

Commission members present:

Al Sikora (Village of Waterford) (Chairman)
Francis Stadler (Village of Big Bend)
Alan Barrows (Waukesha County)
Dean Falkner (Village of Mukwonago)
Chad Sampson (Racine County)
Doug Koehler (City of Waukesha)
Robert Bartholomew (Town of Vernon)
Barb Holtz (Town of Mukwonago)
Randy Craig (Town of Vernon)
Mary Pindel (Town of Waterford – Alternate)
Shelley Tessmer (Town of Waterford)
Jim Ritchie (Wisconsin DNR)
Tom Slawski (SEWRPC)
Jim Pindel (Town of Waterford) (Secretary/Treasurer)

Commission members absent:

Don Scott (Town of Vernon) (Vice-Chairman)
Ron Peterson (Village of Big Bend)
Randy Meier (Town of Waterford)
Ken Miller (Town of Waukesha)

Also present: Don Barron, Barbara Baron, Gary Hansen and Margaret Shoptaw of the WWMD, Geof Parish and Brian Schneider of Graef Eng., Dan Treloar of Kenosha County and Michael Schwar a resident of the Town of Vernon.

At 1:04 PM, Chairman Al Sikora called the SEWFRC meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Roll call was taken and a quorum was confirmed.

Minutes The minutes from the January 23, 2015 meeting were reviewed. It was motioned by Bob Bartholomew that the minutes be approved and the motion was seconded by Francis Stadler. The minutes were approved unanimously.

- a) **Treasurer Reports** – The Treasurer’s Report for January 2015 was reviewed. In summary we started the month with \$128,142.871 in our money market account. We received an interest payment of \$21.77 leaving us with a final balance of \$128,164.64 at the end of the month. The undedicated grant funds left in ENUMs 18 and 19 amounts to \$59,305.40. Jim Pindel pointed out that all of this money needs to be spent by 6/30/15, although we can apply for a six month extension, but even then we should have the projects on the books before June 30th. It was motioned by Dean Falkner and seconded by Francis Stadler that the treasurer’s report be accepted. The motion carried unanimously.

Before Old Business was addressed we jumped ahead in the agenda to allow Brian Schneider and Geof Parish of Graef Eng. to make their presentations, so that they could leave early without waiting through the rest of our regular agenda.

Report on Upper Midwest Stream Restoration Symposium – Graef Eng. Brian Schneider made the presentation covering three main topics, Precision Conservation, Precision Agriculture and Better Ditches. Brian provided a single double sided handout that covered a graphic and picture regarding better ditches. Concerning Precision Conservation Brian stated that the 80/20 rule seems to apply in that 20% of farms produce about 80% of the pollution. The champion for this effort is Peter Nowak of the University of Wisconsin. A trial study is underway using two watersheds in the Pecatonica watershed, which is a tributary of the Rock River. In one watershed they will be applying Precision Conservation practices focused only on the sites with the highest pollutant runoff. This will be a multiyear study. Regarding Precision Agriculture the intent is the use technology to more efficiently apply fertilizer and water to save farmers money and reduce pollution. One of the tools employed is the Soil Nutrient Application Planner (SNAP+) management software. The software provides recommendations for fertilizer based on soil types, crop types and tillage practices. Information and tutorial videos are available at www.snapplust.wisc.edu/ and www.pcm.wisc.edu/. Multi-wavelength imaging is used to assess' crop health using aerial photographs and GPS based fertilizer application. Photographing fields at different wavelengths analyzes the moisture levels, chlorophyll content and biomass of the soil. Using GPS equipped tractors farmers can precisely place nutrients and water where needed. Commercial application of this method is already underway in Europe. The objective is less production costs and less pollution. Regarding Better Ditches Brian provided a graphic which showed the advantage of a two stage ditch over a normal single stage ditch. The two stage ditch can reduce turbidity and retains sediments while optimizing nitrogen removal and allowing for the establishment of vegetation. At the conclusion Brian showed a photograph of a ditch employing two stage methodologies.

