

Land Conservation Committee

December 10, 2019

County-USDA Service Center Meeting Room, Medford

Call Meeting to Order: Ray Soper called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Members Present: Ray Soper, Myron Brooks, Catherine Lemke, Joe Tomandl, Allen Kasparek

Members Absent: None

Other Attendees: Brent Tessmer, County Conservationist; Luke Melotik, Engineering Technician; Karyn Eckert, Conservation Assistant; Melissa Knipfel, USDA-NRCS.

Approve Minutes: Kasparek requested one correction as he made the motion for the contribution to the Golden Sands AIS grant match. Brooks moved to approve the minutes with that correction of the October 8, 2019, meeting; seconded by Tomandl. Motion carried.

Approve Agenda: Lemke moved to approve the agenda with 10 items; Kasparek seconded. Motion carried.

Review and approve 10/1/19 to 12/2/19 bills. Lemke moved to approve the bill; seconded by Tomandl. Motion carried.

Reports:

Wildlife Damage Program –Seth Zesiger was unable to attend and had no updates.

Golden Sands RC&D – Tomandl and Melotik attended the November meeting of Golden Sands in Stevens Point. Tomandl reported the water committee discussed the discovery of more starry stonewort in Wisconsin lakes. Lincoln County has petitioned to be a part of the Golden Sands AIS grant. Melotik reported the agriculture committee discussed hiring for the NRCS soil conservationist position which will be based in Medford. The posting closes Dec. 12. In the general meeting, a discussion was held on creating a second office in southwest Wisconsin due to the closing of Badger RC&D.

Natural Resource Conservation Service – District conservationist Melissa Knipfel reported NRCS has completed 2019 payments for CSP plans; there are currently no active sign-ups. Soft ground under the snow may be a challenge for the 28-tag alder shearing projects scheduled this winter. Knipfel will participate in interviews for the soil conservationist position on Dec. 19; she hopes the person will start in January. Knipfel also reported NRCS is restructuring and changes could include a district conservationist supervising several offices. Tomandl asked if the three-year agreement for the soil conservationist position with Golden Sands RC&D made qualified people reluctant to apply; Knipfel said there were some questions about the three-year period and there is no guarantee it will be extended when the agreement expires. Knipfel thanked the committee for their cooperation and support of conservation work in the county.

Farm Service Agency – Allen Kasparek reported deadlines for various program enrollment are approaching, including Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) and the Market Facilitation Program (MFP).

NRCS/County Grazing Program – No report.

Northwest Land Conservation Association, representative – Tessmer attended the November meeting. Craig Conroy of Burnett County was named LCC board representative and Sue Hendrickson of Douglas County was named alternate LCC representative. There has been no news on the status of the AIS grant program from the DNR. Soper is stepping down from the legislative committee as he no longer has time.

LCD staffing and program update:

Brent Tessmer: Tessmer reported DATCP released the newest version of SnapPlus 19 for nutrient management. Farmer training will be held again in January in Medford. Tessmer said it was a struggle to use the NMP cost-share money this year and we will not use \$4,300 of the \$40,000 allocated; other counties also had money left over. Tessmer said the county will not be penalized for future years and it has been hard to get farmers to commit to the program even with the cost-share incentive. The no-till drill was used on 911 acres in 2019, the most in one year since it was purchased. The new spare tire was put on the right side that was showing wear from the road shoulder. Tessmer got a quote for new tires of \$380 each. October stream sampling had normal flow and nothing unusual in the results. Metals testing was done again for the Bend site. Tessmer attended a cover crop field day Oct. 23 that showed air-seeded annual rye and clover. He attended the Eau Claire River Watershed meeting; the group received an EPA grant to conduct workshops and field days. Tessmer investigated a manure spreading complaint on Dec. 6; the farm was mostly spreading within guidelines, but Tessmer will remind of them of the setback from wells.

Luke Melotik: Melotik reported the remaining 2019 SWRM funds are all allocated with one more contract to be signed. Melotik plans to use 2020 SWRM funds for a barnyard project, cattle lane, pit closure and well closure. The cattle lane will require applying for a wetland variance. Melotik has also been contacted to design a rain garden for a shoreland project, but it will not receive cost-share. Remaining carryover funds were applied to a livestock watering system at the Stanek farm. Crossings will be added to the Freudenthal waterway project. The Feddick feed pad project will be complete once electricity is hooked up to the pump. Carryover projects include a waste storage pad and barnyard runoff control project.

Karyn Eckert: Eckert visited 9 classrooms in October to give presentations on pollinators and introduce the poster contest in Medford and Gilman. Posters are due to the office by Dec. 31. One teacher is interested in a public outreach project with the posters; Eckert plans to work with her and her students on the idea over the winter. She attended the Youth Education Committee meeting in Stevens Point in October as well. Eckert is serving on the Silent Auction subcommittee for the group. The online tree store launched in October with few issues and seems to be well received so far. The LCD has received 40 tree orders so far, most of them done online; we only had 12 at this time in 2018. The early bird discount ends Jan. 10, but Eckert expects species will start selling out before that due to the volume of orders.

