**Upper Mississippi River Region Inter-League Organization**

**Action Committee Video Conference 3-11-2024 at 4:00 pm**

**Present:** Gretchen Sabel (MN), Kay Slama (MN), Coleen Werdien (MN), Lynne Markus (MN), Mary Ellen Miller (IA), E. J. Gallagher (IA), Mickey Croyle (MO), Sheryl Eufinger (MO), Catherine Franczyk (IL), Carolyn Mahlum-Jenkins (WI), Tamara Prenosil (IA)

1. **Old Business**
	* 1. Approve February meeting minutes: E. J. Gallagher moved and C. Mahlum- Jenkins seconded that the 2-12-2024 minutes be approved. Motion carried.
		2. UMRR Farm Bill action: On hold in Congress.

* + 1. MO EPA letter sent by Croyle: Discussed on 2-12-2024

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* + 1. Action Committee policies and procedures were approved by the Board 2/5/24: Discussed on 2-12-2024
		2. The Board asked that we report our actions/time spent on UMRR business and with other organizations involving water, reporting liaison actions, or of which we are members. Easy form: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1YJkbA4xG1FzWek2H_cVp6h2IvcEmND9vUzgp95iobzw/edit?usp=sharing>

G. Sabel will combine the information that was on the old form with this new form with the above link.

* + 1. Board voted to send updated MRRRI letters, M Miller sent to each state LWV president to forward to each local league chapter: Discussed on 2-12-2024

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* + 1. Additional pop-up display opportunities being explored.
		2. Other Organization in which we hold memberships: Is this the committee the place to discuss how to determine which organizations UMRR should join. No dues for MRN or CWFA. Should these groups be multi state or single state organizations?: Discussed on 2-12-2024

9. Signatures on other advocacy groups’ letters should be approved by the Board or Action Committee rather than by individual members who are involved in such advocacy groups. Last year we were able to get an agreement within three days. It is done by text message first then email and replies returned by email: Discussed on 2-12-2024.

 10. Working to get Google Docs for routine forms and reports: C. Franczyk and G. Sabel met to review Google docs and what should be saved. C. Franczyk emailed T. Prenosil an updated link. T. Prenosil has put all annual meetings from 2016 through 2022 on google docs, and now needs to put all action committee minutes (2016 – 2024) on google docs. Are also saving sign on letters on google docs.

11 Other

* 1. **New Business**

1.Tam P. hopes UMRR will sign on as one of the organizations in favor of Elizabeth Warren and Ro Khanna's reintroduction of this Act. <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1rhGAuT4EgHvoS9rOcC4yKaPpLPNpaIPIG9iPsYN8_sM/edit?usp=sharing>

T. Prenosil pointed out that this was introduced in 2022 and she could not find if it had been reintroduced. More research is needed to learn if *The Future of Water Act* has been reintroduced in the 118th Congress. (Numbers for the 117th Congress were HR 7182 & S 3886) G. Sabel informed the Action Committee that LWVUS staff have office hours )2nd and 4th Tuesdays) and during that time, local League representatives can meet with LWVUS staff. C. Mahlum-Jenkins works with Debra Cronmiller in the LWVWI office.

 2. K. Slama. Mpls Star Tribune Article: Impact of the SCOTUS Sackett Decision on Wetlands, wetland regulations are under attack in many states with a focus on Indiana. M. Croyle. commented she is battling bills on track to pass in MO which would remove wetlands and any stream that does not have flowing water even if for less than an hour from pollution controls. Other states have similar issues. At our summer planning retreat we can discuss inviting other states to join LWV-UMRR ILO.

E. J. Gallagher attended a meeting of lobbyists for the Sierra Club. Tennessee has water quality standards that are stronger than the Federal standards. He thought we might check LWV-UMRR ILO states’ standards to see how they compare to the Federal standards.

3. Catherine F. Prairie Rivers Network issued an Action Alert for Witness Slips To protect Illinois waters & wetlands SB 3669 - Creates the Wetlands and Small Streams Protection Act to restore protections for wetlands and small streams that were formerly protected from pollution and destruction by the Clean Water Act. Provides provisions concerning: exemptions; wetlands delineation, classification, notification, permits and veto; general permits; appeal of final decisions made by the Department of Natural Resources and judicial review; investigation and enforcement; and county authority. Creates the Wetlands and Small Streams Advisory Committee and establishes duties and rules for the Committee. Creates the Wetlands and Small Streams Protection Fund. Provides for permit review fees. Defines terms. Makes conforming changes in the State Finance Act and the Illinois Environmental Protection Act. Effective immediately. Also sent out the Chicago Tribune Article.

