



## Coulee Region TU Minutes

Meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. on September 12, 2024.

Board directors present: Berger, Freund, Jonson, Kyte, Muresan, Rees, Townsell, Welter D., and Welter K.

Board directors absent: Hubbard, Jester, and Spademan

Quorum is present.

The President called for any discussion of the minutes of the August 8<sup>th</sup> meeting. There was no discussion and it was moved by D. Welter to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Rees. The vote to approve the minutes was unanimous.

### **President's Report**

- The President yielded the floor to the Secretary for an update report on the progress made with the publication of the board minutes on the Chapter's website. The Secretary reported that through some self-training it appeared possible to host the documents on a page on the website. It was moved by Rees that the chapter post board meeting minutes to the Chapter website for transparency. The motion was seconded by Townsell. After brief discussion, permission from the website administrators was granted to the Secretary to attempt to accomplish the publication. The vote to publish board minutes on the website was unanimous.
- No further update was available on the evaluation of using SignUp.com for volunteer tracking.
- The President advised that because of engagement with another conservation group (Coon Creek Community Watershed Council - CCCWC) he had opportunity to learn of an opportunity to speak to members of the Vernon County Board of Supervisors regarding the dam de-commissioning. He encouraged all the board members to avail themselves of opportunities to engage with other similar partner organizations.
- The ORA Trail project is gearing up and the President encouraged CRTU's support for their activities on Pammel Creek.
- The President provided an update on the tree caging project with CRTU is providing materials to assist the WDNR. This work is scheduled for October 21 with the WDNR crew providing labor and CRTU providing materials and any interested volunteer assistance.
- Through a connection at the CCCWC meeting, the President had opportunity to speak with Mary Henry, Viroqua district representative on the Vernon County Board of Supervisors at their committee meeting regarding the dam de-commissioning. He spoke about the chapter's concerns with the height not being adequate to produce enough cold water for release and the long delay in construction. He further elaborated about the damage already done to the West Fork of the Kickapoo along with potential ruination of the brook trout fishery at Seas Branch and Maple Dale. D. Welter expressed serious concerns about this issue and suggested engaging the WDNR. Muresan

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advocated for a more public and/or published position from the chapter. The President suggested a smaller committee draft a position paper for the board to review. Berger, D. Welter, Muresan, and Jonson volunteered to assist the President with such task.

## Treasurer's Report

Financials were presented by Rees as Chapter Treasurer. It was reported that the current bank balance is sufficient to support anticipated activities. It was noted that the pending distribution of \$5,000 for the matching contribution to the Friends of Wisconsin TU grant for the Mormon Coulee project is to be diverted to a project that can be funded this year as the Mormon Coulee project is delayed.

Berger reported there were a few outstanding small reimbursements from STREAMGirls along with his donation of the replenishment of the badges as a personal donation. Muresan will issue a donor letter to Berger.

Motion was made by Townsell and seconded by K. Welter to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented. There was no further discussion and the vote to accept the report was unanimous.

## Committee Reports

- Membership Events – Muresan reported that Lauren Genske accepted the invitation for the January meeting and Jason Randall had accepted the invitation for the April meeting. This completes the full meeting event calendar. Postcards were mailed to the CRTU membership from the National roster on August 20. Muresan reported that she would miss the October and November meetings. Berger offered to handle the reception duties at those meetings.
- STREAMGirls – August 10 – Berger reviewed the event reporting great engagement with the participants. Our total participant number was 13 with 5 from the local community (non-Girl Scouts). The weather cooperated this year and the facilities at West Fork Sports Club were great. Muresan reported that the electronic signing of the releases and the waivers was successful and should be continued. It made the registration process very smooth. Considerations for next year would be a change to the curriculum as the fly tying poses challenges that tend to lead to some frustration unless we can increase the ratio of volunteers to participants for this activity; i.e. one volunteer for every two participants. It was suggested by K. Welter that we consider tying pins vs. flies. Also, the group photo should be taken at the start rather than end of the program so that we do not forget to do it.
- Trout in the Classroom (TIC) – Berger reported that the letters and applications for the participating groups had been submitted to WDNR. While Holmen will not be participating, La Crosse Polytechnic School and Lemonweir Academy in the Mauston school district would be our participants.
- Flyfishing and Cold-water Conservation – Berger reported that he was working with Logan High School in La Crosse to present a flyfishing and cold-water conservation discussion on October 17 and 31.

