

Meetings:

I propose that we do more communication electronically and rely less on meetings. I think we'll likely get more done that way. Email and online collaborations can be our main interaction, but we should still meet annually at least and quarterly at most... with additional meetings as needed on specific priorities. Your thoughts on that plan are welcome!

Dragon Boat Club:

Annelly Armstrong-Thorstad reports that the board of the International Boundary Waters Dragon Boat Foundation has officially and enthusiastically voted to participate actively in our XBorder committee. Rather than having specific individuals join our group, they prefer to join as an organization. That way, the most relevant and interested Dragon Boat people can participate in specific XBorder activities without committing to every meeting. All their board members get the email addressed to dragonboatff@gmail.com, so communication will be simple and they'll all be in the loop.

FYI, the Club's name is the [Boundary Waters Dragon Boat Club](#), but it's technically the International Boundary Waters Dragon Boat Foundation that's joining our XBorder group, and Annelly requested we list them using the Foundation name.

Odds are good we'll get rolling soon with them on that idea for a guide to doing business on both sides of the border, and a farmers' market (see below).

VF Website page and List of Members:

Speaking of names, Mike Wellcome is working on listing all the Stewards involved in each of the Voyage Forward Destiny Drivers on the [Voyage Forward website](#). I assume our members would be listed on our own [Cross Border Opportunities](#) page. Contact information would ONLY be provided for the co-chairs.

If you got this email, we plan to list your name unless you object. As noted above, though, all the Dragon Boat folks would be listed merely as the International Boundary Waters Dragon Boat Foundation.

Save that link to the [Cross Border Opportunities](#) page. It's likely to be one of the ways we communicate, going forward (pun avoided). It has a section at the bottom for us to post agendas, minutes, other documents and videos.

OARS smartphone option:

Kudos to Myrna Meadows for getting me moving again by taking initiative herself on our ideas to make remote border crossings easier. She'll now have the lead on that project. I'll help out, along with any of you who have ideas or enthusiasm for this issue.

FYI, OARS ([Outlying Area Reporting Station](#)) is the current US system for calling in from a super-special phone, like the one at Bohman's Landing. Joe Henry, of the [Lake of the Woods Tourism Bureau](#), introduced the idea of modernizing that concept to allow people to use smartphones to do the same thing. That'd be much better for the public and cheaper than adding OARS stations, but would require action by the US Congress to implement.

Myrna will be drafting a letter to members of the US Congress for us to present to Koochiching County and our local cities and Chambers for their review and signatures. Initial enthusiasm for the idea has been expressed by some of those entities.

International Farmers' Market:

A relatively new idea is the potential to form a new, thriving international farmer's market for our area. The farmers' market in Fort Frances closed recently and the one in International Falls has been dwindling - it's future is uncertain.

We have the potential for a new and stronger farmers' market by drawing from both sides of the border. We have the knowledge help vendors navigate the steps of doing cross-border business. There's real potential for a success with this idea, and it would also be excellent publicity for the region. The symbolism of a truly international-yet-local market is pretty compelling.

If this idea strikes your fancy and you'd like to get involved, send me a message and we'll see where this idea leads!