

**Fox River Study Group Draft Minutes  
Board of Directors Meeting via Conference Call  
9:30 AM January 18, 2024**

**In Attendance:**

Board Members: Alyse Olson, FREP, Art Malm, Friends of the Fox River, Brian Witkowski, City of Aurora, Cindy Skrukruud, Sierra Club, Debra Ness, City of Elgin, Karen Clementi, Fox Metro, Rob Linke, Kane County, Tim Wilson, City of St Charles

**Others:**

Andrea Pracht, HR Green	Mike Warner, Gewalt-Hamilton
Bob Morris	Naren Patel, Fehr Graham
Dan Langguth, City of Crystal Lake	Rishab Mahajan, Geosyntec
Emily Conti, EEI	Sam Youssef FRWRD
Holly Hudson, CMAP	Steven Polaskey, Fox Metro WRD
Jan Mangers, Valley of the Fox Sierra Club	Caitlin Foster, FMWRD cfoster@foxmetro.org
Lindsay Muth, Trotter and Associates	Leonard Dane, Fehr Graham
Mike Pubentz, City of Elgin	

The meeting began at 9:34 am with. This was followed by self-introductions.

**Minutes** – The tabled November 16<sup>th</sup> minute approval was inadvertently left off the agenda and will be submitted to the Board for approval in February. Motion by Rob, seconded by Brian to approve the minutes of the December 21<sup>st</sup> Board meeting. The December minutes were approved unanimously. Karen abstained due to absence at the Dec. meeting.

**Treasurer's Report** – Karen presented the Treasurer's report. As of 12/31/23 our balances were as follows:

Old Second Bank \$448,323.52  
BMO Harris checking \$2,487.09  
BMO Harris savings \$88,830.44

Karen has reimbursed FRSG \$15 which was a duplicate reimbursement for our 990 form submittal. Karen requested payment of Hoag Communications' invoice for \$400 to cover the cost of website updates.

Brian moved to accept the Treasure's Report and pay the Hoag inoice. Rob seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Karen indicated we need to prepare a cover letter to accompany the 2024 invoices to our sponsoring agencies. Rob will work with Karen.

A digital copy of our 2022 audit is now available. Karen reiterated her call for potential alternative 2023 auditors.

**Nominating Committee** - Cindy moved and Karen seconded the following slate of officers for 2024:

- Rob Linke, Chair
- Cindy Skrukrud, Vice Chair
- Karen Clementi, Treasurer
- Art Malm, Secretary
- Tim Wilson, Assistant Secretary

The office slate proposed was accepted unanimously. Cindy turned the meeting over to Rob. Rob stated the Board's appreciation for Cindy's efforts over the years and her promised continued service on the FRSG's behalf.

### **Modelling and Monitoring –**

The Illinois State Water Survey Trends Report release was noted and is available on our Google drive. A lunch and learn session about the report has been organized for February 29<sup>th</sup>. The ISWS 2023 Trends Report folder is here:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1e4wuR9Sio3QfDPdNuAky5TUYywO9Kgpk?usp=sharing>

Anyone with questions about the report can email those questions to: [foxriverstudygp@gmail.com](mailto:foxriverstudygp@gmail.com) before February 29<sup>th</sup> for forwarding to ISWS.

Rob reported we do not expect to hear any response to our microbial source tracking grant application until March.

**Communications Committee** – Brian noted the upcoming IWS Trends Report “Lunch and Learn” noted above. The committee is working on topics for similar events. Ideas for future seminars are welcome.

**Dam Communications Subcommittee** – Art noted the committee is awaiting release of the Army Corps FAQ responses prior to further action.

Cindy reported on the Corps’ “In Progress Review meeting” in the last week. 35 were on the call, mostly from the Corp but included IDNR representatives along with Rob, Brian and Cindy. Brian remarked how the meeting was run with admirable military precision in a jungle of acronyms. Rob agreed.

The Corps continues with the TSP removing nine dams. For one, Ryan is currently working on the agency technical review, the MSC review, public agency review, the review of 900 emails, and comments made at the public meetings.

Issues already addressed, though unreported, include impact on Elgin’s casino, riparian restoration, water quality, ecology, adverse impacts on wildlife, alternative solutions, and contaminated sediments. The Corps’ plan to address power boating concerns will suggest the TSP will result in more recreational opportunities available for more people.

Comments have been received from the USEPA. The USEPA requested the Corps acknowledge Clean Water Act permitting requirements and recommended the monitoring plan be updated with quantitative metrics.

IEPA comments were expected within a week.

Brian added the Corps found Aurora's water intake would not be impacted. The Corps confirmed that Elgin's water intake will need to be modified due to sediment issues whether the dam is removed or not. Mike Pubentz indicated they were investigating the local river bathymetry and geology to evaluate alternatives.