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## Old Business

- 2025 Fundraising Campaign Ideas – Muresan previously presented a discussion document regarding the need to raise funds beyond the annual fundraiser and the timing of such work. Muresan requested a consideration of a Banquet Auction Action Plan and an Event Schedule and Budget to facilitate the start of planning. Rees offered to continue to spearhead the event ticketing and coordination with Island Outdoors for auction donations. He suggested that we start earlier with letting Island Outdoors know what we might like to purchase at cost as well. Muresan also noted that she would like to investigate the idea Rees floated last meeting of a ‘Red Envelope’ campaign. After this discussion, the President said he would email for volunteers for a smaller committee to work on this issue.
- Cabela’s grant application - Welter D. reports that the grant will be a 2025 event.
- Volunteers – Muresan reported that nine (9) chapter thanks you notes were written to chapter members who had volunteered at an event this year. A chapter decal was included with each note.
- Community Partner’s Day/Event – Muresan reported that she would like the board to pursue the idea of a small get-together event with our community partners to get to know each other and facilitate collaboration. These community partners included Chaseburg Rod & Gun, Viola Rod & Gun Club, Westby Rod & Gun Club, Coon Creek Community Watershed Council, Fishers and Farmers Partnership, Coon Creek Conservation Club, Hill Country Watershed Alliance, and other farmer-led watershed alliances and councils. It was noted by D. Welter that some of these groups might require different strategies. Muresan and D. Welter agreed to review and make a recommendation to the board.
- Stream Walk with local political candidates and incumbents – It was discussed that it is probably too late to do this now, would require extensive coordination but was an idea that the Board should continue to consider for the 2026 election timing.

## New Business

- New request for assistance for Chris Veit - Chapter member requesting pro-bono legal assistance to enforce stream access. The President is to discuss this issue further with Kirk Olson of WDNR and the status of the previous referral to attorney is unknown. Muresan was directed to respond to Veit with a request for a copy of the deputy’s report and citation to review in light of a potential conversation with the DA about angler harassment statute.
- Driftless Trout Trifecta – Muresan discussed idea for fundraising based on a similar event in Utah (Utah Cutthroat Slam) and other TU chapters. For payment of a registration fee at the time of licensing, an angler would catch a specified species of trout – Brown, Brook, and Tiger for example. Upon submission of evidence, appropriate recognition, etc. would be awarded. Registration fees would be used for cold-water conservation projects. Muresan was instructed to contact the Utah Cutthroat Slam organizers for further details.
- Monroe County Request for Easement Mowing – Monroe County contacted the Treasurer about the possibility of a contribution to cost for easement mowing. This is the best time of year to pursue woody brushing projects to clear out the corridors. Motion was made by D. Welter and seconded by Kyte to issue a contribution of \$1,000. Discussion ensued as to whether \$1,000 was an appropriate amount. Jonson suggested that the Chapter question a valuation of the donation from Monroe County. For example, \$1,000 is the value for 200 feet

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of stream access mowing or 'X' number of hours of mowing. This would help to determine if the Chapter should fund a larger donation next year. Rees volunteered to respond to the request. With no further discussion, the vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

- Rent-A-Goat – D. Welter mentioned in reference to mowing of easements that other chapters had success with renting goats to clear invasives and other plants. It is a highly effective vegetation control method. CRTU might consider this for the Coulee Region in the future as well.
- Outdoors Forever – Stan Clements contacted the Treasurer about a donation for providing fry to coops. After discussion, it was the consensus that the Chapter would need a specific project in order to provide a donation to support. Rees was instructed to inform the requester.

### **Adjournment**

With no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Freund and seconded by K. Welter. There was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

Submitted:

Deborah Muresan, Chapter Secretary