

**Fox River Study Group Draft Minutes**  
**Board of Directors Meeting via Conference Call**  
**9:30 AM October 19 , 2023**

**In Attendance:**

Board Members: Alyse Olson, Art Malm, Brian Witkowski, Cindy Skrukrud, Rob Linke

**Others:**

Beth Vogt, FRWRD	Lindsay Muth, Trotter and Associates
Carolyn Campbell, McHenry Co, FREP	Maggie Cormack, RES
Faye Sinnott (at large)	Michael Warner, GHA (Fox Lake/Lake Barrington)
Jan Mangers, Valley of the Fox Sierra Club	Naren Patel, Fehr Graham
Jeniece Neville, EEI	Phil Cotter, Village of East Dundee
Jenny Murphy, USGS	Rishab Mahajan, Geosyntec
John Stein, Village of Cary	Scott Kuykendall, McHenry County P&D
Karolina Cho, Gewalt Hamilton Associates	Steven Polaskey, FMWRD
Kyla Donato, Aileron Communications (PR Consultant)	Zac Bonesz, City of Batavia
Leonard Dane, Fehr Graham	

The meeting began at 9:30 am with Cindy announcing a quorum followed by self-introductions. Cindy requested people sign the meeting attendance record online with the link included in the agenda.

**Minutes** - Motion by Brian, second by Rob to delay approval of the September board meeting minutes until the November board meeting. This will allow review following their late release. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Treasurer's Report** – Cindy presented the Treasurer's report for Karen. As of 9/30/23 our balances are as follows:

Old Second Bank \$448,100.04  
BMO Harris checking \$16,689.80  
BMO Harris savings \$131,827.73

**Withdrawals not shown:**

Porte Brown, audit payment #1 \$5,000  
Reimbursement to FRWRD for 4<sup>th</sup> quarter USGS monitoring, \$6,625.  
Sierra Club \$79.47

Bills to pay: Aileron Sept 5 invoice-\$8,000, Sept 29 invoice-\$8,299.27; ISWS Trends Report - \$18,409

Art moved to pay the bills. Rob seconded, assuring the stability of the ISWS. The motion passed unanimously.

**Audit** – The final pieces of the audit for 2022 are coming together and the “In kind letter appeal campaign: 2022” has regretfully come to an end. The same dance is expected in 2024 for 2023.

**Modelling and Monitoring** –

Rob stated the committee has been active on two issues. Their next meeting appears set for next Friday.

One of the issues at hand was applying for an IEPA grant to help cover the cost of a microbial source tracking project to determine if fecal sources creating the impairments in the watershed were human or animal. [One has considerable human public health consequence, the other virtually none. The two cannot be distinguished with conventional state mandated methods. – APM). The cost of a limited study could be in the \$75K range. It was proposed Geosyntec might develop the application for us in anticipation of their doing the study.

It was suggested the consultant best be paid for their efforts.. Cindy suggested anyone with an interest in participating in the study contact her. Rob was continuing to look for additional feedback on the work as well. Art suggested a national search of labs might be done to find the best available pricing for lab work necessary to do the kind of study that is currently envisioned. The committee will further discuss this question and bring a recommendation back to the boards.

The second item was the possibility of a joint FRSG paper with Geosyntec at the 2024 Illinois Floodplain Management Conference at Peoria in March. Rob will be presenting on another topic for the County and Rishab would like to have FRSG collaborate on their paper. All agreed it would be appropriate for Rob to participate.

Some confusion existed with INHS and interest in extending our contract with the Survey. Alison Stodola at the Survey suggested extending the contract through 2025. This extension will allow the post dam survey to be completed under this agreement and Alison is proceeding with preparation of the paperwork. Cindy stated Alison will be requesting help from local volunteers to tag and return mussels trapped during and immediately following dam drawdown at Carpentersville.

**Communications Committee** – Brian spoke of the zoom presentation Cindy has helped arrange from the Great Lakes to Gulf Observatory at Urbana. We will learn how to use the Observatory to look at Fox River data. Also, how the ISWS is using the Observatory database to monitor green infrastructure projects around the state.

Rob highly recommended getting familiar with the Observatory and its website which is a “*Way Easier*” interface to use than our current Access database.

Cindy also reached out to Elias at the ISWS who is leading the work on the “Trends” report to provide a webinar session on that subject. That might occur 1Q2024. The new USGS environmental database access will be another future program.

**Dam Communications Subcommittee** – Art stated we are now in the TSP public comment period. All need to spend some time thinking about and raising question for the Corps to address in their Recommended Plan and providing suggestions the Corps might find helpful to incorporate in their Recommended Plan.

