

Minutes
Land and Water Conservation Committee Meeting
July 21, 2010

Jefferson County Courthouse
320 South Main Street Rm 202
Jefferson WI 53549

In attendance: Committee members Greg Torres, Co-chairperson, Walt Christensen, Secretary, Carlton Zentner, Karen Christian, Mark Watkins, Director, LWCD, Nancy Lannert, LWCD, Dennis Vollmer, NRCS.

Others present: Julian Zelazny, WLWCA Executive Director, Lee Olson, NRCS Earth Team Volunteer, Phil Roou, Sue Marx and Weenonah Brattset, interested citizens.

Members of the committee absent: Michael Burow

1. **The meeting was called to order** by Co-chairperson Torres at 8:30 a.m.
2. **Roll Call** was made; a quorum was present.
3. **Meeting was properly notices and compliant with open meeting law.**
4. **Agenda** A review of the agenda was made with the correction of adding Walt Christensen as Secretary and omitting George Jaeckel's name.
5. **Citizen Comments** There were no citizen's comments.
6. **June Minutes** Karen Christian moved for the approval of the June 2010 minutes, Carlton Zentner seconded the motion. Motion carried.
7. **Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association Membership Discussion** Julian Zelazny, the Executive Director of WLWCA was introduced to the Committee. He was asked to speak to the Committee in regard to the requested increase in annual dues for membership in WLWCA. Zelazny distributed an information sheet describing the organization's activities and detailing the value membership provides for the County Land Conservation Committee. (See attached)

Committee members asked various questions of Zelazny. Mr. Zelazny stated in regard to their accomplishments, most notably, their lobbying efforts had saved State Staffing Grants from being cut in the last biennial budget, resulting in a savings to counties of \$18,000 in each year.

Mark Watkins stated that he has been able to add the increased dues as part of the 2011 budget without going over the 2% increase cap. The Committee thanked Mr. Zelazny for coming to speak with them.

8. **NRCS Report** Dennis Vollmer updated the committee on NRCS activities. (See Attached) The next annual CRP general signup is expected to be held in August but it has not been officially announced as of this meeting date. Vollmer introduced Lee Olson, a student at St. Cloud who is gaining experience in natural resources as an Earth Team Volunteer with NRCS. Vollmer also reported that a new Soil Conservationist will be starting in his office as of August 16, 2010. He passed out a brochure for a Seasonal High Tunnel Workshop to be held on August 9, 2010.

9. **County Farm Access** Watkins discussed the latest access issues concerning the county farm. Four addition access points have been blocked off by the new Highway 26 by-pass project. Three of these have been rectified through close work with the Wisconsin DOT Engineer. The fourth is being worked on. Watkins will keep the committee updated on the situation.

10. **2011 Draft Budget** Committee members received a copy of the 2011 draft budget. Watkins went over the various components. The core budget which basically covers office supplies had no real increase except for computer services (MIS) which the Department has no control over. The increase was due to spreading out the lost revenue to MIS from Country Side to all other County departments. He was able to keep his request under the 2% as directed by Administration. The County Farm lease expires this fall. Watkins has estimated the revenue to be down this year as there is less farm land to rent due to the state purchasing part of the farm for the by-pass and generally lower cash rents being reported throughout the County. The increase over the 2010 budget is \$1801.00.

Watkins will be approaching Finance Committee for four capital expenditures. Both County vehicles need to be replaced. They are becoming unsafe and repair costs have been excessive in the past years. The office copy machine is in need of replacement also. He is also requesting to reinstate the Administrative Clerk position back to full time. These capital expenditures are anticipated to be approximately \$98,000.

11. **Land and Water Resource Management Plan Update** The Land and Water Resource management plan was approved by the full County Board at their July 15, 2010 meeting. It will next be presented to the State Land and Water Board on August 3, 2010 for their final approval.

12. **Working Lands Initiative Update** A brief update was given on Working Lands Initiative (WLI). The State Secretary of Agriculture sent out a letter to all current Farmland Preservation Program participants explaining the new compliance criteria under WLI. The letter lists the Department's WLI Hotline number for more information. It appears that the Hotline is being used. The Department is working on updating the web page with information on WLI. A group of landowners in the south east part of the County applied for and were selected as an Agricultural Enterprise Area which will give them a greater tax credit under WLI. Walt Christensen mentioned he went to the first Quadrant meeting for WLI held by the Zoning Committee. Watkins attended the Ag

Focus Group meeting held on July 20, 2010. He stated there was a lot of discussion concerning the compliance requirements.

13. **Monthly Financial Report** There was no change to the monthly financial report from the last meeting. However, the first installment of the Department's staffing grant has been requested and should be sent to the Department in the very near future.

14. **Correspondence** The Department received a letter from the Drumlin Land Trust. (See Attached) It contained a resolution asking the County to authorize releasing the money set aside from the sale of County farm land to the DOT for use as matching money to secure Purchase of Conservation Easement grant money. This item will be added to the next meeting's agenda for discussion.

15. **Next Meeting Date and Possible Agenda Items** The next meeting will be held August 18, 2010. Agenda items include Land Trust letter and the 2011 budget.

16. **Adjournment** Walt Christensen made a motion to adjourn, Karen Christian seconded, and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 10:35 a.m.