A technique implemented on tiled farm fields to manage water levels, increase crop yields and reduce nutrient loads out of their tile systems. Geof Parish started out by showing a slide that showed old fashioned drain tiles made of cement that allowed water to come in between the cracks between the tiles and direct the water flow down the center of the tiles. Modern tile are corrugated plastic with holes on the sides to allow the water to get in. The point of Geoff's presentation was the method of controlling the water depth in the drainage tiles to increase crop yields and improve water quality. The costs associated with the improvement have a payback time of less than ten years and as low as three to five years depending on weather conditions. Geof showed photos of a field before the drain tiles were controlled, where you could see a grassy field where the vegetation was significantly greener where the main tile ran through it. The second photo showed the same field as an open water expanse as a wetland restoration. The benefits of agricultural drain tiles are allows early planting, improves access, longer growing season, more crop area and reduced runoff. The disadvantages of drain tiles are the removal of water when unnecessary, decrease soil moisture storage, transfer of excessive nutrients to the waterway, soil oxidation and loss of habitat. Francis Stadler asked if the slits in the

sides of the plastic tiles allow slit to enter the drain tile sending sediment down the tile. Geof said that depending on the soil the tile may be covered with a geotextile sleeve which keeps the sediment outside of the tile. Geof went on to say that the idea is to control the water level in the tile. This is accomplished by introducing water level control stations along the way on the main water carrying tile. This method works best on fields of less than 2% slope and typically one structure for every 10-20 acres of field. Geof then showed graphics that displayed that the level in the main tile is adjusted according to the time in the crop cycle. The water level is allowed to be high in winter when no crops are in the field, lowered during the planting season, increase during the growing season and lowered again during the harvest season. There was a three year study done in Canada which showed a 3% crop yield increase for corn and a 4% crop yield increase for soybeans using this methodology. The study showed a control structure cost of between \$500 and \$2000 per structure and a cost of \$84 per acre with a 25 year life expectancy. US studies show a cost of \$20 to \$110 per acre. The cost of structures increases with depth and diameter of the tile. Other studies in South Carolina showed a 5% increase in yields and that yields were dependent on weather where yields were better during normal or dry years. Chad Sampson said that this practice seems to be more prevalent in Iowa and Illinois and hasn't been implemented here in Wisconsin as far as he knew. Chad has applied for grants to try out this method in eastern Racine County but has not been able to find funding so far. Chad said that he believes that this method will become popular once some farmers try it out, especially during dry years, and get the word out to others. Jim Pindel pointed out to Chad that he knows a place on the Waterford impoundment where drain tiles come right down to the water line from farm fields uphill. Jim also pointed out that if no one else used up the available grant funds we have, that we could provide grant money for this potential project. Shelley Tessmer asked if the price per acre could be reduced if several farmer banded together to get the work done at the same time and it was agreed that there would be some economies of scale cost reductions. Chad Sampson asked about how to handle the riparian buffer along a waterway where the drain tile comes down to a waterway. Geof said that the practicality was to put the control structure above or before the riparian buffer to accommodate the ease of access for the farmer. Geof also pointed out that there are positive value to the riparian buffer zone. Francis Stadler asked for the websites that would be available to further study this methodology. Brian Schneider said that he would email all the websites to Jim Pindel who would forward this information to all the commissioners. Don Baron asked Chad Sampson if some of the money made available from the new federal farm bill couldn't be used for this method and Chad said it could not be used at this time.

Old Business

- a) Fox River Partnership Summit: Tom Slawski said that the program is finally finished and passed around a copy for all to see. Tom also said that he emailed the program to Jim Pindel today and that he forwarded it to all the commissioners. Tom asked that everyone forward this program and invitation to anyone and everyone they knew to hopefully increase attendance. At this point there are only about 25 people registered. Tom said that it has been distributed to interested

parties in Illinois and now he is waiting for responses.

At this time it was pointed out that in previous years the commission compensated commissioners who attend by covering their attendance fee. It was motioned by Francis Stadler and seconded by Dean Falkner that we reimburse commissioners who attend the summit. The motion passed unanimously.

- b) Mukwonago River shoreline restoration at WE Energies Site. Alan Barrows said that he had sent an email to WE Energies saying that we were working on our next year's budget asking them for a commitment that they are going ahead with the project. Alan said that the goal is still to accomplish the project this year. Dean Falkner asked if this was truly a single parcel, single agreement project without the Seifert property involved and Alan confirmed this fact.
- c) Big Bend Boat/canoe launch retaining wall fence & vegetation – Francis Stadler said that it was the same as last meeting. We will have to wait till things thaw out next spring to get some work done.
- d) Wood Drive Erosion Control Project – Chad Sampson said that there was not much going on and that he would approach the land owner here and on the Malchine project below to not plant crops next spring too close to where the work has to be done. This will give the county time and space to get the work done.
- e) Malchine Farm field Erosion Control – Chad Sampson was not present see item (d) above.
- f) Highway 164 Ravine repair Project: - Chad Sampson said that he was surprised by the fact that he has not received a bid on the project so far.
- g) Waterford Impoundment ESR Project Dredging Permit: - WWMD. Don Baron said that the WWMD has applied for an Individual permit which the WDNR required. They are scheduled to get WDNR approval of the permit application by the end of March. They have until 3/6/15 to apply for an additional extension if necessary if they cannot get all the required easements and permissions from farmers and landowners along the way. A public hearing is tentatively scheduled for April 16th for public input. Don asked when the WWMD can submit a request for funds against the \$50,400 we have committed to the permit application. Jim Pindel explained that they can request a partial cash advance at any time. However to get the entire \$50,400 they would have to provide invoices and proof of payment along with the usual reimbursement forms. At this point Jim Pindel said that he wanted to make a clarification. At previous meetings he told the commission that he was against applying for an individual permit versus a general permit because the Army Corps of Engineers said that the process a general permit in about one month and that an individual permit would take over a year. It was finally clarified that even though we are applying to the WDNR for an individual permit the application to the Army Corps can still be a general permit.

