Extension/Land Conservation Committee Agenda

Tuesday, July 7th, 2026- 10:30 A.M.

Barron County Government Center | Room 2106

335 E. Monroe Avenue- Barron, WI 54812

1. Call to Order
2. Acknowledgement of Public Posting Requirements
3. Public comment
4. Approval of Agenda
   - -Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting – 6/2/26
   - -Edit List- July
   - -Announcements –New Land Services Zoning Administrator
5. Presentation by Natasha Ward-True Wellness
6. Land Conservation Committee Chapter 92 presentation of the rules governing land conservation
   - Informational video-9 minutes
   - Review training from June 10th. -discussion
7. LCC Representative to the Wisconsin Land + Water Board of Directors.-discussion
8. NR 151 Survey update - discussion
9. West Central Clark County tour- Recap. –discussion.
10. Ground Water Plan: one of 3 options as presented from previous meeting and included in the packet – action item
11. Farmland Preservation review with DATCP. –discussion
12. Certificate of Compliance- action item
    - Sarah A. York
13. Staff Reports – UWEX, NRCS, FSA, and SWCD (10 minutes) information only
    - Executive Committee Report
    - Fair Board Report
14. Set date for the next meeting – August 4, 2026
15. Adjourn

PLEASE CALL 715-537-6315 IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND.

Any person with 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 can be made to accommodate your request.

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

EXTENSION-LCC COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, June 2, 10:30 a.m.
Room 2151
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Members present: Randy Cook, Fran Langman, Gary Nelson and Audrey Kusilek and Carsten Ellison. Staff present: Justin Everson, Pat Brown, Dave Gifford, Becky Melton, Jeff French, Lori Baltrusis, Sara McDonald and Bronson Thalacker.
Absent: Gores and Kirsten Huth
Others present: None

Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 10:30 a.m. by Administrator French. Melton confirmed proper posting of the meeting.

Item #3 Elections of Officers:

a. Chair: **Motion:** (Langman/Kusilek) to nominate by unanimous white ballot for Supervisor Randy Cook to remain as Chair and Executive Committee Representative and Supervisor Jim Gores to remain as Vice Chair. Discussion. Carried.
b. Vice Chair: Motion: No motion needed due to previous action.
c. Executive Committee Representative: Motion: No motion needed due to previous action.

Item #4 Public Comment: Chair Cook encouraged support and attendance of upcoming Dairy Breakfast.

Item #5 **Motion: (Kusilek/Nelson)** to approve the agenda; carried. **Motion: (Langman/Kusilek)** to approve the minutes of 04/07/2026 meeting; carried.
Announcements: Melton reviewed the upcoming Wisconsin Land + Water LCC Training day in Hayward on June 10th and the West Central Tour on June 24th in Clark County, registration is required.

Item #6 Virtual Meeting Attendance: Administrator French reviewed the County Boards stance on virtual attendance of committee meetings. Discussion. **Motion: (Kusilek/Nelson)** to approve that virtual attendance will be allowed as long as it is not abused; carried.

Item # 7 UWSP Groundwater Center Proposal Discussion: Gifford reviewed the 3 drafted proposals of ground water studies in Barron County. Discussion and questions from committee members were answered by staff members, Everson, Thalacker, French and Gifford.

Item # 8 Certificate of Compliance for Carol Ann Olson was presented for approval. **Motion: (Kusilek/Nelson)** to approve the certificate; carried.

Item #9 Staff Reports

UWEX – Baltrusis gave an update on staffing, campus and programming.
FSA –MacDonald provided an update and overview on several programs.
Executive Committee – French discussed upcoming agenda.
Fair Board – French had no update at this time.

Next meeting date: July 7, 2026 at 10:30 a.m.

Future agenda items: *Ground Water Study for budget*.

Motion: Unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting at 11:19a.m.; carried.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Becky Melton, Administrative Secretary, Land Services

June Edits

6/4/2026	Randy Cook	C0095889	Cost Share-waterway	SWCD Cost Share	$8,351.03
6/4/2026	Deyong Revocable Trust	C0095888	Cover Crop Cost Share	SWCD- Cover crop cost share	$1,000.00
6/4/2026	Hey Everything	C0095883	Supplies for Purple Loos Strife	SWCD Purple Loose Strife	$42.28
6/10/2026	Clark County	C0096025	Tour Registration	SW- Summer Tour | 6 members going	$150.00
6/25/2026	Craig & Lori Hamernik	C0096148	Conservation Payments	SWRM Grant- Grass waterway	$4,700.33
6/25/2026	Gordon Scheil	C0096149	Conservation Payments	SWRM Grant- Grass waterway	$1,884.58
					$16,128.22

Barron County Trend Monitoring Options to continue the work from our previous study.