Kyla Donato from Aileron gave us an update on their progress since coming on board in August to help with our public information/education campaign. That work focused on preparation for the Corps’ release of their TSP on September 5<sup>th</sup> and the three subsequent public hearings. Content was generated for the hearings presentations and a social media campaign was organized to rally public attendance and support at the hearings. Aileron also provided essential website updates to support this effort.

A second media campaign began following the public hearings. That goal was to get supporters to register their questions and support with the Corp by November 6<sup>th</sup>. Additional work included a series of press and public media statements highlighting cases of misunderstanding and misinformation as well as the environmental and economic advantages of dam removal. This will be the subject of a third social and print media campaign. This third campaign will also include a public survey by the FRSG whose results will be submitted to the Corps November 6<sup>th</sup>.and provide a basis for garnering political support among public officials.

Aileron is also working on template “letters to the editor” showing public support to municipal officials who will become a growing focus of our public outreach. Kyla asked for anyone interested in making a public statement to contact her.

Cindy wanted to emphasize the importance of getting information from first responders about the safety aspects of dam removal. Art cited a potential source who was onsite when the two Elgin firemen were killed at Kimball Street.

Art discussed conversations he had with the South Elgin trustee concerned about sediment testing. A lot of significant information is expected to be coming out of the Corp in a manner and at a time unknown, but after November 6<sup>th</sup>.

Cindy noted Tim is at an internal St. Charles meeting about the dam issue and was not able to attend this meeting.

### **NPDES Special Conditions Committee**

Karen was currently on a call with the IEPA discussing related matters . According to Beth, FRWRD’s last two permits out for renewal have been submitted but not yet responded to by IEPA. Beth went on to describe the highly structured submittals.

**Chair’s Report** – Cindy highlighted the FRSG draft formal letter to the USACE recommending adoption of the TSP along with key backup documents. Rob motioned to approve Cindy sending the draft letter to the Corps. Bryan seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Upcoming events/other updates**

- Find McHenry County BMP Talks & Tours upcoming programs and videos of most past events at <https://tinyurl.com/FridayBMPTours> Next program is Salt Smart Training and Certification for Parking Lots and Sidewalks on Tuesday, Oct. 24 8 am -1 pm at Ringers Landscaping 2101 Rte 176, Crystal Lake. There is a \$25 fee for this program as attendees at this session will receive a certification they have completed the new Salt Smart training program. Sign up at [www.mchenryh2o.com](http://www.mchenryh2o.com)
- Tyler Creek Watershed Coalition annual meeting, Wednesday, Oct. 25, at 7 pm at Judson University in the Reed Room on the first floor of the Lindner Tower (500 W. River Rd, Elgin). Presentation live stream by Alison Stodola, Curator of Malacology at INHS, on the history and current research on the mussels within the wadable streams of Illinois. Mussel shells from our local streams will be on display. Refreshments served.

- Army Corps Study Public Comment Period on their Fox River Connectivity & Habitat Study ends on Nov. 6. The draft PIR/EA is available online at the following link: <https://www.lrc.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works-Projects/Public-Review-Documents/>. Comments and/or questions can be sent to Mr. Ryan Johnson, Biologist, at [Fox-River-Study@usace.army.mil](mailto:Fox-River-Study@usace.army.mil).
- FREP Program on Wednesday, November 8th, 1 pm at the Montgomery Village Hall Lower Level (200 N. River St. Montgomery). Alison Paul and Kyla Muhammad with The Conservation Foundation will present on "Equity in Nature Access and Environmental Justice." There will be a brief membership meeting prior tthe program. For more information please visit: <https://foxriverecosystem.org/fox/meetings-news>
- FRSG Annual Meeting 9am-Noon, Thursday Nov. 9 at Heritage Ballroom, Centre of Elgin, 100 Symphony Way, Elgin RSVP by Nov. 1 at <https://forms.gle/nDFFLKX5V4BwHsCm6>
- Morning Coffee & Learn Session: Great Lakes to Gulf Observatory- webinar at 9:30 am, Thursday, November 30

#### **Other updates and programs of interest**

- Links to videos/slides of past events
  - [FREP Feb. Noon Network Video](#) Mussel species in the Fox River Watershed in WI and IL." Alison Stodola, Aquatic Biologist, INHS
  - "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>
  - Fox River Summit 2023 presentations on [YouTube](#). Past presentations are at drop-down menu at <https://www.southeastfoxriver.org/foxriversummit>
  - Update on Fox Waterway Agency's [Watershed Planning for the Chain O'Lakes Region](#)

The meeting was adjourned at 10:50.

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Malm, Secretary, FRSG