

Fox River Study Group Draft Minutes
Board of Directors Meeting via Conference Call
9:30 AM June 22, 2023

In Attendance:

Board Members: Cindy Skrukrud, Art Malm, Brian Witkowski, Eric Johnson, Rob Linke, Debra Ness, Karen Clementi, Tim Wilson

Others in attendance:

- Dan Langguth, City of Crystal Lake
- Cyrus McMains, YBSD
- Deanna Doohaluk, The Conservation Foundation
- Anna Kootstra, Village of Wauconda
- Emily Conti, EEI
- Jan Mangers, Valley of the Fox Sierra Club
- Atticus Zavelle, ISWS
- Zac Bonesz, City of Batavia
- Steven Polaskey, Fox Metro WRD
- Rishab Mahajan, Geosyntec
- Beth Vogt, FRWRD
- Phil Cotter, Village of East Dundee
- Scott Kuykendall, McHenry County
- Jenny Murphy, USGS
- John Stein, Village of Cary
- Dennis Dreher, Geosyntec
- Naren Patel, Fehr Graham
- Mike Warner, Gewalt Hamilton, representing Fremont Township, Antioch Township, Avon Township, Ela Township, Grant Township, Village of Lake Barrington, Village of Fox Lake
- Bob VanGyseghem, City of Geneva
- Logan Gilbertsen - HR Green
- Bob Morris
- Lindsay Muth, Trotter and Associates Inc.

The meeting began at 9:30 am with self-introductions. Cindy will send out an email blast to give all on our mailing list the opportunity to opt out of our meeting invitations. Those wanting, but not receiving, FRSG meeting invitations should notify Cindy and talk to their network administrator to be sure their server allows emails from foxriverstudygp@email.com.

Minutes - Motion by Brian, second by Tim to approve minutes of the May 25, 2023 Board Meeting. Motion approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report – Karen provided the Treasurer's report. As of 5/31/23 our balances are as follows:

Old Second Bank \$447,798.16
BMO Harris checking \$122,116.33
BMO Harris savings \$1,212.57

Karen thanked Yorkville Bristol SD for their annual contributions.

Karen requested Board authorization to pay CMAP \$2,156.00 for a past due Indian Creek study bill. Brian moved to approve the bill. Rob seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair's Report – Cindy suggested we all celebrate our Fox River's designation as a National Water Trail. Special thanks to FREP and our Wisconsin partner SWRPC for the seven year effort to achieve that designation. Special thanks also were given to Karen Miller for her extraordinary efforts leading to the successful application, designation, and who is now leading Kane County's promotional efforts.

Board members and others were again asked to send in their 2022 in kind expenses so that IRS and IAG reports may be completed.

The Army Corps study was updated. Cindy indicated the Corps Division Staff gave approval to proceed with the draft Tentatively Selected Plan (“TSP”) that recommended removing 9 dams. Draft copies of the presentation and draft TSP were made available to the Board on a confidential basis.

The current program schedule has public review of the TSP from September 5 through October 8, 2023. Other milestones include:

- Agency decision milestone in January 2024
- Final report approval Jan 2025
- Division Engineer’s letter February 2025
- Director of Civil Works report March 2025.

Cindy reported work continues on the H&H study with concerns expressed during the Corps meeting about how delays in completing this work impacts the project schedule. Corps’ discussions were directed towards ensuring sufficient resources are provided to maintain this current schedule. The FRSG will have an opportunity to review the final draft TSP prior to public review.

Art indicated in the next month the Dam Removal Communications Subcommittee will provide the board with how these dates coincide with other important milestones for the Corps, the dam owners and the dam hosting communities.

Cindy indicated Nick Karnezis has replaced Bridgette Bentley as the Corps’ project leader. Cindy requested a joint meeting with IDNR and FRSG be scheduled as soon as possible. Cindy also reached out for a meeting with Frank Veraldi who has for years had intimate familiarity with our 519 program.

Tim indicated the Corps has also told the Tri Cities communities they would have an opportunity to review the draft TSP prior to making it available for comment to the general public. Geneva reached out for the first time and requested a meeting with the Corps.

Brian questioned whether the H&H studies being done by the Corps would be adequate to inform the public on what the new riverbanks will look like. A preview of the new river view is something very important to both his economic development department and residents. Karen stressed the importance of new river renderings to developing community support of the projects. Art stated the Corps has committed to us data and graphics giving us shorelines at normal, flood and low flows. Rob agreed we need to press them for that data at every opportunity given its importance.