At this point Barbara Baron stated that the WDNR said that this was the largest project that they have ever been involved in. Barbara said that she has been very happy with the effort and cooperation that they have received from the WDNR. She also said that at the onset of the last and major meeting they had with the WDNR, the WDNR started by stating that they wanted to get this project permitted. A public hearing is tentatively scheduled for 4/16/15 at which time the public is welcome to comment for or against the project. This event is not intended to be a debate all input or questions are taken under consideration.

- h) Schuetze Playground Storm Water Abatement: - David Burch. Jim Pindel said that just before the meeting started he received an email from David Burch which stated that they are in the fund raising mode and have obtained \$90,000 of the \$125,000 goal. The city is finalizing plans for the new play area which includes the storm water abatement and rain gardens aspects of the project. David said that he will provide another status report for our next meeting. All indications are that the project will be accomplished this year.

New Business

- a) Review of Preliminary Proposed 2016 budget for Counties: Jim Pindel provided an Excel spreadsheet to all commissioners, which was reviewed in detail. Regarding non-grant funds we started 2015 with \$28,142.87, we gain real and estimated income (including a \$10,000 allocation from Racine County) bringing us to a final income of \$38,643.70. Taking off the estimated 2015 & 2016 expenses of \$876.09 we are left with an expected non-grant balance of \$37,767.91. In the realm of grant funds we have the \$400,000 from ENUM-18 and ENUM-19 with total grant expenses for 2012 through 2015 of \$240,694.60 resulting in \$59,305.40 of grant funds still available for projects. At the end of the day we have \$438,643.70 in total (grant and non-grant) income and the same \$438,643.70 in total (grant and non-grant) expenses, thus ending up with a balanced budget. The expenses include \$97,073.01 in Future Project Reserve, which is all the grant and non-grant income theoretically available for projects. The spreadsheet itemized completed, active and projected expenses (projects) for Racine and Waukesha counties. At this point Jim reviewed the final version of the 2015 budget, stating that the 2016 budget will have the same format and will be available for review at our next meeting. At the end of the 2015 budget was a list of Anticipated Potential Grant Fund projects by county. Jim asked all present to advise him in the next two weeks of any additions to this list. All that is needed at this point is a name for the project, its location and a cost estimate. At the end Jim pointed out that he had not included for a 2016 Summit and asked Tom Slawski if he expected there to be one and Tom said yes and indicated that \$5500 would be a reasonable cost for it. Jim said he will add it to the budget.
- b) Request for funding for WWMD Eco-System Restoration (ESR) Dredging stage: Gary Hansen of the WWMD made the presentation. Gary introduced himself as the Chairman of the Finance Committee of the WWMD and provided a three page handout to the commissioners. Gary started out by saying he is requesting

