

# September 3, 2025, 4:00 pm WIDL Minutes of the Iron County Watershed Coalition

"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."

## Call to Order at 4:00

**Attending:** Bette Premo, Rich Sloat, Maggie Scheffer, Doug Felger, Dodi Felger, Jim, Dorien, Dave Martwick, Dan Hinch;

**Introduce Guests:** Dan Hinch, Don Linder, Becky Jorgensen members of GREEN UP: Melissa Carswell, Fern Tuchowski, Aeron Riley, Ria Riley, Matthew Maki, Sandy Maki.

**Review and Approval of minutes & Agenda:** Rich moved, Dave 2nd, passed. Jim moved to approve agenda and Rich 2nd. Passed.

**Treasurer's Report:** (as received in email on 8/24/25)

**Correspondence:** none

## Old Business:

- Two workbees at the Miskwaagaamiwiziibi Shelter in July accomplished the completion of the outhouse door; a large tent pad adjacent to the shelter; progress on the takeout ramp; chinking the cordwood walls, removal of old cordwood stack; and dispersal of sand pile across the access trail. Sara provided lunch for 10-12 volunteers both days.
- The annual "Float" on Fire Lake, with potluck picnic and music afterwards at the Miskwaagamiwiziibi shelter was well attended with members of "Silent Sporters" of Dickinson and Iron Counties joining ICWC for the event. 30+ people attended. Thanks to Bette and Dean for elevating the occasion with their music!
- No updates on the Dober Mine or Wild Rivers culvert replacement.

## Ongoing Business:

- **Cooks Run:** In the interest of bringing everyone up to date, provide a summary of activities and developments:
  - Timeline: 100 years at Cooks Run (Maggie) Preview of timeline graphic.

- Proposed timber harvest, February, 2025 (Rich) The forest management plan includes an area considered for clear cut harvesting which is an environmentally sensitive area. That along with its historic and recreational value deem it worth conservation
- Involvement with County commissioners and Parks and Rec Committee (Rich)
- Communications and meetings with Jennifer Mistak, DNR; efforts to clarify ownership roles and responsibilities. (Bette reported on the discussion from the TEAMS meeting held on Sept. 2nd with DNR staff members to forge potential solutions to the current limitations of the reverter clause in the property deed. From the DNR: Jessica Mistak, Stacy Welling, Robert McKay, (Historical Architect), Stacy Tchorzynski, Merrie Carlock, (Recreational grants coordinator); Iron County Parks and Rec. chair, Dan Hinch; Mark Stauber, Iron County Commissioner; Brock VanOss, forester, a county commissioner; Dan Germic; Mike Golas; Bette Premo, Rich Sloat, Maggie Scheffer, Sara Basso. (Refer to minutes of that meeting for details.)
- Nomination to Old Growth Forest Network. Rich reported of the nomination of the Cooks Run site. A representative (Nick ?) will come to walk the site in the 2nd week of October. Determination will be made if it can meet the criteria for Old Growth designation.
- Northwoods Alliance support: Maggie contacted Joe Hovel of NWA who indicated an interest in partnering to help as a fiscal agent.
- Dan Hinch has scheduled a Parks and Rec meeting for Sept.22nd. Rich suggested assistance with bridge reconstruction could be sought through MI National Guard. Dan will look into application for assistance with National Guard. Bette brought up a "Friends of Cooks Run" concept that would function as an auxiliary of Iron County to be a fund-raising entity to the county. A steering committee could include representatives from any interested conservation non-profits to serve as the catalyst for future uses and improvements of the site, in partnership with Parks and Rec committee and Board of Commissioners.
- Desired outcomes for the future of the site from a conservation viewpoint: Ria Riley spoke of MI Tech's forestry program's role at Alberta in maintaining buildings for student use. Gogebic Community College also has a 2 year forestry program and may be a potential user/contributor. Purdue University

students who study in the area each spring may also benefit from access to the stream and riparian area.

- Explore other organizations' interest in forming a Friends group as an alliance to advocate for protection and potential uses of the site in the future. RiseUP Indivisible, Trout Unlimited, Wildlife Unlimited, Northwoods Alliance, Iron County Audubon, Silent Sports, I.C. Lakes and Streams, Baraga-Iron County Conversation District; SNAAP (Special Needs Are Awesome People).
  - Goal #1: Form a "Steering Committee" to develop a set of guidelines for use of the site, and goals to facilitate a desired outcome.
  - Desired Outcome: not a clear-cut; improved public accessibility (road); Center for environmental learning; short term rentals; trail development for hiking, skiing, snowshoeing; Dark Sky designation are all potential outcomes.
  - Rich proposed a resolution to Form a "Steering Committee" to develop a set of guidelines for use of the site, and goals to facilitate a desired outcome. The steering committee could evolve into a formal "Friends of Cooks Run". Motion from Rich, 2nd by Doug Felger; motion passed.
  - Volunteers to serve on the steering committee and reach out to potential partners: Don Lintner (liason with Trout Unlimited, IC Lakes and Streams and Audubon); Rich Sloat as a Parks and Rec liason; Dodi Felger and Maggie Scheffer (ICWC); a representative from Rise UP Indivisible GREEN UP committee; Jim (silent sports); Matthew Maki (SNAAP). A formal letter of solicitation will be drafted by Bette which liaisons will present to solicited groups.
- Rich voiced concern of beavers building up the height of dams on Cooks Run. Discussed the use of PVC pipes to divert water flow, preventing dam buildup as an alternative to destroying dams
  - Website: tabled until next meeting.

## Date of Next Meeting

To be determined. Potentially 3rd week of October.

## Adjourn at 6:08 PM

Jim moved and Rich 2nd. Motion passed.

**Submitted by Secretary, Maggie Scheffer**