

St. Croix River Association

Advisory Council Notes

November 22, 2013

SCRA Headquarters, 1:30-3:30 PM

AC Present: Ron Lorenz, Chris Stein, Mike Miller, Jim Harrison, Larry Kennedy, Sally Leider, Jane Prohska, Jane Harper, Scott Person, Denny Caneff, Chuck Arnason, Dan Willius, Buck Malick, John Herman, Tracy Fredin (for John Shepard), Dan Engstom, Shaun Hamilton (for Susan Schmidt).

Staff: Deb Ryun, Tracy Maki, Monica Zachay, Julie Hildebrand, Alysa Zimmerle

Board: Gary Noren, Melanie Kleiss Boerger, John Velin, Peter Gove, Jerry Dorff, Bill Clapp, Jim Fitzpatrick

Introductions & overview last year's notes

NPS Update:

- Chris Stein spoke about sequestration and its effects for the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway (SACN). Sequestration could occur every year (at the rate of 8%/year) until 2021. If that actually ever happened, the NPS would have to shut down parks. For the SACN, in 2013, they had to incur a 5% budget cut, and in 2014 an additional 3%. That translates to a \$311,000 cut. In 2013, 25% fewer seasonal rangers were hired than in previous years. That translated into 9 fewer hires; 3 in interpretation, 2 in resource management, 2 in maintenance and 2 in law enforcement. Tough decisions had to be made this year, so the budget does not include any federal money for seasonal interpreters in 2014 along the Riverway. All 6 subject to furlough employees will take the full six months furlough. There is also a vacant Terrestrial Biology position open that cannot be filled due to budget constraints. Mathew Jacobsen has been hired as the Chief of Resource Management, his appointment started in December.
 - NPS has closed their Marshland Visitor Center located near Grantsburg. There will be in a GSA auction for the building in the near future.
 - Chris Stein confirmed that SCRA is the Friends group of the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway.
 - The SACN, along with 12 other NPS units in the Upper Midwest, have established a “sister park” partnership with several national parks and protected areas of the Osa Region of Costa Rica. Tropical Wings group has been formed to help with interpretation and protection. Rotary is involved in helping to organize that group
- ❖ **NPS Questions to the Advisory Council:** Is there anything that the AC recommends to raise awareness and public focus on issues such as the bridge, or Zavoral mine? With sequestration how do we educate leaders better and increase volunteers throughout the valley?
- So many people don't even know they have a national park right here; billboards and a “Name the Closest National Park” project.
 - Educate of local officials in a group setting – to help create synergy.
 - SCRA could host forums and be the place where people can learn about the riverway.

SCRA Overview: *Advocating for Conservation throughout the Watershed:* Deb Ryun gave a PowerPoint presentation of SCRA accomplishments and direction. Here is the link for those slides;

<http://www.stcroixriverassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Conservation-Throughout-the-Watershed-by-Deb-Ryun.pdf>

- ❖ **Questions to the AC:** Do you have any ideas of how to increase our earned revenue potential? The current political climate favors personal property rights over laws & ordinances=variances are handed out like parade candy. What ideas do you have to ensure our wild and scenic remains special?
- Convene conversational groups to get more collaboration and communication--draw in people who maybe don't have the same values so that a dialogue can occur.
 - Reduce the number of variances by building a constituency that cares.

- Build communications with local governments so that we might be able to influence comp plan updates.
- Earned income: summer camps – could partner with other summer camp groups, such as Warner Nature Center, it could build advocacy and income.
- More outreach will build membership that would then build stewardship.

Where are we with Phosphorus reduction: Monica Zachay gave a PowerPoint on Lake St. Croix TMDL: *Are We There Yet?* Here is the link for those slides; <http://www.stcroixriverassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/LakeStCroixTMDL-presentation-by-MZ.pdf>

- ❖ **Questions to the AC:** How do we increase voluntary measures of phosphorus reduction? Is it possible to obtain enough voluntary reduction? Should we be relying on voluntary practices to achieve TMDL goal?
 - Organizations need to turn the heat on agriculture.
 - Farmer Lead Council (with Pierce, St. Croix and Polk counties) is helping to engage ag in a farmer to farmer dialogue.
 - Water consortium of Washington County created a software program to show best management practices have been implemented, and the modeled impacts of practices. This tool could be made available to other counties.
 - Create partnerships with universities, and WI & MN Extensions.

Asian Carp: Deb Ryun gave a PowerPoint presentation on SCRA involvement with Asian Carp and the St. Croix. Here is the link for those slides; <http://www.stcroixriverassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Asian-Carp-and-the-St.-Croix.pdf>

- ❖ **Questions:** What could SCRA do to boost WI DNR's involvement in Asian carp issues on the St. Croix River? Should SCRA pursue a ban on live bait upriver of the SCF dam?
 - Studies are being run in MN on deterrents inside the locks (noise, lights, etc.).
 - They could reengineer the spill ways so the velocity is such that it would prevent movement of the carps.
 - Important that SCRA keeps the flag raised so people don't forget about the St. Croix.
 - It was suggested that money spent on biological bullets would have a better return than money being spent on barriers.
 - Have SCRA work with Mary Divine to write a comprehensive story. Larry Kennedy offered to reach out to Mary.

What opportunities or issues should we be focusing on? What are we doing that could be left to other organizations, what could we drop? Melanie Kleiss Boerger facilitated discussion with the AC:

- Build stronger stewardship ethic for the St. Croix by bridging public interest with an environmental and scenic needs
- Use economic impact studies to help build the case for the river.
- Engage the next generation with the River.
 - Create a "textbook" or use social media and experiential learning to teach about the St. Croix River.
 - Teaching kids how government works could further the SCRA mission.
- Consider where the power is when educating, current issues aren't likely to be solved by classroom education.
- Work with educational partners.
- Do something BIG: Develop a larger connected sense of the St. Croix River:
 - Create an overall plan for the St. Croix River, including trails, more parks, nature centers, cultural/historic sites, etc. (National Heritage Area initiative may be able to help with that effort & it could generate memberships and engage elected official.)
- Create MN Legacy Funding strategy for the whole St. Croix