

Land and Water Conservation Committee Minutes

September 16, 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), Matt Foelker (UW) (Vice-Chair), Margaret Burlingham (PACE) (via Teams), Elizabeth Hafften (UW) (via Teams @ 8:50), Scott Schultz (Ag), and Gary Skalitzky were present. Also in attendance were Patricia Cicero, Director, Land & Water Conservation Department (LWCD); Kim Liakopoulos, LWCD; Dave Hoffman, LWCD (via Teams); and Sam Peterson, LWCD. Walt Christensen was excused.

- Others in Attendance: Anita Martin. Via Teams; Suzanne Marx and Michael Miller.

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 August 19, 2026 Meeting Minutes:

Foelker made a motion to approve the August 19, 2026 meeting minutes as written, Schultz seconded. Motion passed 5/0.

6. Public Comment:

Anita Martin gave public comment on an item not on the agenda.

7. Communications:

- Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) Report
- 2027 Jefferson County Youth Conservation Poster Contest
- Wisconsin Leopold Conservation Award Finalists - The Brattset Family Farm

8. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Report:

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

9. Discussion on Departmental Updates:

Cicero reminded the Committee that LWCD staff worked on a state-wide study on compliance with NR 151 agricultural rules. Staff submitted data on the sites chosen in Jefferson County. The State is working on a report, and Cicero will share the report with the Committee when it is available. Cicero attended the open house for the BECI transmission line. Hoffman reviewed potential BECI route maps and communicated any conflicts with conservation easement locations. Cicero attended a meeting with the strategic plan implementation team leaders, Michael Luckey, and Steve Chimelewski for planning a local government academy class for citizens. A wetland delineation was done on the County Farm west of State Road 26. The delineation is part of due diligence for the potential sale of county farmland. An environmental assessment will also be done in the future. Cicero attended a Fair Park master planning session. Cicero presented the 2027 LWCD Budget to the Finance Committee September 15, 2026. The budget was approved by the committee. Joe Strupp, Sam Peterson and Cicero met with the Rock Lake Improvement Association (RILA) to talk about agriculture in the Rock Lake watershed. Strupp and Peterson have been completing cost share contracts for cover crops. Colton Hutchinson attended annual meetings of the Lower Spring Lake District and Blue Spring Lake District. Hutchinson joined the Capital Area Regional Planning Commission field crew to learn how the Great Lakes road-stream crossing inventory is performed. Hutchinson assisted the Parks Department with a river clean up on a section of Whitewater Creek.

Hutchinson found an invasive aquatic species plant, Stary Stonewort, at one location during the Rock Lake plant survey. Hutchinson and the DNR revisited the site to confirm its location. Hutchinson assisted the RLIA with their DNR pre-grant application for updating the Rock Lake management plan. Hoffman is working on Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program re-enrollments and updating existing contracts. Hoffman sent letters to non-metallic mines regarding upcoming annual inspections. Hoffman attended a farm finance workshop to talk about linking agriculture lending and conservation. Hoffman attended a Kernza emerging crop workshop.

10. Discussion and Possible Action on Authorizing the Application and Implementation of a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Clean Boats, Clean Waters Grant: Foelker made a motion to authorize the application and implementation of a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Clean Boats, Clean Waters Grant and forward it on to the County Board for approval, Skalitzky seconded. Motion passed 6/0.
11. Discussion and Possible Action on Authorizing the Application and Implementation of a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Lake Monitoring and Protection Network Grant: Foelker made a motion to authorize the application and implementation of a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Lake Monitoring and Protection Network Grant and forward it on to the County Board for approval, Schultz seconded. Motion passed 6/0.
12. Discussion on Wisconsin Grazing Academy - Sam Peterson:
Peterson discussed the Wisconsin Grazing Academy and the benefits of his attendance. A discussion followed and Peterson answered committee questions.
13. Discussion on Producer-Led Groups: Jefferson County Soil Builders (JCSB) and Rock River Regenerative Graziers (R3G): JCSB had a field day at Karl Hundt's farm August 25, 2026. Shultz and R3G will host a pasture walk September 24, 2026. JCSB and R3G submitted their 2027 grant applications to DATCP. Peterson spoke about an upcoming visit with the Nature Conservancy Board at Shultz's farm to see field border conservation practices.
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 Notices of Noncompliance - FPP:
There were no cancellations.
16. Discussion and Possible Action on Purchase of Agriculture Conservation Easement (PACE) Applications & Baseline Documentation: Hoffman sent out program and application information to interested landowners in August. Hoffman has received one PACE application and has communicated with an additional landowner that has expressed interest in applying.
17. Review of the Monthly Financial Report:
The most recent statement of revenues and expenditures was distributed.
18. Discussion on Items for the Next Agenda:
Possible agenda items include: Zachary Venchus, Wildlife Damage Abatement and Claims Program
 - Next Scheduled Meeting: October 21, 2026 at 8:30am in Room C2063
19. Adjournment:
Skalitzky made a motion to adjourn at 9:10am, Foelker seconded. Motion passed 6/0.