Discuss/take action on expanding Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) into additional towns. DATCP has asked if Taylor County would like to expand CREP into other towns that are now eligible due to impaired surface water. Eligible land is enrolled for 15 years. A crop history is required to be eligible. Motion by Kasperek, second by Tomandl, to support expanding the CREP program to eligible towns. Motion carried.

Future Meetings and Events:

- Next LCC Meeting.....Tuesday, Feb. 11, 9 a.m.
- Winter County Conservationist meeting, Stevens Point.....Dec. 12-13
- Nutrient Management Farm Education, NTC-Medford.....Jan. 3, 10 & 17, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
- Golden Sands RC&D, Stevens Point.....Thursday, Jan. 16, 10 a.m.
- Northwest Area Association meeting & contests, Hayward.....Thursday, Feb. 6, 9 a.m.
- WI Land+Water Annual Conference, KI Center, Green Bay.....March 4-6, 2020

Motion by Tomandl, seconded by Lemke, to adjourn at 10:00 a.m. Motion carried.

Land Conservation Committee

October 8, 2019

County-USDA Service Center Meeting Room, Medford

Call Meeting to Order: Ray Soper called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

Members Present: Ray Soper, Myron Brooks, Catherine Lemke, Joe Tomandl, Allen Kasparek

Members Absent: None

Other Attendees: Brent Tessmer, County Conservationist; Karyn Eckert, Conservation Assistant; Seth Zesiger, USDA-APHIS.

Approve Minutes: Tomandl moved to approve the minutes of the August 13, 2019, meeting; seconded by Brooks. Motion carried.

Approve Agenda: Lemke moved to approve the agenda with 12 items; Kasparek seconded. Motion carried.

Review and approve 8/7/19 to 9/30/19 bills. Tomandl moved to approve the bill; seconded by Kasparek. Motion carried.

Reports:

Wildlife Damage Program –Seth Zesiger reported. Taylor County currently has 22 enrollees for the wildlife damage program, most for deer or bear damage. Zesiger is not expecting any damage claims. Zesiger presented the agreement for participation in the venison donation program, which requires Soper's signature. Motion by Brooks, seconded by Tomandl, to approve the venison donation program agreement. Motion carried.

Zesiger also presented the 2020 wildlife damage abatement budget. Motion by Brooks, seconded by Lemke, to approve the wildlife damage budget. Motion carried.

Golden Sands RC&D – Tomandl and Tessmer attended the September meeting of Golden Sands in Stevens Point. Tomandl reported the water committee discussed groundwater protection legislation, high water on area lakes and efforts to combat aquatic invasive species. Tessmer reported the agriculture committee discussed a new sign for the Jim Livingston demonstration forest and advertising for the NRCS soil tech position. Golden Sands is applying for a grant that would expand its Woods and Wildlife for Today and Tomorrow program to Taylor County. The program creates partnerships between woodland owners to enroll in forest management programs.

Natural Resource Conservation Service – District conservationist Melissa Knipfel was unable to attend the meeting and had no updates for the committee.

Farm Service Agency – Allen Kasparek reported for director Deb Marg. Sign-ups for various programs continue. There is an enrollment period for disaster claims, but no claims from Taylor County are expected.

NRCS/County Grazing Program – Tessmer reported for grazing specialist Lanice Szomi. No new plans have come in since the August meeting.

Northwest Land Conservation Association, representative – Tessmer reported the group's next meeting should be in November.

LCD staffing and program update:

Brent Tessmer: Tessmer attended the NRCS local work group meeting in Thorp on Sept. 9; Taylor County projects received \$611,000 in NRCS funding in 2019. Tessmer attend the nutrient management planning update in Eau Claire and a planning meeting for the 2020 NMP farmer education sessions. Farmers will be able to receive cost-share for soil sampling, capped at \$750 per farm. He completed NMPs for four smaller farms, a total of about 200 acres of soil sampling. If all farmers that expressed interest in the NMP program take the cost-share, Taylor County's 2019 grant funds will be used up. Tessmer treated buckthorn around the Ag Service Center and 14 sites of knotweed around the county. The no-till drill has made 32 stops and has covered 900 acres. It sustained damage at a farm when the operator turned sharply with the drill in the plant position, so repairs had to be made. Tessmer had normal water flow for August stream sampling and high water for September. He will take the last samples of the year, including samples from the Bend site, October 10-11. Tessmer and Eckert went to the Black River with a group of 7th graders from Medford Area Middle School to talk about surface water quality and stream monitoring.

Luke Melotik: Melotik was unable to attend due to construction activity. Tessmer presented a written report.

Karyn Eckert: Eckert reported the drinking water testing program had 99 participants who submitted 94 homeowner's packages and 70 metals packages. Of those, 2 came back positive for e. coli and 29 for coliform bacteria. Twenty residents with positive coliform tests submitted second tests to confirm those results. Eckert distributed a written summary and maps from the 2019 drinking water program. Eckert participated in youth education committee and silent auction subcommittee conference calls in August. She has had a good response from a letter inviting teachers to participate in the 2020 poster contest; the theme is "Where would we BEE without Pollinators?" She visited a 4th grade class in Gilman on Oct. 2 and visit 7th classes at MAMS on Oct. 9 and 11. Seedlings are ordered for the 2020 tree sale and she hopes to have brochures mailed and start taking orders by Oct. 25.

