



Meeting Notes – April 11, 2007
Wil Dilg Chapter, Izaak Walton League

The meeting convened at 6:30 at the Monarch Public House in Fountain City, WI. Camaraderie, pizza and conversation heralded the meeting beginning. Due to the snow storm attendance was limited to members Cal Fremling, Stan Ledebuhr, Lori Ahl, and Barry Drazkowski. We also were fortunate to have to potential new members, Joe Tadie and Bob Miller. Joe is a philosophy professor at Saint Mary's University with a strong personal and professional interest in environmental philosophy, youth education, and resource management. Joe is involved with actively engaging his student in Leopold-based environmental philosophy and engaging young people through outdoor adventure through geocaching. Bob is a retired soil and microbial scientist with a career marked by teaching at Ohio State, North Carolina State, and then dean of the University of Rhode Island's College of Natural Resources. He is also Governor Doyle's Buffalo County representative to the Mississippi River Parkway Commission. We had a wonderful discussion of the Chapter and Ikes' history and their related interests. We sincerely appreciate their participation and hope they both decide to become new members. Our organization will greatly benefit from their membership.

The following summarizes key discussion and action:

1. We had a good discussion about the proposed summer youth environmental ed event based on a geocaching approach exposing them to resource features within the Trempealeau Wildlife Refuge. We are working with refuge staff, Cindy Samples, Eric Nelson, and Tex Hawkins to insure we comply with refuge guidelines and fully benefit from their expertise. We discussed ways to involve a larger youth community through individual member's networks. Lori and Bob both have contacts within day care organizations that might be valuable participants in this event. We also discussed implementing a regular program of engagement if we can also entice university students to join and become youth mentors. We are still planning on a June/July implementation schedule.
2. We discussed the developing Water Resource Development Act and the probability of its passage in both the House and Senate. We discussed our concern over passing a bill that invested such a large amount of Federal dollars in expanding a navigation system that is experiencing declining use. The growing ethanol market is significantly reducing corn exports and transportation down the river bringing into question the cost effectiveness of expanding navigational infrastructure at such a high cost. We also discussed the positive side of the legislation for putting large amounts of money into the Upper Mississippi River's environmental sustainability. We discussed a concern that those dollars would be used to expand an already large Federal and State environmental monitoring and research network. A network originally developed (following the 1986 WRDA authorization of the Environmental Management Program) at the expense of the existing academic infrastructure. Drazkowski discussed a proposed WRDA amendment that would create the Academic Research and Geospatial Utilization System (ARGUS). This System would direct a small portion of the UMR environmental monitoring and research dollars through the existing UMR academic infrastructure to rebuild the lost environmental education capacity that was so prevalent thirty years ago. This revitalized environmental academic capacity would

have the added benefit of creating a new community of environmental scientists grown and trained through river field research projects.

3. We discussed membership promotion and extended our heartfelt hope that Bob and Joe would both join. Both expressed sincere interest in joining, with each also noting other individuals that we should be actively pursuing as members. The future looks brighter for the chapter's growing membership and, more importantly, the diversity and ideas that these folks bring to our group. Stan suggested that we begin using a mail notification process for members that do not have email. He noted that at least three current members don't have email and only hear about our meetings if others happen to speak to them. We decided to acquire post cards and mail meeting announcements to these folks so all our members are aware of what is happening.
4. We discussed the Chapter's new Website, with Lori using the Monarch's wireless system to demonstrate the site. The site can be viewed under the existing UMBSN website (www.umbsn.org), by clicking on the Wil Dilg link on the navigation bar. All are encouraged to look at the site and provide constructive comment on what we could include or not include. Lori suggested we have a calendar function which I will look at setting up. Anything else is appreciated.
5. The next scheduled meeting is May 9th.

By Barry Draskowski
Acting Secretary