

FoxRiver Study Group Draft Minutes
Board of Directors Meeting via Conference Call
9:30 AM December 21, 2023

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, Rob Linke, Kane County, Tim Wilson, City of St Charles

Others:

Andrea Pracht, HR Green
Anna Kootstra, Wauconda
Christine Davis, IEPA
Cyrus McMains, YBSD
Deanna Doohaluk, TCF

Holly Hudson, CMAP
John Stein, Cary

Mike Warner, Gewalt Hamilton Associates
Lindsay Muth, Trotter and Associates
Naren Patel, Fehr Graham
Phil Cotter, East Dundee
Sam Youssef, FRWRD
Sarah Cowley, EEI
Steven Polaskey, FMWRD

The meeting began at 9:30 am with. This was followed by self-introductions.

Minutes - Motion by Art, seconded by Rob, to table the November 16th minutes. The minutes were tabled unanimously.

Treasurer's Report – Karen presented the Treasurer's report. As of 11/30/23 our balances were as follows:

Old Second Bank \$448,247.38
BMO Harris checking \$12,672.09
BMO Harris savings \$88,829.69

Tim motioned to pay the Porte Brown final audit invoice for \$2,700. Brian seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Cindy indicated Chad Craycraft at IDNR had received an invoice from the Army Corps which we will see in January for \$49,700. Art asked if we should be tracking expenditures related to the study or if IEPA will be fulfilling the 35% share without consideration of FRSG collateral costs such as Aileron.

Karen and Cindy will begin working on annual letter to sponsoring communities.

Cindy indicated we are looking for another auditor to consider as an alternate to Porte Brown.

Modelling and Monitoring –

The Illinois State Water Survey will be issuing a new water quality trends report by the end of the year.

Rob indicated the 604(b) grant application has been submitted through Aurora for the microbial source tracking program at Indian Creek. Winners will be announced in February.

Communications Committee – Brian briefed us on the Great Lakes to Gulf Observatory seminar. A link to the presentation will be made available for this powerful water quality database interface. Additional topics for ‘lunch and learns’ are being solicited. February 29th is a tentative date for a lunch and learn session on the ISWS trends report.

There have been changes made to our website in response to criticism that we appeared to be an activist group rather than a “study group”. The changes are to make clear that while we are advocating for dam removal we continue to solicit comments from all interests. Anyone having further recommendations to modify our website should contact Cindy.

Dam Communications Subcommittee – Art reported the committee has been working on the website revisions and referenced the new Aileron proposal for continued work. Board members were asked to review the proposal and provide feedback to the subcommittee. The subcommittee is awaiting the Corps’ FAQ responses prior to initiating further work, after which the committee will meet to establish the direction of our efforts. Ryan Johnson of the Corps was working to get the FAQs complete by the end of December.

Art indicated he would put into the subcommittee folder a copy of a short presentation created for a General councilman by Friends of the Fox River showing post removal development at three different dam sites.

Brian moved and Tim seconded to extend Aileron’s contract for one month at \$8,000 following the release of the Corps’ FAQ for the support subsequent committee response and planning. The motion passed unanimously.

Annual Meeting Recap

Tim has posted all of the presentations from the annual meeting on our website.

NPDES Special Conditions Committee

The Committee is awaiting IEPA response to standard NPDES language proposed by the committee.

Chair’s Report –

Cindy has been working with others on the March 14th Fox River Summit program. Registration for the Summit is now open at the link below. Cindy also highlighted the IEPA guidance document on dam removal available at the link below. This document has been sent to dam hosting communities in the valley.

Congresswoman Underwood’s staff has reached out to our website looking for information and interest in the Water Resources Development Act, from which the Illinois River Basin Restoration and our 519 study are funded. The design and deconstruction of the dams will need WRDA funding and that implementation funding will likely need to be in the 2024 WRDA bill in order to meet the Corps’ current schedule. Cindy is coordinating this conversation about implementation funding with the Corps and IDNR.

The Fox Waterway Agency is working on its water quality program and requested information on FRSG’s testing program and the possibility of coordination. Art indicated the importance of sediment transport measurements from the Chain.

Officers from 2023 have agreed to serve again in 2024 after their election in the January meeting. The one exception will be Rob and Cindy who will switch places with Rob our 2024 chairperson. Finally, our annual report is due to the IEPA by March 31 that Karen and Cindy will be authoring.

Upcoming events/other updates

January 18, the Conservation Foundation Environmental Summit, 8:30am to 12:00 pm.
<https://theconservationfoundation.org/event/2024-environmental-summit/> “AGROECOLOGY & COMMUNITY CENTERED AGRICULTURE“

January 25, Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy Conference,
<https://registration.extension.illinois.edu/start/2024-illinois-nutrient-loss-reduction-strategy-partnership-conference>.

February 22, Conservation Foundation “Beyond the Basics” conference 8:30 am – 12:00 pm.
[Conservation Foundation "Beyond the Basics"](#)

Other New Links

[Illinois Excess Nutrient 2023 biennial report](#)

Next regular meeting: Thursday, January 18th, 2024 9:30 am. This meeting was moved from January 25th because of interference with the Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy Conference January 25 in Springfield and Webex.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00.

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Malm, Secretary, FRSG