

## **Land Conservation Committee**

December 14, 2021

Taylor County Courthouse County Board 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, Allen Kasparek

**Members Absent:** Joe Tomandl

**Other Attendees:** Brent Tessmer, County Conservationist; Luke Melotik, Engineering Technician; Karyn Eckert, Conservation Assistant.

**Approve Minutes:** Brooks moved to approve the minutes of the October 12, 2021, meeting; seconded by Kasparek. Motion carried.

**Approve Agenda:** Kasparek moved to approve the agenda with 9 items; Brooks seconded. Motion carried.

**Review and approve 10/6/21-12/6/21 bills and October-November budget analysis.** Brooks moved to approve the bills; seconded by Kasparek. Motion carried.

### **Reports:**

**Wildlife Damage Program** – No report.

**Golden Sands RC&D** – Tomandl and Tessmer attended the November meeting of Golden Sands RC&D.

**Natural Resource Conservation Service** – No report.

**Farm Service Agency** – Kasparek reported payments were made to producers enrolled in the dairy margin program at the \$9 level. He also reported that changes were being made to the FSA representation on county land conservation committees; he expected more information would be coming soon.

**NRCS/County Grazing Program** – No report.

**Northwest Land Conservation Association, representative** – The next area meeting is planned for Friday, January 28 in Hayward.

**Discuss/take action on Engineering Technician vacancy and job description.** Melotik submitted his resignation; his last day is Dec. 30. Tessmer said he was not recommending any changes to the job description. Lemke moved to post and fill the Engineering Technician position; Brooks seconded. Motion carried.

### **LCD staffing and program update:**

Brent Tessmer: Tessmer reported Nutrient Management Farmer Education classes started in January and letters were sent to farmers who needed to take the refresher course. Tessmer will be also be working with farmers on NMP updates over the winter. Tessmer reported a larger farm is building a feed storage system and is interested in NMP cost-share. Tessmer worked with the Buildings and Grounds Department to get the no-till drills and invasives into storage at the Bauer property. In October, Tessmer cut buckthorn that was regenerating around the Ag

Service Center and built herbicide daubers to use on cut stumps. A meeting of the Upper Chippewa Invasive Species Partnership was held with Sawyer, Price and Rush counties; a new grant application was submitted to the US Forest Service to fund additional roadside surveys and billboards. Tessmer said Marathon County is interested in expanding its Agriculture Enterprise Area (AEA) and could add Taylor County farmland.

Luke Melotik: Melotik reported he is wrapping up projects and his work in Taylor County. Projects for 2022 include two manure pit closures and fencing; a cattle lane should also be ready for construction next year. A new farm owner wants to install a manure pit next year; Melotik said area engineering staff will help the new engineering technicians with the soil testing and design of the project. The Feddick project is also scheduled to be completed in 2022 and will need rebar and concrete checked.

Karyn Eckert: Eckert reported she attending planning meetings for the middle school conservation camp at Upham Woods in June; the camp was last held in Marinette County in 2019, but they no longer have the staff to run it. The tree sale is going well with steady orders and about half the seedlings already sold. The early order deadline is January 5.

**Future Meetings and Events:**

- Next LCC Meeting..... Tuesday, February 8, 9 a.m.
- Golden Sands RC&D, virtual .....Thursday, January 20, 10 a.m.
- Northwest Area WLCA Meeting, Hayward ..... Friday, January 28, 2022
- Wisconsin Land+Water Annual Conference, Wisconsin Dells .....March 2-4, 2022

Motion by Brooks, seconded by Kasperek, to adjourn at 9:29 a.m. Motion carried.

## **Land Conservation Committee**

October 12, 2021

Taylor County Courthouse County Board Meeting Room, Medford

**Call Meeting to Order:** Ray Soper called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m.

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

**Members Absent:** Allen Kasparek

**Other Attendees:** Brent Tessmer, County Conservationist; Luke Melotik, Engineering Technician; Seth Zesiger, USDA-APHIS; Emily Gojmerac, The Star News.

**Approve Minutes:** Brooks moved to approve the minutes of the August 10, 2021, meeting; seconded by Tomandl. Motion carried.

