

**Fox River Study Group Draft Minutes**  
**Board of Directors Meeting via Conference Call**  
**9:30 AM April 27, 2023**

**In Attendance:**

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

Others in attendance:

- Steven Polaskey, FMWRD
- Phil Cotter, Village of East Dundee
- Zac Bonesz, City of Batavia
- Nora Bertram, City of Elgin
- Carl Fischer, Baxter & Woodman
- Gabriel Powers, McHenry County Conservation District
- Lindsay Muth, Trotter and Associates, Inc.
- Holly Hudson, CMAP
- Kevin Zidonis, IEPA
- Beth Vogt, FRWRD
- Logan Gilbertsen, HR Green
- Cyrus McMains, YBSD
- Anna Kootstra, Wauconda
- John Stein, Village of Cary
- Andrea Pracht, HR Green
- Albert Ettinger, Attorney

The meeting began at 9:30 am with self-introductions

**Minutes** - Motion by Rob, second by Eric to approve minutes of the March 23, 2023 Board Meeting.. Motion approved unanimously.

**Treasurer's Report** – Cindy provided a summary of the Treasurer's report in Karen's absence. Our balances are as follows:

Old Second Bank \$477,670  
BMO Harris checking \$44,522  
BMO Harris savings \$1,212

Cindy thanked the following communities and agencies for their annual contributions:

Algonquin, Batavia, Cary, East Dundee, Elburn, Lake in the Hills Sanitary District, Geneva, St. Charles, Sandwich, Wauconda and Yorkville.

Our Secretary of State annual filing was financed by Cindy with a \$10 personal check. Cindy to be reimbursed.

Art moved to approve the Treasurer's report. Seconded by Brian. The report was approved unanimously.

**Chair's Report** - The 2022 Fox River Study Group annual report was submitted to the IEPA and our NPDES Discharge Permit holders for their respective submittals. No comments have been received from the Agency to date.

The Board was reminded some still required appointment letters. Nora indicated Elgin's official Board representative appointment is expected next week. Also, listings of 2022 contributions of goods, services, transportation etc. for our 990 IRS reporting were again requested of the Board and any other contributor. This especially includes agencies involved in our sampling program efforts.

Cindy gave an update of FRSG activities on April 12th to the Lake County Stormwater Management Commission (“SMC”) advisory committee. Several requested to be added to our email list.

**Finance Committee** – Cindy reported on behalf of Karen that we have received Porte Brown’s \$7,700 quote for our 2023 audit and 990 reporting. Karen recommended the Board approve moving forward with Porte Brown.

Brian moved that we employ Porte Brown for preparing our audit and 990 this year. Art seconded the motion. Cindy will advise the cost of last year’s audit. Eric recommended next year we issue an RFP for these services to confirm pricing has remained competitive. The motion passed unanimously.

**Modelling and Monitoring Committee** – Holly provided an update to the Indian Creek subwatershed study. The site specific BMP modelling using HSPF (detention basins, parking lots etc) has been completed by Geosyntec and remaining loose ends are being tied up by Holly. She hopes to provide a summary report next month. Rob pointed out the public engagement section of the program website is well worth a look.( <https://engage.cmap.illinois.gov/indian-creek-watershed-based-plan>).

Rob stated our new improved MS4 tracking tool for non point source pollution continues in development. This tool was initially developed to calculate non point source contributions as an alternative to water quality monitoring studies for NPDES permits. Kane County is currently using the old version for preparing its MS4 report. The Kane County MS4 report is used by various agencies within the county as a reference/education source. Cindy indicated there was interest in the MS4 tool at the Lake County SMC advisory committee meeting. Their feedback has been requested.

Rob discussed the high resolution flow tracing tool on the Kane County website which can track the path of drainage anywhere in the county. The corresponding upstream tracing tool will be ready late this summer. That tool will establish the drainage area above any point along any stream or sewer in the county. Linking these capabilities to the new MS4 tool for use throughout the watershed is a goal under consideration by the committee. Geosyntech intends to continue to cooperate on this program.

Beth asked whether there were others with continuing Google Drive issues on meeting invitations, drive access etc. Rob stated he has also had problems causing delays. It was agreed to send meeting invitations using traditional emails until Calendar issues are resolved. Cindy indicated several organizations’ servers are particularly difficult to penetrate with messages etc.

Rob was just informed a Monsanto settlement generated a surprise \$27,000 check for sampling and reporting of PCBs (only!) in Kane County. Input on potential uses of the money was requested. There is no time limit on this award. Brian Valleskeyto shared this website for more information on the class action: <https://pcbclassaction.com/>.

