

Fox River Study Group Draft Minutes
Board of Directors Meeting via Conference Call
9:30 AM March 23, 2023

In Attendance:

Board Members: Cindy Skrukrud, Karen Clementi, Art Malm, Brian Witkowski, Rob Linke, Alyse Olson, Eric Johnson, Mike Pubentz

Others in attendance:

- Gabriel Powers, McHenry County Conservation District
- Steven Polaskey, Fox Metro WRD
- Leonard Dane, Fehr Graham
- Kat Gerdts
- Geoff Penman, City of Sandwich
- Jack Russell, FRWRD
- Emily Conti, EEI
- Kevin Fecske, Village of Barrington
- Andrea Pracht, HRGreen
- Lindsay Muth, Trotter and Associates, Inc.
- Carl Fischer, Baxter & Woodman
- Clint Bailey-USGS
- Scott Kuykendall, McHenry County
- Rishab Mahajan, Geosyntec
- Josie Woger, Fox Metro WRD
- Naren Patel, Fehr Graham
- Beth Vogt, FRWRD
- Jan Mangers, Sierra Club VOF
- Bob Morris
- Holly Hudson, CMAP
- Karolina Cho, Gewalt Hamilton Associates

The meeting began at 9:35 am with self-introductions

Minutes - Motion by Karen, second by Brian to approve minutes of the February 23, 2023 Board Meeting. Motion approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report - Karen presented the Treasurer's report. February 28 our balance at Old Second Bank was \$477,572.62. The BMO Harris savings balance was \$1,212.54 and the BMO checking balance was \$14,035.33.

Motion by Mike, second by Eric to accept the Treasurer's report. Motion passed unanimously.

Karen had invoices from the Secretary of State for \$10 for the annual report filing, IDNR for the Army Corps Study of \$90,300 (second payment of cost share) and \$6,625 reimbursing FRWRD for the first 50% of USGS 2023 monitoring program at Stratton Dam. Brian moved to approve payment; Art seconded. Cindy indicated the first 519 study payment of \$70,000 has been unstuck and sent to the Corps due to Chad Craycraft's efforts at the IDNR. The motion approved unanimously. Cindy will be submitting the annual report to the Secretary of State before April 1 and send copies to FRSG members and the Board.

Karen will be obtaining a quote for the 2022 audit. New CD rates are being investigated. Actions to distribute our accounts to assure FDIC guarantee in the event of additional bank failures are being considered. Recommendations will be made next month.

Chair's Report – Cindy requested those Board members who have not sent in their appointment letters should do so. Email to Cindy at foxriverstudygp@gmail.com. Cindy will send out a tally of who has and has not forwarded those appointments.

The "in kind time and expenses" records from 2022 should be sent to Cindy for our annual IRS 990 report. These records include meeting attendance time, salary, monitoring, travel and other expenses. and should be sent to foxriverstudygp@gmail.com, not Cindy's personal email address.

March 8th there was an Army Corps call on the habitat and connectivity (519) study that was joined by several board members. Field work remained to be completed for the hydraulics and hydrology (H&H) study at two dams. Developing and completing the H&H has slowed the 519 report progress. Brian Johnson, biologist for the Corps, reported at the Summit last week the draft for public review is expected to be available September 2023 with anticipated final headquarters approval in May of 2024.

The Corps has met with Elgin, St. Charles and Aurora. All are interested in the results of the modelling work all will meet again with the Corps when the modelling is completed.

The 519 study is expected to recommend that, based upon anticipated habitat and connectivity improvements, the dams from Carpentersville to Montgomery should be removed. Any final decision will be subject to the level of risk assignment due to local issues at any given dam.

New land exposed by dam removal will receive temporary native plantings to stabilize that land. The Corps has asked for a list of FAQs from FRSG to address as part of their outreach program. This list will be prepared by the dam removal communications subcommittee. Suggested questions should be sent to foxriverstudygp@gmail.com.

The Corps is planning to set up a meeting in April with IEPA and has requested IDNR and FRSG participation. The Corps has also put together a two page summary fact sheet for the project that Cindy will email to the group. This will be posted by the Corps and FRSG with links soon to be made available.

Cindy reported on the One Earth Film Festival March 9th where attendance once again suffered from bad weather. Brian assisted Cindy at the FRSG table for the event. Rob indicated the film was behind a paywall and could not be viewed remote from the event making it difficult to share with other groups. Cindy will check with FREP on how others might view the film.

Presentations seen at the Fox River Summit on March 16th will be available at <https://www.southeastfoxriver.org/2023foxriversummit>. Special mention was made of the neonicotinoid insecticides first introduced to agriculture in the mid 1990s . These pesticides are now pervasive nationwide and their highly destructive impact on bees and aquatic macroinvertebrate populations is becoming apparent. A recently published study from Cornell finds these chemicals have very limited crop yield benefits despite their environmental impact.