**Approve Agenda:** Tomandl moved to approve the agenda with 9 items; Lemke seconded. Motion carried.

**Review and approve 8/3/21-10/5/21 bills and July-August budget analysis.** Tomandl moved to approve the bills; seconded by Lemke. Motion carried.

### **Reports:**

**Wildlife Damage Program** – Seth Zesiger presented the crops price proposal for corn, honey and beehives. Brooks moved to approve the crops price proposal; seconded by Lemke. Motion carried.

Lemke moved to set December 20, 2021, as the deadline for damage assessment; seconded by Tomandl. Motion carried.

Tomandl moved to approve the 2022 wildlife damage budget presented by Zesiger; seconded by Lemke. Motion carried.

Zesiger reported on the status of the wolf hunt and wolf damage reports; 75 wolves were trapped and euthanized by APHIS this year, but none in Taylor County.

**Golden Sands RC&D** – Tomandl and Tessmer attended the September meeting of Golden Sands RC&D which was held in-person. Tomandl reported all counties opted into the aquatic invasive species services with Golden Sands. They will be seeking volunteers for that program. Tessmer reported a Demonstration Forest Field Day is planned for October 23 in Taylor County which will teach property owners about woodland management. The LCD assisted in promotion of the event with advertising in the Star News and Star News Shopper.

**Natural Resource Conservation Service** – District conservationist Melissa Knipfel provided a written report.

**Farm Service Agency** – No report.

**NRCS/County Grazing Program** – No new plans were requested since the last meeting. Karyn Eckert, Conservation Assistant, attended her first virtual training meeting in September and is working toward becoming certified to write grazing plans.

**Northwest Land Conservation Association, representative** – Tessmer reported he had not received a date for the next Northwest Area meeting. The Shoreline Stabilization brochure was received and is available from LCD's office.

**Discuss/take action on programs to target spending of carryover funds.** Tessmer provided an overview of a proposed cost-share program to help with the cost of pumping manure from storage facilities so they can be closed. Soper asked if there were other ideas for the carryover funds and Tessmer suggested eliminating the shipping fee for soil samples which would cost the department about \$350 per year. Tessmer would like to zero out the newsletter, resource workshop and river planning line items. He would like to use the NMP cost-share grant line item for manure pit closure pumping as well. Tomandl moved to spend money from those four accounts for manure pumping cost-share with a yearly review of funds available; seconded by Brooks. Motion carried.

Lemke moved to pay for the soil sample shipping fees; seconded by Tomandl. Motion carried.

#### **LCD staffing and program update:**

Brent Tessmer: Tessmer reported permits were issued in August for a waste transfer pipeline at Brandner Dairy and in September for a feed leachate transfer at Brandner Dairy. The newer no-till drill made 16 stops for 270 acres and the older drill made 8 stops for 155 acres, a total of 434 acres this year. A rock took out the acre meter on the newer drill, which cost \$300 to replace. Tessmer replaced some down bars and W-clips due to rocks in a field. Some hoses are starting to wear through by tubes. Tessmer is meeting with a group of counties to plan this year's Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) farmer training. He is still looking for a home for the majority of our 2021 SEG fund allocation and has been out taking soil samples this fall. Tessmer sprayed buckthorn seedlings and regrowth around the Ag Center and sprayed 22 sites of Japanese knotweed this fall. He took the last stream samples of the year last week with normal to low flow observed. The Farmland Preservation Plan will go to the full county board October 27 to be considered for adoption. Following adoption, he will send in for grant reimbursement of the costs to develop the plan.

Luke Melotik: Melotik reported the Kasperek pit closure was completed but waiting approval before reimbursing. The fencing project on the Tomandl farm is anticipated to be completed yet this year; it can be carried over if it is delayed. The Feddick project receiving DNR funding will be carried over to next year; a small amount of fill material needs to be brought yet before construction can start. The Brost farm is pouring a smaller channel to be exempt from needing a permit and engineered design. The amount of clay needed was prohibitive and typically 2 of 3 dimensions less than 24" has not required a permit. The Hargot pit closure earthwork is finishing today and will be seeded and surveyed so it can be reimbursed. A farmer will likely have a cattle lane project in 2022, so Melotik will have him sign a contract to carryover any leftover funds. Two grazing plans are needed for possible fence cost sharing. The Hoover waste storage facility is complete pending approval from the area engineer. Melotik will be attending a road-stream crossing training as well as soils training in northern Wisconsin. He looked into a landowner wanting to store industrial waste in his manure pit but came to the conclusion it was not feasible and likely not possible to do so; old earthen manure pits are almost impossible to get DNR approval to use for industrial waste.

