

9/23/08
Iowa Whitewater Coalition
Minutes
Office of Michael Sharp

Members present: Lyle Danielson, Nate Hooegeveen, Ann Cannon, Dave Kraemer, Peter Komendowski (via telephone)

Announcements:

Dave announced that he and his wife will be moving to Rochester, Minn., later this year, pending sale of their house and the hiring of a new editor at the Tribune. Dave will regretfully resign from the board upon his departure, likely November.

Lyle announced that Scott Bandstra will withdraw as vice president and board member. Scott finds himself unable to attend meetings as family and his children's activities conflict.

Treasurer's report:

Lyle reports IWC is still in the black, but not spending much recently. Expense for water trail kickoff t-shirts is not reflected in this report. When incurred, expense will total \$1,084, for 100 t-shirts with Iowa Water Trails and logo on front, sponsors on the back.

Minutes:

Minutes from July were amended, per Ann: The three ospreys rescued from Jester Park were wild birds, hatchlings, taken to a rehabber and released along with others received from Minnesota at Whiterock. One of the three rescued birds died prior to release.

Water trails kickoff:

T-shirts are done. Lyle will bring Make a Difference wristbands to distribute. Lyle will bring the dam model. Electricity is available. Will need the canopy and the IWC banner. Electronic picture frame display will be set up. T-Shirts will be distributed by someone from Nate's crew. Lyle will bring a table. Set up begins at 2:30 p.m. Suggest arriving between 3 and 3:30 p.m. All are encouraged to come with boats on vehicles.

Gov. Culver's Jump Start Iowa plan:

Nate described the \$40 million plan with funds drawn from the Iowa Power Fund, the Vision Iowa Program including RECAT, and the Low Head Dam Public Hazard Fund.

In the Low Head Dam Fund, \$200,000 allocated the year before still remains.

When the fund looked like it would be \$1.2 million, the plan was for \$200,000 to go to water trails and \$1 million for dams. To that, the DNR would add \$50,000 to water trails that it had allocated from its own funds.

Now, the DNR anticipates it will award \$200,000 entirely for dam projects. Deadline for project proposals is Sept. 30. A second deadline, Jan. 31, will probably be kept open as well in case funds become available.

Jump Start also pulled funding from RECAT, which also would have provided funds for dam work through a specific authorization within the program.

Proportionately, while the Power Fund and the Vision Iowa and RECAT funds lost great dollar amounts, the Low Head Dam Public Hazard Fund lost a far greater percentage of its available funds.

Board members expressed concern that the Low Head Dam Fund is not being viewed as a life-saving fund.

Nate noted that a number of dams have been damaged by the floods and that now is a perfect time to address the issue. But the \$200,000 remaining in DNR funds for this work will not accomplish much of the work that needs to be done.

Board members also discussed the board's most effective posture in responding to this development and agreed that taking a critical approach to the governor's decision would not gain popular support when so many people have been devastated by the flooding.

A better approach would be to graciously acknowledge the need for support this year, but then argue to restore these funds for future years.

Advocates for such change may include friends and family members who have lost loved ones on Iowa's rivers.

Some opportunity to advocate for restoring the Dam Safety Fund will come Monday at the kickoff for water trails in Adel.

Other steps to be taken by IWC include:

- Issuing a reminder on the IWC list serve on the Monday kickoff. Lyle to take responsibility.

- Separate message to undecided recipients that introduces an aggregate of dam drowning information already on the Web. Lyle and Ann.

- Solicit Susan Heathcote at the Iowa Environmental Council to make use of their radio spots. Dave to contact Susan.

- Draft a letter to be sent to lawmakers and the governor supporting Iowa flood relief but asking for future help. Dave

Peter expressed that IWC has worked hard to get the state to recognize that we save lives through dam modification. We should acknowledge that we understand the need and accept it, but that we hope we get these funds reestablished.

Peter also suggested sending letters to the mayor of communities with low head dams that we know are problematic, letting them know that the available funding has disappeared this year and asking for their support. Volunteer initiatives apart from state funding may be necessary to maintain interest in the issue. Peter: will draft letter to all dam owners and process delivery.

Also suggested, contacting school administrators to demo low head dam safety.

Dam safety model:

Peter met with Blackhawk County Conservation staff at Hartman Reserve for a dam model training session. Five people were trained directly, including the top two in leadership positions.

Retreat:

Those available on Oct. 4 would be. Lyle, Julie, Debbie, Dave, Ann? Pat Boddy? John Wenck, Nate maybe. Todd Roberts?

Discussion centered on whether there should be others, outside of IWC at the retreat. Lyle and Dave will invite the boards of directors from Central Iowa Paddlers, Skunk River Paddlers, Iowa Rivers Revival and Iowa Environmental Council.

Nate will talk with Pat Boddy, facilitator, to find a date later in October to help encourage members of other organizations. Consensus was to use a half-day, ending in a meal, for the retreat. Ann will help facilitate finding a date through Doodle Pro software.

Respectfully submitted: Dave Kraemer, secretary