Background

A Barron County 2022-2023 well water quality inventory (738 samples) showed that 10% of private wells exceeded the 10 mg/L nitrate-nitrogen drinking water standard. This is greater than the statewide average of 7.3% (DATCP, 2023). Furthermore, results indicated that the Towns of Clinton, Barron, Stanley, Maple Grove, Prairie Lake, Chetek, and Dovre had mean nitrate-nitrogen concentrations greater than 5 mg/L (ppm) in their private well water. While the health standard for nitrate-nitrogen is 10 mg/L, nitrate-nitrogen concentrations above 5 mg/L in private wells indicate contamination from external sources. Elevated nitrate levels generally occur in areas of agricultural activity or areas of dense rural development (i.e. small lot sizes with septic systems, lawn fertilizers, etc.).

Recommendations

- Focus testing efforts on townships with prior data indicating elevated nitrate levels (>5 mg/L nitrate-nitrogen).
- Track groundwater quality over time via nitrate-nitrogen and chloride testing. Nitrate and chloride tests provide valuable information on land use impacts and will help researchers identify wells where nitrate and/or chloride are increasing or decreasing.
    - Additional parameters, such as pH, conductivity, alkalinity, and hardness allow us to better understand water quality changes in relationship to factors such as weather/climate. These additional parameters also add confidence to results and provide important metrics about other water quality characteristics.
- By using historical data to focus testing efforts to selected areas instead of another county-wide study, the focus can be on higher sample counts per township.

Budget scenarios

The following example budgets reflect the first year in a 5-year testing program and do not reflect annual salary or inflation cost increases.

1. ~$20,000/yr: Nitrate-nitrogen, chloride, pH, alkalinity, total hardness, conductivity
    a. Includes general groundwater chemistry and geologic influences.
    b. Most comprehensive, with moderate spatial coverage and informative groundwater chemistry panel.
    c. ~29 samples/township in year one (208 total)

Estimated costs FY27

Direct costs	***Unit cost***	***Units***	***Subtotal***
PERSONNEL			
Salary – Abby Johnson, Data Scientist, @ $66219.00 base salary (0.03 FTE) time to support recruitment/data management/analysis	$2,046.00	1	$2,046.00
Fringe	$908.00	1	$908.00
Total personnel			**$2,954.00**
ANALYTICAL COSTS			
HOP-BAC @ 40% discount	$40.80	208	$8,486.40
Total analytical			**$8,486.40**
MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES			
Packaging and shipping to participants	$5.50	208	$1,144.00
Return shipping to lab	$10.00	208	$2,080.00
Recruitment letters, postage, and return postcards	$1.30	208	$270.40
Total materials and supplies			**$3,494.40**
Total direct costs			**$14,934.80**
Indirect costs			
UWSP indirect rate (~34%)	34%	1	**$5,077.83**
Total Project Cost (Direct + Indirect)			**$20,012.63**

2. ~$20,000/yr: Nitrate-nitrogen and chloride only
    a. Does not include general groundwater chemistry and geologic influences.
    b. Larger spatial coverage, though less informative on overall groundwater quality.
    c. ~35 samples/township in year one (247 total)

Estimated costs FY27

Direct costs	***Unit cost***	***Units***	***Subtotal***
PERSONNEL			
Salary – Abby Johnson, Data Scientist, @ $66219.00 base salary (0.03 FTE) time to support recruitment/data management/analysis	$2,046.00	1	$2,046.00
Fringe	$908.00	1	$908.00
Total personnel			**$2,954.00**
ANALYTICAL COSTS			
NO3/Cl; 40% discount	$31.80	247	$7,854.60
Total analytical			**$7,854.60**
MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES			
Packaging and shipping to participants	$5.50	247	$1,358.50
Return shipping to lab	$10.00	247	$2,470.00
Recruitment letters, postage, and return postcards	$1.30	247	$321.10
Total materials and supplies			**$4,149.60**
Total direct costs			**$14,958.20**
Indirect costs			
UWSP indirect rate (~34%)	34%	1	**$5,085.79**
Total Project Cost (Direct + Indirect)			**$20,043.99**