Karyn Eckert: Eckert was unable to attend; Tessmer shared a written report on her behalf which included updates on the drinking water program, the tree and shrub sale, youth education and training to write grazing plans.

**Future Meetings and Events:**

- Next LCC Meeting .....Tuesday, December 14, 9 a.m.
- Northwest Area WLCA Meeting, virtual..... TBD
- Golden Sands RC&D, virtual or in-person.....Thursday, November 18, 10 a.m.

Motion by Lemke, seconded by Brooks, to adjourn at 10:35 a.m. Motion carried.

## **Land Conservation Committee**

August 10, 2021

Taylor County Courthouse County Board 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, Allen Kasparek, Joe Tomandl

**Members Absent:** None

**Other Attendees:** Brent Tessmer, County Conservationist; Luke Melotik, Engineering Technician; Karyn Eckert, Conservation Assistant.

**Approve Minutes:** Brooks moved to approve the minutes of the June 8, 2021, meeting; seconded by Kasparek. Motion carried.

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

**Review and approve 6/2/21-8/2/21 bills and May-June budget analysis.** Tomandl moved to approve the bills; seconded by Lemke. Motion carried.

### **Reports:**

**Wildlife Damage Program** – Seth Zesiger provided a written report of 2021 enrollees to date.

**Golden Sands RC&D** – Tomandl and Tessmer attended the July meeting of Golden Sands RC&D Council at Lake Helen in Rosholt. Tomandl reported on the waters committee and curly pond weed on Lake Esadore. He also reported most counties in the group will contract with Golden Sands for AIS assistance. Tomandl also reported a group working on drafting groundwater bills has given up on action in the Legislature and is hoping to work with Sen. Tammy Baldwin on the federal side. Tessmer reported on the agriculture and forestry committee. A forestry event is being planned at the Jim Livingston property in Taylor County for late summer or early fall.

**Natural Resource Conservation Service** – District conservationist Melissa Knipfel provided a written report.

**Farm Service Agency** – Kasparek reported FSA office operations remain the same with limited in-person assistance and most work being done over phone or email. Payments were made in the dairy margin program and sign-ups for the Conservation Reserve Program were held. Kasparek said sign-up for the pandemic assistance program is open with no deadline announced. The program includes assistance for timber harvesters and haulers.

**NRCS/County Grazing Program** – No report.

**Northwest Land Conservation Association, representative** – Tessmer reported the area published a new booklet on shoreline stabilization; a pdf is available now and printed copies will be distributed soon. The next meeting will include a tour hosted by Bayfield County (the date is to be announced).

**Discuss/take action on 2021 Drinking Water Program rates.** Eckert reported lab fees were increasing by \$5 per test package as of July 1 to \$60 and \$57. The LCD has been charging \$25

per package the last several years during the drinking water program. Eckert passed out some options with the potential budget impact, including leaving it the same, charging \$30 for the first package and \$50 for both, or charging \$30 per package. Lemke moved to charge \$35 for one package and \$50 for both packages, Brooks seconded. Motion carried.

**Discuss/take action on cooperative agreement with Golden Sands Resource Conservation and Development Council to provide core Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention and Citizen Lake Monitoring Network services.** Chris Hamerla, AIS coordinator for Golden Sands, joined the meeting by phone to discuss questions on the contract. Hamerla said under the new funding system, counties would be pooling their funds to meet DNR deliverables since most counties will not receive enough funding to staff AIS programs on their own. Hamerla plans to continue the purple loosestrife biocontrol program and offer trainings in-person for interested lake groups and virtual trainings for a regional audience. Hamerla said the new system puts more emphasis on outreach and education, but less on fieldwork by AIS technicians. Brooks moved to join the Golden Sands AIS consortium and sign the agreement; seconded by Tomandl. Motion carried.

