

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes



April 3rd, 2024

10:00am

*Virtual Due to Weather

Members Present: Steve Kircher (Forest County LWCD, virtual), Scott Goodwin (Florence County LCD, virtual), Aaron McCullough (WDNR-Marquette, virtual), Sheri Denowski (Marquette County, virtual), Nicole Schutt (Forest Service, virtual), Amber Butterfield (Dickinson Conservation District, virtual)

Members Absent: Tracy Beckman (Lumberjack RC&D), Larry Sommer (Lumberjack RC&D), Sherry Pethers (Forest County), Larry Phelps (Menominee County)

Guests: Shawna Broullire (Florence County LCD, virtual), Nick Cassel (UPRC&D, virtual)

Staff: Lindsay Peterson (Coordinator, virtual), Katherine Mentel (Project Manager, virtual)

Meeting called to order at 10:01 am by S. Goodwin.

Board of Directors Meeting

1. **Approval of Agenda** – Motion to approve the agenda as presented was made by S. Denowski/A. McCullough. **Motion carried.**
2. **Approval of Minutes** – Meeting Minutes from the January 3rd, 2024 BOD Meeting were presented. S. Denowski made a correction that in the Round Robin update from Marquette County the management plan for the Harmony Arboretum was presented to her Development Committee, not to the Harmony Arboretum. S. Kircher/S. Denowski moved to accept the minutes with the correction made. **Motion carried.**
3. **Grants & Treasurer's Report** – A. Butterfield led this portion of the meeting.
 - a. Grants and spending are on track. The GLRI Pathways grant was recently submitted for final close out. L. Peterson met with partners on the MEF PL grant, and an extension will be filed shortly. WRISC is working with the DCD on the next round of reporting and reimbursement requests. We have not been reimbursed for the MISGP 22 grant. There was an expense of \$75 out of the undesignated fund, which sits at \$9,721.61. The WRISC cost-share undesignated fund has had no expenses this year. Motion to put the grant report on file made by S. Denowski/A. McCullough. **Motion carried.**
4. **Project Updates/Reports**
 - a. **Events:** L. Peterson led this portion of the meeting. WRISC has many upcoming events in April and May, which include meetings and workdays. If anyone wants to set up a workday or something similar, please get in touch with L. Peterson.
 - b. **Grants:**
 - i. We are working on the MEF PL extension request with WePIC and L2L CISMAS. L. Peterson hosted a meeting last week to discuss the specifics of the project moving forward.
 - ii. We received the MISGP 22 extension, so the grant will now end in December. This will help wrap up portions of the grant that were held up due to staffing shortages.
 - iii. We will be wrapping up the MI DNR HWA grant funding this winter. WRISC completed 75% of the grant, but due to staffing issues could not complete the final project. L. Peterson is

working with the grant contact to work out how to spend out and/or return the remaining funds.

- iv. WRISC received the MISGP 23 funding, which will start at the end of April and run for one year. Due to project overlap and staffing changes, this project will probably be extended. WRISC is looking to hire another full-time project manager by the end of year to keep this grant on track.
 - v. The UPRC&D received the HWA grant, from which WRISC will receive a subaward. However, they received much less than requested, which will impact the amount of work done on the project.
 - vi. WRISC is waiting to hear back on the GLRI CWMA proposal and LSR grant. When the ranking list was sent out, WRISC was ranked in the middle for the LSR grant.
 - vii. WRISC submitted the LSR project to the MEF grant fund, in case we do not receive the LSR funding.
 - viii. WRISC is waiting to hear if UPRC&D received the NOAA Phrag grant, from which WRISC would receive a subaward. This award will likely be announced in August
- c. **Hiring:** WRISC hired three new seasonals and has two returning staff, so we are looking forward to an efficient season.
 - d. **Outreach:** Outreach is consistently growing.
 - e. **Questions:** S. Denowski asked if the NOAA Coastal Restoration grant could help with the resurgence of Phragmites along the coastline. L. Peterson said the grant focuses on previously treated sites, so some may qualify. The project will identify high-quality habitats and work to restore these sites. For current Phragmites treatment, WRISC is offering cost-share treatments and will send out information for site sign-ups in the next month. S. Denowski also asked if the LSR could help with the Harmony Arboretum buckthorn work. It would, and even if WRISC does not receive the LSR or MEF grant, we would still be able to work on a way to assist in managing the area. S. Goodwin asked if there was a reason why HWA was cut so much. Nick Cassel said the unfortunate factor is that even though the UP has a large Hemlock distribution, it is considered less risky than downstate areas. HWA is trickling northward downstate, so the state wants to focus efforts on the leading edge of the infestation. Other reasons include a change in the funding ratios. The UPRC&D is looking at GLRI and America the Beautiful funds to help find additional resources for HWA work.

