

LOWER WISCONSIN STATE RIVERWAY BOARD

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NEWS RELEASE

JULY 16, 2026

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RIVERWAY BOARD ANNOUNCES RE-APPOINTMENTS

MUSCODA.....The Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Board (LWSRB) met in Muscodas on July 9th to conduct a regularly scheduled meeting. Mark Cupp, Executive Director, announced Governor Tony Evers had re-appointed Gretchen “Gigi” La Budde of Spring Green as LWSRB Sauk County representative and Lara Czjakowski Higgins of Prairie du Chien as Crawford County representative. La Budde currently serves as the Riverway Board Chair and has a background working on restoration of prairie habitats, invasive species control, and other native plant community projects. She also volunteers at the University of Wisconsin-Madison Herbarium. La Budde initially was appointed to the board in July of 2016. Czjakowski Higgins is a corporate attorney who grew up paddling rivers in southwestern Wisconsin due to her father’s interest in building and collecting canoes. She replaced her father, Jim Czjakowski, on the Riverway Board upon his untimely death in 2021.

Cupp said, “I’m very pleased Governor Evers has re-appointed Gigi and Lara for additional three-year terms to the Riverway Board. They bring diverse backgrounds, life experiences and strong leadership skills to the board, which is the smallest state agency in Wisconsin government. I look forward to working with Lara and Gigi and the rest of the board members as we continue to fulfill our mission to protect the scenic beauty and natural character of the final 92 miles of the lower Wisconsin River valley.”

In other action, the board issued a timber harvesting permit to Juli Van Cleve on behalf of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for a parcel in the Town of Marietta, Crawford County, on STH 60 west of Clear Creek Road. The harvest will occur during the leaf-off conditions when the ground is frozen or dry and will involve small clear-cuts, shelterwood cuts, selective harvesting and salvage harvesting of storm damaged timber. The purpose is to establish an uneven aged stand upon completion of the harvest. A combination of natural regeneration and hand planting of seedlings will follow.

Cupp said he had issued three other timber harvest permits to DNR per discussion at the May meeting. Two in the Mazomanie Unit on CTH Y, which are not visible from the Wisconsin River, and the third in the Black Hawk Unit in the Town of Mazomanie, accessible via STH 78, of which a small portion is visible from the river. He said two general permits were issued to a landowner in the Town of Troy, Sauk County, for a site not visible from the river; one structure is a shed and the other structure is a barndominium.

(more)

RIVERWAY BOARD JULY MEETING/ADD ONE

Prior to the meeting, three board members; La Budde, Rich Ten Pas and Meredith Beckman, joined Cupp and members of the public on a voyageur replica canoe trip from Lone Rock to Gotham. The trip was one of thirteen such trips offered by the Riverway Board in 2026. Cupp serves as guide on these excursions and receives assistance from Riverway Board member Rich Ten Pas, an expert in wilderness paddling, and Friends of the Lower Wisconsin Riverway (FLOW) members Timm Zumm and Pete Arnold, both also seasoned paddlers. Cupp told the board it was another successful year of conducting trips on the river with waiting lists for most trips and about 140 passengers. In addition to the tremendous scenic beauty, the various groups saw many eagles, osprey, turkey vultures, pelicans, swans, blue herons, green herons, kingfishers, cedar waxwings, swallows, turtles and even a deer and twin fawns swimming from an island to the shore. For many participants, it was their first time on the Wisconsin River and, for quite a few, it was their first time in a canoe. Photographs of the trips may be viewed on the board's website or Facebook page.

Cupp said, "The voyageur canoe trips offered by the board have grown in popularity over the years. We have many individuals and families that look forward to these excursions each year and the "word of mouth" publicity continues to attract new patrons. I hope we'll be able to offer free voyageur canoe trips to the public next year and beyond."

The next Riverway Board meeting will be held on September 10th in Muscoda at the board office beginning at 5:00 p.m. A virtual option will also be available.

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For further information, contact Mark E. Cupp, LWSRB Executive Director, at (608) 739-3188 or by email at mark.cupp@wisconsin.gov .