

**Executive Committee Meeting**  
**West Tennessee River Basin Authority**  
**March 14, 2023**

The Executive Committee Meeting of the West Tennessee River Basin Authority was held at 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, March 14, 2023, via in-person at the WTRBA office. Executive Committee members in attendance were Chairman Gary Reasons, Dr. Jim Byford, Mr. Hugh Adams and TDEC Commissioner David Salyers (via call-in). Others in-person attendance were Executive Director David Blackwood, Paige Keith, Kris Gordan, Kimberly Rios, and Mr. Jake Rogers (Kustoff). Chairman Reasons verified a quorum and called the meeting to order.

The following agenda items were discussed:

Fiscal Updates

- County Fund Letters  
Director Blackwood reminded the Executive Committee that it had been agreed upon at a previous meeting to not increase funds per county this fiscal year. Blackwood informed the Executive Committee that Paige Keith has been updating the letters and is preparing to mail them by the following week.
- Governor's Budget  
Director Blackwood provided an update regarding the Governor's Budget and the proposed funding to transition Middle Fork Bottoms Recreational Area into a TN State Park. Blackwood informed the Executive Committee that it has been proposed that \$22M go towards this, for the development of a Visitors Center and other beautification needs. Director Blackwood added that \$28M has been approved for the development of the W.E.T Center at Lone Oaks Farm. Blackwood concluded by stating the budget has yet to be passed but is hopeful that changes will not be made to these decisions.

WTRBA Staff Updates

- Summer Intern Program  
Blackwood stated that WTRBA is in the process of reviewing applications for Summer interns. Blackwood informed the Executive Committee that the objective is to select four interns to work on multiple projects this summer. Blackwood noted that one main project they would be assisting WTRBA staff with is the Culvert and Rural Roadway Scorecards and helping to collect the data needed to move forward with the project. Blackwood concluded by stating the deadline to apply was Friday, March 10, 2023 and asked for approval to move forward with the hiring. With no further discussion Chairman Reasons asked for a motion to be made. Dr. Jim Byford made a motion with Mr. Hugh Adams seconded. All voted in favor.
- New Staffing Position  
Director Blackwood informed the Executive Committee that WTRBA is in the process of posting a new ASA2 job position. Blackwood added the new staff member will be responsible for grants and contracts, procurements, reporting on major projects, and helping to track budget spending. Director Blackwood concluded by stating that he would like to see that position filled by the end of Spring.
- Reclassification  
Blackwood reminded the Executive Committee since changing over to a technical track we have been working on reclassing positions and the ability for staff to move up and have competitive salaries.

## WTRBA Project Updates

- Tennessee Riverbank Stabilization  
Blackwood updated the Executive Committee on the Tennessee Riverbank Stabilization project, stating he and Ms. Keith met with TVA, NRCS, UTIA, and Tennessee Valley Farms on March 10, 2023, to discuss the project with all entities to strategize on next steps and what positions all will need to play in order to follow through with the project, adding all agreed this will be a five-to-ten-year project, allocated annual funds per year will be needed until completion.
- Running Reelfoot Bayou  
Director Blackwood stated he and Kris Gordan have a meeting scheduled with a small design team from USACE Memphis District on March 15, 2023. Blackwood informed everyone the purpose of the meeting will be to collaborate on what operations and plans need to take place to move forward with the project.
- Cub Creek Phase I  
Director Blackwood reminded the Executive Committee that work on Cub Creek Phase I had been tabled for the winter months and now that weather is becoming more favorable, work on the project will resume.
- NRCS Wetland Restoration  
Director Blackwood stated that with the increase in favorable weather, staff was able to plant the remaining NRCS trees needed for the Wetland Restoration project, making the total of trees planted for the project 50,000+.
- Hicksville NDRC Project  
Director Blackwood reminded the Executive Committee of the greenway gully bank stabilization project in Hicksville stating that a pre-bid for this project will be held on March 16, 2023.