\$2,000,000 from the commission over the state's 2015-17 biennium budget and will request the same from us in the next several upcoming state biennium budgets. Gary said that the waterway is facing a major problem. The waterway is filling in with silt at a rate of 0.6 to 0.7 inches per year. So in a matter of 10 to 15 years the impoundment will be unnavigable and useless for recreational purposes. This is the fill in rate since the 2008 flood during which a greater amount of silt was deposited in the impoundment. Gary said that after review with the Town of Waterford assessor and others the negative economic impact would be in the range of about \$100,000,000 for this region. This includes the lost property values, lost business income and lost personal income. In going through their research they found that there is a law from 1984 listing our Fox River, the Green Bay Fox River and a portion of the Rock River as Scenic Urban Waterways. A copy of the law was included in Gary's handout and shows the legislative intent and charges the WDNR to manage and maintain these three waterways for the use of Wisconsin citizens. When bringing this issue up to the WDNR, the WWMD was advised by Eric Nitschke a direct report to Kathy Stepp the secretary of the WDNR that they fulfill their obligation under this law by funding the our commission the SEWFRC. With this logic in mind, Gary is asking the commission to increase its request for funding from the state to include the money it will take to manage and maintain this Scenic Urban Waterway by providing funds that will significantly offset the cost of dredging the impoundment. This rehabilitation project will make the impoundment a navigable, recreational and sporting waterway for many years to come. Gary pointed out that also in the handout is sheet concerning the amount of land the WDNR has purchased. Gary said that Wisconsin is ranked tenth in the nation in the amount of land it owns. Over the last 8 years the WDNR has purchased over \$20,000,000 per year in land acquisitions. This does not include rents or interest payments but just purchase of prime real estate. The WWMD feels that they could fund the dredging project by simply postponing (by even 10%) some of these acquisitions for a few years. Funding the dredging project in this manner will not cost the Wisconsin tax payers any money or increase the state's deficit. Shelley Tessmer asked if there were any other parts of the Wisconsin statutes that pertained to clean waters or environmental issues that would also lead to funding from the state. Gary responded that he was not sure how our commission obtained or qualified for grant funds but that the Scenic Urban Waterway law was very specific in its focus of managing and maintaining the Fox River Waterway. When Shelley asked if the funding request would be made annually, Gary said that the exact cost of the project is still not determined and will not be known exactly until the dredging permit is obtained and contractors are allowed to bid on the project. Even at that the cost is expected to be adjusted up and down as the work moves forward. Gary said that they realize that the project will be expensive and take probably on the order of five years to complete. Francis Stadler asked if the WWMD had a plan for the dredging and was told that the dredging permit was the plan including what was to be dredged, where, when and where it would be dewatered and where it would be deposited. Jim Pindel pointed out that at this time we cannot approve the dredging project as an active project because we do not have the money to

fund it. At this time we should only consider approving it as an "Anticipated Potential Grant Fund Project" listed at the end of the proposed 2016 budget. Jim pointed out that we have funded several aspects leading up to the permit application, such as sediment sampling, sediment volume determination, a public outreach to educate the riparian owners and most recently funding the cost of the permit application. So since these activities met our project acceptance criteria, we most certainly will be able to accept the fulfillment stage of the dredging as an official project. It will take work and communication with our legislators to get this funding considered. Francis Stalder expressed a concern that the legislature or the WDNR will say that we should fund the dredging out of the usual amount we are allocated in each biennium budget leaving us little else to work with. Shelley Tessmer asked if some of the sediment could be sold to offset the cost and Gary said that we are not allowed to package it for sale but sale in bulk might be permitted. In any case any income would be used to offset the cost of the project. The discussion then turned to who and how to approach out state legislators and Barbara Baron said that in previous discussions with them, they felt that it was important that the local residents pay a portion of the costs. And so Barbara said that the WWMD would expect to have the membership that is the riparian owner to provide some portion of the costs. Obviously the smaller the portion of the costs the more acceptable it will be to the riparian owners. Jim Ritchie said that the WDNR has to operate within the programs that the state, residents and legislature dictate and dredging is not something that has been identified as something that is eligible for funding. Barbara Baron said that not using the word dredging but instead referring to it as maintenance helps. Gary Hansen also pointed out that in the last seven years the WDNR funded the entire cost of dredging Mirror Lake near the Wisconsin Dells. Barbara Holtz asked if anything has been done to keep the impoundment from filling back up with silt in the short term. Jim Pindel responded by stating that there is a natural silt trap at the north end of Conservancy Bay. The WWMD is intending to dredge some 80,000 cubic yards of sediment from this area to trap silt as it comes down from up river. Jim pointed out that the impoundment has existed since 1836 and over this time period the natural silt trap has completely filled up. Now with all the storm water abatement work and erosion control measures that have been made up stream it would seem that it would take even a longer time for this silt trap to be saturated again. Chad Sampson, who goes back to the beginning of the commission, said that when the SEWFRC was conceived it was done so to eventually dredge the Waterford impoundment. Shelley Tessmer motioned that we include the \$2,000,000 funding request to the Anticipated Potential Grant Fund Projects portion of the proposed 2016 budget and the motion was seconded by Jim Pindel. The motion passed unanimously. Gary Hansen thanked the commission for accepting his proposal.

