

Southeast Wisconsin Fox River Commission Meeting Minutes

Friday, January 16, 2026 at 1 p.m. – In person meeting at Vernon Fire Station #1.

W233 S7475 Woodland Ln. Big Bend, WI 53103

Commissioner's Present:

Alan Barrows, Waukesha County
Jim Pindel, Town of Waterford
Fred Koeller, Village of Waterford
Wayne Jensen, Village of Rochester
Lee Manthey, Town of Vernon
Chad Sampson, Racine County
Paul Tollard, Kenosha County
Donna Duescher, Town of Wheatland
Tom Slawski, SEWRPC
Wayne Castle, Village of Mukwonago
Robin Grams, City of Waukesha
Bill Hopkins, Village of Salem Lakes
Bryan Bindel, Village of Big Bend
Joshua Grover, Village of Big Bend

Guests:

Kailyn Palomares, Racine County

1. Alan Barrows called the meeting at 1:01 p.m.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Roll call and verify quorum
4. Kailyn Palomares recording the meeting and Chad Sampson taking minutes.
5. Bill Hopkins made a motion to approve the previous minutes, seconded by Fred Koeller.
 - a. Motion passed unanimously.
6. Review of the Treasurer's Report. A motion made by Fred Koeller to approve the Treasurer's Report, seconded by Bill Hopkins.
 - a. Motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

7. Fox River Summit – Tom Slawski stated that registration is open and the Summit is going to take place on March 12, 2026 at the Veteran's Terrace in Burlington. This all-day event combines citizens from Illinois and Wisconsin to learn about activities and impacts to the Fox River. Tom went over a list of speakers and topics that he has lined up for the event. All members from the Commission that attend can be reimbursed for their registration fee by the Commission.
8. SEWRPC Survey from the Waterford Dam to the Illinois border – Tom Slawski stated that he is close to wrapping this up and has been sharing data to assist with other planning efforts.
9. Vernon Wildlife Area DU Impoundment Restoration – The project is complete and the Commission committed \$68,000 for the project. The project needs to be closed out by the end of June 2026.

10. Racine County Office of Emergency Management Flow Gauge - Chad Sampson stated that the Racine County Public Works and Parks Committee denied the annual maintenance payment for the flow gauge. So, it will be up to the City of Burlington to pay long-term maintenance.
11. Noble Brothers Burgers Permeable Pavers – Chad Sampson stated the portion that was completed was not permeable and will not be paid with cost share. There is going to be phase II this spring, which will be permeable. The contractor may submit a quote and request a down payment up front.

New Business

1. Discussion of a bi-state NRCS RCPP – Dean Farr will have further discussions with the Commission at the Fox River Summit.
2. 2021 – 2030 SEWFRC Implementation Plan – Alan Barrows had a copy of the completed version of the Implementation Plan. There are three ways to get a copy. It can be mailed, pdf emailed or available on a shared drive Word version. The document is much leaner than the previous version.
3. Fox River Watershed Hazard Mitigation Plan / Regional Coordinator Group – Alan Barrows said he will share this information with Kenosha County to assist with the update of their Land & Water Resource Management Plan.
4. Fox Bend Wetland Restoration Project within the Village of Vernon
 - a. Alan Barrows said the project was entirely under water during the flooding, but there was no damage. There are concerns that Reed Canary Grass weed seed has inundated the site, but that will be a maintenance issue moving forward.
5. Margis Phase III Shoreline Protection and Access Improvements
 - a. Chad Sampson said the project is completed and can be removed from the agenda. Wayne Jensen agreed that all final reimbursements have been completed.
6. Consideration of having a Wisconsin Statute attorney on retainer to advise us on legal issues.
 - a. An email was sent to the legal team at WI DNR and that is where this project stands.
7. Racine County 2026 Shoreline Projects – Kailyn Palomares gave presentations for 8 potential shoreline projects for Racine County. The presentations included photos and the point rating sheets. Kailyn gave presentations for: Ogden, Miller, Musta, C. Randa, K. Randa, Strasser, Hodach and Waterford Landing. The amount of \$9000 cost share was requested for all projects except Hodach which requested \$8100. Alan Barrows and Tom Slawksi had recommendation for trees removed such as fish sticks or revetments to improve habitat with the shoreline erosion work. Donna Duester noted the math was incorrect on a couple project point sheets. Chad noted some other funding will be used for some of the projects and that the County estimates are usually \$200 / linear foot.

Reports and Updates

1. Report on the activities of the Fox Waterway Agency of Illinois – Tom said they are collaborating with some stuff for the Summit, otherwise there is no report.
2. Report on the future of the Echo Lake Dam in Burlington – No report.
3. Report on the Fox River Watershed TMDL Progress
 - a. Alan Barrows stated that it looks like fixing ditches and shorelines doesn't look like that is going to be enough to meet the TMDL. Chad Sampson stated the DNR is speaking on the TMDL at the Winter Workshop.
4. Watershed Protection Committee of Racine County
 - a. Chad Sampson gave an overview of the group and reported that the Winter Workshop is on Friday, February 6 at the Cotton Exchange in Waterford. The event is free and encourage Commissioner's that haven't attended one of their events in the past to attend.
5. Kenosha County Regenerative Producers
 - a. Paul Tollard stated they recently had their annual kick-off meeting. He stated Kristi Heuser from Root Pike WIN helps with their group. Paul Maggio, a grazer, is the president. They have low nutrient management numbers in Kenosha County and are planning an event in April to increase this.
6. SEWFRC Website
 - a. Alan Barrows stated some updates have been made on the website, but there will need to be before, during and after photos of projects on the website to make it more complete.

Correspondence

11/8/25 Email from Jim Pindel to Al Sikora with list of current Commissioners.

11/11/25 Email from Jim Pindel to all commissioners to mark your calendars for the January 16 meeting.

12/16/25 Email from Katelyn Bratz with the draft meeting minutes.

1/5/2026 Email from Wayne Jensen with the most recent treasurers report.

Miscellaneous Issues

1. The next meeting was set for February 20th at 1 p.m. at the Big Bend Fire Station.
2. A motion to adjourn by Fred Koeller, seconded by Chad Sampson to adjourn at 2:33 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Chad Sampson, SEWFRC Commissioner.