**Discuss/take action on 2022 budget.** Tessmer presented the proposed department budget. He reported the department is projected to receive \$138,934 for staffing in 2022, an increase of more than \$17,000. Tessmer said due to the US Forest Service grant for invasive species work expiring the end of 2021, he proposed creating a line item for invasive species control and monitoring with \$3,000. Soper moved to decrease the equipment budget by \$3,000 and increase the invasive species control to \$6,000; Tomandl seconded. Motion carried.

Motion by Kasparek to approve the budget and forward it to the finance committee; Brooks seconded. Motion carried.

#### **LCD staffing and program update:**

Brent Tessmer: Tessmer reported a permit for a waste transfer system was issued to Brandner Dairy. The no-till drills have been used on just over 400 acres this year. Tessmer released beetles from the purple loosestrife biocontrol program July 9 and 12 at one site in the Town of Jump River and three sites in the Town of Little Black. Tessmer checked 45 sites for wild parsnip and sprayed or pulled plants as needed; he reported fewer plants than previous years. He will start treating Japanese knotweed the end of August. Stream sampling was completed in July with low flow; August stream sampling will be done this week. Tessmer received word that DATCP approved the county's Farmland Preservation Plan on Monday, so a special meeting will be held prior to the next Extension committee meeting on Sept. 7; a 30-day notice will be published for a public hearing in October, then the county board will vote on adopting the plan.

Luke Melotik: Melotik reported he has three manure pit closures to complete; the Hargot pit will use the rest of the 2020 money, while closures for Brahmer and Kasparek will be done this year with 2021 bond money. Other projects include the Bauer fencing project completed this year and a barnyard for the O'Malley farm which will likely carryover into 2022. A fencing project is underway at Joe Tomandl III's farm and will be carried over as needed. Melotik discussed a pig manure composting facility with a farmer, but construction is not likely until 2023; the same farmer is interested in a grazing system with fencing in 2022. The Feddick NOD project has most of the earthwork done with plans to start the final phase within a month. Melotik also worked on a manure channel for a new barn at the Brost farm that will not be cost-

shared. A manure storage facility at the Hoover farm is nearly complete; inspecting the fencing and seeding must be done to finish it. Melotik discussed a possible barnyard with a farmer, but it may not be feasible due to wetlands and the inability to do a VTA, so the cost of pumps and tanks may be cost prohibitive. Melotik attended a training and tour on embankments in Buffalo County in July.

Karyn Eckert: Eckert reported the annual Drinking Water Program was scheduled for next week and advertising was placed in the shopper and Star News. She is starting to plan for the 2022 tree and shrub sale since some nurseries will begin taking orders this month; the online tree sale site will open in October. The theme has not yet been announced for the youth poster contest; once information and updated forms are available, Eckert will be in contact with schools to encourage participation. Eckert attended a pasture walk in July at a farm using rotational grazing and robots; she is waiting to hear when training to write pasture plans will be available. Eckert and Tessmer will have training Friday to use the live view, Parallels, in the new financial system.

**Future Meetings and Events:**

- Next LCC Meeting.....Tuesday, October 12, 9 a.m.
- Northwest Area WLCA Meeting, virtual..... TBD
- Golden Sands RC&D, virtual or in-person.....Thursday, September 16, 10 a.m.

Motion by Lemke, seconded by Tomandl, to adjourn at 10:34 a.m. Motion carried.



## **Land Conservation Committee**

June 8, 2021

Taylor County Courthouse County Board Meeting Room, Medford

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

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

**Members Absent:** Joe Tomandl

**Other Attendees:** Brent Tessmer, County Conservationist; Karyn Eckert, Conservation Assistant; Chris Hamerla and Kendra Kundinger, Golden Sands RC&D; Jason Laumann and Emily Nelson, Northwest Regional Planning Commission.

**Approve Minutes:** Brooks moved to approve the minutes of the April 13, 2021, meeting; seconded by Lemke. Motion carried.

