

Advocates for the Knife River Watershed (AKRW)

Board Meeting Minutes 12/12/23

Board Members Present: Shary Zoff – Chair; Julie Johnson – Secretary.
Rodney Johnson; Paul Trygstad; Peg Zahorik – recorder
Others Present: no additional members or guests attended meeting.

Treasurer Report – Mark Osadjan

Treasurer report not available at time of meeting

Secretary Report – Julie Johnson

Draft minutes from Nov. 14, 2023, were read and approved after minor revisions.

Julie forwarded an email from Karen Gran to board members just prior to the meeting. She requested the board review this email and that we, at a future time, decide whether to send attached article to membership (article from Seattle reviewing a management plan created to allow for a win for all where a beaver, salmon, and human practices intersected and caused concerns).

Georganne Hunter sent a note of appreciation for information AKRW sent about the documentary “Sea Change”. She also provided a strong positive review of the documentary.

AKRW email had no entries since our last board meeting.

Old Business

Presentation on forestry - Review of ideas

Rodney presented board members with an outline of suggested topics which he proposed we send to John DuPlissis for review and possible use in a potential presentation about forest harvest practices. Topics outlined included explanations of work done by County managers (St Louis and Lake Counties), State managers, Federal Land managers, and how they manage for forest systems when making harvesting decisions such as sale choices, logging practices, timing, and more. Additional topics included forestry’s effects on watershed hydrology, wildlife and biodiversity, as well as human economy considerations that influence decisions such as logging, recreation, county/state/federal/school revenues, etc. Rodney also suggested we request an overview of best practices and ways we might influence decision makers regarding forest management in the KR watershed.

The board supported and greatly appreciated Rodney’s outline of suggested forestry topics and requested he ask John (DuPlissis) to consider these topics in a presentation that would give an overview of forestry practices (as opposed to separate topic presentations). It was clarified that the topics were for John to choose from or include as a whole (his discretion). After discussion the topic of climate change was added to the list as well as forest diversity and resiliency concerns.

A presentation suggestion from Shary and Peg was for Eli Sagor (U of M Sustainable Forestry Educational Cooperative) to present, possibly with a county forester (Lake or St. Louis) or a forester who would speak about indigenous forest management practices which have gained increased scientific respect and increased use in forestry practices within northern Minnesota. They stated the focus of the presentation would be on practices which promote forest resiliency and diversity along with climate change concerns.

The board unanimously chose to focus first on pursuing a presentation with John Duplissis who would provide an overview of area forestry practices (Rodney's info above). A presentation in January was suggested. A presentation as suggested by Shary and Peg was proposed as a possibility in March.

10-year advisory plan. Are we in?

Julie reminded the board of our participation in the previous advisory plan and that information was provided at that time stating that a member of our group would like to be present for the next plan.

A call to Cory Goldsworthy (DNR) was suggested to be sure we are contacted. Julie will send a correspondence to Cory to ask when the process will continue.

Join with Izaak Walton? – Tabled

Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA)

Shary asked if a board member was interested in attending CISMA meetings. Rodney volunteered. Shary will inform Laurie (CISMA representative).

New business

Update from Kari Hedin - Lake County Soil and Water Conservation District (LCSWCD)

Julie reported that Kari Hedin will update the board on news from LCSWCD. As updates are received, they will be attached to board minutes. It was also determined that Kari's updates will be sent to the AKRW e-blast list. A new report not available at this time

501c3 status

Board members briefly discussed the idea of 501c3 status for AKRW. Rodney noted that if we decide to do this, Dave Mount (watershed resident) would assist with handling public funds (pass money through and up to others). Advantages discussed included our increased ability to support important projects and protections for the watershed. Concerns mentioned related to the additional work this would result in and the need for additional assistance (grant writing, etc). A project of interest mentioned in relation to this would be working with Kari Hedin (LCSWCD) to gain increased forest protection in the Knife River watershed. No final determination about 501c3 status was made at this time.

EPA grant applications - tabled.

Knife River Storm water meeting.

Board members determined that the storm water meeting information should be sent using our e-blast list. Julie will e-blast poster announcement.

Possible presentation and annual meeting dates

Future presentation dates discussed included an inquiry for a January presentation with John DuPlissis. Rodney will talk with John about date possibilities.

An annual meeting date on the last Tuesday in February (2/27) was proposed as well as a general board meeting in early February for which a date has not yet been determined.

Next meeting – Zoom, January 2, 2024. Meeting focus is for next (January) presentation.