

Land & Water Conservation Committee Minutes

October 15, 2025

1. Call to Order:

The monthly meeting was called to order by Meg Turville-Heitz at 8:30am. Committee Members Meg Turville-Heitz (Chair), Matt Foelker (UW) (Vice-Chair), Cassie Richardson (via Teams), and Scott Schultz (Ag), were present. Also in attendance were Patricia Cicero, Director, Land & Water Conservation Department (LWCD); Kim Liakopoulos, LWCD; Michael Luckey, County Administrator; and Danielle Thompson, County Corporation Counsel. Margaret Burlingham (PACE) was excused. Walt Christensen and Elizabeth Hafften were absent.

- Others in Attendance: Zachary Venchus, Wildlife Damage Abatement & Claims Program (@ 8:40); Elizabeth McGeary, Director/Health Officer, Jefferson County Health Department (via Teams); Anita Martin, Sue Marx, Lisa Eddy (via Teams), Mary Dougherty (via Teams), Todd St. Martin (via Teams)

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 Agenda:

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

5. Approval of the September 17, 2025 Meeting Minutes:

Foelker made a motion to approve the September 17, 2025 meeting minutes as written, Schultz seconded. Motion passed 4/0.

6. Public Comment:

Antia Martin gave public comment on agenda item #8

Lisa Eddy gave public comment on agenda item #8

Mary Dougherty gave public comment on agenda item #8

7. Communications:

- Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection (DATCP) Report.

➤ Items 8-10 have been temporarily postponed until the arrival of Zachary Venchus, Wildlife Damage Abatement & Claims Program.

8. Discussion on Avian Influenza in Jefferson County:

Michael Luckey discussed avian influenza in Jefferson County. Luckey spoke about continuing coordination with State Agencies and the support being offered by Jefferson County. Luckey said Jefferson County continues to work collaboratively with all partners to ensure that every step of the response is conducted in the best interest of our county and its residents.

9. Discussion and Possible Action on the 2025 Wildlife Damage Abatement Claims Program Crop Prices and 90% Harvest Date:

Zachary Venchus discussed the Wildlife Damage Abatement Claims Program. Foelker made a motion to accept the 2025 Wildlife Damage Abatement crop prices, and that in order to qualify for the program, 90% of the crops will need to be harvested no later than December 1, 2025, Schultz seconded. Motion passed 4/0.

10. Discussion and Possible Action on the 2026 Wildlife Damage Abatement Claims Program Budget:

Venchus discussed the Wildlife Damage Abatement Claims Program Budget. Schultz made a motion to approve the 2026 Wildlife Damage Abatement & Claims Program Budget, Foelker seconded. Motion passed 4/0.

11. Discussion and Possible Action on Participation in the Deer Donation Program:

Venchus discussed the Deer Donation Program. Foelker made a motion to continue participation in the Deer Donation Program, Schultz seconded. Motion passed 4/0.

12. Discussion and Possible Action on Resolution Authorizing the Application and Implementation of a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Aquatic Invasive Species Surface Water Planning Grant:

Foelker made a motion to approve the Resolution Authorizing the Application and Implementation of a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Aquatic Invasive Species Surface Water Planning Grant and forwarded it to the County Board, Schultz seconded. Motion passed 4/0.

13. Discussion on Departmental Updates:

Cicero attended a highly regarded quality-of-life strategic plan meeting. Cicero attended a Wisconsin Geologic Mapping Advisory committee meeting. Dave Hoffman performed annual non-metallic mine visits. Colton Hutchinson will be attending the health and conservation meeting. Due to the government shutdown, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has been impacted. The easement program and terrace system cost share program are both on hold. Joe Strupp and Sam Peterson are working with farmers on the cover crop cost share program. The 2025-2026 tree sale will go live October 15, 2025. An order form was provided. Cicero is attending the annual county conservationist meeting in Steven's Point. LWCD staff is giving a presentation to the Rock Lake Improvement Association on Jefferson County agriculture programs at 6:30pm, October 28 at Lake Mills City Hall.

14. Discussion on Producer-Led Groups: Jefferson County Soil Builders (JCSB) & Rock River Regenerative Graziers (R3G): Cicero discussed the grants submitted by JCSB and R3G along with the Winter Workshop which will be held in early 2026. Schultz spoke about a pasture walk he attended in September.

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

There were no notices.

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

Steven Punsel

Foelker made a motion to accept the notice, Schultz seconded. Motion passed 4/0.

17. Discussion and Possible Action on Purchase of Agriculture Conservation Easement (PACE) Applications & Baseline Documentation: Cicero informed the committee that the resolution for the Rollefson easement was approved by the County Board at their last meeting. Unfortunately, the federal shutdown has delayed the next steps for the easement.

18. Review of the Monthly Financial Report:

The most recent statement of revenues and expenditures was distributed.

19. Discussion on Items for the Next Agenda:

Possible agenda items include: Avian Influenza in Jefferson County

- **Next Scheduled Meeting:** *TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2025 @ 10:30am IN ROOM C2063*

20. Adjournment:

Foelker made a motion to adjourn at 9:20am, Schultz seconded. Motion passed 4/0.