethers (FCAL)

Members Absent: Tracy Beckman (Lumberjack RC&D), Susan Krage (US Forest Service)

Guests: Garret Vucenic (Florence Co AIS Technician), Casey Allen (US Forest Service, online), Nick Cassel (UP RC&D)

Staff: Lindsay Peterson (Coordinator), Natalie Hunding (Project Manager)

Meeting called to order at 10:01am by L. Peterson

Board of Directors Meeting

1. Approval of the Agenda – L. Peterson suggested moving Item “6.a. Officer Reorganization” to the start of the agenda as Item 2. Motion to approve the agenda with amendment was made by K. Littleton / S. Pethers. ***Motion carried.***
2. Officer Re-organization
 - a. Nominations were called three times for Chair. S. Dishaw was nominated. S. Dishaw accepted her nomination. Motion to appoint S. Dishaw as Chair by S. Denowski / K. Littleton. ***Motion carried.***
 - b. Nominations were called three times for Vice Chair. K. Littleton was nominated. K. Littleton accepted her nomination. Motion to appoint K. Littleton as Vice Chair by S. Pethers / S. Denowski. ***Motion carried.***
 - c. Officers assume their roles.
3. Approval of the Previous Meeting Minutes
 - a. Minutes from the October Meeting were presented. S. Denowski made clarification on her round robin update for lake names Thunder Island - Eagle Lake and Beecher Upper Lake. Motion to accept the October minutes as amended made by S. Denowski / S. Pethers. ***Motion carried.***
4. Grant/Treasurer’s Report
 - a. D. Nelson presented the grant report. She noted WRISC received payouts from the U.S. Forest Service grants, two new MEF grants and new USFS award incoming in 2026.
 - b. L. Peterson reported the current balances of the WRISC Undesignated funds, with the Donation fund sitting at \$13,794.16 and the Cost Share program brought in about \$6,000 for a total account balance of \$18,169.12.
 - c. Motion to place the grant report on file was made by S. Pethers / S. Denowski. ***Motion carried.***
5. Project Updates
 - a. L. Peterson presented the project update report.
 - i. Events: there were a few workdays hosted with area students and several partnership meetings during the last period. L. Peterson also noted upcoming conferences and

trainings, such as the HWA Training in Torch Lake and the Stewardship Conference in January in Lansing.

1. The idea of partnering with Blackwell Job Corps on buckthorn management on the Blackwell walking trail was presented.
- ii. L. Peterson presented updates for all grant projects. Several grants will be closing out in the coming months including: MEF Purple Loosestrife, GLRI Boatwash, GLRI Public Outreach (seeking extension), GLRI Buffer Zone project, GLRI CWMA (seeking extension), MISGP Core 23, MISGP Core 24 (spring, seeking extension).
- iii. New grants awarded included two WE Energies MEF projects, including an in-house award for WRISC for three-years and a five-year partnership project for Michigamme Purple Loosestrife Phase 2. Additionally, GLRI funds from the CNNF have been awarded (\$66,000) but not finalized as of yet.
- iv. WRISC is also submitting several proposals to additional funding sources, including MISGP Core, MISGP partner projects with UPRC&D and North Country CISMA, and EGLE for lake survey work. There are a few other upcoming grant RFPs that will be explored. WRISC also may have leads for some potential contracting work for lake associations.
- v. Hiring: WRISC hired two HWA Survey Technicians, to start in January 2026.
- vi. A new website for Roots & Rivers Collaborative will be developed over the winter months and the current website will be maintained for several months to redirect traffic to the new one.

b. Please see report for full details.

6. Old Business:

- a. Non-Profit Filing Update
 - i. No progress was made during the government shutdown. Met with the account for financial review which is good to go. Secured EIN, now just waiting.
- b. Bylaws for Roots & Rivers Collaborative
 - i. L. Peterson presented bylaws for Roots and Rivers Collaborative. The document is quite similar to existing WRISC bylaws, with the primary change being the removal of the fiscal agent language. L. Peterson suggested that the mission statement also be adjusted slightly to better capture the perspective shift with the new organization to focus on habitat conservation more broadly beyond just invasive species management. Discussion was had and several minor suggestions and alterations were made to the document. A. McCullough also suggested adding a statement about the board's authority to hire an executive director for the organization. L. Peterson will develop this language to add into the final document. Motion to approve the RRC Bylaws with the edits agreed upon by the board was made by S. Pethers / S. Denowski. ***Motion carried.***

7. New Business:

- a. 2026 Board Meeting Schedule
 - i. L. Peterson shared the 2026 board meeting schedule. Meetings will continue to be held on the first Wednesday of even numbered months at 10:00 am central time. The Annual Meeting will be held in Forest County this year, likely in Crandon area with exact location to be determined. Some ideas for speakers were shared, including *Bad Naturalist* author Paula Whyman, and *How to Love a Forest* author Ethan Tapper. L. Peterson will explore speaker options.

8. Round Robin:

- i. **Aaron McCullough (WI DNR):** Working on extensive wetland project at Lake Noquebay wildlife area. Barrens restoration project at Amberg Wildlife Area, and prescribed burn set for the Peshtigo River State Forest later this week as part of a red pine research project.
- ii. **Kayla Littleton (Forest Co LWCD):** wrapping up shoreline cost-share projects; discussed partnership with Laona School Forest; did not overwinter Purple Loosestrife plants as they did not perform well this past year, will harvest plants in spring 2026 instead; Tech is working on rotational grazing and new agricultural projects with NRCS.
- iii. **Casey Allen (US Forest Service):** WRISC grant extension request is in the final stages; busy as usual, catching up from the shutdown and starting in on winter buckthorn management.
- iv. **Dana Nelson (Dickinson CD):** Spring tree sale is live; completed report for data logger project; wrote mini-grant for air quality monitors at local schools; will have Lights on the Lake display at Lake Antoine
- v. **Garret Vucenic (Florence Co LCD):** working on reimbursement requests; Crossett Creek culvert project; large culvert project with highway department slated for 2026.
- vi. **Sheri Denowski (Marinette Co LID):** Will be receiving funds from the WI DNR for European frog-bit crew; received Lumberjack RC&D grant for Harmony Arboretum caretaker to manage invasives, install signage, planning to do prescribed burn; FLOW AIS has applied for funding for county lakes group through WI Surface Water grant program; Hemlock Curve project is moving forward with contractor for the shoreline reinforcement and restoration.
- vii. **Sherry Pethers (FCAL):** No updates at this time.
- viii. **No additional updates**

9. Any other Business:

- i. Next meeting: February 4th, 2026 – Florence Natural Resource Center, Florence, WI (Florence County)

10. Future Agenda Items: Annual Meeting

11. Adjourn – meeting adjourned at 11:53am

Minutes compiled and submitted by N. Iwaszek & L. Peterson.