

Advocates for the Knife River Watershed (AKRW)

Board Meeting Minutes 11/14/23

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

Others Present: Steve Betzler – AKRW member; Barb Omarzu - Lake County Soil and Water Conservation District (LCSWCD) board representative for AKRW

Treasurer Report – Mark Osadjan

Checking has \$2,355.76; Savings- \$60.50.

We made 2 cents in interest since the last report, no expenses.

We have one new member (welcome Beth Hippert) bringing our total active membership to 48.

Paul noted there was a check for membership renewal in the mail.

Due to a suggestion from an AKRW member, Shary asked the board if we wanted to consider an audit at this time. After discussion the board agreed that an audit would not be pursued.

Secretary Report – Julie Johnson

Minutes from the Oct board meeting were read and approved with minor revisions.

Barb Omarzu stated she would help by providing updates from Kari Hedin (LCSWCD) at our monthly board meetings.

Julie noted there was no new correspondence this month.

Old Business

Map News

Rodney stated there were no new updates at this time

Book Recommendation – tabled

CISMA - tabled

Presentation Possibilities

Board members discussed several thoughts related to future presentations. Julie suggested Nick Peterson present about the upcoming work on the Knife River tributaries. Shary suggested presentations about forestry issues. Shary also proposed asking our membership what presentations they'd prefer at this time. After discussing member input (considered results from previous member surveys, input from Barb O. and Steve Betzler, and more) the board chose to move ahead with selecting upcoming presenters at this time.

Following a lengthy discussion regarding possible presenters and presentations (presentation from Nick Peterson after 2024 field work, several ideas related to forestry including assisted migration, what to do after land is cleared, wildlife, climate, woodlots, panel discussions, and more) Peg suggested that sub-committees be formed to clarify presentation ideas and report back to the board in December. Board members reporting back include Rodney, Shary and Peg, and Paul.

Tim Rutka (Forestry Technician II, St. Louis County Land and Minerals)

Peg reported information received from Tim Rutka. Tim's work had included the area around Knife River for many years. Due to moving to a new position he no longer works in the Knife River area. Anna Earley (Forestry Technician, St. Louis Co.) will now be our contact person for the area. Anna has already been in communication with Peg and supplied updated bud capping information at the Shilhon trail head.

Tim Rutka also shared information about the grant proposal for work on 18.1 acres located near Knife River's Shilhon road trailhead where logging, followed by tree planting, had previously been done. The goal of the grant is for the removal of trees within a 6 foot diameter of the crop trees (planted red and white pine, northern white cedar, and white spruce). Anna Earley will now be taking over the work related to this grant. Tim noted that as part of the grant, Nature Conservancy may be doing the tree removal near "crop trees".

Additionally, information included in an email correspondence from Tim R. to Anna E. (cc'd to Peg and others) stated a request related to cage removal concerns that volunteers in the Knife River area have expressed (resident volunteers have difficulty keeping up with cage removal and placement). Wording in email is as follows: *"Some of the crop trees have been caged and after 12 years of growth in many cases the fencing (cages) are impeding the growth of the crop trees. Ideally it would be beneficial if the Nature Conservancy could relocate that caging to a nearby small crop tree. They have not done this type of work for our department in the past but there certainly is a need. The reason I suggest an adjacent "small" crop tree is to minimize the number of times these cages need to be relocated"*.

Peg noted great appreciation for the additional request and asked for continued updates regarding possible assistance with cages as well as any new information about this grant proposal. Peg also noted great appreciation for all the communication and work that Tim Rutka has provided over the years and for the communication and assistance already received from Anna Earley.

Dean Paron - Interview on KTWH

Peg noted a recently aired interview with Dean Paron on KTWH (Two Harbors Community Radio) and requested permission to include the interview on our website. In summary, after approximately 20 years as the Minnesota DNR's Finland area fisheries supervisor, Dean now works in the position of Minnesota's statewide stream habitat supervisor. The interview includes information about this as well as his recent Climate Adaptation Leadership Award. Shary is writing a congratulatory note to Dean from the AKRW board.

The board agreed to have this interview added to our webpage. Peg will send the needed information to Gail Trygstad who, graciously, volunteers to manage all things "webpage" for us.

Next Board Meeting (Zoom): 6:30 PM, December 12, 2023. Julie will send Zoom link to all members.