Cindy suggested these issues, along with others such as riverbed ownership would be good to include as topics in a call with Frank Veraldi.

Finance Committee – Karen indicated she had requested a checklist from Porte Brown of items necessary to complete the audit and was scheduled to meet with them June 22.

Modelling and Monitoring – Karen indicated on July 14 she would participate in the IAWA (Illinois Association of Wastewater Agencies) roundtable on watershed study groups such as FRSG.

Rob provided a brief update on Indian Creek from Holly indicating final data was being compiled into the final draft report to be submitted to the IEPA by June 30th. The final draft plan will be available at the project web page as well as at the websites of FREP and CMAP. Rob remarked about Holly's reference to a 'native Indian land acknowledgement statement' under development with the Mitchel Museum of American Indians, Evanston, IL. Holly will be asked to brief FRSG on that statement.

Rob indicated a committee meeting would be required to discuss further developments in the BMP tracking tool. An approach needs to be formulated in order to develop a useful and economical tool that can be applied across all Fox River Valley sub watersheds to the benefit of the FRSG and all permit holders. Costs of development could range from \$25K to over \$100K.

Cindy indicated she would send Rob the Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy Group's draft report updating what their urban working group has been doing in that regard. Rob indicated Kane County might have to take the lead and pilot the development of this program to demonstrate its potential.

Communications Committee – Brian reported November 9th will be the date of our annual meeting. Our website was updated with our new annual report, more presentations, meeting dates etc.

Brian continues to look for topics of interest that could be used for presentations by the FRSG. These might include the BMP development for MS4 permit holders and a presentation touring the Great Lakes to Gulf Observatory website.

Dam Removal Communications Subcommittee – Art indicated a draft RFP would be released to Gilmore Associates and Aileron for support in developing the public information and communications program that will advocate for the removal of the nine dams on the central Fox River. The committee plans to base content on scientific information and objective analysis. The program startup timing is currently planned to parallel the release of the Corps' TSP. The committee will attempt to support the Corps efforts where possible in a timely manner. In the interim the Friends of the Fox River will continue to provide presentations about the history, purpose and impact of the dams on our Fox as well as the benefits and costs of their removal.

A draft RFP for was made available for review by the board in the meeting packet. Cindy proposed the board pre-approve release of the RFP to the prospective vendors subject to comments received by Tuesday June 26.

Art stated with pre-approval of the draft RFP that selection of the consultant could be made in early August. This is in line with the currently scheduled pre public release of the full draft TSP report. Then, when that milestone is reached, we would be prepared to help elected officials and the general public understand how the TSP will benefit their lives and communities, and how they can show their support.

Cindy will email a link to the current draft FRP to the board so they may record their comments in the Word file. Art provided his direct email address in the meeting blog as apmalm@gmail.com. There was consensus this was an appropriate action that would be undertaken by the committee.

NPDES Special Conditions Committee – Karen stated their committee has continued to try to get IEPA’s feedback on developing more standardized/efficient permitting language standards for FRSG members. It was noted only Ottawa and Mooseheart permits have recently be processed.

Cindy suggested proactively creating a common set of text responses for review and approval by the IEPA might be more successful.. Concerns (and frustrations) extend to other permitting requirements such as Fox Metro’s annual phosphorous reduction report. Karen will set up Teams meeting to drive the process.

Other Matters: There were no other matters brought before the Board.

Upcoming events/other updates

- FREP Annual Picnic on Wednesday, July 12, 3pm at Pingree Grove Forest Preserve Shelter (14N187 Route 20, Pingree Grove). Jeff Mengler & Dave Kraft with Hey and Associates, Inc. and Bill Graser with the Kane County Forest Preserve District will share about the habitat and hydrologic restoration at Pingree Grove Forest Preserve. FREP will provide grilled meats & buns. Please bring a dish to share, a plate/utensils for yourself, and non-alcoholic beverages. Please RSVP to Becky at info@foxriverecosystem.org

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 on https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLIZViRLwSQA3leFIQ8tUoy07TUuOjMU_1.
- Past presentations are at drop-down menu at <https://www.southeastfoxriver.org/foxriversummit>

Next regular meeting: Thurs. July 27 9:30 am

2023 meeting schedule: 4th Thurs in the months Jan-Sept,
3rd Thurs in the months Oct-Dec,
Annual Meeting: Nov. 9, 2023

The meeting was adjourned at 10:46.

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Malm, Secretary, FRSG
Friend of the Fox River

