

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes



January 3rd, 2024 10:00am

Dickinson Conservation District
420 N Hooper St
Kingsford, MI 49802
*Conference Call-In Option

Members Present: Steve Kircher (Forest County LWCD), Scott Goodwin (Florence County LCD), Aaron McCullough (WDNR-Marquette, virtual), Sheri Denowski (Marquette County, virtual), Sherry Pethers (Forest County)
Members Absent: Nicole Schutt (Forest Service), Tracy Beckman (Lumberjack RC&D), Larry Sommer (Lumberjack RC&D), Jeff Carlson (Menominee County)
Guests: Kayla Littleton (Forest County LWCD), Shawna Broullire (Florence County LCD)
Staff: Lindsay Peterson (Coordinator), Katherine Mentel (Project Manager)
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. Pethers/ S. Kircher.
Motion carried.
2. **Approval of Minutes** – Meeting Minutes from the October 4th, 2023, BOD Meeting were presented. S. Kircher/ S. Pethers moved to accept the minutes as presented. *Motion carried.*
2. **Grants & Treasurer’s Report** – A. Butterfield led this portion of the meeting.
 - a. The current grant report reflects spending through December 18th, 2023. Overall, grants are running smoothly. There is some confusion with the current GLRI agreements, but L. Peterson and A. Butterfield are working closely with project contacts to review all agreements with grantors. In good news, grant reimbursements have been coming in on time.
 - b. The year-end undesignated funds for the cost-share program sits at \$3,707.00, which is slightly different than the December 18th report which shows the total as \$3,182.00. On the December 18th report, the WRISC undesignated funds sits at \$9,796,61, which does reflect the \$1,049.14 travel stipend L. Peterson utilized to attend the Wild Spotter Training in December 2023.
 - c. Motion to put the grant report on file made by S. Kircher/S. Denowski. *Motion carried.*
4. **Project Updates/Reports**
 - a. **Events:** L. Peterson led this portion of the meeting. Recent event updates include all events since October. Highlights include WI AIS Partnership Fall Meeting, EFB Fall Collaborative Meeting, Wild Spotter Invasive Species Ambassador Training, and the HWA Training. Other events included school workdays and virtual meetings/webinars. January is set to be a busy month for events and meetings. WRISCs upcoming events include the MISC Annual Meeting January 16th-17th and the Invasive Species Collective meeting with the Forest County Potawatomi on January 24th. L. Peterson was also asked to attend an MSU Extension Strategic Direction Meeting, which involves advising MSU on what they can improve in our local area. L. Peterson will also be presenting at the Environmental Health Conference on February 27th-29th in Bark River, MI. Looking further ahead into March, WRISC is still deciding on whether we will attend the Outdoor Show in Marquette, WI. Since the event is three days, there is an opportunity to share a booth space with WRISC.

b. Grants

- i. The WE Energies MEF grant has closed out and final reporting is finishing up.
 - ii. The WE Energies PL grant will require an extension. L. Peterson is planning to meet with both L2L and WePIC CISMAS to discuss how all groups can catch up on deliverables. This grant fell behind during 2020 due to Covid-19 policies which greatly impacted hiring.
 - iii. The GLRI CBCW FY20 grant closed out during the summer. The next GLRI CBCW grant was started early due to high mileage demands after the truck accident. Thankfully, the deliverables can be attributed to the grant.
 - iv. The WI DNR SOGL Buffer project has ended, and reporting will be completed in February. Due to poor initial communication, WRISC did not get the level of participation intended.
 - v. This fall, WRISC received a sub-award from the MI DNR for HWA surveying. This grant will run through winter and include 10-12 survey days. A. Kirschner has stayed on part-time to help with survey efforts.
 - vi. Also, this fall, WRISC submitted four grant proposals. The MISGP Core Funding for 2024 is for operational activities. The GLRI CWMA grant is focused on ROW management, and WRISC received letters of support from all five county road commissioners. For this grant cycle, the GLRI CWMA grant was double the usual award and had zero match. WRISC also applied for a GLRI Landscape Scale Restoration grant, which would include survey and restoration along the entire length of the Menominee River. This grant required a 1:1 match, but WRISC was able to get more than that thanks to WE Energies and other wonderful supporters. WRISC is also considering an application for an EDRR grant, which would include delimitation surveys for the Flowering Rush found in Marinette County.
 - vii. WRISC is also partnered on two grant proposals, including the UPRC&D NOAA Project for Phragmites Coastal Restoration and the UPRC&D HWA Project. The former would include funding for WRISC to assess, survey, and restore coastal phragmites sites that were previously treated. The HWA grant would include funds to survey Hemlock trees along the coast and the Menominee River corridor on the MI side.
- c. **Staffing:** As mentioned prior, A. Kirschner remains on part-time throughout the winter to help with HWA surveys.
- d. **Outreach:** T. Norris is working on an article series for the WRISC blog and newspaper. They will be released monthly starting in January. K. Mentel has been working to consistently grow WRISC's social media. From Oct.-Dec. total online reach was 48,443 people.

5. Old Business

- a. **Wild Spotter Training Report:** After attending the Wild Spotter Ambassador Training in Idaho in December, L. Peterson is now an Invasive Species Ambassador. While L. Peterson was the only CISMA-level attendee, she had more experience than most individuals. Of the 60-something participants, most were from the US, but there were also international attendees. The conference was very engaging and focused more on social sciences than technical science. The conference focused on the overall approach to invasive species management and how to make people care about doing the work. One highlight of the event came on day three, when L. Peterson was put in a small group and had to work on developing a comprehensive IS Management Plan for a specific location in the US. L. Peterson's group took second place. At the end of the conference, L. Peterson felt confident that WRISC is on the right track when it comes to shifting our direction to be more sustainable and strategic.

