

Board of Directors – Meeting Minutes



February 4, 2026 10:00am Natural Resource Center, Florence, WI

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

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

Guests: Garret Vucenic (Florence Co AIS Technician), Casey Allen (US Forest Service)

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

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

Board of Directors Meeting

1. Approval of the Agenda – Motion to approve the agenda as presented was made by K. Littleton / S. Pethers. **Motion carried.**
2. Approval of the Previous Meeting Minutes
 - a. Minutes from the December 2025 Meeting were presented. Motion to accept the December minutes as presented made by S. Pethers / K. Littleton. **Motion carried.**
3. Grant/Treasurer's Report
 - a. There was no grant report presented at this meeting. L. Peterson explained the current issues and challenges with QuickBooks after the transition to the online version.
4. Project Updates
 - a. L. Peterson presented the project update report.
 - i. Events: event highlights included - The PFAS Summit, Invasive Species and Climate Change hosted by NAISMA, and December's HWA training downstate. Upcoming events include school presentations, the MISGP annual meeting in Gaylord, NISAW webinars, and Lindsay presenting at the Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Conference in April about Purple Loosestrife work.
 - ii. L. Peterson presented updates for all grant projects. Several grants are in close out and final reporting including: MEF Purple Loosestrife, GLRI Buffer Zone project, & MISGP Core 23. GLRI Pathway Education project and MISGP IS24 both received extensions.
 - 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 are waiting to set up agreement. Also received \$70,000 for MISGP IS25 Core funding which is geared towards supporting the non-profit transition. Also news that the MDNR GLRI EPA funding for AIS early detection work for UP CISMAs was secured and MDNR is working to finalize the QAPP. Subawards are expected in 2026.
 - iv. WRISC is also submitting several proposals to additional funding sources, including EGLE for lake survey work, NFF MAP funding opportunity, and Restore America's Estuaries Great Lakes Community Grant Program for Phragmites 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: HWA Survey Technicians are doing very well. Hiring for summer seasonals will be posted in March.
- b. Please see report for full details.

5. Old Business:

a. Non-Profit Filing Update

- i. No update on this, still waiting for designation letter.

b. Bylaws for Roots & Rivers Collaborative

- i. L. Peterson presented revised bylaws for Roots and Rivers Collaborative. Language for non-discrimination and liability and indemnification was added per lawyer's recommendation. This version has been sent to lawyer for review. L. Peterson will contact the board via email for an off-schedule vote of the document if no additional changes are necessary. General consensus was to proceed in this manner.

6. New Business:

a. Annual Meeting Planning

- i. Board Elections: L. Peterson shared the list of board members who were up for re-election in 2026. This included S. Krage, T. Beckman, C. Westrich, S. Denowski, and a vacant seat left open once S. Goodwin left. If board members are interested in continuing in their role, they need to email L. Peterson their Letter of Intent. Members are encouraged to cultivate new relationships to attract additional board members. L. Peterson would like to see additional representation from Dickinson County
- ii. Fundraising Opportunities: L. Peterson has been exploring speaker options. Speaker fees for the two potential author speakers ranged from \$2,000-\$4,000 initially, plus travel expenses and lodging. There was discussion about the cost and fundraising opportunities. S. Pethers committed \$1,000 towards speaker fees. L. Peterson and the Board thanked S. Pethers for her generosity! L. Peterson will explore pricing a bit further with each speaker.
There was also discussion about hosting a silent auction at the annual meeting. The board was in agreement that they would be able to secure items for the auction. L. Peterson will develop guidelines and some examples.
- iii. There was also some discussion on location, with the Crandon being determined as the best location in Forest County to host the event and with the City Hall being identified as a potential option. L. Peterson will look into this venue.

7. Round Robin:

- i. **Aaron McCullough (WI DNR):** Continuing Amberg Barrens restoration on about 80 acres, with a harvest done to open it up and only paid \$1,000 to get stumps sprayed. Marinette County Forest and Athelstane Barrens - targeting knapweed work and asked WRISC to help with that.
- ii. **Connie Westrich (Menominee County):** Concentration is on Shakey Lakes Park and Campground. Working on erosion issues. Looking to get guidance on tree planting, and has concerns about invasive Phragmites.
- iii. **Casey Allen (USFS):** Waiting to hear if the Butternut Lake area garlic mustard contract will be funded.

- iv. **Kayla Littleton (Forest Co LWCD):** will be doing Purple Loosestrife cages again for biocontrol. Technician Lucas has been doing shoreline projects around the county, and getting Healthy Lakes and Rivers projects lined up. Keeping busy with land information work load.
- v. **Sherry Pethers (FCAL):** Has a 17-foot aluminum canoe she is willing to donate to conservation org. Discussed wake boat challenges. Mentioned attractive billboard campaign she noticed while traveling in GA.
- vi. **Garret Vucenic (Florence Co LCD):** CBCW and LMPN grants have been awarded for 2026, pushing the Healthy Lakes Grant, and focusing on outreach efforts.
- vii. **Shawna Dishaw (Florence Co LCD):** Trying to do more with NRCS and farmers. Putting together a field day for EQIP/CSP
- viii. **Sheri Denowski (Marinette Co LID):** Have three summer positions open, one for Harmony Arboretum and two AIS conservation technicians for EFB. Exotic Pet Surrender event scheduled for May 30th.
- ix. **No additional updates**

8. Any other Business:

- i. Next meeting: April 1st, 2026 – Wausaukee DNR Ranger Station, Wausaukee, WI (Marinette County)

9. Future Agenda Items: Bylaws for approval if not approved in interim

10. Adjourn – meeting adjourned at 11:36am

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