- c) Report on Upper Midwest Stream Restoration Symposium – Graef Eng. This item was covered earlier before Old business, see above.
- d) A technique implemented on tiled farm fields to manage water levels, increase crop yields and reduce nutrient loads out of their tile systems. Graef Eng. This

item was covered earlier before Old business, see above

- e) Consideration of expanding the Commission's jurisdiction south to the Illinois border Tom Slawski said that we have perfected our presentation. The Town of Salem immediately after our presentation motioned and approved the MoU, which has since been forwarded to us via email. With regard to the Village of Silver Lake we made our presentation last week and it is possible that they will sign the MoU in time for us to announce at the Summit that we have all the municipalities and counties on board for our expansion down to the Illinois border. Jim Pindel pointed out that during our visits to the new municipalities, twice the issue of flooding came up and at the last presentation at Silver Lake two board members brought up the fact that there is a stretch of the river near highway 50 where the silt is so bad that it becomes unnavigable in late summer. Tom Slawski added that each of the communities had issues that they hoped we could help fund for them
- f) Consideration of how we operate with a larger membership base: Jim Pindel said that he had nothing new to bring up at this time and that as soon as we officially have all the municipalities on board, he will have to summarize our request for changes that we can pass onto the legislature. Shelley Tessmer asked how many municipalities were involved and so Jim Pindel gave her a copy of the spreadsheet from several meetings back that listed all the present and new municipalities with one commissioner and one alternate commissioner from each.

Reports and Updates

- a) Report on activities of Fox Waterway Agency (FWA) of Illinois –Tom Slawski said that he had nothing new to report and he sent invitations to the Summit to all the board members of the agency. In the past they have provided one or two attendees to each Summit.
- b) Possible diversion of City of Waukesha water treatment plant discharge away from the Fox River: Jim Ritchie said that the last he had heard is that the WDNR expects to complete the Environmental Impact Statement sometime after March of this year. At that point it will go out for public comment. Jim said he would report to the group when this happens.
- c) Progress toward designation as a “National Water Trail” – Village of Waterford. Rebecca Ewald was not present and Al Sikora said that he had nothing to report but Rebecca would be at the Summit so we might hear something there.
- d) SEWFRC Website – Al Sikora said he had put everything Tom Slawski gave him concerning the Summit.

Correspondence –

- a. 1/27/15 Email from Brian Schneider with attachment with links to SnapPlus software.
- b. 1/28/15 Email from Dean Falkner concerning approaching wastewater plants to reduce phosphorus.
- c. 1/28/15 Email from Alan Barrows stating that he has been attending seminars regarding adaptive management, water quality and the associated implementation methods. Alan said he could be our point of contact in this regard.
- d. 1/29/15 Email from Jim Pindel sent to Racine County Executive requesting the \$10,000 allocation in the County's 2015 Budget. Also attached was the response from Lorna George stating that she will send a MoU to me to sign before sending the check. Jim said that he received the MoU from Lorna explained what was involved to the commission and said he would US mail the MoU's back to Lorna.
- e. 2/2/15 Email from Alan Barrows with two proofs of payment attached for the Town of Vernon Farm Field Gully Repair project.
- f. 2/3/15 Email from Tom Slawski with article published in the Wisconsin Natural Resources Magazine.
- g. 2/3/15 Email from Tom Slawski requesting a \$4,125 cash advance for the 2015 Summit.
- h. 2/9/15 Email from Shelly Tessmer stating that she talked to Scott Gunderson and that he would not be able to present or attend the Fox River Summit.
- i. 2/12/15 Correspondence concerning the Wind Lake Drainage Canal.
- j. 2/12/15 Email from Jim Pindel to all commissioners with attached preliminary 2016 Budget for Counties.
2/27/15 Email from Tom Slawski with a link to register on-line for the 2015 Summit.

Miscellaneous Issues –

Dean Falkner said that he was in the process of drafting a permit regarding the part per million acceptance level for phosphorus. They are in the early stages of drafting a management plan for phosphorus control. Dean said he has to get rid of about 2000 lbs. of phosphorus per year. Dean said that the Village will be looking to the commission for financial help in projects they will have to initiate to achieve the phosphorus reduction. Dean said that the presentation by Graef concerning water tile control brings up an interesting point because nothing is being done in this regard. He wondered about the relative impact of phosphorus dispersion from surface water runoff versus water tile output.

It was motioned by Bob Bartholomew and seconded by Randy Craig that the meeting be closed and the motion carried unanimously.

Meeting Closed at 3:00 PM

THE NEXT OFFICIAL MEETING WILL BE Friday, March 27, 2015 at 1:00 PM. (Meeting Location: Town of Vernon Fire Station #1, W233 S7475 Woodland Lane, Big Bend, WI 53103.)