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Southeastern Wisconsin Fox River Commission Meeting Minutes

Friday, November 7, 2025 - 1:00 PM

Commissioners and (alternates) Quorum= 9		
Representing	Name	Attended (yes/no, by phone)
Kenosha County	Andy Buehler (Paul Tollard)	Paul Tollard
Racine County	Chad Sampson (Jon Grove)	Chad Sampson
Waukesha County	Alan Barrows (Leif Hauge)	Alan Barrows
City of Waukesha	Robins Grams (Doug Koehler)	
Town of Mukwonago	Katelyn Bratz (Barb Holtz)	Katelyn Bratz
Town of Vernon	Lee Manthey	Lee Manthey
Town of Waterford	Jim Pindel (Shelley Tessmer)	Jim Pindel
Town of Waukesha		
Village of Big Bend	Larry Long (Ellen Cole)	
Village of Mukwonago	Wayne Castle	Wayne Castle
Village of Waterford	Fred Koeller (Al Sikora)	Fred Koeller
Village of Rochester	Wayne Jensen	Wayne Jensen
Town of Burlington	Russ Egan	
City of Burlington	Howard Moser	
Town of Wheatland	Donna Duester	Donna Duester
Village of Salem Lakes	Bill Hopkins	Bill Hopkins
SEWRPC	Tom Slawski (non-voting)	
WDNR	(non-voting)	
WDNR	Rachel Sabre (non-voting)	Rachel Sabre

Guests	
Representing	Name

Illinois contingent of the Fox River	Dean Farr- Defender of soil air, woods waters and wildlife.
WWMD	Grant Horn

In person Meeting to be held at:

Vernon Fire Station #1. W233 S7475 Woodland Ln Big Bend Wi 53103

Southeastern Wisconsin Fox River Commission Meeting

1. Call meeting to order. Alan Barrows called the meeting to order. 1:00 pm
2. Pledge of allegiance
3. Roll call and verify quorum.
4. Confirm the Teams Voice recorder is running.
5. Identify who will record the meeting minutes. Katelyn Bratz will take the minutes.
6. Approval of minutes from the previous meetings held September 19, 2025. Fred Koeller made a motion to approve the minutes. Bill Hopkins seconded the motion. Bill Hopkins abstained from the vote. Motion passes.
7. Review the Treasurer's Report and ENUM project status. Balance of ENUM funds \$92,003.00. Total Approved Projects \$128,000. Total ENUM and Non Grant Funds \$142,003.00

Bill Hopkins made a motion to approve the Treasurer's report. Chad Sampson seconded the motion. Motion passes.

8. Old Business

1. Fox River 2026 Summits – Tom Slawski No Update
2. SEWRPC Survey from Waterford Dam to Illinois border-Tom Slawski No Update
3. Vernon Wildlife Area DU Impoundment Restoration (signage to be provided by Alan Barrows) -Kelsey Norton, WDNR. There was a correspondence from her that she would be present at the meeting. Rachel Sabre confirmed that Kelsey would not be present. Kelsey is willing to come to a future meeting; the project is completed. Rachel followed up with her on the cost share list to provide her with the information on what she needs to turn in for the documentation.
4. Racine County Shoreline Projects – Chad Sampson
This agenda item includes the Magner, Plantz, Doering Milczarski, McCormick and

Hondel shorelines which were individually approved at the 1/24/25 SEWFRC meeting. All six projects are complete. The last one was completed prior to Oct 1st. Everything has been submitted to Wayne Jensen. We are waiting for approval from the WDNR. This can be removed from the agenda. Add to next agenda Racine County 2026 projects.

