

Land & Water Conservation Committee Minutes

May 17, 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), Kirsten Jurcek (via Zoom @ 8:33) (FSA), and Margaret Burlingham (PACE), were present. Also in attendance were Patricia Cicero, Director, Land & Water Conservation Department (LWCD); Kim Liakopoulos, LWCD; Dave Hoffman, LWCD; and Sam Peterson, LWCD. Meg Turville-Heitz was excused.

- Others in Attendance: Dean Weichmann, Jefferson County Soil Builders, Anita Marin, and Frankie Fuller (via Zoom @ 8:32).

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 May Agenda:

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

5. Approval of the April 19, 2023 Meeting Minutes:

Herbst made a motion to approve the April 19, 2023 meeting minutes as written, Christensen seconded. Motion passed 5/0.

6. Public Comment:

There were no comments.

7. Communications:

- Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection May 2023 Report.
- Board of Health: Spray Irrigation of Manure and Other Industrial Waste. This is a future agenda item and will be discussed at that meeting.

8. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Report:

NRCS did not attend the meeting therefore a report was unavailable. The Resource Conservationist position has been posted.

9. Discussion and Possible Action on Memorandum of Agreement with NRCS:

Herbst made a motion to accept the Memorandum of Agreement with NRCS, Burlingham seconded. Motion passed 6/0.

10. Discussion on Departmental Updates:

Cicero is conducting interviews and providing training for the Clean Boats, Clean Waters program in Lake Mills. Cicero is assigning new stream monitors to various locations within the County. Citizens near Rock Lake are meeting to discuss a potential lake district. Cicero met with the new zoning administrator / building inspector with the City of Lake Mills to talk about shorelands. Cicero assisted the DNR with a pretreatment survey for Eurasian milfoil. Cicero and Joe Strupp have been doing research and support for the Solid Waste Committee to discuss how farms are handling day to day mortalities. Strupp, Peterson, and Hoffman have completed an annual report for the DNR regarding the use of Multi-Discharger Variance money for cover crops and pasture establishments. LWCD staff is preparing for FPP spot checks.

11. Discussion on Water Resources Management Specialist Hiring Progress:

LWCD received over 40 applications. Interviews of several qualified individuals have been conducted. It is anticipated that someone will be in the position by the next LWCC meeting.

12. Discussion on Jefferson County Ground Water Study:

More than 2,000 letters were mailed, more than 900 landowners responded that they would participate, and testing kits have been sent. The first batch of test results are expected in July, the second in August. The Health Department, LWCD, and UW Stevens Point met to discuss providing additional information to landowners whose wells test above human health standards.

13. Discussion on Koshkonong Creek Watershed Program:

Dane and Jefferson County are meeting to decide whether a Koshkonong Creek watershed program would be useful. NRCS has funding available. Dane and Jefferson County will ask NRCS to do a feasibility study.

14. Discussion on Producer-Led Groups: Jefferson County Soil Builders (JCSB) & Rock River Regenerative Graziers (R3G): JCSB will have a field day 6/1/23. 6/22/2023 JCSB, R3G, and NRCS will meet at Brew with a View an hour early for the rainfall simulator demonstration. R3G will have pasture walks 6/21/23 and 8/9/23. JCSB & R3G will have combined field day 9/21/23.

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

Voluntary - Vesta Biwer Trust, Arnold Vandre

Herbst made a motion to accept the notices, Christensen seconded. Motion passed 6/0.

16. Discussion and Possible Action on Cancellation of Notices of Noncompliance - FPP:

David & Sally Waddell

Burlingham made a motion to accept the notice, Christensen seconded. Motion passed 6/0.

17. Discussion on Fourth Grade Farm Tour:

Hoffmann, Weichmann, Christensen, and Richardson attended the Fourth Grade Farm tour and gave the "Apple as the Earth" demonstration to hundreds of attendees.

18. Discussion and Possible Action on Purchase of Agriculture Conservation Easement (PACE) Applications & Baseline Documentation: Hoffman updated the committee on the Cummings easement. LWCD has sent the deed language to NRCS and is awaiting approval.

19. Discussion and Possible Action on Funding for the PACE Program:

Christensen made a motion to have LWCD host a joint meeting with Finance and American Farmland Trust to discuss possible funding sources for the PACE program, Herbst seconded. Motion passed 6/0.

20. Discussion on Jefferson County Farmland Potential Sale:

A portion of the County Farm may be sold. Cicero is in communication with the current renter, the County Administrator, and Corporation Counsel to determine next steps on the farm lease, the 2023 LWCD budget, and reimbursement to the current renter for any costs incurred prepping the field for planting.

21. Review of the Monthly Financial Report (March):

The most recent statement of revenues and expenditures was distributed.

22. Discussion on Items for the Next Agenda:

Possible agenda items include:

- **Next Scheduled Meeting:** June 21, 2023 @ 8:30 in the Highway Committee Room

23. Adjournment:

Herbst made a motion to adjourn at 9:45 am, Burlingham seconded. Motion passed 6/0.

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