

**WAUPACA COUNTY
LAND & WATER CONSERVATION COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

Nov. 2, 2015
Courthouse, Waupaca

Chair Federwitz called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

Present: Don Peterson, Bob Ellis, Dick Rohan, Walter Strebe, DuWayne Federwitz, Pat Craig, and Lee Much.

Also Present: Brian Haase, Roger Holman, Lisa Neuenfeldt, Dave Heideman, Levi Campion, and Karen Sakata.

Federwitz gave the open meeting statement.

Motion by Craig, seconded by Ellis to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

Motion by Ellis, seconded by Peterson to approve the Oct. 5, 2015 minutes with the correction of the time for the Nov. 2, 2015 meeting. Motion carried.

Federwitz opened the meeting for public comment. There was none.

Neuenfeldt reported that NRCS has started making cost share payments again. Payments have been processed for a number of recently installed EQIP practices (pollinator habitat, livestock pipelines, grazing, cover crops, etc). There are a few large projects that have been finished, but payment cannot be processed until the “as-built” plan is completed & submitted to NRCS. Waupaca has 49 active Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) contracts. We have begun the process of checking land control and practice documentation to prepare for payments. This program is now the largest conservation program in the nation (70 million acres enrolled), but could use some improvements, according to a national team that’s been studying it. The NRCS chief announced that staff will be receiving training on the re-vamped program beginning in December. Still no word on FY16 EQIP funding yet. We are continuing the planning and design process for “medium” screened applications, in preparation for funding either this year or next year.

Heideman reported that this past year FSA implemented the ARC & PLC (crops program) as part of the 2014 Farm Bill. First landowners were given an opportunity to update yields and reallocate crop bases. Then the farm operator elected either the ARC or PLC program. Finally we had the enrollment for the 2014 and 2015 crop years. Sign-up for 2016 MPP (dairy program) will end November 20. The deadline for fall crop reporting is November 16. There will be a General CRP sign-up from December 1 to February 26. Whole fields are eligible to be offered during this sign-up. Fields must have an eligible cropping history from 2008 to 2013. NRCS is assisting by looking at the fields now to determine compliance. Selection will be based on the Environmental Benefit Index of the offered area.

Sakata, Golden Sands RC&D administrative coordinator, provided the Committee with an overview of the 5th Grade Conservation Field Day held on Oct. 7 at Hartman Creek State Park. There were 385 students from 6 school systems participating in the field day which had 19 stations on various conservation topics. Sakata reported on the terrestrial invasive species program and other Golden Sands RC&D programs.

Federwitz thanked all for their reports.

The Committee discussed the 2016 budget process including the vote on the 1.25% increase to the County step program for employee advancement. Federwitz stated the issue is being addressed by the Human Resource Committee.

Haase presented the following LWRM contracts for Dave Heideman, Gary Schoen and Adam Spierings for approval by the Committee.

Motion by Craig, seconded by Peterson to approve the Dave Heideman, Gary Schoen and Adam Spierings LWRM contracts. Motion carried.

Haase reported that staff is prioritizing construction as-built reports for reimbursement. Haase also reported working with the City of Waupaca on nitrate issues in their wellhead protection area in the Town of Lind. This came about through WI Land & Water assisting the WI DNR Groundwater section on work it is doing to re-map groundwater areas in municipalities around the state that have high nitrate issues. The City of Waupaca has a new public works director that is trying to revitalize efforts in the wellhead area due to rising nitrate levels in city wells over the past decade. Haase also summarized his Oct. 28th county tour with regional DNR runoff management section staff to DNR funded projects or NOD funded projects within the county. Sites visited were Manske's, Hoewisch's, Gonzalez's, Ferg's White Clover Dairy, Lashua Farms, LLC, Mike Schultz and Ken Yaeger. The inspection tour happened on a rainy day and led to some revealing issues on the NOD project farms. In general, the TRM grant sites were functioning well. Haase will be following up with DNR.

Holman stated that a strategic planning process is being developed to look at the Dept. of Environmental Resource Management (DERM). The process will involve the Committee, Chair, and staff. The goal is to provide direction to the future of all the departments covered under DERM.

Holman reported the Management Team is working on evaluations, 2016 budget, and leadership training.

The next meeting was set for Dec. 7 at 9:00 a.m.

Motion by Peterson, seconded by Craig to adjourn. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 noon.

Submitted by,

Roger G. Holman
Recording Secretary