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

**Review and approve 4/7/21-6/1/21 bills and March-April budget analysis.** Brooks moved to approve the bills; seconded by Kasperek. Motion carried.

### **Reports:**

**Wildlife Damage Program** – Zesiger provided a written report of 2021 enrollees to date and on the delisting of wolves which allows trapping and lethal control of wolves preying on livestock.

**Golden Sands RC&D** – Hamerla reported on the AIS program's transition from competitive grants to county allocated funds. A draft agreement has been created and will be on the agenda for the August meeting. Hamerla also shared progress on purple loosestrife biocontrol and curly leaf pondweed on Lake Esadore. He is working with the Richter Lake group on a survey and plans to survey Spirit Lake which was last done in 2015. Tessmer reported a meeting will be planned for landowners interested in the Woods and Wildlife Program to create DMAP cooperatives; an LTE has been hired by Golden Sands to assist with this program.

**Natural Resource Conservation Service** – No report.

**Farm Service Agency** – Kasperek reported a producer cover crop program was introduced as part of Covid relief which pays farmers \$5 per acre for cover crops planted in 2020 and 2021. Producers enrolled in the Dairy Margin Protection Program at the \$7 level or above received payments for March milk. Kasperek said FSA staff is still limited on in-person access they can provide and is working mostly over the phone, email and mail.

**NRCS/County Grazing Program** – Tessmer reported Eckert attended an introductory training webinar in May and will be reaching out to the NRCS grazing specialist to see what the next steps are to become approved to write grazing plans. The LCD has had a few farmers asking about cost-share for fencing which requires a grazing plan.

**Northwest Land Conservation Association, representative** – The next area meeting is scheduled to be held virtually on Thursday, June 10.

**Discuss/take action on 2021 Drinking Water Program rates.** Eckert reported lab fees were increasing by \$5 per test package as of July 1 to \$60 and \$57. The LCD has been charging \$25 per package the last several years during the drinking water program. Eckert passed out some options with the potential budget impact, including leaving it the same, charging \$30 for the first package and \$50 for both, or charging \$30 per package. Lemke moved to charge \$35 for one package and \$50 for both packages, Brooks seconded. Motion carried.

**Discuss/take action on Farmland Preservation Plan.** Laumann and Nelson reported the first draft was completed and sent to committee members to review. Laumann asked committee members to send any edits to Tessmer in the next week or two. The next step is to submit to DATCP which will take about 60 days to review, then the adoption process will begin which is like the comprehensive plan.

### **LCD staffing and program update:**

Brent Tessmer: Tessmer reported he expects Taylor County's nutrient management acres in 2021 to be about the same as 2020. Tessmer was informed of a project at Brandner Dairy for a pipeline from manure pits to a loading area; the LCD will review the plans once they are submitted for permitting. The no-till drills have been on 15 farms in 2021 with 363 total acres, lower than 2020 which Tessmer said could be due to less winterkill in the area. Tessmer replaced the seed drive chains on the older drill as a maintenance project. Tessmer, Eckert and Hamerla dug and potted purple loosestrife rootstock April 15. Beetles have been hard to find this year since the wild purple loosestrife is stunted due to weather. Tessmer treated garlic mustard sites on May 7 and will treat wild parsnip in about two weeks. Buckthorn Bash with Medford fifth graders was held May 13; other conservation agency staff helped the LCD supervise and assist the students in cutting buckthorn. Stream samples were taken May 18-19, including metals samples from the Bend site.

Luke Melotik: Tessmer shared Melotik's report since he was not able to attend. Test pits were done at the Martin farm, which is being permitted by the LCD but is not receiving cost-share. A manure storage facility was closed at the Glick farm as a cost-share project. Another pit closure at the Hargot farm is currently out for bids. Melotik is working with a farmer in Deer Creek on pig manure composting. He reported he has about \$5,000 remaining in bond funding that is not designated, but it could get used if a project goes over budget or a new project comes in. Melotik also reported Cody Overgard has been hired by NRCS and will no longer be working with DATCP projects in late June.