Art indicated PCB testing of sediments behind the dams may be a part of future dam removal projects. Kevin Zidonis from IEPA stated he is active coordinating PCB monitoring programs for sediments and fish tissue. Kevin recommended USEPA’s “How’s my waterway” website as a primary source of historic study information (<https://mywaterway.epa.gov/>) and stated he is available for consultation. Rob will touch base with Kevin to coordinate KC interests. The last intensive Fox River study by IEPA was done in 2022. The next will be in 2027.

Albert inquired whether PCB testing could be coordinated with PFAT/PFOT testing.

**Communications Committee** – Brian set up his first communications committee meeting using an invitation with a single set date and time. It worked, He recommends that approach to other committee chairs.

Auto calendar invite meeting announcements were discussed to help increase meeting attendance. Difficulties with Google Calendar getting through certain firewalls (e.g. St. Charles, FRWRD) were reported by Cindy. As an alternative, Board members and others might still buy a 2023 Friends of the Fox River calendar for a \$20 donation and record future FRSG meeting dates using a far more beautiful format.

Also discussed were FRSG website updates. There is to hope to improve the website with more information without significantly increasing the demands made on our website manager. Website updates would likely include public outreach presentations on the subjects of dam removal, MS4s and other FRSG goals set forth in our 2022 FRIP. Possibly these presentations would be hosted on YouTube through convenient links posted on our website.

**Dam Removal Communications Subcommittee** – The Dam Removal Communications Subcommittee will be meeting today with Kim Gilmore, a local Fox Valley marketing and communications firm to discuss possible avenues for our public information campaign supporting dam removal.

In brief, our 2022 FRIP states that water quality impairments caused substantially by our dams requires the FRSG to actively advocate for removal of those dams. Importantly, the committee will refrain from involvement with or comment on specific dam removal projects. However, if a local project has model features potentially beneficial to others, or conversely, conflicts with the water quality goals of the program, the committee will review and respond accordingly.

A memo will be sent to the Board outlining the proposed scope, timing, and direction of the committee. We would like to have all board members review this memo and be ready to discuss next month.

In response to questions from Holly, Gilmore's has worked with the Fabulous Fox! Water Trail. The potential efficiencies that experience brings in developing our program is one reason why Gilmore Marketing is being considered for recommendation to the Board.

**Annual Meeting Subcommittee** – November 2, 2023 has been tentatively selected for the annual meeting. The Elgin Centre has been requested for the location. Coffee and networking will start at 9:00. The program will run from 10:00 until noon.

In considering the program, the committee decided the USGS watershed study of the Fox should be a separate webinar for future development. Instead, the work and goals outlined in our 2022 FRIP should be the focus of the program.

The Army Corps will be asked for a presentation on dam removal in the FRV that will include representative experiences elsewhere. American Rivers may also be a potential speaker source. Another topical message would be the important improvements made by our water reclamation districts for phosphorous reduction. Cindy will highlight the 20 year history of the FRSG. Past Board members will be invited and honored. A luncheon following the meeting is also a possibility.

**NPDES Special Conditions Committee** – Beth has yet to receive any response on the effort to set up a meeting with IEPA to establish common SC language for the benefit of local permit writers. Beth indicated that absent any response from IEPA in the next week the committee intends to begin drafting standard language for subsequent discussions

### **Upcoming Meetings and Events**

- FREP Membership Meeting & Education Program Wednesday, May 10, 1 pm: “Alien Attack! Studying the impacts of invasive species on local waterways”. NIU Professor, Dr. Jen Koop, and her students will be presenting at Oswegoland Park District’s South Point Facility (810 Preston Lane, Oswego, IL - Enter in door #5 or #15)
- The Isaac Walton League Salt Watch Program is now available, using litmus paper tests for estimating salt concentrations. Correlation with conductivity would be helpful.
- The annual “It’s Our Fox River Day” is September 16<sup>th</sup> this year. This day of appreciation and celebration continues to grow with over 1,000 participants watershed wide last year. The Friends of the Fox River is ready to provide any organization with assistance planning any program of their choice. (<https://friendsofthefoxriver.org/its-our-fox-river-day-2/>)

### **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 2023 presentations are on YouTube. Past presentations can be found on the drop-down menu at <https://www.southeastfoxriver.org/foxriversummit>

Our next regular Board meeting will be Thursday May 25 9:30 am. The remaining 2023 Board meeting schedule is as follows:

4th Thursdays Jan-Sept;  
3rd Thursdays Oct-Dec;  
Annual Meeting: Nov. 2

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00.

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Malm, Secretary  
Friend of the Fox River