K. Slama moved and G. Sabel seconded that the LWV-UMRR ILO write a letter supporting Illinois SB 3669 Wetlands and Small Streams Protection Act. Motion carried. G. Sabel volunteered to write the letter. Because this action is a state action, LWV-UMRR ILO does not need to get permission from LWVUS.

1. **Activity reports:**
	* 1. Affiliate Group Reports
		2. Mississippi River Network (MRN): M. Miller reported the staff and volunteers are just back from the D.C. Fly-In. M. Miller and c. Franczyk completed the paperwork and Memorandum of Understanding; however, no money has been received yet. The Center for Rural Affairs is the fiscal agent for the MRN.

The Nahant Marsh wetlands education center in Davenport, Iowa will host the *“Pure Sparkling Stream Water”* Pop-Up Art Exhibit July 12 through July 14. The artist’s reception will be Friday afternoon. This coincides with the Board retreat. We will have new board members from five states at that time.

Dubuque will have the exhibit on June 8 which will coincide with the National Mississippi River Museum’s celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Upper Mississippi National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. An Art Festival is also planned for that weekend. The artist will be there. M. Miller is still looking for a venue and is hoping for one of the breweries.

G. Sabel reported that Winona, MN would like the exhibit. St. Louis would be a good place for this display somewhere near the confluence of the three rivers.

* + 1. Upper Mississippi River Basin, Iowa Izaak Walton League: M. Miller reported the Izaak Walton League is increasing funding for the Midwest. The Pop-Up Art exhibit will be at the Izaak Walton League’s national convention.
		2. Clean Water for All: T. Prenosil showed a survey that this organization is asking members to complete that will help them focus their policies and action steps for the next five years. M. Miller and T. Prenosil will complete the online survey.
		3. 100 Grannies: No report
		4. MN Environmental Partnership Water Cluster: K. Slama reported they have decided on legislative priorities .
		5. LWV-US Climate Interest Group: No report
		6. Missouri Sierra Club: M. Croyle reported they continue to work on a water quality bill. She will participate in a lobby day on 4-10-2024 with the Clean Energy District
		7. MN Sierra Club North Star chapter**. K.** Slama reported the Sierra Club, CURE, and the Land Stewardship Project are working on CO2 pipeline issues and well as proposed pipelines for methane which would connect large dairies in southern Minnesota.
		8. Lake Michigan ILO: No report
		9. IL Prairie Rivers Network (see report above) C. Franczyk reported she continues to follow the American Farmland Trust:
		10. C. Franczyk met a representative from the IL AIM Agroecology+Innovation Matters who will share a PowerPoint with her.
		11. IA Sierra Club, United Nations Association IA division: E. J. Gallagher reported the Iowa Utilities Board still has not made a decision about permits for the CO2 pipelines. The Iowa legislature is considering a bill that would prevent conservation groups such as the Natural Heritage Foundation from purchasing land at auction that would be turned into conservation areas. The Iowa Sierra Club hosts weekly Lunch and Learn sessions on zoom.

* + 1. Midwest Environmental Advocates: The presenter for the LWV-UMRR ILO informational program in April is from this group. They work on ground water issues. LWVWI works closely with this group.
		2. Other
	1. Reports on other actions by members in their states
		+ 1. Illinois – The recent issues briefing did not include environmental issues. Concerns were gun rights, misinformation, and voting.
			2. Iowa – Concerns are mostly about the dismantling of the statewide Area Education Agencies that provide special education services. There is a proposal to arm teachers.
			3. Minnesota - Continued interest in state agency capture by polluters. The Minnesota League of Women Voters Environmental Task Force will have a zoom meeting on April 3 at 9:30 am about this issue. The zoom link will be sent the morning on the presentation.
			4. Missouri – Interest is about Voter Rights and DEI. However there is an active CAFO (Confined Animal Feeding Operation) Action Network. Farmers have been participating because of concern regarding lagoons.

e. Wisconsin – The DNR cannot hold people accountable for pollution because the state is still working on groundwater standards.

* 1. Put all our activities in Google spreadsheet, with time devoted to each action. Link: [see](https://forms.gle/SeA3WAwsgfB1zzAc7) item A.5.
1. Announcements/Other Discussion Items
	* 1. Possible new Action Committee members: None yet
		2. PowerPoint needs updating – volunteers needed

**Next meeting: April 15, 2024 at 4:00 pm**

Adjourn

* + 1. Put on your schedule with same Zoom link: <https://lwvmn-org.zoom.us/j/87576279567?pwd=WTJWZ2VkbzNGMTk5VlZWNEh2cFovUT09>   Dial to join by phone audio only:  312 626 6799, meeting number 87576279567

Submitted by Tamara Prenosil