The Fish and Wildlife service is expected to address the eagle question directly but is providing full support for the TSP. Potential bridge support scour issues will also be addressed. The Corps will continue to reach out directly on significant issues of local concern.

The timeline is to submit the final report by 10/1/24 with a goal of final approval January 5, 2025 followed by issuance as a director's report in March of 2025. There was to be an additional Corps "in progress meeting" prior to October. Meetings are being/will be scheduled with all dam hosting communities in the first quarter of this year.

Art reported on the St. Charles Active River Corridor Foundation meetings. The first, a two hour round table of approximately thirty stakeholders were addressed by Scott Shipley who has served as the Active River Corridor engineering expert. The Conservation Foundation was a co-sponsor. Questions asked were similar to those posed at the Corps' public meetings. The roundtable was followed by a public meeting attended by approximately 400 at the Arcada Theater. Shipley presented the same three variation of a plan as he presented earlier. The overall concept was promoting 'the river as part of a healthy active lifestyle'.

Currently the Shipley plan uses a series of three submerged weirs with alternate bypass channel designs. All would allow fish and mussel passage upstream while maintaining near current levels of the St. Charles impoundment. Shipley said his plan would not provide for downstream sediment transport. The original estimate was \$23.5 million for the most intensive plan several years ago. Based on current project bidding this design is more likely to be in the \$12 million neighborhood. The annual estimated cost of operation would be 1% of capital cost.

The IDNR estimates the annual cost of dam maintenance is approximately \$125,000 per year. That cost included a 50 year major reconstruction sinking fund but did not including liability costs.

One possible new problem with the Corps program is on the horizon. It appears the Corps and the IDNR do not have any agreement in principle for the agreements to be signed in May of 2025. Hold harmless and liability issues are at the core. This should be followed closely

Tim reminded the group the Active River Corridor project is a third party effort and has not yet been endorsed by the City. He also stated St. Charles had a positive meeting the day before with IDNR and suggested others need to be proactive in scheduling those meetings.

## **NPDES Special Conditions Committee**

Karen advised the Committee has received initial comments from IEPA responding to standard NPDES language proposed by the Committee. A meeting will be held January 19<sup>th</sup> for further discussion. There appears to be no controversy in our proposal, just some “bookkeeping” issues.

### **Chair’s Report –**

Rob’s first report as the Chair discussed the annual FRSG report. This report must be completed and issued to our NPDES permit holding members for their transmittal to IEPA by March 31<sup>st</sup>. This report will be substantially similar to our annual report to stakeholders.

Karen moved and Art seconded the FRSG co-sponsor the One Earth Film Festival to the amount of \$100. The motion was approved unanimously.

Rob suggested after three years it is time to revisit and update our 10 year financial plan. Cindy will put a copy of the current plan/spreadsheet on our G drive. The committee will re-form and schedule their first meeting.

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

- o February 22, Conservation Foundation “Beyond the Basics” conference 8:30 am – 12:00 pm.
- o Feb. 29- FRSG Lunch & Learn- Illinois State Water Survey's latest Fox River Water Quality Trends report presented by Elias Getahun and Atticus Zavelle at Noon, Thurs. Feb. 29 [RSVP for webinar link](#)
- o March 4-6 ILMA Conference at I-Hotel in Champaign.  
<https://ilma-lakes.org/sites/default/files/2024-ILMA-Conference-Workshop-and-Keynote-Flyer.pdf>
- o Mar. 14- Fox River Summit is Thursday, March 14, 2024. Registration is now open at Southeast Fox River Partnership at <https://www.southeastfoxriver.org/>

### **Links to videos/slides of past events**

- FRSG Lunch & Learn Session: Great Lakes to Gulf Observatory webinar available
  - [https://lewisclark.zoom.us/rec/share/JmJV\\_4gPWLxFFc2UtcSqjMo5Up6p6f9egCTfln10MOzUn2hOmaSsTR2MlfiBi3Ws.2Ygo-7xWakkyCbYg](https://lewisclark.zoom.us/rec/share/JmJV_4gPWLxFFc2UtcSqjMo5Up6p6f9egCTfln10MOzUn2hOmaSsTR2MlfiBi3Ws.2Ygo-7xWakkyCbYg)
  - Passcode: 89S=e#f7
- “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 River Summit 2023 presentations on [YouTube](#). Past summit presentations are on a drop-down menu at <https://www.southeastfoxriver.org/foxriversummit>
- Update on Fox Waterway Agency’s [Watershed Planning for the Chain O’Lakes Region](#)

**Next regular meeting:** Thursday, February 22, 2024 9:30 am. The rest of the 2024 meeting schedule will remain the 4th Thursday Feb-Sept and the 3rd Thursdays Oct-Dec.

Cindy moved and Tim seconded the meeting be adjourned. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 10:55 am .

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Malm, Secretary, FRSG