

LOWER WISCONSIN STATE RIVERWAY BOARD

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NEWS RELEASE

MAY 14, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BLUE RIVER SAND BARRENS EXPANSION TO INVOLVE PINE REMOVAL

MUSCODA.....The Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Board met virtually on May 13th to conduct a regular monthly business meeting. The board heard a presentation from Eddie Shea, Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Wildlife Biologist, based in Boscobel. Shea described various habitat projects ongoing in the west half of the Riverway. Major prairie and grassland plantings will occur in the Town of Millville, Grant County, at Russell Hill and Swanson's Ridge. Work continues to restore an oak woodland/savanna site in the Town of Wauzeka, Crawford County, at the former Seeley property. Remnant prairie restoration work continues at two other sites in Crawford County, both in the Town of Marietta, at the former Curtis property and former Merwin property, and in the Town of Orion, Richland County, at the former Burns tract. Shea said there were successful prescribed burns at several sites and the battle against invasive species continues throughout the Riverway.

The board approved a permit request submitted by Trevor Hamdorf, DNR Forester, for a pine removal and pine thinning adjacent to the Blue River Sand Barrens. The project entails 35 acres of total tree removal to expand the barrens habitat and thinning of a white pine plantation on 66 acres. The site is located near the Fish Trap Flowage east of Jones Lake in the Town of Muscodá, Grant County. The Blue River Sand Barrens is a designated State Natural Area that provides critical habitat for a number of rare plant and animal species. The work is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

Mark Cupp, Executive Director, reported the Legislature's Joint Committee on Finance approved the Riverway Board budget for the 2021-2023 biennium. If approved by the full Senate and Assembly, the annual allotment will be approximately \$250,000.

(more)

RIVERWAY BOARD HOLDS MEETING/ADD ONE

Cupp said efforts to find new board representatives for Dane and Crawford counties continue. The requirement is that the individual be a local resident or local elected official. A vacancy also exists for an “at-large” position. The at-large position must be filled by someone outside the six county Riverway area.

The DNR report was presented by Jesse Kellogg who said Hay Lane, the road at the Avoca Prairie in Iowa County, will be extended to the river to provide enhanced recreational use at the site, particularly by shore anglers. He said new steps have been installed to provide river access at Ferry Bluff in Sauk County and he noted erosion control work continues at the Dingman mound group in Richland County.

During the public comment period, the board heard from Forest Jahnke of the Crawford Stewardship Project and Timm Zumm of the Friends of the Lower Wisconsin River (FLOW). Jahnke said his group is sponsoring a Farm Forum. He also noted public hearings on a proposed CAFO in Crawford County will be held in the coming weeks. Zumm said Adult XL life jackets are needed for the Kids Don't Float loaner life vest program. Kiosks have been established at most Riverway boat landings to assure river users have access to life jackets. Visit the FLOW website or Facebook page for information on how to donate. Zumm noted FLOW's starhead topminnow project has been very successful and highlighted the dedication and hard work of FLOW Science Team member Dave Marshall.

The next Riverway Board meeting is slated for June 10th with the hope that the board will be able to convene in-person for the first time since March of 2020. Details on the June 10th meeting will be forthcoming.

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