

Advocates for the Knife River Watershed (AKRW)

Board Meeting Minutes 1/4/23

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

Others present: Invited guest, John DuPlissis, Forest and Land Research Group Manager with the Natural Resource Research Institute (NRRI)

Treasurer Report from Mark

- Checking, \$2,308.46; Savings \$60.46. No expenses were submitted. A \$25 discrepancy has been fixed.
- Current Membership- 69, Members paid up-65.
- Memberships lapsed for more than 1 year- 41. Mark will send reminders these members.

Secretary Report from Julie

- Minutes from November 29, 2022 were reviewed and unanimously approved with minor revisions
- Rodney completed re-registration to the Secretary of State for AKRW which required \$35 to take Leo off current registration information. Rodney requested reimbursement. Unanimously approved.
- Julie presented a large (approx 4x6) watershed map which Rodney and Julie located. It was agreed that this map, along with a large version of the watershed map found on our new brochures, will be hung in the Town Hall during live presentations.
- Zoom services need to be resumed. Cost is \$150. Board approved this cost. Rodney will talk with Gail.

Invited Guest: John Duplissis, Forest and Land Research Group Manager (NRRI)

Rodney asked John Duplissis to speak with us (the board) about a variety of forestry related issues. He graciously accepted our request. The following is a brief outline of some topics discussed.

- Prior experience: work in the Peace Corp which led him to work with private land owners, US Forest Service in Nebraska, Extension Forester in WI for 15 years (assisted family forest owners to improve land advocacy), Forest and Land research group in Nebraska.
- Forests as systems: Understanding how forests work together. Focus on working with, not against them.
- Forest practices: History of our forestry resulted in very little original forests remaining and the rise of planting in rows. Inquiry, how do we now work back to natural systems and keep them healthy?
- School Trust Lands: created to support schools. Office of School Trust land's first goal is to create funds. The DNR manages these lands.
- Tax forfeit lands: Unique history of land barons and tax forfeit lands in MI, MN, WI
- DNR Forestry: multiple use. Forests are not all managed the same way.
- US Forest Service: They are trying to work more with community and are required to take citizen input.
- Forest Legacy: Minnesota legislature support the purchase of these DNR administered easements. Annual funds - \$15-20 million.
- Citizen voice: Citizens have an increased voice with County and Federal Lands, less with DNR. Natural Resource Conservation Districts are required to have a public meeting. Ranger districts will embrace citizen organizations. Citizens can sign up to receive a target logging list. Recommendations were made for getting on both a soil erosion and avian ecology list.
- Modeling Efforts: Looking at forests with a focus on doing the least harm. Have a larger view. Set aside areas to support and maintain diverse species. Make choices to let some areas go (not log).
- Values first: Management consistent with natural processes. Shift focus from economy first to values first (be swayed by the health of the watershed rather than dollars)
- Collaboration/Changing times (Invasive species, climate, etc.): A need to "throw out the old play book" and work collaboratively, not just talk. Interagency collaboration needed. Include citizen science engagement (fisher, martin, etc). Work with Tara Solem at Lake County Soil and Water Conservation

District (LCSWD) as well as conferring with Molly Thompson at Sugar Loaf was suggested. “One Watershed, One Plan” as well as “One Land, One Planet” were referenced.

- Future of Forest Management: GIS is a tool to see how things change. Use of habitat suitability index to think about how it all fits together. Use of GIS forecast models. Example: study at Apostle Island. Using GIS to look at shrinkage of forest land (wind damage, ash bore, climate). Look at what happens, how does it look, how do forests come back?

Old Business:

Tara Solem- (LCSWCD)

Julie stated she was not able to reach Tara regarding LCSWCD updates or to gain information about audio records from last month’s meeting with board members. Peg noted having had a conversation with Tara in which she agreed to write up notes from above mentioned meeting. Tara noted that sending the audio file may not be possible due to its length. Julie will contact Tara to follow up on the above said details if Tara has not sent her notes from the meeting within a couple of weeks.

Posters/Lamination

Mark and Peg will verify permission to leave our posters at the Duluth Town Hall (posters used at presentations). They will also get firm measurements of drawers so that we can determine the size of posters. Given sizes, posters will then be made and laminated at UMD (maps, mission and value statements, etc). Sizes will be sent to Rodney for use when enlarging map found on brochure.

Ideas for American Rescue Plan Allocations (ARPA) funds for Duluth Township

Ideas including funds to support buckthorn removal for private land owners and recreation trails in township (bike, hike) were mentioned. Rod, Julie, Mark, and Peg stated they will be attending the information meeting at Duluth Town Hall.

Joining Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Lake Co. Invasive Team

The board agreed that we would join the MOU. Mark will share this idea with Duluth Town Board.

New Business

John Duplissis

The board discussed having him as a future presenter. This suggestion was seen as favorable by all board members. Details were tabled for a later time.

News Article:

Shary noted an article found in the Lake Co. Press by Tommy Rawlyk titled; “Trout Waters and our Changing Climate”, from Sat. Dec. 10, 2022. She recommended this as an article of interest.

Annual Meeting

The Board briefly discussed ideas for the annual meeting. It was agreed that we would have both zoom and Town Hall options. Meeting date was set for February 28th at 6:30. The Hall will be open to public at 6:00. It will be open to us for set up at 5:00. Peg will ask Bill Berg if he would do a presentation or discussion on the history of wildlife in our area (caribou as suggested). Mark will let us know how to vote given both Zoom and in person format. Discussion was tabled to next meeting.

Recordings:

Paul will link Fire Wise and Fresh Water recordings to the board.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, Jan. 17th, 6:30 PM (Zoom)