

**Fox River Study Group Draft Minutes
Board of Directors Meeting via Conference Call
9:30 AM November 16, 2023**

In Attendance:

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

Others:

Andrea Pracht, HR Green	Karolina Cho, Gewalt Hamilton Associates
Billie Jean Anthony, City of Crystal Lake	Lindsay Muth, Trotter and Associates
Holly Hudson, CMAP	Naren Patel, Fehr Graham
Jeniece Neville, EEI	Rishab Mahajan, Geosyntec

The meeting began at 9:30 am with Rob filling in for Cindy to start the meeting. Rob requested people sign the meeting attendance record online with the link included in the agenda. This was followed by self-introductions.

Minutes - Motion by Tim, seconded by Karen, to approve the September 28 and October 19 board meeting minutes, as corrected. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report – Karen presented the Treasurer's report. As of 10/31/23 our balances were as follows:

Old Second Bank \$448,173.70
BMO Harris checking \$3,390.53
BMO Harris savings \$131,828.85

Bills to pay: Aileron November invoice-\$8,000; Reimbursement to Tim for Annual Meeting expenses \$684.44

Brian moved to pay the bills and accept the financial report. Art seconded. The motion passed unanimously with Tim abstaining.

Audit – The audit was completed with special last minute efforts by Cindy and Karen. Karen echoed the suggestion made in April to consider soliciting proposals from other accountants for our 2023 audit. Anyone knowing interested firms please contact Karen. Karen stated it was important that in kind services information for 2023 be submitted much earlier by all.

Modeling and Monitoring –

Rob stated his thanks to Brian and Aurora for stepping up on short notice to apply for the 604b microbial source tracking project grant. Rishab helped coordinate the application. We will need to issue an RFP for the study work if the grant is approved. The work is anticipated to cost \$110 - \$130,000. Rob and Brian expressed thanks to Geosyntec for their assistance in completing the grant application.

Holly stated unsuccessful 604b grant applications would be notified by 1/12/24. Notice of awards for successful grants will be made February 15th with grant agreements expected April 15th. Fully executed agreements will be completed by June 1.

Holly stated other CMAP watershed projects under active consideration include Somonauk Creek, Jelke Creek, and the mainstem Fox. Letters of FRSG support for this work will be requested.

Additional 604b funds being sought by CMAP include those for the Tyler Creek, currently the oldest current watershed plan. Rob indicated CMAP could rely upon Kane County to support any watershed planning within its jurisdiction. Increased growth pressures in central Kane County will make their collaboration with CMAP timely.

The Illinois Natural History Survey mussel study for post Carpentersville dam removal will be delayed until 2024 due to the delays in the dam removal project. Alison Stodola indicated the INHS would extend the terms of the present agreement through the end of 2024.

Communications Committee – Brian has a lunch and learn session scheduled with the Great Lakes to Gulf Observatory (“GLTGO”) November 30th at 11:00 am. A second lunch and learn will be scheduled for the first quarter, Brian expressing the concern he did not want to overload group uptake capacity.

Rob stated he had spent some time on the very powerful GLTGO database interface and recommended lunch and learn attendance for everyone.

Brian stated the Aurora Beacon article linked in our agenda did not quite accurately portray the City of Aurora’s letter to the Corps in support of dam removal. Art asked that all publication of articles related to dams and dam removal should be brought to the attention of the dam communications subcommittee.

Dam Communications Subcommittee – Art stated we have completed our limited agreement with Aileron and are awaiting the Army Corps’ release of responses to questions raised during public hearings and as otherwise submitted to the Corps. We are also awaiting the official position of the IDNR on whether they want their dams removed as part of the Corps’ 519 program. It is expected that if a local community chooses to keep an IDNR dam, they would have to assume full ownership responsibility.

The Corps received nearly 1,000 comments on their TSP and their response, the Corps FAQ report is expected in December. At that time the committee will be able to re-engage Aileron and refocus our effort to continue our communication efforts with the public and public officials. It was hoped to be able to re-engage Aileron in our December meeting.

Rob asked whether we knew who and with which communities the Corps may be meeting. This question was for the purpose of our staying up to date and knowing how and where to follow up.

Note: Cindy Skrukrud joined the meeting at this time.

Art replied he knew of nobody the Corps was meeting and asked if any such meetings were to occur the committee be notified. It was his understanding the Corps has closed communication until their FAQ response and Recommended Plan was completed. At that time they would re-engage communities with site specific responses.

