

**Friends of the St. Joe River Association Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, June 23, 2016—1:00 PM**  
**Pine Knob Park—Howe, IN**

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

**Directors:** Grant Poole, Jeff Reece, John Law, Matt Meersman, Danielle Meersman

**Watershed Council:** Janel Meyer, Steuben SWCD; Ron Johnson, Fabius Twp Wetlands; Jeremy Reiman, SJRBC;

**Visitors:** Patty Hoch-Melluish, Kieser & Assoc.; Scott Fetters, USFWS; Ed Roberts, Paddlers for Conservation; Tara Lee, Steuben SWCD

President Matt Meersman called the meeting to order at 1:10 pm, welcomed everyone to the meeting and called for introductions.

**Minutes** of the May board meeting were reviewed to approve. A motion to approve the minutes was made by John Law, and seconded by Grant Poole. Motion carried.

**Treasurer's Report** was presented by Danielle Meersman. Danielle noted we received one membership renewal. As of June 23<sup>rd</sup>, net income was \$2222, with total assets and net equity at \$63,535.20. A motion to approve the treasurer's report was made by John Law, and seconded by Grant Poole. Motion carried.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**ACOE Sediment Presentation Update**—Matt reported that he has confirmed with Jim Selegan from Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) that he will give a presentation about their work on monitoring sediment movement in the St. Joseph River at the August 25<sup>th</sup> Board meeting in Three Rivers, MI. He said Jim expected the presentation to last 15-20 minutes.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Great Lakes Protection Fund RFP**— Matt talked about the Great Lakes Protection Fund (GLPF) as potential source of funding for continuing the work that has started with incentivizing conservation through drain assessments and the “payment for ecosystem services” approach that has been taken in Paw Paw, MI by the Van Buren Conservation District. GLPF released an RFP and a pre-proposal is due mid to late July. Jim Klang from Kieser & Associates is taking the lead on developing a proposal that could include partners like the FotSJR and the Van Buren Conservation District. Discussion took place about whether people actually adopted new conservation practices in response to the drain assessment incentive. According to online sediment calculator there was significant sediment loading prevented from the conservation practices. According to Matt, the landowners seem to think the program was fair.

**OTHER**

- Matt was contacted by Michigan NRCS about helping them identify landowners for wetland restoration using the money allocated through the RCPP project in the SJRW. Michigan still has a lot of money that needs to be spent on wetland restoration. Matt suggested holding a landowner outreach event like the ones held for the Wetland Partnership Project that was

focused on SW Michigan. NRCS identified this area as a priority due to technical capacity of the staff in this area. John Law made a motion to spend up to \$500 on the mailing of targeted invitations and refreshments to host such an event by the end of summer. Jeff Reece seconded the motion. Motion carried.

- Everyone commented about the nice facilities and wanted to thank the LaGrange County Parks for providing meeting space at such a great park. Scott Fetters noted that the park had recently been expanded through a grant to purchase a prairie where Mississauga rattlesnakes have been found.
- Jeremy Reiman announced that a steering committee meeting for Cobus Creek will be held at the Elkhart Conservation Club on Tuesday June 28<sup>th</sup> at 2:30pm. Some water quality monitoring has already been completed in Cobus Creek and fish surveys will be done soon.
- Matt invited everyone to come to Trading Post canoe livery in Mongo, IN for a complimentary canoe/kayak trip or to take a self-guided hike at the park following the meeting.

**Motion to Adjourn at 1:59 pm was made by John Law, seconded by Grant Poole.**

#### **NEXT MEETING**

No July Meeting. Next meeting scheduled for Thursday August 25, 2016 at 1:00 p.m. at Three Rivers Public Library.