- i. Comments:* S. Pethers asked if MIPIN was there, and L. Peterson said no. From the Midwest, there were two people from WI, and two from MI, including L. Peterson. S. Goodwin asked if the training will be an annual event, as it could be something WRISC looks to budget for. L. Peterson agreed that it could become a budget item as more information comes out, but it is likely to be a bi-annual event and not annual.
 - b. Truck Update:* Since the last BOD meeting, the DCD has purchased a new 2021 Chevy truck. A. Butterfield said the process to buy the truck was a nightmare. L. Peterson said we are on track to have two vehicles for the next field season, but we will still need to purchase a topper for the new truck.

 - i.* L. Peterson suggested that there should be a long-term buy/sell plan for vehicles, as the current Ford sits at more than 200,000 miles and will need to be replaced in the next year or two. A. Butterfield said she will discuss coming up with a plan with the DCD BOD. The DCD Chair is on board with having safe and reliable vehicles. It would be a good idea to sell vehicles before they lose too much value. S. Pethers said the plan should consider the year/mileage of the truck, and while one is in operation, we should save for the next one.
 - ii.* L. Peterson also mentioned that we should look at getting a 3rd vehicle. This vehicle could be a fuel-efficient, cross-over type that could maybe be rented in the summer to help with events or non-field work. A. Butterfield said she will discuss the idea with her BOD.
 - c. Priority Invasive Species List:* L. Peterson finished the Priority IS List. The formatting is based on the IS list from the BCK CISMA, which grouped species into priority and presence by county. The list is similar to WRISC's original list and has both MI/WI regulations on it. L. Peterson also made a top five species brochure for quick reference. L. Peterson said the list would be on the website by the end of the week.

6. New Business

- a. Seasonal Hiring:* WRISC will be posting seasonal positions by the end of the month. We will be hiring 2-5 workers, depending on which grants we receive. WRISC may have returning CBCW staff.
- b. 2024 Survey/Treatment Planning:* L. Peterson is open to suggestions for areas to survey/treat in each county and/or event or training ideas. S. Goodwin said he will put together a list.
- c. 2024 Board of Director's Meeting Schedule:* For the Florence and Menominee meetings, L. Peterson will call and schedule the meetings. A. McCullough said the Wausaukee Ranger Station can be used for the April meeting. S. Kircher said he will look at scheduling the Forest County Courthouse for the August meeting.
- d. 2024 Annual Partner Meeting – (date, time, location):* The date for the annual meeting will be 6/5/24. L. Peterson asked how the BOD felt about hosting the meeting at Iron Mountain City Park again. S. Goodwin suggested hosting it at the park this year and then creating a rotating schedule for the future, so it is hosted in each county. Therefore, in 2025, the meeting should be held in Menominee or Forest County. Everyone was on board with a similar morning format again with brunch. S. Denowski suggested doing the activity mid-meeting to help break up the presentations. L. Peterson also mentioned that the only negative feedback regarded the expertise level of the presentations and wondered if the meeting should be geared more toward the public or partners. The consensus was to keep the material geared more toward partners, but open to the public. There was an idea to provide an acronym cheat sheet. L. Peterson said she is hoping to have

speakers confirmed as soon as possible so is open to all ideas/suggestions.

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

- a. A. McCullough: noted they found a new round-leaf bittersweet infestation and shared it with L. Peterson. Unfortunately, the site was found post timber harvest, so the site will likely spread next year.
- b. S. Denowski: said she likes WRISC Facebook posts. She also asked if L. Peterson would be joining the meeting to talk about the AOC on the Menominee River, L. Peterson confirmed. Looking toward the field season, Marinette plans to hire three seasonal workers to manage EFB. They are also working on a management plan for Harmony Arboretum. There is a large area of buckthorn that WRISC may be able to assist on.
- c. S. Goodwin: has a new conservation technician/AIS coordinator (S. Broullire). Since the last LTE coordinator missed the grant deadline, the amount of lake monitoring and CBCW work will be much less for the coming season. In the fall, S. Goodwin completed two culvert projects that will need to be monitored for invasive species. These areas already have a lot of Wild Parsnip. S. Goodwin expects he and Shawna (technician) will be doing a lot of lab work in the summer and may be able to assist with testing for partners. On the feral hog front, there was a new report over the county border in Goodman, WI. They suspect the pigs are in the county forest.
- d. S. Pethers: said she found close to 400 Spongy Moth egg masses throughout her forest this year, and mentioned the Bear Lake area is a Spongy Moth hotspot. She is hoping her oil solution works well to kill the masses.
- e. K. Mentel: said she is still working to grow WRISC's social media channels, and has been wrapping up data entry.
- f. S. Kircher: said the forestry department has shown more interest in managing invasive species, as they have noticed the impact on recreation. S. Kircher has also talked with the new principal at Laona about managing the school forest. WRISC could help coordinate student workdays annually.
- g. K. Littleton: has been working with Rosie and Derek Thorn to raise PL beetles, and they had released some near the FCP Recreation Center. This will be a good site to monitor.

8. Other Business: S. Pethers asked about the loan that was taken out in August for payroll since it was mentioned that it was something to bring up at the next meeting. L. Peterson said there will be more of a discussion on funding and capacity issues at the February meeting. The next meeting will be held on February 7th, 2024, at 10:00 am. The location will be the Florence Natural Resource Center in Florence, WI.

9. Future Agenda Items: Capacity/funding limits & master agreement discussion.

10. Adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 11:43 am. ***Motion carried.***

Minutes compiled and submitted by Katherine Mentel & Lindsay Peterson

S.Denowski/S.Kircher moved to accept the minutes on February 7th 2024. Motion carried, minutes approved

