

Friends of the St. Joseph River
Board Meeting
Board Minutes September 23, 2021
Respectfully submitted by Carolyn Grace

Call to order by Matt Meersman 1:02 pm via zoom.

Introduction: Board Members Present:

Matt Meersman, Daragh Deegan, Carolyn Grace, Eric Kerney, Jeff Reece, Kim Sinclair, Annie Klehfoth, Jordan Shedd, and Danielle Meersman

Others in attendance: Becky Shank, Amie Wentworth, Chris Temple, Doug McLaughlin, Melissa DeSimone, Pat Wiltshire, Bill Tefft, Kristi Todd, Cindy Bailey, Frances Tuite and Jennifer Kanine.

Minutes: Reece motioned to accept the board minutes from June. Sinclair seconded. Motion passed.

Treasurer Report: Kim Sinclair explained she did not complete the report before the meeting and asked that it be tabled until the next meeting. She did provide information about some recent activity and the basic status of assets. [A formal report was sent via email to board members after the meeting closed.]

Old Business:

- **Board action:** No board action taken via email
- **St. Joseph River Documentary:** Many great locations showed the Documentary and the Friends \$5,000 for advertisement has been well spent. TV ads are almost complete, Meersman shared his screen for all to watch. WNIT has the Documentary on line at www.wnit.org/celebratethestjoe

New Business:

- **Berrien Springs State Game Area Letter of support:** Sinclair motioned to provide a letter of support for the Michigan DNR's project to secure 900 acres on the St. Joseph River. The requested funding would be provided by a Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant. Deegan seconded. Motion passed. Discussion was had about the actual location of the land and why the owner wanted to sell. It is near Lake Chapin, and the reason for selling is unknown.
- **St. Joseph River Inventory:** Doug McLaughlin and Carolyn Grace gave an update about the GLRI funded river inventory project support by the Friends. All 210 miles have now been walked, crawled or floated. The amount of data is amazing. Grace explained how others could use this data for future grants. Doug will have some video data to share on YouTube soon.
- **Watershed Academy:** Reece motioned to provide 2 scholarships for the Indiana Watershed Leadership Academy. He and Grace will review applications to help choose 2 qualified candidates. Others may help if they choose to do so. Sinclair seconded the motion. Motion passed. The group hopes to get a few new people involved in this wonderful opportunity.

Announcements:

- Matt Diana from MDNR Fisheries provided an update for Meersman to share. Check out the Dowagiac River near Pucker Street. The dam removal project is now complete and the area is looking great! A group of volunteers cleared a pathway through fallen trees above Dodd Park, and a contractor was hired to clear a pathway below the park with grant funding secured by

Marcy Hamilton of SWMPC. Also, the MDNR did a fish survey in the lower St. Joe River and found a grass carp. Although this is an invasive species, it is not the same as the Asian Carp that are causing great concern across the Great Lakes.

- Kristi Todd reported on 2 different opportunities for IN residents and agencies to take advantage of soon. The first is a grant due in early January from the Lake and River Enhancement Program of the IDNR. Projects can include river log clearing, lake and stream studies and more. Check out the RFP to see if you qualify. The second had to do with IDNR's stream and wetland mitigation banking program. The IDNR is trying to find sites in our watershed to restore wetlands and streams to create credits for the program.
- Eric Kerney shared a [link to a story map](#) he created with information from USGS streamgages in the watershed. He had to leave the meeting early, but encouraged others to contact him for more information.
- Many people asked Grace to mail a Friends T-shirt. Contact her if you would like to purchase one.

Adjournment: Reece motioned to adjourn, and D. Meersman seconded. Matt Meersman concluded meeting at 2:21pm

Next meeting November 18th at 1pm on Zoom. Matt will send out a link before the meeting.