

FREP Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, May 12, 2021 - Teams Platform

Call to Order at 11:14 AM by President Jeff Mengler

Present: Jeff Mengler, Elizabeth Hagen-Moeller, Carolyn Campbell, Becky Hoag, Maggie Soliz, Holly Hudson, Karen Miller, Alyse Olson, Jessica Mino, Rob Linke

Approval of Minutes: from 1-13-2021: Motion to approve by Hudson, second by Miller. Approved.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Hagen-Moeller noted the FREP balance as of April 30 is \$3,747.16 and the River Trail is \$4,774. Fees that are paid annually such as the website are in the budget. Motion to approve the Treasurer's Report by Campbell. Second by Miller. Approved.

Mengler noted that the breakout sessions at the Summit generated \$1,940 in revenue which is to be split between FREP and SE Wisconsin FREP which is currently holding the money on our behalf. One suggestion is to use it as seed money for a documentary film featuring Scott Johnson and his presentation on 100 Years on the Fox. Participants at the summit had recommended turning his presentation into a film. We would partner with Wisconsin group and include other groups who may want to contribute. Discussed resources for creating the documentary and possible uses. Committee members to research options and bring back for discussion. Minors will check into resources at TCF.

FREP Annual Membership Drive for 2021-22 will be conducted in June. Fiscal Year starts July 1. Membership dues collected over the current year came to \$4,975 - down slightly from prior year due to COVID. Will continue to focus efforts on bringing in river communities. Still working on a contact for South Elgin. It was noted Crystal Lake Park District is a member, but the city is not. Williamson will reach out to new mayor and invite him to the Crystal Creek presentation in June. Soliz noted that including elected officials to events like Crystal Creek could enhance efforts on watershed planning in general.

Fabulous Fox! Water Trail Update: Miller noted this is the first major update of the website and maps and have contracted with the original consultant who designed the logo, website, and brochure – Map Hero. The original estimate of \$400-\$600 has changed as other updates and improvements have been identified bringing the estimate to \$850-\$1,000. Updates completed look good. Additions included adding river miles for each of the dams and fitting those into all 14 of the downloadable maps which Miller feels is important as it is a safety issue. New photos and updated information on access sites was also included. Project should be completed within the next couple of weeks. Miller noted that Silent Sports Magazine which covers non-motorized sports in the Midwest – published her article on the Water Trail in March. Also, Congressional representatives have been reaching out to local governments seeking ideas for possible funding. The Water Trail was identified during that process and a representative from Lauren Underwood's office reached out requesting additional information on the trail. A packet of information was provided. Mengler noted that he and Campbell are on an advisory committee for Representative Underwood which provides a good platform for getting ideas out in front of the congresswoman and her team. Soliz noted this shows the importance of having shovel ready watershed projects such as Tyler Creek in the queue and that reaching out to Lake County could also increase the chances of funding for regional projects. Federal Committees identified different areas of interest and types of projects that would be eligible through their committees. Members to research ideas.

2021 Meetings/ Noon Networks:

June 9: (Noon Network) Crystal Creek Watershed Plan - presentation by Steve Zimmerman (RES-AES) at Crystal Lake City Hall followed by site tours at Lundahl Junior High and Algonquin Maker's Park.

July 14: (Annual picnic) Les Arends Forest Preserve in Batavia. Will include a presentation on fresh-water mussels by Jessi DeMartini with the DuPage County FPD. Event will start at 4:00 pm. BYO food/ drink.

August 11: (Noon Network) "Roadside as Habitat" hosted by McHenry Township and Environmental Defenders of McHenry County (Nancy Schietzelt). Confirmed. Meeting location to be determined.

September 8: (Membership Meeting) "Singing Insects" presentation by Carl Strang will be held at the Creek Bend Nature Center located in the LeRoy Oakes Forest Preserve in St. Charles which is part of the Kane County FPD. Strang is retired from DuPage County PFD and maintains a website with information on singing insects including sounds for help in identification.

October 13: Lake Marian Creek Project presentation by Jed Anderson and site tour in Carpentersville. FREP saw it pre-construction in April 2019, and it is now completed. Program is confirmed

November and December not confirmed at this time. Art Malm's presentation "Free the Fox" was recommended for November. Looking for ideas on an in-person gathering for December.

Fox River Summit: Mengler noted that FREP had 136 registrants for its portion of the program on Thursday which was the second highest of the participating watersheds. Red Cedar was higher. Additionally, there were at least 35 or so in each of the breakout sessions. Event was successful and had a good response from participants.

One Earth Film Festival: It was noted that 983 guests were registered for the Film Festival with 96% from the US with 10 other countries represented, including Canada and Mexico. 44% of US registrants were from Illinois - which is where the festival is based – but an additional 48 additional states were represented, with 11% of viewers being from California. Very wide reach for overall festival. Numbers specific to our film not provided.

Fox River Watershed Science Fair This was done as part of a STEM Expo event that Deb McMullen puts together for District U46 which provided the technical support. Scott Johnson's students from Oswego East High School were able to sign up and participate through that event. Since this was conducted remotely, students were given a template, including questions they should address, and were asked to create their presentations within that framework. The idea is that this would serve as a pilot for implementing our own program in partnership with Friends of the Fox and others. Next steps would be to compile a database of schools within the watershed and identify individuals who could help get this off the ground. Similar programs have dropped off over time. Need to make sure this is not an extra thing teachers have to do.

Sub Watershed News:

Indian Creek Watershed-based Plan: Field work has begun with detention basin and stream physical conditions assessments. There is one 9-acre lake within the watershed in DuPage County FPD that is difficult to access that will require a shore-line assessment. Water levels have been quite low prompting a conversation by concerned residents through the app - Next Door. One knowledgeable resident used the forum to explain the importance of wetlands. Hudson sees this as an opportunity to incorporate this and other forums for the public outreach and engagement portion of the project. There has always been the challenge of getting information to residents and into the neighborhoods. It was suggested that reaching out to aldermen and representatives could be an additional way to disseminate information through the various forums they use to reach constituents. Schools are another option.

Annual Budget FY22: Hudson noted a discussion was not held on the annual budget. She noted that the CMAP Indian Creek Grant amount of \$1,217.16 was the Ending Balance as of April 30 and that the total amount that would be held over and available for FY22 would be lower than that amount. Also, the grant is expected to be extended which would allow for more time to submit reimbursements. The budget was discussed. FREP does update registration for our non-profit status, but the fee that is submitted – which runs about \$15 – is refunded and is included in Legal Fees. Our portion of the Fox River Summit of \$970 is not currently in the budget but should be reflected in some way. Hoag will add to final copy of budget. Motion to approve budget as amended. Moved by Miller, Hudson seconded.

Continuation of Sub-Watershed News:

Tyler Creek Watershed Plan: Awaiting the notice of funding opportunity to be posted on the Illinois EPA website.

Boone and Dutch Creek Watershed: A coalition has reconvened in McHenry County. Cindy Skrukud is working on getting some leadership into that group.

Flint Creek/ Spring Creek Watersheds Partnership in the Barrington area is looking to replace their coordinator.

Old Business: The link for "From the Ground Up" – the Australian Regenerative Ag Film – is on FREP's website along with the links from the Film Festival.

New Business:

Mengler signed the petition for the America's Wildlife Act on behalf of FREP.

Partners for Conservation. Up for re-enactment. FREP should watch so we provide support.

Adjournment at 12:32 PM

Minutes submitted by Carolyn Campbell, Secretary