

Fox River Study Group Draft Minutes
Board of Directors Meeting via Conference Call
9:30 AM March 28, 2024

In Attendance:

Board Members: Alyse Olson, FREP, Art Malm, Friends of the Fox River, Cindy Skrukud, Sierra Club, Debra Ness, City of Elgin, Karen Clementi, Fox Metro WRD, Rob Linke, Tim Wilson, City of St Charles

Others:

Anna Kootstra, Village of Wauconda

Bob Morris

Emily Conti, EEI

Holly Hudson, CMAP

Jan Mangers, VOF

Jeff Freeman, EEI

Jenny Murphy, USGS

Karolina Cho, Gewalt Hamilton Associates

Kat Gerdts, KDSWCD

Leonard Dane, Fehr Graham

Lindsay Muth, Trotter and Associates

Mary Beth Falsey, DuPage County Stormwater Management

Mike Ott, Strand

Mike Warner, Gewalt Hamilton

Naren Patel, Fehr Graham

Nora Bertram, City of Elgin

Steven Polaskey, Fox Metro WRD

Tim Holdeman, EEI

The meeting began at 9:32 am with self-introductions.

Minutes – Approval of the minutes of the Feb 22, 2024 board meetings was moved by Karen and seconded by Tim. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report – Karen presented the Treasurer's report. As of 2/29/24 our balances were as follows:

Old Second National Bank \$448,470.52

BMO Harris checking \$4,962.09

BMO Harris savings \$78,831.87

Withdrawals not shown include the \$100 Conservation Foundation One Earth Film sponsorship.

Karen continues to search for auditor recommendations. The one bill to pay was for reimbursement to Cindy for the Secretary of State filing fee.

Art moved, Tim seconded acceptance of the Treasurer's Report with approval for reimbursing Cindy. The motion was approved unanimously.

Modelling and Monitoring –

Rob indicated the update of the BMP tracking tool with HSPF and improved user interface is moving forward. Rob has meetings scheduled to discuss the tool with McHenry, DuPage and Kendall Counties as well as local communities.

The 604(b) microbial source tracking project was discussed as it appears we are unable to find a cosponsor with all the necessary water quality management and data certifications. It is possible to resubmit the project as a 319. Unlike the 319, the 604(b) does not have matching funds requirements and remains the preferred route.

Communications Committee – Cindy is working on making previous lunch and learn links available on our website. Also, Dr. Margenot’s (U of I, Champaign) presentation on quantifying phosphorous input to the river due to stream based erosion is being set for a lunch and learn 12:00 pm April 18.

Elgin’s Deb Ness, Nora Bertram and Mike Pubentz and EEI’s Tim Holdeman discussed current work evaluating Elgin water department’s studies addressing the siltation issues at their river intake and potential dam removal impacts . Also discussed was Elgin’s water master plan and differences between the models used by engineers previously to predict water levels in the absence of the dam. The durability of the “Lincoln/Lovell saddle” was discussed in the context of new soil borings. That saddle, if durable, has the potential to serve as a natural dam holding up water levels at the river intake. 2D modelling is being considered to evaluate whether the sand in the saddle would be able to withstand erosion at present day river flows.

A report from Elgin on alternatives for addressing the water intake improvements is expected this summer. Non-local funding sources for the work has yet to be identified. There haven’t been discussions with FRWRD to date on whether and how the choice to keep the Elgin dam would impact their NPDES permits. Rob indicated the FRSG interest in assisting Elgin where possible and Mike stated an openness to hearing comments and ideas from the FRSG.

Dam Communications Subcommittee –

Art indicated IDNR has received the final Carpenters dam removal plans for approval. The committee responded to the Corps’ first tranche of draft FAQ answers early this month but those FAQs have not yet been publicly released. The absence of Corps responses to questions posed last year has thwarted the committee’s ability to move forward with developing an appropriate work program for Aileron.

Rob stated final IDNR approval is at hand for bidding the Carpentersville dam removal this summer. Also, Rob voiced the Corps’ readiness and willingness expressed at the recent Fox River Summit to meet with any municipality to discuss their dam removal questions and issues. As he pointed out FRSG’s previous recommendations for phosphorous removal have all been accepted and met by our wastewater agencies. Dam removal is the next most important action to meet water quality goals but the best way to make that case is still up for discussion.

Art asked for Board interest sponsoring a second formal public opinion survey on dam removal. Benefits and concerns over the value of another survey need further discussion. Tim indicated St. Charles’ first municipal organization meeting to address the dam removal issue would be held this evening.

NPDES Special Conditions Committee

Cindy stated the committee is compiling the communications with the IEPA into a single document for IEPA review and approval. Art asked what permit Special Conditions language might look like for a municipal discharger whose community chooses not to follow dam removal recommendations of the FRIP.

Chair’s Report –

Rob thanked Cindy for updating our annual report to IEPA which Cindy will issue on our behalf this week. This report will need to also be sent to IEPA separately by each member community with an NPDES discharge permit. Rob suggested this annual report is one good example of FRSG’s important work products. This report can be viewed on our website.

Work on our ten year budget and work plan will be restarting this month.

Upcoming events/other updates

- Wednesday, April 10 – FREP Noon Network, Noon-1:30 pm – Fishes of the Fox River presented by Tristan Widloe, IDNR's Region 2 Streams Biologist at Hoover Forest Preserve's Meadowhawk Lodge. More information available here: <https://foxriverecosystem.org/fox/meetings-news>
- Tuesday, April 23 – Virtual One Earth Film Festival, 6 pm- *Carbon: The Unauthorized Biography* foxriverecosystem.org/fox/film-festival

Links to videos/slides of past events

- FRSG Lunch & Learn Sessions (find in our [FRSG videos folder](#))
 - ISWS Trends Report- presented by Elias Getahun and Atticus Zavelle, [Link to Trends Report folder](#) Feb. 29, 2024
 - Great Lakes to Gulf Observatory webinar presented by Laura Kammin and Jong Sung Lee at https://lewisclark.zoom.us/rec/share/JmJV_4gPWLxFFc2UtcSqjMo5Up6p6f9egCTfLn10MOzUn2hOmaSsTR2MfiBi3Ws.2Ygo-7xWakkyYcbYq. Passcode: 89S=e#f7 Nov. 30, 2023
- 2024 Fox River Summit [See agenda here](#). Videos coming soon at Southeast Fox River Partnership YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/@benlikesjazz>
- Fox River Summit 2023 presentations on [YouTube](#). Past summit presentations are at drop-down menu at <https://www.southeastfoxriver.org/foxriversummit>
- “Total Maximum Daily Loads for Total Phosphorus and Total Suspended Solids in the Fox Illinois River Basin” (FOXIL TMDL). Project website: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/TMDLs/FOXIL> Includes Informational Webinar - Oct. 31, 2023 & Project Introduction Webinar - Feb. 15, 2023
- Fox Waterway Agency's [Watershed Planning for the Chain O'Lakes Region](#)
 - Fox Waterway Agency March 13, 2024 presentation of Watershed-Based Plan for the Chain O'Lakes Region [slides](#)

Next regular meeting: Thursday, April 25, 2024 9:30 am. The 2024 meeting schedule remains the 4th Thursday Jan-Sept and the 3rd Thursdays Oct-Dec.

Karen moved and Cindy seconded the meeting be adjourned. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 am .

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Malm, Secretary, FRSG