Discuss/take action on Resolution for Approval of Governmental Responsibility for Targeted Runoff Management and Notice of Discharge Grants. Motion by Lemke, second by Tomandl, to approve the resolution. Motion carried.

Discuss/take action on contribution of match to Golden Sands Resource Conservation & Development Council for aquatic invasive species management. Tessmer said Golden Sands RC&D is requesting the same cash contribution as 2019 as match for its invasive species. Each county served by Golden Sands is asked to contribute. Motion by Kasperek, seconded by Brooks, to contribute \$2,062.50, from tree sale revenue. Motion carried.

Discuss/take action on topper for 2019 Ram truck. Tessmer received quotes from a topper for the Ram truck from two dealers. Slick Up Center in Altoona offered the lower price of \$1,778. Motion by Tomandl, seconded by Lemke, purchase a topper for the 2019 Ram truck. Motion carried.

Future Meetings and Events:

1. Next LCC MeetingTuesday, December 10, 9 a.m.
2. Northwest Area Association, HaywardTBD
3. Golden Sands RC&D, Stevens PointThursday, November 21, 10 a.m.

Motion by Tomandl, seconded by Lemke, to adjourn at 2:20 p.m. Motion carried.

Land Conservation Committee

August 13, 2019

County-USDA Service Center Meeting Room, Medford

Call Meeting to Order: Ray Soper called the meeting to order at 8:56 a.m.

Members Present: Ray Soper, Myron Brooks, Catherine Lemke, Joe Tomandl, Allen Kasparek

Members Absent: None

Other Attendees: Brent Tessmer, County Conservationist; Luke Melotik, Engineering Technician; Karyn Eckert, Conservation Assistant; Chris Hamerla, Golden Sands RC&D; Melissa Knipfel, NRCS; Steve Suchomel, Town of Little Black.

Approve Minutes: Brooks moved to approve the minutes of the June 11, 2019, meeting; seconded by Kasparek. Motion carried.

Approve Agenda: Tomandl moved to approve the agenda with 13 items; Lemke seconded. Motion carried.

Review and approve 6/5/19 to 8/6/19 bills. Brooks moved to approve the bill; seconded by Lemke. Motion carried.

Reports:

Wildlife Damage Program – Wildlife specialist Seth Zesiger was not able to attend and provided a written report.

Golden Sands RC&D – Tomandl and Tessmer attended the July meeting of Golden Sands in Stevens Point. Tomandl attended the water committee which discussed recent legislative hearings in Stevens Point. There is movement to create a nitrates plan for Wisconsin. Southern counties reported high water levels in lakes. Tessmer attended the agriculture and forestry committee. Golden Sands will contract with NRCS to provide a soil conservation technician based in Medford. Chris Hamerla discussed projects and efforts in Taylor County, including Snapshot Day on Aug. 17 at the Perkinstown Winter Sports Area.

Natural Resource Conservation Service – Knipfel reported. NRCS plans to hire the soil conservation technician before the end of the fiscal year. The employee would design projects and work with Melotik. It is not yet determined if the person can work on projects in Price and Clark counties, who are not members of Golden Sands but covered by the Medford office. The position is a 3 year contract. NRCS has 98 CSP contracts. Of those, 14 were eligible for the grassland conservation initiative and 6 will participate. The annual local work group meeting is Sept. 9 in Thorp.

Farm Service Agency – Allen Kasparek reported for director Deb Marg. The new dairy market program began in January. Crop reporting has been extended. Sign-up for the tariff relief program began. Cover crops were required to be planted on prevented plant acres by Aug. 1.

NRCS/County Grazing Program – Tessmer reported for grazing specialist Lanice Szomi. Szomi has 3 potential plans to work on, one beef and two dairy, all in western Taylor County.

Northwest Land Conservation Association, representative – Tessmer attended the June 27 meeting. The group is looking for a host for the fall tour. Tessmer also attended the

legislative/administrative committee during the July county conservationist meeting in Stevens Point. The committee was disappointed with the state budget and discussed strategies to lobby legislators for support to fully fund conservation staffing.

LCD staffing and program update:

Brent Tessmer: Tessmer assisted with the tractor safety training course held in June in Gilman. He met with a DNR representative from the CAFO program for a walk-through at Brandner Dairy Farm. A complaint was received of manure being stacked in a field ditch near Lublin. The farmer was told to spread and clean-up the site as soon as possible and Tessmer provided him with a map of approved stacking areas. He completed soil sampling at two farms. About half of the nutrient management cost-share funds have been used with the remainder still available to farmers. He presented a "lunch and learn" session in June in partnership with UW-Extension. Invasive species was the topic and about 9-10 people attended. He has been checking wild parsnip sites and treating and pulling any plants found. Beetles from LCD's rearing program were released at 8 sites in July. The no-till drill has covered 700 acres with 27 stops, a very busy year even with rain holding up planting. He promoted the drill at a beef pasture walk in July. Stream samples collected in June showed similar trends to other years.

