

Friends of the St. Joe River Association Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday, August 23,, 2012—1:00pm

Three Rivers Library—Three Rivers, MI

IN ATTENDANCE:

- Directors: Eldred Adams, Melanie Stoughton, Rachel Smith, Matt Meersman, Jim Coury, Geoff Cripe, Danielle Meersman, Brian Musser, Eric Kerney, Daragh Deegan, Rudy Kappe, Maria Mast
- Watershed Council: Jeff Reece, IMP; Don Stohler, Christiana Creek Coalition; Grant Poole, Pokagon Band; Eric Kurtz, Elkhart Co. SWCD; Joe Schmees, IDEM; Chris Bauer, MDEQ-WRD; Dona Hunter, SNRT, LaGrange SWCD; Dave Foerster, Two Rivers Coalition

MINUTES of the June minutes were approved on a motion made by Rudy Kappe and seconded by Maria Mast.

TREASURER'S REPORT—was presented by Danielle Meersman, Treasurer, and shows the past two month's activity of July and August. Motion to approve the report was made by Jim Coury, and seconded by Daragh Deegan. Motion carried.

WETLAND PARTNERSHIP PROJECT/CHRISTIANA CREEK EVENT— Matt Meersman reported that the grant is two years in, and that the last third of the grant time will be spent on outreach of the assessment tool. The prioritization of parcels is currently taking place. Outreach of the wetland project was done through a Christiana Creek event that Don Stohler and the Christiana Creek Coalition hosted. Turnout was better than anticipated, with 5 of the targeted landowners attending, three of which were among the top ten wetland landowners in the targeted outreach area.

NEW BUSINESS—

Great Lakes Advisory Board Nomination—Brian Musser reported that the EPA is looking for fifteen qualified people to give the agency guidance on Great Lakes Basin issues. Matt Meersman came to mind, and Brian has nominated Matt to be on this advisory board. Several letters of recommendation were written by people who have partnered with the FotSJR. The EPA should contact people chosen by this fall. Matt Meersman stated that he is very proud of the area within the watershed that he knows, both people and the land, and is thankful to be

involved. These meetings would be four hours a month, with two of those meetings requiring travel to a meeting location, and the remainder of the meetings over the phone.

National Watershed Coalition- There is a call for papers from the coalition, and there is a possibility of the FotSJR group using this opportunity to highlight the Landscape Level Functional Wetland Assessment tool. A 400 word abstract would be required to be completed for request for papers. The National Watershed Coalition annual meeting is to be held in Tunica Mississippi this year.

Water Quality Monitoring Data Consolidation- A uniform place to house and deliver data that could be used to assess the health of the watershed has been brought up as being useful for watershed planning. Matt Meersman mentioned that this is something that the group used to do, and that Ray Leising used to run the program through area schools. The FotSJR will check with Indiana water quality monitoring data to possibly combine MI and IN data. The group would make sure to check the credibility of the data through the USGS and IDEM. Daragh Deegan stated that he serves on the IN water quality monitoring council, and can provide the data to date. Indiana water quality monitoring currently has an online map with monitoring locations and dates of sampling that the FotSJR could possibly model their data consolidation on. Matt said that having the FotSJR website be a portal for data that could have a map with points linking to biosurveys of macroinvertebrates would help give sound data to other organizations looking for project funding within the watershed.

OTHER

- Eric Kerney announced that the tribe will be resubmitting a wildlife grant that did not get funded the previous year. Eric requested support again from the FotSJR for this wildlife habitat restoration project. Jim Coury made a motion to submit a revised letter, with Rudy Kappe seconding. Motion passed.
- Don Stohler suggested that the FotSJR try to get the local media more active in attending board meetings. There was great publicity for the Christiana Creek event, which also gave the wellfield botanical gardens more press as well. The River Country Journal currently covers a lot of FotSJR press, but it is difficult to get all media there due to the large watershed size. Don also mentioned that he would help in recruiting organizations within the watershed to receive information on joining the council.
- Dave Foerster announced that the Two Rivers Coalition quarterly workshop on September 12th will have Peter Sinclair, of a climate change think-tank as their guest speaker. He will speak for 90 minutes on how climate change will impact community infrastructure.

- Melanie Stoughton announced that the Calhoun Conservation District would be submitting a Notice of Intent on a planning grant for the Nottawa Creek Watershed. Melanie requested a letter of support from the FotSJR. Rudy Kappe made a motion to support the project, with Geoff Cripe seconding. Motion carried.
- Chris Bauer mentioned that along with the Nottawa Creek 319, the south branch of the Paw Paw River, and the Hodunk-Messenger were also submitting an NOI.
- Joe Schmees announced that the 319 request for proposals would be closing on November 30th.
- Eldred Adams announced to the group that he still has the basic FotSJR bulletin boards that highlight the mission of the group. If anyone would like to use these bulletin boards, please let Eldred know. The group requested that Eldred bring the boards to the September meeting to be available to anyone. Eldred also let the group know that his son would be coming to speak at the September meeting on fundraising strategies.

NEXT MEETING –The next meeting will be held on Thursday, September 27th at the Three Rivers Public Library.

Meeting adjourned at 1:55 pm.