

Land & Water Conservation Committee Minutes

February 18, 2026

1. Call to Order:

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

- Others in Attendance: Dean Weichmann, Jefferson County Soil Builders; Anita Martin, Sue Marx (via Teams), Michael (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 December 17, 2025 Meeting Minutes:

Christensen made a motion to approve the December 17, 2025 meeting minutes as written, Schultz seconded. Motion passed 5/0.

6. Public Comment:

There were no comments.

7. Communications:

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

8. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Report:

NRCS did not attend the meeting therefore a report was unavailable.

9. Discussion on Departmental Updates:

Cicero and Colton Hutchinson are assisting the Health Department with a grant for additional arsenic sampling. Cicero, Hutchinson, and Hoffman are working with Zoning on a Shoreland Contractors workshop on April 7, 2026 to cover zoning rules and best practices. Cicero and Turville-Heitz attended the Southern Area Association (SAA) meeting. Jefferson County has renewed its participation in the SAA Annual Poster Contest. Due to a bit of a late start, one poster was received. Hutchinson will get the contest information out earlier this year. Cicero attended a meeting on updating the Jefferson County Parks and Outdoor Recreation Plan. Joe Strupp and Peterson held a Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) update class for farmers to write their own plan. Strupp and Peterson gave assistance with a grazer specific NMP class also. Hutchinson attended a groundwater education workshop. Hutchinson applied to receive a ground water sand model and was accepted. The model will be used for ground water education. Strupp, Peterson, and Hoffman attended the producer-led Winter Workshop 2/5/2026. Hutchinson worked with Rock Lake Improvement Association on implementing “fish sticks” in Rock Lake on Department of Natural Resources (DNR) property which was partially funded with the Healthy Lakes and Rivers grant. LWCD has received DNR grants for Clean Boats, Clean Waters, and the Lake Monitoring and Protection Network grant. Another DNR grant was received and will be used to fund an aquatic plant survey and a near-shore fish survey on Rock Lake. Cicero described a transformative government team product, a continuity of

work plan, which wall staff will be completing. Hoffman submitted an annual report to Watertown for the Watertown Waterways Improvement Program. Farmland Preservation Program Annual Certifications are being received. There has been an increase in new enrollments in terms of acres. Strupp and Peterson are reviewing 2 livestock siting applications. The tree and shrub sale is ongoing. All species are still available with 3 species running low.

10. Discussion on Donation for Rock Lake Watershed to Fund Agricultural Practices:

A \$5,000 anonymous donation was received in 2024 for agricultural practices in the Rock Lake watershed. The donation was used to plant cover crops: 109 acres were planted in single species cover crops and 27 in multi species cover crops. This year a \$4,000 donation was received for agricultural practices in the Rock Lake watershed from the same donor.

11. Discussion on Producer-Led Groups: Jefferson County Soil Builders (JCSB) & Rock River Regenerative Graziers (R3G): Peterson submitted the JCSB 2025 annual report. JCSB applied for and received two grants for 2026. One from the Department of Agriculture for \$22,000, another from Nature Conservancy for \$3,750. A Winter Workshop was held 2/5/2026 in Whitewater. It was very successful, well attended, and informative with multiple guest speakers.

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

There were no notices.

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

There were no cancellations.

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

Hoffman informed the committee that NRCS has rejected the Rollefson easement application. This is due to NRCS legal counsel's opinion of a deed restriction that Rollefson had removed to complete the easement. Rollefson's are in contact with their lawyer regarding this issue and are considering their next steps.

15. Review of the Monthly Financial Report:

The most recent statement of revenues and expenditures was distributed.

16. Discussion on Items for the Next Agenda:

Possible agenda items include: Ground Water Model Demonstration

- **Next Scheduled Meeting:** March 18, 2026 at 8:30am in Room C2063

17. Adjournment:

Christensen made a motion to adjourn at 9:05am, Burlingham seconded. Motion passed 5/0.