

Extension/Land Conservation Committee
Tuesday, July 11, 2023, 8:30 A.M.
Barron County Government Center
Room 2151
335 East Monroe Avenue, Barron, WI

Agenda

1. Call to Order
2. Acknowledgement of Public Posting Requirements
3. Public comment
4. Approval of Agenda
 - Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting – 7/28/22
 - Edit List
 - Announcements –
5. Ag Land Ownership by Foreign Owned But U. S. Registered Corporations – discussion item
6. Well Abandonment policy – action item
7. State Staff & Support Funding – discussion item
8. Land & Water Resource Mgt. Plan: 5 Year Review – discussion item
9. Summer Tour Review – discussion item
10. Groundwater Testing – update
11. Staff Reports – NRCS, FSA, SWCD, and UWEX (10 minutes) information only
 - Executive Committee Report
 - Fair Board Report
12. Set date for the next meeting (action required)
13. Adjourn

***If you cannot make the meeting, PLEASE call the SWCD at 715-537-6315.

(All times are estimated)

ADA Statement for Agenda

Any person who has a qualifying disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act and requires the meeting or materials at the meeting to be in an accessible format must contact the County Clerk's office at 715-537-6200 at least 24 hours prior to the meeting so that arrangements may be made to accommodate your request.

cc: Cook, Gores, Langman, Kusilek, McRoberts, G. Nelson, Huth, Okey, County Clerk, County Administrator, Webmaster, Public postings

EXTENSION-LCC COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, June 6, 2023, 8:30 a.m.

Room 2151

Members present: Kirsten Huth, Jerry McRoberts, Jim Gores, Randy Cook, Fran Langman and Audrey Kusilek. Staff present: Tyler Gruetzmacher, Jeff French, Lori Baltrusis, Sara Waldron, Sarah MacDonald and Kim Collins.

Absent: Gary Nelson.

Cook called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. and Collins confirmed proper posting of the meeting. No public comment.

Motion: (Langman/McRoberts) to approve the agenda; carried. **Motion: (Kusilek/McRoberts)** to approve the minutes of March 7, 2023 meeting; carried. No questions on edit lists and no announcements.

Item #5. French and Baltrusis discussed the support position for Extension, currently 32 hours per week, and whether there is a need to fill the position.

Item #6. Gruetzmacher discussed the void for soil sample shipping as Extension is discontinuing this service for local landowners. After committee discussion, committee consensus was SWCD will prepare a soil sampling packet for landowners/farmers to submit their own samples.

Item #7. SWRM Staffing Grant – Gruetzmacher and Cook presented information regarding the funding issues from DATCP. Gruetzmacher also mentioned that NRCS may have staff funding available; he will research this for a future meeting.

Item #8. Gruetzmacher provided a brief overview of the 2023 West Central Summer Tour to be hosted by BC SWCD and explained the registration process.

Item #9. Gruetzmacher gave a slide show of the Demo Farm activities.

Item #10. Gruetzmacher provided an overview of the Groundwater Study sampling thus far.

Item #11. Staff Reports –

NRCS – No NRCS report.

FSA – MacDonald provided an overview of FSA program activities.

SWCD – Gruetzmacher provided a slide show of conservation projects.

UWEX – Baltrusis discussed the Parenting Forever program and stated Becky Brathal will be our new Crops/Soils Educator.

Executive Committee – French stated the committee would be reviewing the Extension position noted above and transfer fee retention.

Fair Board – No report but stated they are constructing the new office.

After discussion, the next meeting is set for July 11, 2023 at 8:30 a.m.

Future agenda items: *NRCS Funding*

Motion: (Gores/McRoberts) to adjourn; meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 9:43 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Russell-Collins
Administrative Secretary, Land Services

Minutes are not official until approved by the Extension/LCC Committee at the next meeting.

