

# Iron County Watershed Coalition Minutes of Board Meeting

October 19, 2023, West Iron District Library

"ICWC works to ensure the highest possible water quality in Iron County lakes, streams and wetlands by educating and engaging our communities in projects that will restore and preserve our watersheds for future generations."

Meeting Called to Order at 4:00

**Attending:** Bette Premo, Rich Sloat, Doug Felger, Jim Brennan, Sara Basso

**Approval of minutes of previous meeting, June 28, 2023:** Motion to approve: Rich, 2nd: Doug Passed.

**Approval of Agenda:** Motion to approve: Rich 2nd: Doug; passed.

**Treasurer's Report:** (See attached) Motion to approve: Jim 2nd; Rich. Passed.

**Correspondence:** none has been received

## Dober Ponds Project Update - Watershed Council Support Grant

In July Dr. Alan Johnson met with Bette Premo and Lindsey Ringuette for work at the Hiawatha Shaft. They measured water quality parameters and took samples from various depths (table attached). This table of data from 2023 was compared to the same measurements collected in 2004 and 1976. The most remarkable information is that pH at 1200 feet is now near neutral compared to higher acidity in 2004 and 1976.

In August, Aaron Wright from Brennan Company met at the Dober Pond site with Bette Premo, Richard Sloat, Maggie Scheffer, Jay Parent (EGLE), Scott Richards (EGLE) and Lindsey Ringuette (EGLE). The purpose was for Brennan company to take measurements and samples for a treatability study that would allow for the development of a scope of work for dredging of the Dober Ponds and Dober Pit. On September 26 Brennan submitted their Scope of Work and Budgetary Pricing to ICWC and EGLE (attached). ICWC members discussed additional work that will be requested at the site including fencing and additional weirs placed between the ponds as per the original design.

Richard Sloat delivered a map which showed the results of depth soundings he performed at the Dober Pit. These soundings were done to replicate those performed by David Tiller

and Alan Johnson in 2004 in order to determine if the amount of sediment in the Dober Pit has changed. The map of and table of soundings is attached. Significant increases in depth of sediment were demonstrated in some parts of the pit and significant decreases in depth at other parts. Finalized elevation maps of the ponds and pit will be prepared by Richard and Pisoni Survey and submitted for the final report.

Richard Sloat and Sara Basso met with Rep. Ed McBroom on August 2 at the Dober site. Richard was impressed with his knowledge, concern and commitment regarding the need for continued work improving the site and its safety to both humans and animals.

## Wild River Road Project Update

MDNR has extended the ICWC Fisheries Habitat Grant for another year (October 2023-October 2024). Trout Unlimited has requested (and has been conditionally approved for) an additional \$200,000 from the WE Energies MEF fund to help support the project. NFWF (National Fish and Wildlife Foundation) has approved our request to use their promised funds for engineering (\$47,130) and to pay for a portion of the culvert materials (\$122,000) at this time. Brad Toivonen (Iron County Road Commission Superintendent) and Geri Grant (Superior Watershed) have been working with UPEA (Upper Peninsula Engineers and Architects) and UP Concrete to get the contracts in place and the engineering work is beginning. Both UPEA and UP Concrete are excited to work on the project and UP Concrete provided a generous \$20,000 donation. We have a plan now for a ConSPAN bridge which will place our project within the budget of our DNR Fisheries Habitat Grant and additional funding sources.

## Musky Tagging Project Update (Jen Johnson, MEF)

Jen Johnson has extended her project and will be getting additional equipment to continue the Musky tagging project on the Paint River.

## Miskwaagamiwiziibi Park Shelter

Richard has been working at the site. There is a start for the canoe ramp and a latrine. More work needs to be done to develop privacy walls around the latrine and trails and interpretation on the trails. Rich would like to work with Girl Scouts and Cub Scouts to help develop trails and learn orienteering at the same time. Bette mentioned that interpretive signs could be as simple as a small metal plate that directs a person to an online smart

phone accessible interpretation (either with a QR code or website ID). Next year marks the 100th year anniversary of when this land was dedicated for public use in Iron County.

## Cook's Run

Rich reported that attempts by Iron County Parks and Rec. were not successful to remove two acres and the historic hatchery cabin from the reverter clause on the property so it remains as county property to preserve and use it recreationally for the benefit of the public. This site is listed on the Michigan Historic Register and therefore a State owned facility. Iron County Parks and Rec. would like to have their name on the deed in order to get private organizations help with funding for restoration.

## Float the Paint

Some discussion was had regarding how the float the paint can be more easily managed. There is some difficulty associated with shuttling people with their cars to the take out location. We want to engage more people in this activity or others like it.

## Partnership for Watershed Restoration Conference

Sara Basso attended and reported on this meeting. She mentioned there was lots of talk regarding (AOP) Aquatic Organism Passage, and how culverts and water passages are hot topics. Sara reported at the PWR meeting about our Dober project and how there needs to be an inventory of other such places to get them identified and highlighted for restoration.

**Date of Next Meeting:** December (date and time to be determined)

**Adjournment:** 6:00 pm. Motion: Rich, 2" by Doug.