Luke Melotik: Melotik spent a lot of time revising the plans and fixing items the state wanted changed. The Feddick project will include a feed pad, collection system and waste storage that gravity flows into an existing pit. Cody Overgard has been working with him on the Fettes manure pit project. Melotik visited a site near Ladysmith for a concrete pour for a manure pit project. He attended a Basic Ag for Conservationists training. A follow-up field day will be held in September. The McAlpine fencing project is finished except for the watering system. He hopes to attend a grade stabilization field day unless he needs to be on-site for project construction. Future projects that farmers have expressed interest in a pit closure, barnyard and a well closure.

Karyn Eckert: Eckert reported ads had been placed in the Star News and Shopper for the upcoming drinking water program. Bottle distribution is Aug. 19-23 in Medford, with distribution hours in Westboro on Aug. 22 and Gilman on Aug. 23. Collection day is Aug. 26 and samples will be transported to the lab at UW-Stevens Point on Aug. 27. Eckert ordered 100 sample kits which have arrived and are ready to distribute. LCD had three display boards at the fair, one on water, one on invasive species and one on our county Land and Water Resource Management Plan, along with handouts for visitors to take. A Golden Sands representative attended the fair Saturday morning. The office should be getting the scanner to take credit cards soon. Eckert assisted Tessmer with purple loosestrife beetle release in July. The department is working on figuring out species and orders for the 2020 Tree & Shrub Sale.

Discuss/take action on 2020 budget. Tessmer presented the 2020 draft budget. Bond funding for projects decreased \$10,413 for our county. Statewide, there was a 2% decrease in bond funding. SWRM (staffing) grants were increased 5 percent statewide, giving the department an additional \$9,417. Tessmer increased line items he felt needed additional funds, but he requested guidance for where to allocate the remaining funds if the department planned to submit a budget with 0% increase to finance.

Motion by Kasperek, second by Brooks, to increase the equipment outlay to \$8,864 and approve the budget. Roll call vote, 5 yes, 0 no. Motion passed.

Discuss/take action on County Farmland Preservation Plan. Tessmer said Taylor County has received a grant to cover half the cost of writing the plan and staff time can be used as match to cover the remainder. He would like to contract with Northwest Regional Planning to help us prepare the plan. Motion by Tomandl, seconded by Lemke, to contract with Northwest Regional Planning to develop a Farmland Preservation Plan. Motion carried.

Discuss/take action on International Migratory Bird Day Resolution. Motion by Tomandl, seconded by Lemke, to approve the resolution. Motion carried.

Discuss/take action on online Tree & Shrub Sale store. Eckert presented a preview of the proposed online tree and shrub store created on the Shopify platform. The site charges \$29 per month, with a discount if paid per year. Motion by Tomandl, second by Brooks, to approve the online tree & shrub sale store. Motion carried.

Future Meetings and Events:

- Next LCC Meeting Tuesday, October 8, 9 a.m.
- Northwest Area Association, Hayward..... TBD
- Golden Sands RC&D, Stevens Point Thursday, September 19, 10 a.m.

Motion by Lemke, seconded by Brooks, to adjourn at 11:20 a.m. Motion carried.

Land Conservation Committee

June 11, 2019

County-USDA Service Center Meeting Room, Medford

Call Meeting to Order: Ray Soper called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Members Present: Ray Soper, Myron Brooks, Catherine Lemke, Joe Tomandl, Allen Kasperek

Members Absent: None

Other Attendees: Brent Tessmer, County Conservationist; Luke Melotik, Engineering Technician; Karyn Eckert, Conservation Assistant; Steve Suchomel, Town of Little Black; and Akilah Dillon, The Star News.

Approve Minutes: Brooks moved to approve the minutes of the April 15, 2019, meeting; seconded by Tomandl. Motion carried.

Approve Agenda: Kasperek moved to approve the agenda with 11 items; Brooks seconded. Motion carried.

Review and approve 4/2/19 to 6/4/19 bills. Tomandl moved to approve the bill; seconded by Kasperek. Motion carried.

Reports:

Wildlife Damage Program – Wildlife specialist Seth Zesiger was not able to attend. He did not have any updates to report.

Golden Sands RC&D – Tomandl and Tessmer attended the May meeting of Golden Sands. Tomandl attended the water committee. They discussed legislation to address nitrates in well water that would fund grid sampling in townships. Golden Sands hired two technicians to inspect boat landings as part of its Aquatic Invasive Species work. They will be resurveying lakes for invasive species, including in Taylor County. Golden Sands is working on funding to construct a more permanent facility for rearing beetles to control purple loosestrife. It hopes to expand the Woods and Wildlife program to all counties, including Taylor, if the grant is approved. Tessmer reported the ag committee discussed Golden Sands signing on to a cooperative agreement with NRCS to hire grazing staff.

Natural Resource Conservation Service – No report.

Farm Service Agency – Allen Kasperek reported for director Deb Marg. Dairy payments will be issued for January through April. Crop reporting is behind, and FSA is expecting a lot of prevented planting acres.

NRCS/County Grazing Program – Tessmer reported for grazing specialist Lanice Szomi. Szomi is caught up with plans currently and is waiting for new plan requests.