COUNTY OF BARRON

Payment Request Edit
On-Line Vouchers
LAND SERVICES DEPT

Vendor No/Name	Line#	voucher#	Account Desc	Date	Description	Amount
6645 SWANT GRABER MOTORS	1	C0084766	VEHICLE EXPENSE-LAND SERVICES	06/08/23	LS-OIL CHANGE/'16 CHEVY SILVERA	21.39
922 WIEHES HARDWARE HANK	1	C0084767	OFFICE SUPPLIES	06/08/23	LS-MARKING FLAGS/ALL DIVISIONS	17.97
258741 KOBUSSEN BUSES LTD	1	C0084768	EDUCATIONAL	06/08/23	SWCD-SUMMER TOUR/TRIP #233142	902.30
744 CHETEK ALERT INC	1	C0084769	PUBLICATIONS	06/08/23	SWCD-STOUT NOTICE/ONE WEEK	14.79
286389 SYNERGY COOPERATIVE	1	C0084770	OFFICE SUPPLIES	06/08/23	SWCD-LIME/DEMO FARM	622.72
75965 UW SOIL TESTING LAB	1	C0084771	OFFICE SUPPLIES	06/08/23	SWCD-SOIL TEST/DEMO FARM	15.00
274259 APG MEDIA OF WISCONSIN LLC	1	C0084772	PUBLICATIONS	06/08/23	ZA-MAYO/STAFF PUBLIC NOTICE	58.43
1686 HALCO PRESS	1	C0084773	PUBLICATIONS	06/08/23	ZA-PUB NOTICE/LUO	27.40
289493 BUREAU OF CORRECTIONAL ENTERPRISE	1	C0084774	ADDRESS SIGNING	06/08/23	ZA-RURAL ADDRESS SIGNS	380.00
3565 SAFETY AND BUILDINGS DIVISION	1	C0084775	DUE TO STATE - SANITATION FEES	06/08/23	ZA-STATE SAN FEES/MAY 2023	2,800.00
Totals:						4,860.00

MANUAL VOUCHERS/JOURNAL ENTRIES

DEPT	NAME	ACCOUNT	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
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Dept Approval

Admin Approval

MANUAL VOUCHERS TOTAL: \$0.00

GRAND TOTAL: \$4,860.00

Land Services Total: \$39.36
 Land Information Total: \$0.00
 Soil & Water Conservation Total: \$1,554.81
 Zoning Administration Total: \$3,265.83

Why Should I Properly Abandon My Old Well?

Old wells that are left open and/or unused are at risk of having contaminants enter into them and into the groundwater. Old drilled wells can develop cracks in the steel casing that can let contaminants through. Old dug wells were often lined with brick or field stone which does not provide a good barrier to prevent contaminants from reaching groundwater. Once contaminants reach the groundwater, it is difficult, if not impossible to remove them. Often the contamination will migrate to other wells drawing water from that aquifer. Old and unused wells may also pose a safety hazard. Old dug wells can be 6 feet across and 50 feet deep or deeper. Serious injury or worse could result if a person or animal fell into an old well.

How Do I Get Started?

The following describes the steps landowners must follow in order to receive cost sharing for a well abandonment project under this program.

- 1) The well owner applies for cost sharing from Barron County SWCD
- 2) The well owner requests a cost estimate for the well abandonment project from a Licensed Well Driller or pump installer (service provider). *NOTE: If the first estimate exceeds \$500.00, a second estimate is required.*
- 3) A copy of the cost estimate is submitted to the Barron County SWCD for review. The SWCD reviews the project and determines eligibility for cost sharing.
- 4) If the project is eligible for cost sharing, a "Cost Share Agreement" (CSA) must be signed by all necessary parties and approved before any work is done on the well abandonment project. Well owners that do not have a signed and approved CSA prior to beginning their project will be denied cost sharing.
- 5) Once the project is completed, the well owner pays the service provider in full and requests a signed and dated receipt indicating the amount paid or the invoice marked "Paid in Full" signed and dated. The service provider must also properly complete and sign a WDNR Well Abandonment Form 3300-005 and give a copy to the well owner.
- 6) The well owner submits these documents to the LWCD for review and reimbursement in accordance with the CSA.

* What is Cost Sharing?

Cost Sharing is financial assistance to pay for a portion of the project. The Barron County Soil and Water Conservation Department has state funding used for cost sharing the installation of conservation practices, such as well abandonment projects.