Cindy indicated she thought the Corps continued to meet with communities and communities wanted to meet with them. At the Annual Meeting Cody had indicated they planned to set a date to meet with St. Charles. Tim indicated meetings will be scheduled with the Tri Cities but are expected after the

holidays. Rob reiterated the importance of following the municipal meetings as they occur so we remain updated and in a position to respond to inquiries.

Cindy stated work continues on our coalition letter. Fourteen or fifteen groups have already signed on to this letter with others having expressed interest. It was hoped to send this letter to communities the first week in December. Cindy expressed that as partners with the Corps she feels we should be updated at least every couple of months. Art believes updates every couple of weeks might be more helpful at least through release of the Recommended Plan. It was agreed that keeping current with our member community activities throughout the next year will be important.

The meeting leadership was turned over by Rob to Cindy.

Cindy said Wes Cattoor will keep FRSG in the loop on any meetings IDNR has on this issue. Cindy indicated IDNR continued to work on completing and releasing their policy on removal of 'run of the river' dams. Anyone with questions on IDNR policy should contact Wes.

Annual Meeting Recap

Tim provided a recap of our annual meeting which was well attended with lots of conversation and interest shown in our exhibitors and presenters.

It was reported Tristan at IDNR would send an updated slide deck of his presentation for our records and use. Karen indicated her presentation would be made available within the next couple weeks. Cindy will send thank you messages to all exhibitors and speakers.

Tim indicated he received requests for copies of the slide presentations from his communities. Cindy will see to it those presentations are made available to him and posted on our website.

NPDES Special Conditions Committee

The IEPA has responded to our work recommending standard permit language for submitting and processing NPDES permits by our water reclamation agencies. Karen believes this movement may have been driven by last month's Illinois Association of Wastewater Agencies meeting. Karen will be emailing FRSG responses to comments IEPA made following review of our proposed language tomorrow.

Chair's Report –

Cindy mentioned our 604b funding program letters of support were sent for the DeKalb Soil and Water Co Shabbona Creek plan and the Aurora microbial source tracking program. Holly will draft for Cindy a similar letter of support for the Kane DuPage Soil and Water Conservation District's update of the Jelke Creek action plan.

Cindy highlighted the support we received for our website petition supporting dam removal. The petition results have been submitted to the Corps along with our 2022 FRIP. Our petition of support will remain live on our website. As of yesterday we had 203 signatures of support which were submitted with attached comments to the Corps.

Also pointed out were the WBBM radio interview and Aurora Beacon article listed in the Agenda. Art suggested the \$150 million cost of having to go to 0.1 mg/l P may become a subject of serious public scrutiny. If so, then the engineering studies required by IEPA as part of NPDES permitting requirements identifying those costs would need to be recovered and updated. Tim indicated Beth had

worked on a spreadsheet with those numbers but that effort was incomplete. Rishab has that spreadsheet and forward it to Art.

FRSG Officers for 2024 will be discussed in the December meeting with voting in January.

Upcoming events/other updates

- A Fox River Study Group Lunch & Learn Session on the Great Lakes to Gulf Observatory will be held virtually at 11 am on Thursday, November 30. The GLTG platform provides user-friendly access to water quality information from throughout the Mississippi River Basin. One of the biggest datasets is from our own Fox River! ▪ ADD THIS ZOOM LINK TO YOUR CALENDAR Topic: What's New on GLTG, Nov 30, 2023 11 AM Join Zoom Meeting <https://lewisclark.zoom.us/j/91641432232> Meeting ID: 9164143 2232 One tap mobile +13052241968,,91641432232#
- FREP Holiday Gathering on Tuesday, December 12th, 5pm in St. Charles. We will share a potluck meal, hear nature tales from Pam Otto & Cheryl Smith, and end with a bonfire. RSVP for location directions and food coordination to info@foxriverecosystem.org

Links to videos/slides of past events

- FREP Feb. Noon Network Video (<https://youtu.be/Mre0bNQbp>) 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> Includes Informational Webinar - Oct. 31, 2023 & Project Introduction Webinar - Feb. 15, 2023
- Fox River Summit 2023 presentations on YouTube https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLIZViRLwSQA3leFIQ8tUoy07TUuOjMU_1
- 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 (<https://www.foxwaterway.com/welcome/>)

Next regular meeting: Thursday, Dec. 21 9:30 am.

The 2024 meeting schedule will remain the 4th Thursday Jan-Sept and the 3rd Thursdays Oct-Dec.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:47.

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Malm, Secretary, FRSG