5. Flow gauge for Racine County Office of Emergency Management for the Fox River. The request includes purchase of the hardware, installation and maintenance. – the SEWFRC committed to funding the hardware and installation only. - Lorenzo Santos Wayne Jensen asked for a clarification on what we are funding. They were informed they would have to pay in advance, we would reimburse after the project. What was the dollar amount? \$16,500. We will confirm after the meeting. Wayne Jensen will update the approved project expense list.
6. Noble Brothers Burgers Permeable Pavers – Chad Sampson.
 - a. The contractor that has been doing the work, called Chad Sampson for upfront payment. Chad said that is possible, but they have to follow what is on the plan. He has not received further information. There are 2 more phases, not sure which phase will be next. Project will be in 2026.
7. Fox River Restoration at Wilmot Wi – Jared Young or Kenosha County
 - a. Project is completed. They have been reimbursed, paid and submitted. Can be removed from the agenda.

New Business

1. Consideration of coordinating a bi-state Natural Resources Conservation Service/ Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCP) grant and advocacy for making such a joint effort possible within the Fox River watershed. – Dean Farr. Director of Land and Water conservation.
 - a. RCP is a process where their community can customize conservation practices. Had a call with RCP coordinator. If we are interested in applying, to bring a plan to them. There is interest building in Illinois and wanted to inquire about the interest here. Dean has knowledge of the process that could support the process. Those at the Fox River Summit, they shared their RCP project on the Milwaukee River. Working with various methods to keep the farm water in its watershed. Gave a handout on the project. Wisconsin has a lot of resources that he does not have. Starting the project here could be more feasible. He has talked with the Chain O'Lakes organization. The RCP is a start but not a solution. Hopefully there can be work on a joint venture. Begin here is Wisconsin and then move south. The challenge will be to build community support. We may have more support here. Would like to potentially form an exploratory committee. There is a potential webinar upcoming.
 - i. Alan Barrows- about 2 years ago we applied for an RCP grant. Feedback was that we need to be more specific. We have a starting point with a previous application.
 - ii. Grant Horn of WWMD- we are looking at spending up to 7 million in dredging and removing phosphorous. If we could

get an RCPP that could cover. RCPP would not cover the removal, but the buffers and prevention to keep it out.

- iii. Jim Pindel- what is the estimating removal. We have removed 1 million pounds of phosphorous. We remove it and then it prevents it from running down the river.
- iv. Chad Sampson- our producer led group is a sub recipient of a RCPP grant from the Sand County Foundation. 2.3-million-dollar grant from the RCPP for producer groups around the state. The Racine group received \$100,000 over a two-year period. The goal is to target farmers that are converting to no till, or land that was previously tilled and is no longer. Approved earlier this year. Did not have a lot of time to get new farmers on board. They need to get 6-8 farmers on board next year. Our first application was a starting point. The Milwaukee application could be another starting point for an example.
- v. Jim Pindel- 25% of the land in Walworth County. Walworth County is not in our boundaries. They are not represented here because the river does not run through the county.
- vi. Alan Barrows- Let's continue a dialogue. Any river or municipality interested is welcome to join. But let's have the counties and SEWRPC start the conversation.
- vii. Dean Farr- There is no timeline, but it needs to begin.
- viii. Alan Barrows- Thank you for coming up. We have the TMDL in progress. We have an in-depth study of the river that is also in the works.

2. 2021 – 2030 SEWFRC Implementation Plan – Tom Slawski & Alan Barrows

- a. Katelyn Bratz has finished the edits. Alan Barrows will work on it in the next month.
- b. Jim Pindel- will there be paper copies or online. He would like to be able to provide a copy to the municipalities.

3. Fox River Watershed Hazard Mitigation Plan/Regional Coordinator Group- Gail Goodchild

- a. No Update

4. Fox Bend Wetland Restoration Project within Village of Vernon- Alan Barrows

- a. Two farm fields in the flood plain. Took several grants to fund. Broke drain tiles, scrapes for wildlife. All the earthwork is done. Working on vegetation. The whole area was flooded in August. There are most likely reed canary seeds from the flood that will need to be addressed. Has not filed the paperwork as needs to reimburse other grants first and gather the invoices.

