

Land & Water Conservation Committee Minutes

April 19, 2023

1. Call to Order:

The monthly meeting was called to order by Matt Foelker at 8:30 am. Committee Members Matt Foelker (Chair) (UW), Walt Christensen (Vice-Chair), Dan Herbst (UW), Cassie Richardson (via Zoom), Meg Turville-Heitz (via Zoom), Kirsten Jurcek (FSA), and Margaret Burlingham (PACE), were present. Also in attendance were Patricia Cicero, Director, Land & Water Conservation Department (LWCD); Kim Liakopoulos, LWCD; and Dave Hoffman, LWCD.

- Others in Attendance: Dean Weichmann, Jefferson County Soil Builders, and Anita Martin

2. Roll Call (Establish a Quorum):

A quorum was established.

3. Certification of Compliance with the Open Meetings Law:

It was determined that the committee was in compliance with the Open Meetings Law.

4. Review of the April Agenda:

The April agenda was reviewed by the committee members. No changes were proposed.

5. Approval of the March 15, 2023 Meeting Minutes:

Turville-Heitz made a correction to the spelling of her name in Item #17. Christensen made a motion to approve the March 15, 2023 meeting minutes as corrected, Herbst seconded. Motion passed 7/0.

6. Public Comment:

There were no comments.

7. Communications:

- Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection April 2023 Report.
- Land & Water Conservation Department 2022 Annual Report.

8. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Report:

NRCS did not attend the meeting therefore a report was unavailable. Jurcek informed the committee that Andy Berndt will be leaving NRCS 5/7/2023. NRCS will be hiring two Area Resource Conservationists per County in the future.

9. Discussion on Departmental Updates:

Several water resources reports have been produced: aquatic plant reports on Hope Lake, Mud Lake, and the mill pond at Rock Lake, Rock Lake internal phosphorus loading, and Lower Spring Lake aquatic plant management report. Staff is working on the Watertown water quality trading practices and specifications. The County Board approved the Intergovernmental Agreement with Watertown. Tree sale pickup will take place at the Parks shop this year, 4/26 & 4/27. The Annual Report was provided to the County Board and Cicero will give an oral report at the May meeting.

10. Discussion on Water Resources Management Specialist Position:

Marisa Weider has chosen to leave the LWCD for a job with a private company. The water resources position has been posted. Cicero will be handling water resources for the time being.

11. Discussion on Jefferson County Ground Water Study Update:

The goal of recruiting 800 wells for this study was reached. The kits will be sent out at the end of April.

12. Discussion on Acquiring a Nitrate Meter to Test Groundwater:

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds can be used to purchase a nitrate meter. Cicero spoke to Kevin Masarik, UW Steven's Point, and he recommended using a testing kit instead which will be less expensive.

13. Discussion on Producer-Led Groups: Jefferson County Soil Builders (JCSB) & Rock River Regenerative Graziers (R3G):

JCSB & R3G held a joint meeting to discuss the rainfall simulator at Brew with a View with NRCS 6/22/2023. Educational outreach - JCSB will have a field day 6/1/23 - R3G will have a field day 6/21/23 and a pasture walk 7/19/23 - JCSB & R3G combined field day 9/21/23.

14. Discussion and Possible Action on Notices of Noncompliance - Farmland Preservation Program (FPP):

There were no notices.

15. Discussion and Possible Action on Cancellation of Notice of Noncompliance - FPP:

C&J Hutchins Trust

Burlingham made a motion to accept the notice, Herbst seconded. Motion passed 7/0.

16. Discussion and Possible Action on Participation in the Fourth Grade Farm Tour:

Christensen, Richardson, Weichmann & Dave Hoffman (LWCD) will attend and perform the Apple as the Earth demonstration at the May 3, 2023 tour.

17. Discussion and Possible Action on Purchase of Agriculture Conservation Easement (PACE) Applications & Baseline Documentation:

The Cummings easement baseline has been started. LWCD is awaiting the title search and a Forest Management Plan. The next step for the Rollefson easement is an appraisal.

18. Discussion and Possible Action on Funding for PACE from the Sale of County-Owned Farmland:

The most recent easement appraisal is over what was anticipated, and funding may be an issue for the next easement.

19. Review of the Monthly Financial Report (February):

The most recent statement of revenues and expenditures was distributed.

20. Discussion on Items for the Next Agenda:

Possible agenda items include: Invite American Farmland Trust to an LWCC meeting to share the benefits of agricultural conservation easements and the cost of rural development to the community. The Finance Committee may be invited to the presentation.

- **Next Scheduled Meeting:** May 17, 2023 @ 8:30 in the Highway Committee Room

Turville-Heitz informed the committee that she will be unable to attend the May LWCC meeting.

21. Adjournment:

Christensen made a motion to adjourn at 9:50 am, Herbst seconded. Motion passed 7/0.

Committee member Kirsten Jurcek has been appointed to serve on this committee due to her status as the designated Farm Service Agency committee member. All her opinions and votes are as a member of the public and as a producer/farmer, not as a representative of the Farm Service Agency, United States Department of Agriculture, or Federal Government.

Kim Liakopoulos
Administrative Specialist I ~ LWCD