

LOWER WISCONSIN STATE RIVERWAY BOARD

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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RIVERWAY BOARD MEETING MARKS THE START OF YEAR THIRTY-THREE

MUSCODA..... The Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Board (LWSRB) met on November 11th to conduct a regular monthly business meeting. The meeting signaled the beginning of the boards' thirty-third year as a state agency. The first meeting of the Riverway Board was held in Muscodia on November 1, 1989.

The board reviewed management activities on state owned lands and issued permit extensions to Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Wildlife Biologists Savanna Grayless, Nancy Frost and Travis Anderson. The management activities involve cutting of woody vegetation and trees for restoration of native plant communities, such as prairie, oak savanna, and oak woodlands. Grayless recently replaced Eddie Shea and works out of the Boscobel DNR office. She covers Grant and Richland counties and the portion of Crawford County that falls within the Riverway. Frost is the Wildlife Biologist for Sauk County and Anderson is the Wildlife Biologist for Iowa County.

Gigi LaBudde, LWSRB Vice-Chair, gave a presentation on pokeweed, a plant that had been discussed at the October meeting. She provided additional information on the plant which is native to Wisconsin, and which seems to be more prevalent in southwestern Wisconsin in the last decade. LaBudde said the increase in numbers of pokeweed could be due to climate change because it is a more common plant south of Wisconsin. The plant is striking with a large pink stalk and clusters of purple berries. It is toxic to mammals but not to birds. LaBudde encouraged people to obtain a good plant identification book to carry along when in the woods or walking through prairies to learn more about Riverway botany.

Mark Cupp, Executive Director, said he and LWSRB members Steve Wetter, Gigi LaBudde and Ritchie Brown had met with Terry and Suzanne Shifflet regarding the possible sale of the Wintergreen ski

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RIVERWAY BOARD MEETING MARKS THE START OF YEAR THIRTY-THREE/ADD ONE

hill property and building to the State of Wisconsin for the Riverway project. DNR Riverway Property Manager Jesse Kellogg also was present. The property includes 250 acres of wooded bluffs and nearly a mile of shoreline on the Wisconsin River. The board directed Cupp to contact Governor Evers, Senator Howard Marklein and Representative Todd Novak, as well as other interested parties, to determine if acquisition by the state would be feasible. Cupp said he has long envisioned a Riverway Visitor Center with a Natural and Cultural History display area. The site also would be able to house LWSRB offices and have space for meetings. The existing trail infrastructure would draw visitors and would enable interpretation of the Riverway natural and cultural resources along with stunning views of the lower Wisconsin valley. Cupp said the acquisition would be a wonderful asset for the Riverway and would enhance tourism growth and stir economic development. The Wintergreen property is located in the Town of Wyoming, Iowa County, west of Taliesin , near Spring Green.

Cupp reported he had issued two permits since the last meeting. Permits were issued to Mike Finlay, DNR Forester, for continued timber harvest and tree removal in the Town of Spring Green, Sauk County, and to the Mississippi Valley Conservancy for continued management activities at their property near Boscobel.

Larry Anding of Arena addressed the board regarding concerns with irregular river flow. The Anding family has owned property on the river in Iowa County for 75 years. He said the flow has changed significantly and the river is wider and shallower that it used to be. Cupp explained the dynamics of river flow management with the dams upstream, including the Prairie du Sac dam. He said the Riverway Board has no jurisdiction over river flow but suggested the board host a guest speaker on the topic so the public and board members could learn more about river flow management.

The next Riverway Board meeting is slated for December 9th.