Karyn Eckert: Eckert reported 16,250 seedlings were ordered and distributed to residents in April. This is not quite 4,000 more than 2020, but still below the peak of 22,620 in 2008. This year's sale had a profit of \$4,150.36. Eckert attended the May 28 WLCA youth education committee meeting which reviewed the contests, silent auction, conference and Envirothon. Summer camps were canceled. Eckert passed out the updated youth education program brochure. Eckert presented on tree planting to Rib Lake sixth graders in May along with the Knoll Family which shared a presentation on their maple syrup operation; each student received a sugar maple seedling to plant. Sugar maple seedlings were also distributed to Rib Lake 2<sup>nd</sup> graders, Gilman 2<sup>nd</sup> graders, and Rural Virtual Academy students. The Drinking Water Testing Program is scheduled for Aug. 16-20 with a return day of Aug. 23. Eckert is putting together educational displays for the Taylor County Fair on July 22-25.

**Future Meetings and Events:**

- Next LCC Meeting..... Tuesday, Aug. 10, 9 a.m.
- Northwest Area WLCA Meeting, virtual..... Thursday, June 10, 2 p.m.
- Golden Sands RC&D, virtual or in-person..... Thursday, July 15, 10 a.m.

Motion by Brooks, seconded by Lemke, to adjourn at 2:04 p.m. Motion carried.

## **Land Conservation Committee**

April 13, 2021

Taylor County Courthouse County Board 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.

**Approve Minutes:** Lemke moved to approve the minutes of the February 9, 2021, meeting; seconded by Kasperek. Motion carried.

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

**Review and approve 2/2/21 to 4/6/21 bills and January-March budget analysis.** Brooks moved to approve the bills; seconded by Lemke. Motion carried.

### **Reports:**

**Wildlife Damage Program** – Zesiger provided a written report.

**Golden Sands RC&D** – Tessmer attended the March meeting and reported Golden Sands is planning to hold summer county meetings on the Woods and Wildlife Program to promote and recruit for DMAP cooperatives.

**Natural Resource Conservation Service** – District Conservationist Melissa Knipfel provided a written report.

**Farm Service Agency** – Kasperek reported payments were made to producers enrolled in the dairy margin program. Sign-up for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) opened April 5 for 60 days; this is a new program in addition to previous covid aid programs and for socially disadvantaged producers. Crop reporting will be done by mail and online tools, the same as in 2020.

**NRCS/County Grazing Program** – Tessmer reported he has referred farmers looking for grazing plans to Golden Sands RC&D for now. There are still no dates or details for training for Eckert to become certified to do grazing plans, but she will participate once it becomes available.

**Northwest Land Conservation Association, representative** – Tessmer attended the area meeting held virtually on April 9. The area is working to publish an outreach pamphlet on shoreland stabilization. A grant for printing costs from the DNR fell through, but the area had funds to cover half and is looking to partner with another area to fund the other half. They will also have a PDF and online version available.

### **LCD staffing and program update:**

Brent Tessmer: Tessmer reported he has a few more Nutrient Management Plan checklists to come in yet and has been out collecting soil samples for farmers who need them done for their plans. A manure storage construction permit was issued to Elvin Hoover. The no-till drills have each visited one farm with about 12 more signed up to use the drills so far. Tessmer ordered herbicide for treating invasive species for the Upper Chippewa Partnership as well as a few new sprayers for applying it; our invasive species control grant with the US Forest Service expires at the end of the year. Tessmer has been in contact with Dan Nelson at the Medford Area Middle School to schedule Buckthorn Bash with the fifth graders. Tessmer and Eckert will be digging purple loosestrife roots for the beetle rearing product in the next few days.

Luke Melotik: Melotik reported the farmer will be seeking bids this spring to complete the Feddick project which was extended; he wanted to wait to see if concrete and steel prices would drop before construction. The Hoover manure storage project should be starting construction in early May; Melotik said the project is not receiving cost-share and the landowner is not in a hurry, so it will probably be completed in 2022. SWRM funding is planned to be spent on a manure pit closure, several well closures, a grazing system with access road and fencing. MDV funds are allocated for a fencing project at the Bauer farm. Melotik is also working on designing a barnyard project at the O'Malley farm and will do a site visit soon. Two manure pit closures were carried over from 2020. Future projects are potentially another barnyard project which may qualify for MDV funding and a streambank restoration. Melotik's work on planning for work at the Brecke site is mostly done and he is waiting on more direction from the DNR before moving forward. He will be doing project site visits with Cody Overgard soon.

