Special Meeting of Lumberjack's Executive Committee, Executive Director, WHIP, TIP, FLOW Coordinators & Steering Committee Members.

10am Thursday, October 1, 2026 at the Lumberjack Office & via Zoom

Present: Bill Bialecki, Tracy Beckman, Derek Thorn, Brianna LeFebre, Janelle Leikes, Michele Sadauskas, Jeremy Johnson, Sheri Denowski, Quita Sheehan, Al Wirt, Steve Heimerman, Wayne Plant, Bob Mott.

1. **Call to Order** - The meeting was called to order at 10am by President Bialecki and introductions were made.
2. **Approve Agenda** – motion by Mott/Plant to approve the agenda as is. Motion Carried.
3. **Strategic Plan Discussion**
    a. Review Lumberjack Expense Coverage Sheet – Heimerman explained the pie chart showing that our income from administrative fees does not cover our expenses. He stated that the pie chart information is not accurately communicated to the council with the current reports. He stated we need to make sure our council is financially literate about our standings and he & Beckman are working on those reporting tools. Decisions should be made only after the council understands the full financial picture.
    b. Discussion shifted to the cost of fiscally sponsoring WHIP, TIP, and FLOW. They explained that administrative fees from grants only partially offset Lumberjack's costs, and that the $10,000 annual allocations to WHIP and TIP were not reflected as losses in previous reports. Representatives from WHIP, TIP, and FLOW described their funding constraints, the value of fiscal sponsorship, and the limited grant and fee-for-service opportunities for terrestrial invasive species work. The group discussed the need for better financial literacy, clearer reporting, and potential budgeting for the sponsored programs. They also considered the strategic importance of invasive species management to counties and the broader mission of Lumberjack. The conversation ended with recognition of the financial challenges and the need for more transparent, accurate financial reporting and strategic planning.

**Partnership Financial Concerns Discussion**

The concern is that projections show Lumberjack losing $181,000 over the next four years if current spending continues. The group discussed financial challenges, with Steve highlighting that expenses are increasing at 14% annually while revenues are only growing at 4%, creating a significant funding gap. The discussion focused on different revenue streams across programs with suggestions and ideas for alternative funding from counties, foundations, corporations, fee for service work. Concerns were raised about the feasibility of significantly increasing administrative fees given current grant constraints and community willingness to pay for services.

**Grant Budgeting and Administrative Challenges**

Tracy discussed challenges with grant budgeting and administrative costs, explaining that Lumberjack has been absorbing excess administrative fees without explicit decision-making. The group recognized the need to rebuild administrative structures and establish clearer boundaries between WHIP and TIP as fiscal sponsors, with Tracy suggesting that Lumberjack needs to decide whether to continue supporting these programs given the current cost structure. The discussion revealed concerns about the financial sustainability of the current model, with participants acknowledging that the true costs of supporting WHIP, TIP, and FLOW programs are significantly higher than the $10,000 annual grants currently allocated by the Council.

**Strategic Planning Discussion**

Lumberjack should identify how the current structure benefits our sponsor counties and all other partners and vice-versa. We need to show value to each individual county as part of Lumberjack. A plan should center around how we can all work together to connect healthy and vibrant eco systems on the water, land and in our communities.

**Next steps Lumberjack**

- Develop and distribute a budget format for WHIP, TIP, FLOW to be presented at Council Meetings starting in 2027.
- Recreate the financial reporting structure to more accurately reflect income and expenses, ensuring clarity for the Council. This would include building Lumberjack's administrative costs into everything so that there are no behind-the-scenes costs.
- Review line-by-line and analyze all of Lumberjack's expenses. Ideas/suggestions were to look at everything, office space, remote work, instead of grant program invest in sponsored agencies or regional projects.
- Provide the steering committees of WHIP, TIP, and FLOW with a breakdown of open grants, administrative fees, and allotted hours at the start of the year.
- Work on a communications plan to better communicate the benefits of our partnership as well as invasive species management to counties and the public. It was noted that this will be undertaken by a Nicolet College work study student later in October.

**Next Steps Partners**

- Jeremy, Michele, Derek, and other steering committee representatives: Take the financial information back to their respective steering committees and brainstorm solutions for reducing costs and/or increasing revenue. Send suggestions to Tracy by the Executive Committee meeting on the 15th.
- Executive Committee: Meet to discuss budget reductions and strategic options for revenue growth and cost reduction.
- Lumberjack Council: Decide at a future meeting how to allocate limited funds between the grant program and fiscal partnerships.
- Tracy and Executive Committee: Develop clear, written agreements with WHIP, TIP & FLOW defining roles and responsibilities.

The meeting adjourned at noon on a motion by Mott/Heimerman.