Northwest Land Conservation Association, representative – The next area association meeting is June 27 in Hayward.

LCD staffing and program update:

Luke Melotik was introduced as the new engineering technician. He started on May 28.

Brent Tessmer: Tessmer reported he is finishing up a small NMP plan. The deadline to report NMP acres to the state is this week; Tessmer believes Taylor County's acres will be down due to some voluntary plans not being turned in this year. Buckthorn Bash was cancelled and rescheduled due to cold and rain; the new date had great weather and the 5th graders enjoyed the morning. Purple loosestrife was dug and potted in May. Tessmer and Eckert placed beetles on the plants with netting June 10. The beetles should be ready to release in a few weeks. Tessmer treated garlic mustard and noted there were fewer plants than other years. He will start treating wild parsnip soon. Tessmer gave a presentation on invasive species at the Towns Association meeting with information on mowing times to minimize the spread of seed. He will talk about invasive species at UW-Extension's Learning for Life event on June 18. The first round of stream sampling was done May 23-24. The no-till drill has done 440 acres so far with more planned, which is more than all of 2018. North Breeze Dairy withdrew their permit application for manure storage. Brandner Dairy is in the CAFO permit application process with the state.

Karyn Eckert: The Tree Sale wrapped up in May with over 13,600 trees sold and a profit of about \$3,500. Money from the tree sale has been used for items such as the Land and Water Resource Management Plan, grant match for invasive species and similar items. The forestry class at Medford High School helped package the 500 maple trees the LCD donated to Maple Fest in April. The drinking water program is set for August with bottle distribution Aug. 19-23 and collection on Aug. 26. We will be distributing and collecting bottles in Gilman and Westboro, as well as our office. We will have displays at the fair to promote the drinking water program and other department activities. Eckert attended a youth education committee meeting in Stevens Point in May. The theme for this year's poster contest is pollinators. Eckert and Chris Hamerla taught buckthorn identification prior to Buckthorn Bash. Eckert and Tessmer also shared a soil conservation demo at the Simek Center and taught forest plant identification at the Medford School Forest in May.

Discuss/take action on replacement of Land Conservation Department truck. Two bids were received. Motion by Kasperek, seconded by Brooks, to accept Medford Chrysler Center's bid of \$26,992. The cost will be paid for from the sale of the current truck to the Highway Department for \$14,000 and the balance taken from technical service fees. Motion carried.

Discuss/take action on online Tree & Shrub Sale store and accepting credit card payments. Eckert report the LCD has been getting more requests to use credit cards to pay for water and soil samples, trees and other things the LCD charges for. Customers have also asked about ordering trees over the phone and online; other counties are offering online ordering and some have moved to online only tree sales. LCD could use the PayGov.us that other county departments have used – the fee would be 2.5% (minimum of \$1 and would be passed on to card users). Eckert and Melissa Seavers from the IT Department also researched setting up an online store for trees. The fees range from \$26 to \$29 per month for Shopify or Square stores, plus credit card fees would be 2.9% plus .30 per transaction. The online service could also be used to manage inventory and offline orders. Most online store services allow a trial period of a few weeks before committing to them.

Motion by Tomandl, seconded by Lemke, to allow the Land Conservation Department to accept credit cards using the PayGov.org service. Motion carried. The request will be forwarded to the finance committee.

Motion by Tomandl, seconded by Brooks, to sign up for trial periods of online stores to decide which platform would best fit the needs of the LCD. The online tree sale store would go back on the agenda in August for a final decision. Motion carried.

Future Meetings and Events:

- Next LCC Meeting.....Tuesday, August 13, 9 a.m.
- Northwest Area Association, Hayward.....Thursday, June 27, 10 a.m.
- County Conservationist Meeting, Holiday Inn, Stevens Point.....July 18-19
- Golden Sands RC&D, Stevens Point Thursday, July 25, 10 a.m.

Motion by Brooks, seconded by Lemke to adjourn at 10:21 a.m. Motion carried.

Land Conservation Committee

April 15, 2019

UW Extension Meeting Room, County-USDA Service Center

The LCC meeting was called to order by Ray Soper at 9:00 a.m. The meeting was held in the UW Extension Meeting Room, County-USDA Service Center, Medford, WI. Members present were Ray Soper, Myron Brooks, Catherine Lemke, Joe Tomandl and Allen Kasperek. Brent Tessmer, Conservation Technician; and Karyn Eckert, Conservation Assistant; Seth Zesiger, APHIS; and Melissa Knipfel, NRCS, were also present.

MOTION by Tomandl/Brooks to approve the minutes of the February 12, 2019 meeting and the April 5, 2019 meeting. **MOTION CARRIED.**

MOTION by Lemke/Tomandl to approve the agenda. **MOTION CARRIED.**

MOTION by Brooks/Tomandl to approve the 2/4/19-4/1/19 bills. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Reports

Wildlife Damage Program, Wildlife Damage Specialist, reported: Seth Zesiger reported calls for deer damage to stored feeds increased after the county received more snow in February. He has also responded to beaver complaints and wolves harassing cattle near Sheldon. Zesiger reported there is another bill to remove wolves from the endangered species list. The Fish and Wildlife Service has also proposed to delist wolves and is proceeding with public comment periods; he expects the earliest it could happen is March 2020, but it would also be challenged in court.