Karyn Eckert: Eckert reported the Tree Sale is going well with 15,975 trees sold, a large increase over the 12,200 sold in 2020. Less than 1,000 seedlings remain and she will continue to take orders until they are sold out or April 19. Eckert offered the Maple Fest sugar maple seedlings to Taylor County schools and will be taking 65 to two grades in Rib Lake, 25 to a class in Gilman, and Rural Virtual Academy will distribute remaining seedlings to their students. Eckert worked on the Silent Auction during the annual conference which raised \$3,645.50 for WLWCA youth conservation programs. Upcoming programs Eckert will be assisting with include Buckthorn Bash and Clean Sweep. She will also be planning for the Drinking Water Testing Program in August.

**Discuss/take action on the 2022 Staffing Grant and 2021 Annual Work Plan.** Tessmer reviewed the Staffing Grant application and Annual Work Plan with the committee. Tomandl moved to approve and submit the Staffing Grant and Annual Work Plan; Brooks seconded. Motion carried.

**Discuss/take action on 2021 Drinking Water Program rates.** Eckert reported she received word the rates at the Water and Environmental Lab at UW-Stevens Point would be increased as of July 1, however, they have not confirmed how much the increase will be. Brooks moved to table a decision on drinking water program rates until the June meeting when the new rates would be known; seconded by Kasperek. Motion carried.

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

**Future Meetings and Events:**

- Next LCC Meeting ..... Tuesday, June 8, 9 a.m.
- Northwest Area WLCA Meeting ..... Thursday, June 10, time and format TBD
- Golden Sands RC&D, virtual ..... Thursday, May 20, 10 a.m.

Motion by Brooks, seconded by Kasperek, to adjourn at 10:12 a.m. Motion carried.

## **Land Conservation Committee**

February 9, 2021

Taylor County Courthouse County Board 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; Seth Zesiger, USDA-APHIS; Chris Hamerla and Anna Cisar, Golden Sands RC&D; and Jason Laumann, Northwest Regional Planning Commission.

**Approve Minutes:** Tomandl moved to approve the minutes of the December 15, 2020, meeting; seconded by Brooks. Motion carried.

**Approve Agenda:** Kasperek moved to approve the agenda with 9 items; Lemke seconded. Motion carried.

**Review and approve 12/2/20 to 2/1/21 bills and November/December budget analysis.** Tomandl moved to approve the bills; seconded by Brooks. Motion carried.

Tomandl moved to approve the November/December budget analysis; seconded by Kasperek. Motion carried.

### **Reports:**

**Wildlife Damage Program** – Zesiger reported Taylor County had received two Wildlife Damage Claims for bear damage to beehives, honey, and corn silage. After deductibles, the value of the claims was \$6,303.52. Committee members asked if there had been wolf damage reports; Zesiger said there had been two predations in his area with shooting permits issued and traps set to address them.

**Golden Sands RC&D** – Tessmer and Tomandl attended the January 21 meeting of Golden Sands RC&D held virtually and included staff and year-end reports. Tomandl reported members discussed increased interest in tree and shrub seedling sales held by counties. Tessmer reported the Ag and Forestry Committee discussed the Woods and Wildlife program and upcoming virtual landowner meetings. Columbia County has joined the RC&D.

**Update on Lake Monitoring and Protection Network funding program.** Hamerla reported on the new DNR funding program for Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) replacing the current competitive grant system. Taylor County will be allocated \$13,443.63 annually and can use funds internally to accomplish program deliverables or designate an agent to complete them. Hamerla said Golden Sands would like to continue the AIS program in Taylor County as its designated agent. Hamerla said existing counties Golden Sands works in have similar needs and he feels a regional approach is the best opportunity for consistency. Cisar reported they are having similar conversations with all current counties and are developing a draft cooperative agreement for the county to consider at a future meeting. Cisar said they plan to bring the agreement to the committee for discussion in May/June to meet a September pre-application deadline. Hamerla said changes may include less time in the field, more emphasis on education and they will no longer need to document grant match activities.

