

Land Conservation Committee

February 8, 2022

County-USDA Service Center Meeting Room, Medford, 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 Kasperek, Joe Tomandl

Members Absent: None

Other Attendees: Brent Tessmer, County Conservationist; Karyn Eckert, Conservation Assistant; Kelvin Martin; Emily Gojmerac, The Star News.

Approve Minutes: Tomandl moved to approve the minutes of the December 14, 2021, meeting; seconded by Brooks. Motion carried.

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

Review and approve 12/7/21-2/1/22 bills and preliminary 2021 budget analysis. Brooks moved to approve the bills; seconded by Kasperek. Motion carried.

Reports:

Wildlife Damage Program – Seth Zesiger, USDA-APHIS, emailed an update that he completed 2021 crop damage claims and sent them out for producer review and signatures. He is also conducting wolf tracking surveys for the DNR.

Golden Sands RC&D – Tomandl and Tessmer attended the January meeting of Golden Sands RC&D held virtually. Golden Sands is planning a 50th anniversary celebration at a park in the Stevens Point area. The group sold \$19,000 of tree shelters in its 2021 sale. Tessmer will be meeting with AIS coordinator Chris Hamerla to discuss required goals and additional services for Taylor County.

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

Farm Service Agency – Kasperek reported no payments were issued last month for the dairy margin program. CRP sign-ups are being accepted for grassland CRP. Crystal Romanowski is now serving on the FSA committee and one seat remains open.

NRCS/County Grazing Program – No report.

Northwest Land Conservation Association, representative – A meeting was held January 28 in Hayward with a virtual option; Eckert attended virtually. The group approved the 2022 budget and coordinator MOU. Divya Eckert's poster placed second in the K-1 age group. The next meeting is to be announced.

Discuss/take action on state Land and Water Conservation Board ballot. Each county is allowed one ballot for the Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Board. Tessmer asked for the committee's input on which three candidates Taylor County should cast its ballot for. After discussion, committee members recommended Monte Osterman, Rebecca Clarke and Russell Rindsig. Tessmer will cast the final ballot for the county.

Discuss/take action on wetland setback variance for Kelvin Martin waste storage permit. Martin was present to request the variance. The proposed storage facility is 240 feet from a wetland; Taylor County's ordinance requires a 300-foot setback. If the facility was relocated to meet the setback, the scrape lane would double in length and result in more rainwater flowing into the pit. Martin and the project engineers believe the proposed site is the best location and it does meet the requirements for the flood plain and groundwater. Motion by Tomandl to approve the wetland setback variance for the Kelvin Martin waste storage permit; Brooks seconded. Motion carried.

LCD staffing and program update:

Brent Tessmer: Tessmer reported there was higher attendance at the Nutrient Management Farmer Education program in Medford with five Taylor County farms represented. Tessmer is working with farmers to complete their NMP checklists. The UW Soil Lab moved from Marshfield to Madison. SnapPlus received a major overhaul and parts are being released to test this year with the new release coming next year. It will be web-based and have a desktop option. Tessmer reported the new owner of the Kreklau farm in Deer Creek asked for assistance with a milkhouse waste transfer. Blasel Farms near Stetsonville is working with NRCS on a feed pad and leachate system; the LCD will likely provide NMP cost-share and MDV cost-share. Tessmer presented results from the 2021 stream monitoring program which included testing for phosphorus, oxygen, conductivity, and temperature. Tessmer reported flow was mostly normal to low, although August has higher flow. Results were similar to past years. Tessmer observe low flows, sediment and runoff in the Eau Pleine; a group based in Marathon County is promoting interseeding of corn silage ground to address some of the issues.

Karyn Eckert: Eckert reported we had five posters submitted for the county poster contest in two age categories. The winners will receive Culver's gift cards and certificates. Eckert gave presentations on "Fish Hotels" for Gilman students in grades 1-6 at the Perkinstown Winter Sports Area Feb. 1-2. The tree sale is starting to wind down and the pick-up date will be set once the nurseries begin lifting seedlings in late March or early April. Extra seedlings and free Sugar Maple seedlings will be available at our Maple Fest booth on April 30. Eckert is helping with planning of the middle school conservation camp at Upham Woods, June 15-18; students entering grades 6-8 are eligible to attend. A high school camp is also being planned for the following week; this is the first time WLWCA has held the camps since 2019.

Future Meetings and Events:

- a. Next LCC Meeting - Tuesday, April 12, 9 a.m.
- b. Golden Sands RC&D, location TBD - Thursday, March 17, 10 a.m.
- c. Wisconsin Land+Water Annual Conference, Wisconsin Dells - March 2-4, 2022

Motion by Lemke, seconded by Kasperek, to adjourn at 10:02 a.m. Motion carried.