

**Friends of the St. Joe River Association Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, June 27 2013– 1:00pm**  
**Bonneyville Mill County Park—Bristol, IN**

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

- Directors: Matt Meersman, Brian Musser, Melanie Stoughton, Eldred Adams, Danielle Meersman, Geoff Cripe, Maria Mast, Ron Niezgodski
- Watershed Council: Bill Courliss, Union Lake Com. Assoc.; Karen Mackowiak, St. Joseph River Basin Commission; Grant Poole, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians; Marcy Colclough, SWMPC; Mandy Courtright, Steuben Co. SWCD; Dave Foerster, Two Rivers Coalition; Dallas Chester, Two Rivers Coalition
- Visitors: John Law, St. Joseph County Dept. of Public Works; Dane Cramer, Ducks Unlimited; Michael Sertle, Ducks Unlimited; Kathleen Petitjean, Greening the Bend

President Matt Meersman called the meeting to order at 1:09pm. A big thank you to Karen Mackowiak for planning and hosting the June meeting in Indiana was given. Matt welcomed everyone to the meeting and called for introductions.

**Minutes** of the May meeting were submitted by Rachel Smith. One correction of a duplicate name in the minutes was noted and will be corrected. Motion to approve minutes was made by Ron Niezgodski and seconded by Maria Mast. Motion carried.

**Treasurers Report** was presented by treasurer Danielle Meersman. In the report Danielle noted that there is a net loss of \$175 for the month, and a year to date loss of \$300. There has also been activity in membership renewals, with \$50 in dues coming in for the month. Danielle reported that net assets are currently at approximately \$50,000. A motion to approve the treasurer's report was made by Maria Mast and seconded by Ron Niezgodski.

**Old Business**

**Wetland Partnership Project** – Ron Niezgodski summarized the overall scope of the partnership project. Matt Meersman included a summary of the wetland functions that are being used for this assessment. Dave Foerster asked what funds still remained on the grant. Matt reported that there were still funds left due to a portion of the GIS work being done in-house. More grants will be looked into in order to keep the momentum of the project moving forward.

**Membership Development and Fundraising** – Maria Mast passed a short report around. Matt Meersman summarized membership progress to date, and the point of sale ideas for future fundraising.

**Greening the Bend Partner Support**—Kathleen Petitjean summarized the participation of Greening the Bend in past FotsJR meetings, and their progress to date on obtaining 501c3 status. Greening the Bend has not yet received their non-profit status, but Kathleen noted that their group has no concerns that they will not receive their status. Since requesting help from the FotsJR, Greening the Bend has received an agreement from the City of South Bend to form an escrow account that would hold any donations towards the green roof project for the Century Center. Kathleen thanked the group for their continued support on their project, and reminded the group of their upcoming fundraiser scheduled for September 7<sup>th</sup>. Kathleen noted that there will be a silent auction during their Rain Barrel Ball, and any

contributions would be greatly appreciated. Information is available on the group's website and Facebook page. This information will also be posted on the FotSJR website and event calendar.

### **New Business**

**St. Joe River Races Event**—Danielle and Matt summarized the event over the past years. This year, Danielle and Matt have inherited the race, which is in its tenth year. Matt stated that he and Danielle would like the proceeds of the race to go to the FotSJR. Along with the paddling race, Matt noted that they would also like to include a 5k run that day as well. The event will be held Saturday, September 28<sup>th</sup> at Veteran's Memorial Park in South Bend. Volunteers for the day are needed. Members were encouraged to volunteer if available, as well as share any other ideas for the event for marketing.

A motion to support the event was made by Geoff Cripe and seconded by Maria Mast. Motion carried.

### **Other Items**

- Ruddy asked Matt for any updates regarding the call to the Governor regarding wetland issues. Matt summarized the issue and the legislation currently going through. If passed, Michigan would lose its "Assumption of Federal Permitting". Matt urged everyone to look into the matter and voice their concerns.
- Matt Meersman updated the group on the progress of the Hillsdale CD's River Cleanup Project. Volunteers will be needed for the event. Matt noted that Lucas Gabbard is the person to contact for more information.
- Melanie Stoughton announced that the 319 grant application from Calhoun County for the update of the Nottawa Creek WMP was not funded. Melanie also announced that the Kalamazoo Conservation District will be seeking a District Administrator, and the position will be posted shortly.
- John Law announced that the Elkhart County Conservation Club is looking for any information regarding work being done along Cobus Creek.
- Mike from Ducks Unlimited announced that Dane Cramer will be taking over the region for the agency. He also updated the group on the federal NAWCA grant proposal regarding the NE-NC counties of Indiana.
- Marcy announced to the group that the video from the FotSJR Annual Meeting titled, "On the Water" is now available on DVD. Contact Marcy for more information.

**Next Meeting**—Matt reminded the group that there is **NO July board meeting!** The next meeting will be held on Thursday August 22nd, 2013 at 1:00pm at the Three Rivers Public Library. Matt Meersman reminded the group that there will be a Wetland Partnership Project Meeting prior to the afternoon meeting at 10:15 am at the same location.

Meeting adjourned at 2:27 pm.