Well abandonment projects will be ranked as a high or low resource concern and cost-shared as follows:

- High resource concern is eligible for 70% cost-sharing up to a maximum of \$1000.
 - Dug wells
 - Wells prone to flooding
- Low resource concern is eligible for 50% cost-sharing up to a maximum of \$500.
- Non high resource wells being abandoned as part of the process of drilling a new well are not eligible for cost sharing.

A well located in an area with a low potential to allow pollutant loading into the groundwater as determined by the SWCD shall be deemed a low resource concern well.

Well abandonment projects need to be completed by a licensed well driller or pump installer to be eligible for cost sharing."

Greetings conservationists,

As discussed in last month's Capitol Update, on May 18, the Legislature's Joint Committee on Finance (JFC) voted 11-4 along party lines on to approve \$10,962,300 for county conservation staffing in 2024, and \$11,214,200 in 2025. In spite of WI Land+Water's best efforts to get funding restored following JFC's vote, we do not anticipate that the Legislature will restore funding before the end of the budget process. If funding is not restored and remains at the levels approved by JFC, **this would constitute a statewide cut to county conservation departments of \$317,700 in 2024 and \$65,800 in 2025 from current 2023 funding levels of \$11,280,000.**

To better understand and attempt to correct the situation, WI Land+Water has been in frequent communication over the past month with multiple legislative offices from both parties (specifically Rep. Kurtz, Rep. Novak, and Sen. Ballweg), as well as staff and leaders from the Dept. of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP), the Dept. of Administration (DOA), and the Legislative Fiscal Bureau (LFB).

Our best understanding of the situation is that when LFB drafted Alternative 3b of [Budget Paper #185](#) (the alternative that JFC ultimately selected), LFB made a significant decision that undervalued current (2023) funding levels, which in turn undervalued proposed 2024 and 2025 funding levels.

Specifically, LFB departed from the concept of a minimum "base" \$75,000 allocation being awarded by DATCP to each county for its first county conservation department position, if its first position request falls below \$75,000. LFB removed funding provided to nine counties in 2023 in support of a base allocation in its assessment of current statewide 2023 funding levels. Since 2013, DATCP has awarded the base allocation to counties to counties that qualify for it, per its authority in ATCP 50.32(5)(a). The goal of the base allocation is to distribute funds more equitably across the state, and to provide the best opportunity for all counties to do meaningful conservation work.

Moving away from a base allocation system is a significant change, and one which counties, DATCP, and WI Land+Water should have been consulted on. To our knowledge, none of these entities were consulted.

In addition to not incorporating base allocation funding, Alternative 3b does not apply an inflationary increase from current 2023 funding levels to 2024, but it does apply a 2.3% increase from 2024 to 2025. It is unclear why this inconsistency between the two years of the biennium exists. This is a departure from past

budgets, which applied inflationary increases year-to-year, to match inflationary increases on the county level.

The Legislature's work on the budget is in the final stretch. We expect the full Senate to take up the budget this Wednesday, and the full Assembly to take it up Thursday. After that, Gov. Evers will determine whether he approves it, vetoes part of it, or vetoes the entire budget. He has previously expressed concern over any cuts to UW System funding and the structure of a statewide tax cut, both of which JFC has proposed.

Based on everything we know at this point, WI Land+Water is not optimistic that funding for county conservation departments will be restored over the next 48 hours, but would not discourage county members from contacting their legislators if they are compelled to do so. Legislators' contact information can be found [here](#).

Whatever the outcome to county conservation department funding for 2024-25, WI Land+Water will continue to work with legislators, partners, and agencies, to ensure our program is understood and supported, and that state budget priorities reflect that support.

Thank you,

Matt Krueger,
Executive Director



Land and Water Conservation Board
County Land and Water Resource Management Plan
Five Year Review of LWRM Plans

County:

Implementation Covering Past Five Years and Future Directions

Answer these four questions in writing (not to exceed 4 pages)

1. Provide a representative number of accomplishments that can be directly traced to activities identified in multiple work plans. For each accomplishment, explain how the planning process helped the county achieve its outcome, including planning adjustments that helped better target county activities.
2. Identify any areas where the county was unable to make desired progress in implementing activities identified in multiple work plans. For each area identified, explain the work plan adjustments that were made to refocus planned activities. If no areas are identified, explain how the county was able to make progress in all the areas planned.
3. Describe how the county's work plans implement its priority farm strategy and the effectiveness of county actions implementing agricultural performance standards and conservation practices on farms. In particular, the county should describe outreach, farm inventories, and additional funds that were pursued to implement its strategy.
4. Provide representative examples that show changes in direction for work planning in the upcoming five years, with specific examples provided showing adjustments in planned activities in the county's most recent work plan.