Golden Sands RC&D, Taylor County representative: Tomandl and Tessmer attended the March meeting in Stevens Point. Tomandl gave an overview of Golden Sands RC&D and distributed the 2018 year in review. In the March water committee meeting, reports were given on well testing and contamination found and Wood County's nitrate testing lab. Tomandl said Golden Sands approved selling materials from the Prairie Chicken Festival for a reasonable price. Tessmer reported on the ag and forestry committee. Golden Sands took over the NRCS agreement from Southwest Badger RC&D which funds contract employees to work with graziers. Golden Sands also received an award for its work on urban forestry.

Natural Resources Conservation Service, District Conservationist: Knipfel reported NRCS completed 29 Young Forest Initiative projects this winter. NRCS has 44 contracts totaling \$707,000 with about \$500,000 in farmstead projects alone. Three farmstead applications came from Taylor County. Knipfel said Stanley had worked on NRCS projects prior to leaving the department, but will not be working on any new projects in his limited role with LCD. NRCS is currently taking EQIP applications for soil health and cover crops. Knipfel said NRCS is seeing an uptick in wetland and highly erodible soil violations. There is a backlog of FSA determination requests due to the government shutdown. CSP sign-ups were on hold due to the new Farm Bill. NRCS is now taking CSP sign-ups until May 10.

Farm Service Agency, County Director: No report.

NRCS/County Grazing Program, Grazing Specialist, reported by Tessmer: Grazing planner Lanice Szomi is updating a grazing plan for a farmer who is transitioning from dairy to beef.

Northwest Land Conservation Association, representative: Soper and Eckert attended the area meeting held at the Land & Water Conference in Lake Geneva. Soper attended the legislative committee meeting in Stevens Point. Discussion was held on SWRM grants and the request to fully fund them. Soper said recent media coverage of groundwater problems has given the request to increase staffing funds momentum.

LCD staffing and program update.

Brent Tessmer: The deadline for nutrient management plan checklists is past. Tessmer is helping 6-7 farmers finish up plans and is working with consultants to get information on those plans. LCD is now able to offer assistance with soil sample costs for farmers writing new plans. The no-till drill is ready to go, and nine farmers have signed up to use it. Tessmer attended a meeting in Hayward in February to discuss changes in DNR grants for aquatic invasive species. The grants are changing from competitive to county allocations. Taylor County could pursue the allocation on its own or partner/contract with another group. Tessmer attended the state Cisma meeting with Ann Dassow from the Forest Service. One idea he learned about there was a waterless boat washing station but installing one would likely be cost-prohibitive.

Karyn Eckert: Eckert attended the speaking contest in Hayward on Feb. 14. Two Taylor County students competed with Julia Pester placing 3rd in the senior division. The WLWCA Youth Education Committee met by conference call on Feb. 19. May will be an in-person meeting. Eckert co-chaired the silent auction at the WLWCA conference and attended sessions on drinking water and moving toward a paperless office. Poster and speaking contest awards were received and distributed to all but one school. Tree sale pick-up is being planned for April 25-26, a week later than originally planned due to the snow. Leftovers will be for sale during pick-up and at Maple Fest on April 27.

Marie Koerner arrived at 9:58 a.m.

Closed Session. MOTION by Brooks/Lemke, at 10 a.m. to go into closed session pursuant to Wisconsin State Statutes, Section 19.85 (1)(c), for the purpose of reviewing candidates interviewed for the Engineering Technician position, as well as salary and benefits. A roll call vote cast, five (5) voting aye, **MOTION CARRIED.**

Open Session. MOTION by Kasperek/Lemke, to go into open session at 10:22 a.m. A unanimous cast, the motion carried.

Approve the County Conservationist job description. MOTION by Tomandl/Brooks to approve the County Conservationist job description. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Approve Engineering Technician job description. MOTION by Brooks/Lemke to approve the Engineering Technician job description. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Appoint County Conservationist (Department Head) position and approve salary. MOTION by Brooks/Tomandl to appoint Brent Tessmer as County Conservationist, pay grade L, step 4, effective April 15, 2019. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Discuss/take action on 2020 Staffing Grant and 2019 Annual Work Plan. Tessmer said the annual work plan is similar to past years with a few additions from the new LWRM Plan. **MOTION** by Tomandl/Lemke to approve the 2019 Annual Work Plan. **MOTION CARRIED.**

MOTION by Tomandl/Lemke to approve the 2020 Staffing Grant application. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Discuss/take action on replacement of Land Conservation Department truck. Three bids were received and met bid specifications: Medford Chrysler Center, \$26,449; Medford Motors, \$28,036; and Toycen of Ladysmith, \$31,866.90. Trade-in values for the current truck were \$14,000 from Medford Chrysler and \$12,800 from Medford Motors. The Highway Department has offered to purchase the truck for \$14,000. **MOTION** by Brooks/Lemke to accept Medford Chrysler's bid of \$26,449. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Discuss/take action on 2019 Drinking Water Program rates. Eckert recommended keeping the rates at \$25 per package. **MOTION** by Tomandl/Kasperek to set the rate at \$25 per test package. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Future Meetings and Events:

- Next LCC Meeting.....Tuesday, June 11, 9 a.m.
- Maple Fest, Medford..... Saturday, April 27, 7 a.m.-3 p.m.
- Golden Sands RC&D, Stevens PointThursday, March 21, 2019, 10 a.m.
- Northwest Area Association, Hayward.....Friday, June 14, 10 a.m.

