

Advocates for the Knife River Watershed (AKRW)

March 9, 2022, Board Meeting Minutes

Board Members Present: Shary Zoff - Chair, Julie Johnson – Secretary, Corlis West- treasurer, Rodney Johnson, Paul Trygstad, Mark Osadjan, Peg Zahorik – recorder

Other member present: Gail Trygstad

Treasurer Report

Checking – \$2,520.25; Savings - \$55.25 25 paid members

Julie will send out a general notification stating that membership dues are again being requested. After notification is sent Corlis will then send individual notices to those whose memberships are about to expire. This notice will specify member expiration date and amount of dues owed.

Secretary Report

Draft Board Minutes from February 2022 were reviewed by the board. After a few revisions the minutes were unanimously approved. (Corlis 1st, Mark 2nd)

Eric Mead added Gail Trygstad as Facebook administrator. Gail will now take over as administrator. Julie will send card to Eric thanking him for his work on our Facebook page.

Julie noted that she attempted to receive updates from Tara Solem (Lake County Soil and Water Conservation District, LCSWCD) but has not yet been able to reach her.

Old Business

Web Domain

The board members discussed various questions and concerns with Gail T. related to our webpage. Primary issues related to difficulty locating our webpage when doing a google search with key words. The need for a more searchable domain was discussed. Gail stated we could have 2 domain names but that there would be an additional cost. The board unanimously agreed to spend AKRW funds money for the extra domain. It was agreed that the designations will be “AKRW” and “Advocates for the Knife River Watershed”. Gail will secure both these domains for us.

Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA)

Shary will attend the CISMA meeting. The board unanimously agreed that she should sign the Memorandum of Understanding with CISMA for AKRW. This Memorandum is a voluntary agreement to work together with other partners to share information, provide educational opportunities, and facilitate cooperation between all.

Lake County Soil and Water Conservation District (LCSWCD) – Tara Solem and Buckthorn equipment

Tara Solem has stated that she'd like to host a workshop in late April and asked if we'd like to co-host the workshop with her. After discussion the board determined we needed further information about the workshop and specifically what Tara would like our role(s) to be if we co-hosted. Paul stated he would clarify these questions with Tara. Julie noted the joint session on Tuesday, April 26th will be discussing forestry/ budworm, native planting, invasive species, CISMA, and Eddmaps. Paul will speak with Tara regarding that presentation.

The topic of lighter weight buckthorn removal equipment available for resident use was again discussed. Paul will speak with people at LCSWD to request the purchase of this lighter equipment.

Guided Spring walk on Knife River trails for members.

The possibility of hosting a spring walk on the Knife River trails was discussed. Teaming with the Knife River Recreation Council for this and possibly other activities, as well as a possible presentation to discuss the work of AKRW was discussed. Peg will speak with Steve Betzler about teaming on a spring walk activity and about a potential meeting with KRRC board to discuss other possibilities for partnership. A suggestion to invite Jamie Juenemann or Mackenzie Hogfeldt to add educational information along the walk was favorably discussed.

Brochures/Posters

Gail has offered to assist us by producing our brochures. Peg will speak with Gail about the possibility of producing posters (mission statement etc.) maps, or other desired information.

Further revisions to our brochure were discussed. Rodney stated he found a new map which better illustrates our watershed. He will email the map to board members if/when he receives permission for use. If board approves a new map it will then replace the one currently on our brochure. The board also agreed to secure an address at the Two Harbors Post Office. The new P.O Box address will replace Corlis' address on the brochure. Gail will make all requested revisions to the brochure. We agreed to work with Gail to print brochures and labels for mailing. Rodney and Julie will work with Gail to learn how to produce labels. Peg volunteered to check the P.O. Box in Two Harbors on a weekly basis after it is secured and in use.

Paul suggested including brochures from CISMA to our mailings. Corlis recommended making sure additional information sent relates to our work on the watershed. Shary stated she would look into what information would be good for additional mailing. The extra cost for additional information, including the need for an envelope, was mentioned as a possible concern. Julie recommended that we include a cover letter explaining why brochures are being mailed to residents with property along the river. Corlis will look into pricing and possible discounted mailing rates for non profits.

Peg noted that AKRW brochures are currently available at the Mocha Moose and that Larsmont Trading Post agreed to have brochures there as well.

Presentations

Rod sent the title of Julie Etterson's presentation to the board. Julie E. is available to do this presentation in the March 24th – April 15th date range and is willing to present through zoom or other methods including in person presentation. Rodney also noted having no further information from George Host. He will check with George regarding a possible September meeting.

The board discussed a possible Karen Gran presentation. Her recent zoom presentation with the IKES (Isaac Walton League), for which 70 people attended, was discussed as well as the question of a presentation with her in May. Rod suggested that if we have Karen Gran present it would be useful if she would include her current research based suggestions for a more nuanced approach to beaver management. A special invite to Deserae Hendrickson (Fisheries/DNR) was also suggested

Needs related to zoom presentations were discussed as well as advantages/disadvantages regarding zoom and in person presentations. After discussion all agreed to use Zoom for Julie Etterson's presentation and to provide an in-person format for the presentation that follows Julie's. We decided posters were not necessary for Zoom Presentations. Julie will send Julie E.'s presentation announcement to our e-blast list which will include the zoom link for all to use. Peg will send presentation information to KTRWH to be read on community announcements. It will direct people to our webpage for the zoom link. Peg will make sure a Knife River Recreation Council board member sends info to its membership (Steve B is out of town). Our zoom broadcast will be recorded. Mark will edit zoom as needed. We hope to post the recording on our Website.

New Business

Stacia Grayson (Duluth Township)

Shary will contact Stacia Grayson, a new Duluth Township Board member, to inform her about AKRW. Corlis stated he would drop off brochures with the town clerk for distribution to all Township board members.

Emily Fairfax video re: mega fires and beaver dams

Rod and Julie recently joined the National Association of Wetland Managers (NAWM) and stated this organization has many impressive videos explaining results of various studies. They offered to show board members Emily Fairfax's video which reviews research demonstrating the importance of beaver dam's when forest fires occur.

Rod and Julie invited board members to view this over zoom. The video will then be discussed for possible viewing with AKRW members. The idea of asking Emily Fairfax if she would host a zoom meeting for our members was mentioned, as well as having it be a joint presentation with the IKES, Sugarloaf Cove North Shore Stewardship Association, the KR recreation council, and possibly others. Dr Fairfax's research on the effects of beaver activity on fire resilience is done in a western landscape. Rodney suggested asking her if she presents to our group, could she include implications of beaver activity in the Midwest. Board members will further discuss this idea at the next board meeting. Rodney will send a link to the IKES should we choose to pursue this further. It was noted as an excellent film in relation to forest fire ecology.

Video by Suzanne Simard- forest ecologist

Shary will send a link to view a 7 minute YouTube presentation featuring Suzanne Simard's forest science study results. It is recommended that board members view this presentation prior to the next board meeting. Board will discuss the possibility of sharing this with others after we've had a chance to view it.

Douglas Tallamy – Planting and collecting native trees and bushes

Rodney discussed information about Douglas Tallamy who has done extensive research about the effects of invasive plants on insects and the consequences to birds and bird habitats. Rodney noted seeing his "powerful" video presentation. Rod and Julie watched a zoom presentation from him at Sugar Loaf where he emphasized the importance of native species for all life in this area. He lives in Delaware and also addressed northern Minnesota. They further suggested reading his book, "Natures Best Hope" for which they will send a link.

Next Board Meeting- April 14th, 4:00 PM (Zoom)