Continued collaboration with Wisconsin DNR and the Fox Waterway Agency on nutrient TMDL development as highlighted at the Summit will continue. Jenny Schiavone, the education director for Friends of the Fox River, presented on her 10-day expedition along the entire length of our Fox of September 2022. March 14, 2024 has been selected as the date of the next Summit.

Modelling and Monitoring Committee – Rob will be scheduling the first meeting of the year for this group. Holly Hudson of CMAP reported on the status of the Indian Creek Watershed Plan. This plan is expected to be completed and ready for presentation at our April meeting.

Rob discussed IEPA's MS4 permit extension activity. Specific water quality monitoring requirements of current MS4 permits have been met with the assistance of a spreadsheet-based tool previously developed for the FRSG by Limnotech. This tool is used to project the impact of various BMPs for phosphorous. There is interest in updating this tool, perhaps online access, for more general use and

benefit. Expansion of this tool's use might include total nitrogen and suspended solids. A request to Geosyntec for updating is anticipated. Scott Kuykendall of McHenry County is very interested in the possibility of participating with the further development and use of this tool given the potential regional continuity benefits it may provide.

Holly provided a link to the Lake County Stormwater Management Commission and Des Plaines River Watershed Workgroup's interactive website at <https://lakecountyil.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=4bec638a6b8f471eb4e7c3dee717f042> This may be a valuable model to follow. Watershed wide hosting and updating responsibilities are key areas of concern. Email questions, concerns and other interests to foxriverstudygp@gmail.com.

Communications Committee – Brian will be setting up the first meeting of the year so the committee can begin to offload some of the work from Cindy. Cindy reported the letters to contributing members and the 2023 invoices have gone out, with special thanks to Sarah and Norma at Fox Metro for their assistance.

The FRSG 2023 update to the Illinois Nutrient Reduction Strategy biannual report is being prepared by Cindy. Also, an updated FRSG fact sheet has been prepared and was distributed at the One Earth Film Festival and the Summit. The annual FRSG report for the IEPA is being prepared by Cindy. The report is due to be submitted by the FRSG and NPDES permit holders by March 31.

Dam Removal Communications Subcommittee – Art reported the committee has met twice this month and a memo outlining the committee's proposed direction following the 2022 FRIP update is available. The committee will assume a leadership position in advocating for dam removals but generally refrain from commentary on specific local projects. A FRSG website landing page for dam removal will be developed in the near term. The committee's schedule and activities will at least initially closely parallel that of the Army Corps. Additional members to the committee will be welcomed.

Annual Meeting Subcommittee – A decision still needs to be made for the date of this 20th Anniversary in person meeting to be held in Elgin. It will be either 10/26/23 or 11/2/23. Speaker recommendations are welcome.

NPDES Special Conditions Committee – Beth is setting up a meeting with IEPA to establish common SC language for the benefit of local permit writers. Those consultants involved in writing these permits are especially welcome to join the committee.

- Upcoming events/other updates
 - Become certified as a RiverWatch citizen scientist and learn how to monitor the water quality in your local streams! Training sessions are being offered throughout April at locations in and nearby the Fox River watershed. [Register here](#).
 - [FREP Noon Network](#) Wednesday, April 12, Noon-1:30pm: featuring the 7th Avenue Creek Project in St. Charles that resulted from 319 planning. Meet at St. Charles Public Works Training Room (1405 S. 7th Ave) and walk to site. Ken Jay & Chris Gottlieb with City of St. Charles and Logan Gilbertson with HR Green will be sharing about the project. <https://foxriverecosystem.org/fox/meetings-news>

- The Isaac Walton League Salt Watch Program is now available, using litmus paper tests for estimating salt concentrations. Correlation with conductivity would be helpful.

- Links to videos/slides of past events
 - [FREP Feb. Noon Network Video](#) "A watershed approach to uncover suitable habitat for vulnerable mussel species in the Fox River Watershed in WI and IL." Alison Stodola, Aquatic Biologist and Curator of Malacology with the IL Natural History Survey Prairie Research Institute.
 - "Total Maximum Daily Loads for Total Phosphorus and Total Suspended Solids in the Fox Illinois River Basin" (FOXIL TMDL). The study area includes the Upper, Lower, and Middle Fox River, the Des Plaines River, the Mukwonago River, Sugar and Honey Creeks, the White River, Nippersink Creek, North Mill Creek, and Channel Lake watersheds. The FOXIL TMDL study area covers approximately 1,060 square miles within Wisconsin. Project website: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/TMDLs/FOXIL>
 - Fox River Summit past presentations are at drop-down menu at <https://www.southeastfoxriver.org/foxriversummit> (2023 Summit not up yet)

The next FRSG Board meeting will be Thursday April 27, 2023 at 9:30 am.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00.