Annual Work Plans

Attach both of the following:

- a. The most current annual work prepared by the county.

- b. The work plan for the previous year that includes a column that identifies the progress in implementing the planned activities for that year.

Board Review Process

The goal of the review is not to fail counties. The board recognizes the dynamic nature of the planning process. Board members are interested in how counties tackle priorities over time and how they respond to changing conditions in pursuing their priorities. The board will evaluate a county's planning and implementation based on how well the county balances and prioritizes the following: agricultural performance standards, other state priorities (impaired waters, FPP checks), and local priorities. When needed, the Board will provide constructive support to counties to improve the quality of their planning. Counties have the option to prepare a brief presentation to illustrate their successes and future priorities.

Land Conservation Committee Notification

The LCC was provided a completed copy of these questions (including attachments) on:

Signature of Authorized Representative: _____ **Date:** _____
(e.g. County Conservationist, LCC chair)

Send completed questionnaire and attachments to:
Lisa.Trumble@wi.gov



Wisconsin Land+Water Conservation Association

121 S. Pinckney Street, Suite 420 · Madison, Wisconsin 53703
(608) 441-2677 · Fax: (608) 441-2676 · wisconsinlandwater.org

County Conservation Meeting Agenda

Thursday, July 13, 2023

11:30 am – 12:45 pm Registration open
South Commons

Noon – 12:45 pm Lunch
Expo 1

12:45 – 12:55 pm **Welcome**
Expo 2 *Bob Micheel, Monroe Co. Land Conservation Dept. Director, WI Land+Water Board of Directors President*

12:55 – 1:15 pm **State Budget Debrief, Legislative Update**
Expo 2 *Matt Krueger, WI Land+Water Executive Director*

1:15 – 2:30 pm **Solar Farms and Conservation**
Expo 2 *Jake Curtis, Attolles Law Attorney*
Sam Dunaiki, RENEW Wisconsin Executive Director
Kurt Calkins, Columbia Co. Land and Water Conservation Dept./Planning and Zoning Dept. Director

2:30 – 2:45 pm **Break**

2:45 – 5:00 pm **Conservation Roundtable Discussions**
Expo 1, Expo 2, *Attendees will participate in facilitated, small-group discussions to develop skills and Spruce/Sands, Stonefield inform about important conservation topics (30 min. each). Topics:*

- Nonpoint Source Program Outreach and Communications
- Solar Farms and Conservation
- DNR Wetlands and Waterways Bureau Introductions and Rule Revisions
- Communications Skills & Strategies to Improve Conservation Outcomes

5:00 pm **Social Hour**
East Commons

Dinner on your own

Friday, July 14, 2023

7:00 – 8:00 am Expo 1	Breakfast
8:00 – 8:30 am Expo 2	Selected WI Land+Water Committee Highlights <i>Technical Comm. – Matt Hanewall, La Crosse Co. Land Conservation Dept Director</i> <i>Public Outreach Comm. – Katie Abbott, Iowa Co. Conservationist</i>
8:30 – 9:00 am	NRCS Introductions and Input on Inflation Reduction Act Funding <i>Tyrone Larson, NRCS Wisconsin State Conservationist</i>
9:00 – 9:30 am	Sackett vs. EPA Decision and Implications for Wisconsin <i>Dan Helsel, DNR Waterways and Wetlands Bureau Director</i>
9:30 – 9:40 am East Commons	Break
9:40 – 11:30 am Expo 2	Conservation Updates – Speed Round! <i>Each county has an opportunity to provide an important update from their county in LESS THAN 2 MINUTES. What one thing do we absolutely need to know?</i>
11:30 am – noon Expo 2	Crowdsourcing Conservation <i>What conservation questions or challenges would you like input from your peers on? We'll discuss questions submitted during registration, and taken from the floor.</i>
Noon – 12:45 pm Expo 1	Lunch