

LOWER WISCONSIN STATE RIVERWAY BOARD

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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RIVERWAY BOARD HEARS REPORT ON STATE NATURAL AREAS

MUSCODA.....The Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Board (LWSRB) met in Muscodia on March 9th to conduct a regular monthly business meeting. Nate Fayram, Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Ecologist, provided information on activities related to the numerous State Natural Areas in the Riverway. Fayram described efforts to combat invasive species such as spotted knapweed, sweet clover, garlic mustard and purple loosestrife as well as dozens of acres of black locust control. He said fire is an important tool in battling invasive species as well as restoring and maintaining native plant communities. Fayram said burns are planned this spring at sites throughout the Riverway, including a 2400 acre area encompassing the Avoca Prairie. The prescribed burns will occur if weather conditions are favorable. Fayram said two new State Natural Areas have been added to the Riverway. The Millville Oak Woodlands is a 1267 acre natural area and the Boscobel Bluffs is a 384 acre parcel owned by the Mississippi Valley Conservancy, a portion of which is located within the Riverway. Both properties are located in Grant County.

The Riverway Board approved extensions to several permits for vegetative management of natural areas from Wyalusing to Prairie du Sac. In addition, the board approved a permit for Jeffery Dederich for a timber harvest in the Town of Prairie du Sac, Sauk County. The harvest will be done pursuant to a Managed Forest Law plan for the property and will entail removal of mature and over-mature trees to improve the quality of the woodlot and enhance wildlife habitat. The board deferred action on an application by Christy Helms for a tree house in the Town of Spring Green, Sauk County, until further information is provided by the applicant and contractor.

Mark Cupp, Executive Director, said the semi-annual report filed with the board by the Pattison Sand Company indicated there has not been any mining activity within the Riverway at the Bridgeport site. Cupp said he will meet with Department of Transportation officials to discuss the geological investigations report for the STH 60 Gotham to Muscodia project and will provide the board with information at the April meeting. He noted a volunteer work day at the Blue River Barrens organized by DNR and Friends of the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway (FLOW) was successful with 20 volunteers clearing brush and small trees to enhance the native plant community. Cupp said FLOW will host a Riverway symposium in September. He is working with the FLOW team on planning for the event. Cupp noted records have been set for river flow at Muscodia in recent weeks as unprecedented high water for February and early March has been seen.

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DNR officials reported on the emergence of an early wildfire season this year with firefighting crews battling several blazes already. Timber harvests and other management activities are planned for state owned lands in Grant, Sauk and Iowa counties. During the public comment session, representatives of the Mazomanie Riverway Alliance told the board their organization is hoping the closure of lands, including islands, in the Mazomanie Unit can be lifted so people can utilize the state lands. The area around the former Mazo Beach has been closed to public access by DNR.

The Riverway Board will next meet in Sauk City on April 13th.

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For further information, contact Mark E. Cupp, LWSRB Executive Director, at (608) 739-3188 or 1-800-221-3792.