Soper asked if anyone else would be interested in representing the committee at the area meeting as he does not have time to attend the meetings.

MOTION by Lemke/Brooks to adjourn at 10:54 a.m. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Land Conservation Committee

April 5, 2019

3rd Floor County Board Room #3306, Taylor County Courthouse

Call Meeting to Order: Ray Soper called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Members Present: Ray Soper, Catherine Lemke, Myron Brooks, Joe Tomandl, Allen Kasperek

Members Absent: None

Other Attendees: Marie Koerner, Ben Stanley, Colleen Handrick [left at 1:02 p.m.]

Approve Agenda. A motion was made by Brooks, seconded by Tomandl, to approve the agenda with five items. A unanimous vote cast, the motion carried.

Closed Session. A motion was made by Brooks, seconded by Lemke, at 1:02 p.m. to go into closed session pursuant to Wisconsin State Statutes, Section 19.85 (1)(c), for the purpose of conducting interviews for the Taylor County Conservation Engineering Technician position. A roll call vote cast, five (5) voting aye, the motion carried.

Open Session. A motion was made by Brooks, seconded by Tomandl, to go into open session at 4:13 p.m. A unanimous cast, the motion carried.

A motion was made by Brooks, seconded by Lemke, to offer the County Conservation Engineering Technician position to the 1st-ranked applicant who had interviewed. A unanimous vote cast, the motion carried.

Adjournment. A motion was made by Tomandl, seconded by Lemke, to adjourn at 4:15 p.m. A unanimous vote cast, the motion carried.

Secretary: Marie Koerner

TAYLOR COUNTY LAND CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

Minutes of February 12, 2019

The LCC meeting was called to order by Ray Soper at 9:00 a.m. The meeting was held in the UW Extension Meeting Room, County-USDA Service Center, Medford, WI. Members present were Ray Soper, Myron Brooks, Catherine Lemke and Joe Tomandl. Ben Stanfley, County Conservation Engineer; Brent Tessmer, Conservation Technician; and Karyn Eckert, Conservation Assistant were also present.

MOTION by Tomandl/Brooks to approve the minutes of the December 11, 2018 meeting and the January 28, 2019 meeting. **MOTION CARRIED.**

MOTION by Lemke/Tomandl to approve the agenda. **MOTION CARRIED.**

MOTION by Tomandl/Brooks to approve the 12/5/18-2/4/19 bills. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Reports

Wildlife Damage Program, Wildlife Damage Specialist, reported: Seth Zesiger was not able to attend and had no updates. LCD received the final billing for 2018 wildlife damage and is waiting on an invoice for deer donation processing to submit for reimbursement.

Golden Sands RC&D, Taylor County representative: Tomandl and Tessmer attended the January meeting in Stevens Point. Discussion included nitrates in groundwater and groundwater legislation. Miller Dam is scheduled to be mapped for aquatic invasive species. Golden Sands is working with Jim Livingston to create a demonstration forest in Taylor County. The group is considering hiring a grazing planner.

Natural Resources Conservation Service, District Conservationist: NRCS is working with Allen Fettes on a manure pit and transfer system. The project will probably need a variance for wetland setback. Stanfley reported he partially approved a permit for another NRCS project, a waste transfer system for Nick and Lynn Hicks, pending payment of the permit fee.

Farm Service Agency, County Director: No report.

NRCS/County Grazing Program, Grazing Specialist, reported by Stanfley: No updates since last meeting.

Northwest Land Conservation Association, representative: Soper attended the legislative committee meeting. Discussion was held on what WLWCA should be asking for in the next state budget. One group wants to ask for full funding of staffing grants; the committee approved the request narrowly by one vote. The executive board was asked to review the decision and backed it.

LCD staffing and program update.

Ben Stanfley: Stanfley reported he completed 2018 as-builts and will carryover \$35,830 into 2019. Engineering work was approved for the Freudenthal waterways; the project will have almost one mile of waterways constructed. Plans for the Feddick project will be reviewed for approval soon. A dairy farmer is interested in a barnyard near the Yellow River; Stanfley will visit

the site this week. Construction on the Pitzke manure pit was done in October, but Stanfley did not receive the as-built report until January and it was missing extra sampling required, the safety fence, seeding and mulching was not done and there were other problems. Stanfley said he hoped the engineer just forgot to include that information; the recourse would be to issue a citation.

