



Annual Meeting MINUTES

Tuesday, October 26, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

Mercer Community Center, 2648W Margaret Street, Mercer, WI

1. **Call to order:** In attendance were board members John Bates, Karen Hagemann, Diane O’Krongly, Mike Ondresky, Teresa Schmidt, Ian Shackelford, and Bob Traczyk. Others in attendance included: Bethany Thomas, Joe Kravetz, Carm Andrews, Kit Bogenschneider, Paul Hagemann, Christine Faulkner, Zach Wilson, Dick Fischer, Gary Patzke, Hedda Patzke, Brenda Nelson, Mike Nelson, Julie Hellrig, Jim Zedler, Amy Nosal, Martha Pierpont, Shari Younger, Elmer Gosh, Tom Sonntag, Rand Atkinson, Julie Klug, Chris McMurray. An additional 3 people attended online using Zoom.
2. **Approval of minutes** from the 2020 Annual Meeting: Motion by Traczyk, second by Bates to approve the minutes as presented. Approved unanimously.
3. **Treasurer’s report:** Treasurer Traczyk presented a report from Oct 1, 2020 through Sept 30, 2021, showing ending account balances of \$20,084 in the checking account and \$32,083 in the Edward Jones account. These account balances are separated into two funds: approximately \$46,000 in the Hurley Non-Motorized trail fund and \$6086 in the general fund. Motion to accept the treasurer’s report was made by Hagemann, seconded by Schmidt. Approved unanimously.
4. **Membership update:** Traczyk reported that we had 60 members in 2020/2021.
5. **2020/2021 Activity Reports:**
 - a. **Bike trail proposal: Manitowish to Sandy Beach** - Bates reported that ICORE has made a request to the DNR to form a bike trail on the railroad grade from the intersection of Highways 51 and 47 in Manitowish to the campground at Sandy Beach. The DNR representative has determined that the DNR owns the railroad grade. If the trail was to go ahead, the DNR would request that ICORE enter into a land use agreement to maintain the trail for summer use. There is one privately owned parcel at the Manitowish River and a couple more close to Sandy Beach Road. We would need to establish easements on those properties or find alternate routes. The DNR would also need to do a master plan variance to allow for the trail. Completing this trail would allow for a loop between the start of the trail to Powell Road in Manitowish Waters and then to the Heart of Vilas County trail system.

- b. **Mixed Monday Paddle:** This group was led by Mike and Gail Ondresky this summer, and held 11 paddles on Monday evenings with attendance ranging from 15 to 30 people, with dinner following at area restaurants or potlucks at private homes or public parks. Events were advertised through ICORE's Meetup page.
- c. **Camp Mercer CCC Trail:** Schmidt reported that there has been great progress on this trail this year thanks to partnerships with the Northern Highlands American Legion State Forest and the Manitowish Waters Historical Society. Interpretive signs will be installed tomorrow at a work bee at 10am. We'll hold a small celebration at 3pm on November 5 to celebrate the installation of the signs and the progress on the trail. The trail is located off Manitowish River Access Road in Manitowish.
- d. **TFSWA adopted trails:** O'Krongly reported on the two trails that ICORE has adopted in the Turtle Flambeau Scenic Waters Area: the Hidden Rivers Trail and Deadhorse Grouse Habitat. The DNR staff is doing a great job maintaining these trails, but O'Krongly and Pierpont are also monitoring them and doing cleanup as necessary. We could use some more signage at both sites so that people know that these trails are available to hikers.
- e. **Hurley Non-motorized trail & Trailhead:** Shackleford reported that the proposed trail from Hurley to Montreal has been delayed due to property issues. Most of the property is still owned by the Canadian National railroad. CN has resumed communications with ICORE, so we are hopeful that we can complete a purchase of land for the trail between Hurley and Montreal in 2022. We were tentatively awarded a Knowles-Nelson grant to cover half of the land purchase cost in 2021, but since the land sale could not go forward this year the state rescinded the grant and encouraged us to reapply for the funds when we are able to make the purchase. We'll need to raise funds for engineering work, including an analysis of the bridges on the property, and then for trail construction. At the trailhead, a new kiosk constructed by students from Hurley School was installed. We have light posts and a dog waste station installed, and the city will install solar lights in the spring. The trail gets a lot of use!
- f. **Other events and activities:** We did not hold very many events this year due to the covid-19 pandemic.
 - i. Traczyk led a walk to the Montreal River Gorge on August 19: it was a hot day and quite a few people came.
 - ii. Hageman and Thomas led a walk on the North Country Trail in October.
 - iii. MECCA trail will hold its Winterfest again this year: it's a hybrid event with virtual events 12/18-2/18, a live race on 2/5, and an awards ceremony to be held at the Mercer Community Center. They will need

50+ volunteers to make the event happen. There will also be a MECCA candlelight snowshoe & ski on January 29.

- g. **ICORE media update:** We have 227 e-newsletter subscribers, 699 likes and 787 followers on our Facebook page, and 377 members on our Meetup. O’Krongly asked for volunteers to help with ICORE publicity, Facebook, and email newsletters.

6. Election of board members

- a. Motion by Schmidt and second by Traczyk to elect 4 members to one-year terms: Karen Hagemann, Ian Shackelford, Bob Traczyk, and Diane O’Krongly; and elect 3 members to two-year terms: Brenda Nelson, Kit Bogenschneider, and Mike Ondresky. There were no other nominations from the floor. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Election of board officers: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer

- a. Motion by Schmidt and second by Bates to elect Hagemann as president; Shackelford as vice-president; Traczyk as treasurer; and leave secretary position vacant for now, to be determined by the board at their next meeting. There were no other nominations for officers. Motion passed unanimously.

8. Open comment:

- a. Brenda Nelson reported that the Mercer Chamber was leading a group called “Mercer by Bike” to encompass all of the bicycling activities in the area. The group had three proposals: to move the Mercer bike trailhead to Carow Park; to create a new trail down Highway J to Winchester at WinMan Trails; and to create a new trail to Hurley. Nelson suggested that the Mercer By Bike group could become a committee under ICORE’s structure. The ICORE board will discuss this at their next meeting.
- b. Zach Wilson reported that he is leading work on the Mercer School Forest trails. Expect to see some work bees announced about this in the coming months.
- c. Martha Pierpont asked that ICORE try to respect the environment by not using plastic bottles in the future.

9. Adjourned at 7:07pm.

The meeting was followed by a presentation by wildlife biologist Mike Meyer on “The Status of Loons in Wisconsin - What’s known and what’s at risk.” There were 41 people attending in person and at least 13 attendees online using Zoom.

Minutes presented by Teresa Schmidt