**Natural Resource Conservation Service** – No report.

**Farm Service Agency** – Kasperek reported on ARC/PLC program enrollment and the CRP sign-up ending February 12. Farmers will now be able to change their ARC/PLC enrollments each year. Staff is working on a new Quality Loss Adjustment Program with a March 1 deadline for the 2018 and 2019 crop years, but are finding many farmers lack records to apply.

**NRCS/County Grazing Program** – Tessmer reported NRCS is planning to have training for certification to write grazing plans and Eckert plans to participate. No dates or details for the training have been announced.

**Northwest Land Conservation Association, representative** – Tessmer reported the speaking contest was held virtually on January 20. Poster judging was also held virtually with ballots emailed to members. There were fewer participants in both contests this year due to Covid-19 and changes in schools.

**Discuss goals and objectives of Taylor County Farmland Preservation Plan.** Laumann shared samples of FPP goals and objectives from Bayfield and Iron County and asked the committee preferred to draft their own or have NWRPC draft them for the committee to review and discuss. Tomandl moved to have NWRPC draft the goals and objects and have the committee review them; seconded by Kasperek. Motion carried.

#### **LCD staffing and program update:**

Brent Tessmer: Tessmer reported three farmers attended the nutrient management training course in Medford. Class sizes in Wausau and Spencer were about half the size of past years. Tessmer submitted the final reports for reimbursement on the Nutrient Management Farmer Education Program. Tessmer attended the virtual CAFO update meetings which featured several farmers talking about efforts to divert clean water from manure storage and building separate storage facilities for feed leachate. Other speakers talked about treating manure with reverse osmosis. Tessmer applied for the 2021 permit for purple loosestrife biocontrol by rearing beetles. Tessmer reviewed data from the 2020 stream sampling program with 35 testing sites throughout the county.

Luke Melotik: Melotik reported he received final approval for closing out the Bauer project and would be submitting the invoice for reimbursement later this week. He plans to speak with the Feddick farm owner soon to make a timeline to complete the project there that was delayed. Payments were made for the last of the 2019 carryover projects for Fettes and Freudenthal. Money was carried over from 2020 for two manure pit closures. For the 2021 funding, potential projects include three well closures; fencing, lanes and water lines for a grazing system; and a farm that would like to install barnyards. Melotik had been in contact with the Village of Rib Lake and the DNR about a possible streambank restoration, but there were concerns the work would resuspend contaminants; the site was forwarded to the EPA for testing to decide how to proceed. Melotik completed plans for a storage facility were completed and forwarded to DATCP for review. Melotik is working with a farmer on a potential manure pit project; test pits and planning will need to be done in 2021 with construction planned for 2022.

Karyn Eckert: Eckert reported 133 orders for 14,010 seedlings had been received so for in the 2020-2021 tree and shrub sale. About 1,815 seedlings are remaining. With Maple Fest



canceled, Eckert asked what committee members would like to see done with the 500 seedlings the department planned to donate to the event. Options include offering them to schools, selling them in the regular sale or canceling the order. Committee members asked Eckert to offer them to schools, either for distribution to students or planting on school property. Pick-up dates are tentatively April 22-23, weather dependent. The county did not receive any poster or speaking entries. The LCD will check with Medford Middle School to see if Buckthorn Bash would be an option this year. Eckert attended the virtual Youth Education Committee meeting and learned the Sand Lake Conservation Camp for grade 6-8 is canceled and the high school camp is pending but is likely to be canceled as well. Envirothon will be a virtual contest for 2021. Eckert will participate in training to become certified to write grazing plans once the training is offered.

**Future Meetings and Events:**

- Next LCC Meeting.....Tuesday, April 13, 9 a.m.
- WI Land+Water Annual Conference, virtual ..... Tuesday, March 2-Friday, March 5
- Golden Sands RC&D, virtual ..... Thursday, March 18, 10 a.m.

Motion by Kasperek, seconded by Lemke, to adjourn at 10:42 a.m. Motion carried.