5. Old Business

- a. **Hiring Update:** At the last meeting, WRISC was in the process of hiring, Austyn was working on HWA work, and T. Norris had just left. Currently, only K. Mentel and L. Peterson are working for WRISC, but we have hired three seasonals that can start at the beginning of May. One person can stay on through October, and another may be able to do part-time work. We'll also have two returning seasonal employees, one field tech and one watercraft inspector.
- b. **Master Agreement Update – Dickinson CD:** WRISC presented the Master Agreement to the DCD BOD in March. They approved the agreement. It now comes back to WRISC. L. Peterson asked if the BOD wanted to officially approve the agreement. S. Denowski/ S. Kircher made a motion to approve the agreement. **Motion carried.**
- c. **Annual Partner Meeting Update:** WRISC had the fee waived for the rental space at Iron Mountain City Park. The \$75 holding fee will be refunded after the meeting. We are working to finalize speakers/presentations. The BOD Meeting following the event will be short and include Board

Member position elections. WRISC will have more information out in the next few weeks.

6. New Business

- a. **Event Planning:** WRISC has many upcoming events. L. Peterson asked Board Members if there were additional events WRISC could help facilitate.
- b. **Survey & Treatment Needs:** L. Peterson asked if there were certain areas WRISC should be looking at for treatment/survey in each county.
- c. **Board Member Positions/Elections:** The current BOD Members up for reelection are Nicole Schutt, Tracy Beckman, Larry Phelps, and Sheri Denowski. If interested in remaining on the WRISC BOD, L. Peterson will need a short email indicating a desire to run again. There will be elections of officer positions at the annual meeting.

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

- a. Nick Cassel: no comment
- b. S. Denowski: asked if L. Peterson was working with the Lower AOC. L. Peterson went to the Harbor Commission meeting in Marinette. Even if WRISC does not get the LSR grant, WRISC can fit the work into current grant funds. To start, WRISC will be doing inventory and some management. The Mayor of the City of Marinette said the city would also be willing to contract WRISC to do the work and possibly other work on city property. The WI DNR properties will have to fall under other current grant funding. S. Denowski said they are hiring two LTEs to work on the EFB work and have two returning staff members. These staff may also be able to help with the island work. Two lake associations are updating their IS plans, which may overlap with some of the work WRISC does. S. Denowski wants to keep in touch with the Trade-Up days and Harmony Arboretum.
- c. A. Butterfield: said tree sale orders close Friday, and pickup will be at the end of the month. She is presenting at the MI Recycling Coalition conference at the beginning of the month. A. Butterfield is also working on a funding application from the NRCS for vertical farming. She applied for MEF funding for erosion/restoration projects, which the Iron/Baraga CD partnered on. Waiting to hear back on an EGLE stormwater management grant.
- d. S. Kircher: said they are doing a potting day next week for PL plants to raise beetles. Also, they are wrapping up native plant sale orders in the next week and looking forward to another successful sale.
- e. A. McCullough: has staffing/funding updates. A. McCullough is no longer allowed to work on the ground on county land, because of PR/funding issues. This will affect knapweed control on barrens sites. May be able to have an LTE do some of the work. Did not get funding for a technician so will be short-staffed this summer. A. McCullough said he may be able to work with S. Denowski on some of the work on County Forest Land. It would be 1-2 days in the summer for some of the work. A. McCullough did mention Turkey Stamp funding for the Athelstane Barrens.
- f. N. Shutt: said they are hoping to hear what GLRI projects were awarded by the end of April/early May. Hiring both positions for the Florence office, which will help address many of the GM and WP sites. Will be approving the invoice for the WRISC Pathways Project as soon as it comes in. She will also be formally closing out the previous BW grant.

g. S. Goodwin: has no feral pig update. The last report was of a sighting on a trail camera near Goodman. S. Goodwin thinks they may be in the county forest. Will be hiring three, part-time CBCW workers, who will be in place by Memorial Day. On the 18th, Tammy Baldwin will be sending staff up to talk to the economic development committee about invasive species. S. Goodwin will be promoting WRISC and the work we all do in the area.

h. K. Mentel: gave updates on Trade-Up Days and some upcoming events.

8. **Other Business:** The next meeting will be the WRISC Annual Partner Meeting – June 5th, 2024, at Iron Mountain City Park.

9. **Future Agenda Items:** Elections

10. **Adjourn.** The meeting was adjourned at 10:46 am.

Minutes compiled and submitted by Katherine Mentel & Lindsay Peterson

Minutes Approved as presented June 5th, 2025. Motion by S.Kircher/A.McCullough, Motion carried.