Brent Tessmer: Tessmer has been working on nutrient management plans with farmers. About 12 people attending the training session at NTC in Medford in January. Tessmer also helped with training and Wausau and will go to Spencer as well. The grant for the class was capped at \$20,000, but more may be available to provide farmers with additional stipends for sampling, etc. Tessmer extended three SEG contracts into 2019, about \$17,000. Tessmer has been working on mapping data for the invasive species survey and making it available to the public. Aquatic invasive species (AIS) grants are changing from competitive to an allocation. Preliminary information from the DNR shows northern counties may be getting less. Taylor County will have to decide how it wants to handle the allocation in the future. Tessmer distributed results from 2018 stream monitoring. He added sites to narrow where runoff is coming from. Three sites near mink ranches are showing high levels of phosphorus. Point source phosphorus may be easier to address than non-point runoff from fields. June was the only month with sampling that followed significant rainfall in 2018. Some sites were dry in July and August.

Karyn Eckert: Eckert reported 7,865 tree seedlings were sold, about 60 percent of inventory with 85 individual orders. Pick-up is planned for the third week of April but will depend on weather. Taylor County received 17 posters for its contest in three age categories. Aliyah Eidsen of Rib Lake Elementary received second place in the grades 2-3 category at the area contest. The speaking contest was rescheduled due to weather and is planned for Feb. 14, starting at 12:30 p.m. in Hayward. Taylor County will have two students in the speaking contest. Eckert completed year-end reimbursement requests for the RAC grants and those payments were received.

Discuss/take action on Mahr Brothers LLC winter emergency manure transfer. Mahr Brothers would like to transfer manure before weight limits come on. Stanfley said he expects this to be a one-time request and they will have adequate storage in the future. **MOTION** by Tomandl/Brooks to approve the emergency manure transfer. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Discuss/take action on replacement of Land Conservation Department truck. Stanfley said a new truck would be roughly \$29,000. After trade-in, about \$13,000 would be needed; LCD currently has \$6,000 in the vehicle outlay account so \$7,000 would need to come from somewhere else. Stanfley reported there is \$18,000 in technical service fees. The current truck has about 56,000 miles on it and is starting to rust. Soper said he would like to see the technical service fees account spent down. **MOTION** by Tomandl/Lemke to advertise for bids for a 2019 half-ton pick-up truck. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Discuss/take action on multi-discharger variance for phosphorus. Stanfley said this program takes money from wastewater treatment plants exceeding phosphorus limits and gives it to counties. 65% of the funds would be used for cost-sharing projects to lower phosphorus and up to 35% can be used for staff. The money needs to be spent by 2021. **MOTION** by Brooks/Tomandl to approve the multi-discharger variance for phosphorus. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Discuss/approve County Conservation Engineer job description. The update to the training aspect would add "or professional engineer" after engineer in training. **MOTION** by Lemke/Brooks to approve the job description. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Discuss/take to authorize Ben Stanfley to continue engineering work. Stanfley is willing to work Fridays on conservation projects requiring engineering so they can move forward and start in spring. **MOTION** by Tomandl/Lemke to authorize Stanfley to do engineering work for the Land Conservation Department. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Future Meetings and Events:

- Next LCC Meeting.....Tuesday, April 9, 9 a.m.
- NW-WLWCA Area Association meeting, Lake Geneva.....Wednesday, March 13, 4:15 p.m.
- WI Land+Water Annual Conference, Lake Geneva..... March 13-15, 2019
- Golden Sands RC&D, Stevens Point.....Thursday, March 21, 2019, 10 a.m.

MOTION by Lemke/Brooks to adjourn at 10:31 a.m. **MOTION CARRIED.**

TAYLOR COUNTY LAND CONSERVATION COMMITTEE
Minutes of January 28, 2019

The LCC meeting was called to order by Ray Soper at 10:32 a.m. The meeting was held in the 3rd Floor Jury Room, Taylor County Courthouse, Medford, WI. Members present were Ray Soper, Myron Brooks, Catherine Lemke and Joe Tomandl. Ben Stanfley, County Conservation Engineer; Brent Tessmer, Conservation Technician; and Marie Koerner, Human Resources Director, were also present.

MOTION by Brooks/Lemke to approve the agenda. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Closed Session. MOTION by Tomandl/Brooks to go into Closed Session pursuant to Section 19.85(1)(c), Wisconsin State Statutes, at 10:33 a.m. for the purpose of discussing possible department reorganization and staffing in the Land Conservation Department. **MOTION CARRIED.** Brent Tessmer left the meeting at this time.

MOTION by Lemke/Tomandl to go back into open session at 11:15 a.m. **MOTION CARRIED.**

MOTION by Tomandl/Lemke to have Marie Koerner facilitate the transition of the Land Conservation engineer position with Ben Stanfley continuing to work some hours in the position each week, while being the Highway Commissioner, until a new engineer is hired and determining how he will be compensated for his hours worked. **MOTION CARRIED.**

MOTION by Lemke/Tomandl to recruit for a Conservation Engineer to include the responsibilities of Department Head. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Discuss/take action to appoint acting department head. MOTION by Brooks/Tomandl to recommend Brent Tessmer as the acting Land Conservation Department Head until a new Department Head is appointed. **MOTION CARRIED.**

MOTION by Lemke/Tomandl to adjourn at 11:19 a.m. **MOTION CARRIED.**