## Outreach & Regional Leadership

- ACEC- Leadership PE  
Director Blackwood informed the Executive Committee of his acceptance into the ACEC Leadership PE program. Blackwood stated the program is devoted to promoting business interests of engineers, architects, land surveyors, scientists, other specialists in such fields. Director Blackwood stated this is a four-month program and meetings are held one week per month in different locations throughout Tennessee, with graduation taking place in June 2023.
- MVFCA Washington D.C. Annual Meeting  
Blackwood updated the Executive Committee on his attendance at the 88<sup>th</sup> Annual MVFCA Meeting in Washington D.C. Director Blackwood informed everyone that he was able to meet with the Colonel and Memphis staff while there and all meeting were well excepted and productive.
- Greenways and Trails Council  
Director Blackwood reminded the Executive Committee of his involvement with the Greenway and Trails Council and his placement on the committee was by referral of Commissioner Salyers. Blackwood stated the group meet at Fall Creek Falls on February 8-9 to review grant projects.
- TAPA Winter Meeting  
Director Blackwood stated that he was asked to present on Cub Creek at the TAPA winter meeting. Blackwood informed everyone the meeting was held on February 1, 2023, at the UT AgResearch Center in Jackson, TN.
- Water Resources Symposium  
Blackwood provided an update on the Water Resource Symposium, stating this years event was the best attended and most well received symposium WTRBA has hosted. Director Blackwood added

that there were 125 individuals for multiple states in attendance and the event came in under budget and \$500 was lacking in being fully funded by sponsors.

- Stantec Flood Predictor Presentation

Director Blackwood stated that Ms. Susan Marlow with Stantec held an education session for County Highway Superintendents, County Mayors, and County EMAs at WTRBA on February 16, 2023, regarding a flood prediction tool Stantec developed. Blackwood stated this tool is an online program that will show flood boundaries while flooding is occurring.

- Eagle Scouts MFB Project

Blackwood informed the Executive Committee that he met with an Eagle Scout group to discuss building three benches to place at the Middle Fork Bottoms. Director Blackwood stated the troop will be attending WTRBA Board of Directors meeting on April 14, 2023, to present the project to the board.

- Regional Outreach Meetings

Director Blackwood stated he and Ms. Keith will be attending the Mississippi River Commission High Water Inspection trip on March 27, 2023, adding that he will be presenting a testimony to attendees.

#### Other Business/Adjourn

- Board Appointee Recommendations

Director Blackwood informed the committee that he and Ms. Keith have been speaking with the Governor's Office regarding board appointments and it was brought to light that Dr. Jim Byford and Mr. Hugh Adams appointments have expired, and it has been requested by the Governor's office for them to be redone and reappointed. Mr. Hugh Adams shared with the group that Farm Bureau will replace his position on the board, but that he will stay on until his replacement fills the position. Dr. Jim Byford agreed to stay on for another term.

- Office Facilities

Blackwood stated there is a need for WTRBA to grow its office facilities, adding that with new staff members and programs taking place, it is becoming difficult to find adequate working space for staff and his goal is to begin transitioning into a new building or adding on to the current location within the next three years.

- SEDHYD Conference

Blackwood asked for approval to attend the SEDHYD Conference in St. Louis on May 5-12, 2023. He stated he was asked by Mr. Andrew Simon to join him in presenting at the conference on Nutrient and Soil Loading. With no further discussion from the board Chairman Reasons asked for a motion to be made. Dr. Byford made a motion with Mr. Adams seconding. All voted in favor.

- Orphaned Lakes

Director Blackwood reminded the committee of the topic regarding orphaned lakes, adding these are lakes that have been built and have reached the end of the life cycle and have reached the point of who takes care of them now and what needs to be done with them. Blackwood said the discussion reached a standstill regarding funds, stating the cost for WTRBA to take them over, would roughly total an increase of \$50K to the maintenance budget and \$75K in the salary budget. Blackwood stated he suggests offering a timeframe to those with a watershed district in WTRBA's boundary to agree for the organization to take over, after the window of time has closed then that entity oversees that lake, concluding it would have to go through legislative protocols but those are the steps he would like to see taken.

With no further business, Chairman Reasons asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mayor Butler made the motion with Mr. Hugh Adams seconding.

---

Mayor Gary Reasons, Chairman

---

Mr. Hugh Adams, Secretary

Upcoming meeting:

Board of Directors Meeting on April 14, 2023, at 11:30am

Executive Committee Meeting on May 16, 2023, at 9:30am

Executive Committee Meeting on June 20, 2023 at 9:30am