Advocates for the Knife River Watershed (AKRW)
Board Meeting Minutes 3/15/23

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

Zoom meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by Shary Zoff, Chairperson

Treasurer Report from Mark Osadjan
Checking account balance – 1,999.76
Savings account balance - $60.47
Since the last board meeting, reimbursement checks have been written to Peg Zahorik for purchase of supplies and food items for use at presentations ($66.67), to Mark Osadjan for printing and laminating of posters ($108.07), and to Rodney for Zoom renewal costs ($166.68).

There are currently 45 active members.

Secretary Report from Julie Johnson
Regarding the Annual Meeting: A handwritten "thank you" note was sent to Bill Berg; email "thank yous" sent to Tara Solem and Nick Peterson for attending our meeting and presenting valuable information and opportunities for the AKRW and members; Dave Zentner sent a note of regret that he could not attend the Annual Meeting; The board asked that the secretary write thank you notes to Leo Babeu for leading a group discussion at the Annual Meeting and to Gail Trygstad for maintaining our website. A motion was made by Rodney Johnson to waive Gail's membership dues for one year to thank her for her hard work on our website. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Secretary met with Maggie Barnick, of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Mark Osadjan and Rodney Johnson regarding programs to assist private landowners with buckthorn removal. Summary of meeting was sent to AKRW Board following the meeting.

Multiple emails have been shared with Nick Peterson, Lake Superior Fisheries Specialist about a proposal for fish movement studies and the desire to have AKRW assist with locating citizens who would allow access to the river in numerous locations. Nick asked for a letter of support and asked to meet with the AKRW Board at their April Meeting. Secretary will notify Nick of the meeting date and time.

Shary has started a letter of support and others will submit segments of a letter to Shary as desired, by 3/16/23. No significant emails have been received on the AKRW gmail account.

Secretary asked Shary if landowner Bonnie Rose had responded to Shary's email. Shary stated that Bonnie had not yet responded.

Draft minutes from our February 7, 2023 board meeting were reviewed and approved by the board.

Discussion with guest, Maggie Barnick, (MN Department of Agriculture)
Maggie Barnick provided information to board members regarding a grant funded program which could assist area landowners with invasive species management and removal. Details discussed included application process, time frame, short term “hands on” assistance from Conservation Corps for selected applicants, longer term landowner responsibilities, and more. Six emergent invasive species were mentioned, all of which have a leading edge in our area.

(For further details refer to attached document "Zoom Meeting with Maggie Barnick, Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA)" March 2, 2023)
After discussion several suggestions emerged which will be further explored. The suggestions included a possible presentation sponsored by AKRW from both Maggie Barnick and Nate Quadhamer who would describe their different grant funded opportunities as well as present information about targeted invasive species (live samples and power point).

Other suggestions included development of written information for our wider membership related to best management approaches related to the grants and to invasive species management (procedures and timeline starting at the beginning of the process), distinguishing details of the two separate grant opportunities, and possible support from AKRW through emailing both our members and e-blast list with information related to grant program(s).

Maggie stated a desire to speak with Nate about a possible shared presentation and would update us.

Shary suggested involvement with CISMA and stated that she'd contact them to ask permission to put their brochure(s) about invasive species on our webpage. If approved, Mark will send a PDF(s) to Gail.

Old Business

Kari Hedin and Nate Quadhamer presentations

A presentation with Kari Hedin and Nate Quadhamer was suggested for April 11th or 12.

Spring walk co-sponsored by Knife River Recreation Council (KRRC) and AKRW

Peg spoke with Steve Betzler (KRRC board member) about the shared spring hike event for both KRRC and AKRW members. Steve stated having mentioned this to Ann Skadberg (KRRC chair) who was in favor of the idea. Steve and Peg discussed some possible hike details including:

- Recommendation of a morning hike on either the first or third Saturday in May.
- Opportunity for participants to choose one hike from two or three hike options. Each hike option would start at the same time but would be of varying lengths and in different sections of the trail.
- Possibly include a guide on each hike option who would discuss a topic such as bird calls, plant ID, etc.
- All participants would meet at the recreation center in Knife River prior to the start of the hike. Car pooling to the specific trail head could be available.
- Steve suggested having snacks or lunch at the Knife River Rec Hall following the hike and stated KRRC could fund that portion of the event.

After discussion, AKRW board discussed the possible dates. Due to scheduling conflicts it was apparent that the 3rd Saturday in May would work best for AKRW board members. Peg will contact Steve with date information and request a confirmation for Saturday, May 20th. The board suggested we have the event rain or shine and only cancel if a severe weather event is occurring (thunder/lightening, strong winds, etc).

Peg stated she'd contact Robbie Tietge to ask if she'd provide bird identification info along a section of the trail and would contact Tim Rutka to see if he would provide tree identification and information about forestry practices along the longest hike option. Paul will contact a person at Lake County Soil and Water Conservation District (LCSWCD) about being a guide for various plants, flowers, and tree identification.

Nick Peterson, Lake Superior Fisheries Specialist – Fish study letter of recommendation

Nick needs a letter of support by March 23rd, 2023 related to his proposed study of native fish communities on tributaries of the Knife River (a focus on brookies). Shary offered to start a letter of recommendation and will email initial draft to board members for further suggestions or additions.

Sugar Loaf- Tabled

Fire Wise
Julie noted things we (AKRW) could do to increase awareness and information about the Fire Wise program to our membership. After discussion the board decided to reach out to our members to see if someone would like to be involved with the Fire Wise action plan or attend Fire Wise meetings and report to AKRW with information.

New Business
Review of by-laws
Shary suggested that board members review our by-laws to see if there are changes or additions we should consider.

Annual Meeting (2023) - Zoom and Minutes suggestions (2023)
Minutes**:** AKRW has traditionally reviewed and approved minutes from Annual Membership Meeting with members who are present at the following year's membership meeting. Julie recommended that a draft of the Annual Meeting minutes could be written, reviewed, and sent to members prior to next year's meeting, noting that sending information to members closer to the date the annual meeting occurred would be advantageous for AKRW board members and membership alike. The board unanimously agreed to this new procedure. It was noted that, due to rules of order, the Annual Meeting draft minutes would continue to be reviewed for approval at the annual membership meeting of the following year. Peg stated she would have the 2023 annual meeting minutes draft ready for board review at a date near the end of April 2023.

Zoom: the board discussed some concerns sent by members related to viewing the Annual Membership meeting via zoom. After discussion the board determined several changes that could occur prior to the next zoom presentation. These include:

- Placing a sheet in front of the camera stating when live zoom broadcast would begin.
- Starting the live broadcast 15 minutes prior to the start of the meeting and facing the camera toward the chairs so the at home audience can see people arriving, etc.
- Have an external speaker available for audio issues.
- Have a separate microphone available for questions from audience.

Peg will add these points to the "Presentation To Do List" which the board reviews prior to presentations.

Stream Bank Remediation and Reforestation
Paul will ask Kari Hedin if she will talk with the board during an AKRW board meeting to discuss a grant which involves stream bank remediation and reforestation around the Knife River area.

Next Board Meeting (Zoom) – Tuesday, April 11th, 6:30 PM