5. Margis Phase III Shoreline Protection and Access Improvements – Chad Sampson

- a. Completed in October. They did more brushing to continue the access road. Added rip rap and seeding on the area that was brushed. There is still a lot of shoreline that need repair. Will continue to come to the commission in

future years as the project progresses. Will have more information at the next meeting. Completed and paid, can be taken off the agenda. The park is a very nice park that has had a lot of improvements over the past several years using county funds as well.

6. Consideration of putting a Wisconsin Statute attorney on retainer to advise us on legal issues. This would have to be paid for from non-grant funds. Email was sent to Rachel Sabre requesting forwarding to appropriate person(s) within WDNR.
 - a. Had sent an email in September to the legal staff. She just followed up with them. Heard back today, Kate is going to talk with their supervisor. There is policy on independent commissions. Rachel explained to them about the commission and our logistics. She is going to talk with them further to better explain. She checked with the supervisor. The WDNR is not able to offer legal support as it would be a conflict of interest. SEWPRC might have more advice for counsel and resources. Rachel will specify that we are a statutory commission. We are a line item; it no longer flows through the DNR. The DNR no longer funds it but watches and monitors the funding. Rachel Sabre will follow up with the legal department.
 - b. Alan Barrows- could we ask the Attorney General's office for an interpretation. Alan does not know what that avenue looks like.

Reports and Updates

1. Report on activities of Fox Waterway Agency of Illinois – FWA or Tom Slawski
 - a. No Update
2. Report on future of the Echo Lake Dam in Burlington
 - a. No Update
3. Report on Fox River Watershed TMDL progress – Rachel Sabre
 - a. Email that shared draft allocations have been completed. Beginning stakeholder engagement. Will be meeting with municipalities to discuss allocations. Will also be coordinating with the counties. Winter of 2025 the draft report should be finalized and open for public comment. Spring of 2026 the report will be finalized and comments addressed. Summer 2026 finalized.
 - b. Alan Barrows- permittees will have allocations that they will then need to meet within their permits. They will have to work to meet the load allocations.
4. Watershed Protection Committee of Racine County- Chad Sampson
 - a. They are getting a grant for 22,000 for 2026 DatCAP. They are looking to move some people movers for the. Potential donations will cover at least one of them.
 - b. Friday, Feb 6 At the Cotton Exchange. Event is free.
5. Kenosha County Regenerative Producers
 - a. They applied for DatCAP grant as well. Meeting about a month ago, but no update since.
6. SEWFRC Website – Al Sikora or Alan Barrows
 - a. Alan Barrows has been working with Al Sikora to update the website.
 - b. There is a 2014 study that has been outlining the priority areas. It is

- now on the website. Potentially creating a new heading called resources. This will link the maps and important documents.
- c. We could potentially put a current commissioner list on the website.
 - d. We need to commend Al Sikora for all the work that he has done.

Correspondence

9/20/25 Email from Jim Pindel to all commissioners to mark your calendars for today's meeting.

9/20/25 Approved August meeting minutes sent to Al Sikora for the website

9/22/25 September meeting minutes received from Chad Sampson

9/23/25 Email from Tom Slawski requesting that Dean Farr be added to the agenda for us to consider a by-state joint RCPP grant for our watershed.

9/23/25 Email from Tom Slawski (forwarded to all commissioners) request we vote for "Friends of the Fox River" to achieve the Rivers are Life Impact award

10/27/25 Meeting announcement for today's meeting.

Phone conversation and follow up email with the clerk of Big Bend. We do have commissioners for Big Bend.

Email from Andy Beuhler thanking us for the change to the voting member policy.

Miscellaneous Issues

1. Next Meeting and Location
 - a. January 16, 2026 at 1:00 pm.
2. Jim Pindel requested occasional support from the commission in the upcoming months as needed with his commission commitments.
3. Close Meeting
 - a. Fred Koeller made a motion to adjourn the meeting
 - b. Bill Hopkins seconded the motion
 - c. Motion Passes
 - d. Meeting Adjourned 2:30

* If you have any questions about the Agenda, please contact Secretary Jim Pindel at jpindel@wi,rr.com or call him at 414 550 8213