3. ~$10,000/yr: Nitrate-nitrogen, chloride, pH, alkalinity, total hardness, conductivity
    a. Includes general groundwater chemistry and geologic influences.
    b. Less spatial coverage, but lower cost.
    c. ~11 samples/township in year one (80 total)

Estimated costs FY27

Direct costs	***Unit cost***	***Units***	***Subtotal***
PERSONNEL			
Salary – Abby Johnson, Data Scientist, @ $66219.00 base salary (0.03 FTE) time to support recruitment/data management/analysis	$2,046.00	1	$2,046.00
Fringe	$908.00	1	$908.00
Total personnel			**$2,954.00**
ANALYTICAL COSTS			
HOP-BAC @ 40% discount	$40.80	80	$3,264.00
Total analytical			**$3,264.00**
MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES			
Packaging and shipping to participants	$5.50	80	$440.00
Return shipping to lab	$10.00	80	$800.00
Recruitment letters, postage, and return postcards	$1.30	80	$104.00
Total materials and supplies			**$1,344.00**
Total direct costs			**$7,562.00**
Indirect costs			
UWSP indirect rate (~34%)	34%	1	**$2,571.08**
Total Project Cost (Direct + Indirect)			**$10,133.08**

Tests

Nitrate

Nitrate is an important test for all private well owners because 1) it provides insight into land use impacts to groundwater/private wells, and 2) nitrate at elevated levels is associated with negative health outcomes. Levels greater than 10 mg/L nitrate-nitrogen should not be consumed by infants, women who are or trying to become pregnant. Everyone is encouraged to avoid long-term consumption of nitrate greater than 10 mg/L.

Nitrate is a chemical commonly found in agricultural and lawn fertilizer. It is also produced when organic rich materials such as manure, bio-solids, septic system effluent, etc. decompose. Nitrate is a very soluble form of nitrogen and can easily leach past the root zone of plants into our groundwater. Levels of nitrate in groundwater are generally less than 1 mg/L in natural or areas of little human influence. Elevated levels generally occur in areas of agricultural activity or areas of dense rural development (i.e. small lot sizes with septic systems, lawn fertilizers, etc.). Soils and geology make certain areas more prone to nitrate losses to groundwater. For these reasons, nitrate is a good test to perform if trying to understand the impacts of land use on groundwater quality as well as trends over time.

Chloride

Like nitrate, chloride is a useful tool for understanding the impacts of land use. Major sources of chloride to groundwater include fertilizer, road salting and septic system drainfields. Potash is used to add potassium to soil. The most common form of potash is potassium chloride; the chloride is susceptible to leaching. Road salt (usually sodium chloride) helps in deicing roads but is then washed off roads into ditches or other pervious areas where it soaks into the soil and can eventually leach to groundwater. Septic system drainfields dispose of wastewater which contains chloride from human waste and water softener salt. Unlike nitrate, there are no negative health outcomes associated with chloride at levels typically found in Wisconsin's groundwater.

Alkalinity

Alkalinity is a measure of water's ability to neutralize acid. It is generated by the dissolution of carbonate minerals common to Wisconsin. Groundwater alkalinity measurements are relatively stable from one year to the next. Testing for

alkalinity would help in understanding if a particular sampling event was influenced by rainfall or snowmelt because alkalinity should be relatively consistent under normal conditions. Also useful for verifying that sample has not been treated with reverse osmosis.

Conductivity

Conductivity is a measure of the amount of total dissolved ions in water but does not give an indication of which minerals are present. In most uncontaminated waters, however, conductivity is about twice the total hardness value in an unsoftened water source. Changes in conductivity over time may indicate changes in overall water quality. There are no health concerns at levels of conductivity found in Wisconsin's groundwater.

Hardness

Hardness measures the amount of calcium and magnesium in water. Hard water can cause scale deposits on fixtures, in pipes or water heaters. Water that is naturally low in hardness is often referred to as soft and can be corrosive. There are no health concerns associated with drinking hard water. Water less than 150 mg/L is considered soft while values greater than 200 mg/L are considered hard. Concentrations are expressed as mg/L as CaCO3. Also useful for verifying that sample has not been treated with a water softener or reverse osmosis.

pH

The pH test is a measure of acidity. The lower the pH, the more corrosive the water. There is no health standard for pH, however corrosion of metal plumbing or fixtures is more likely to occur when pH levels are less than 7. Water greater than 7 is more likely to result in scaling. Low pH water may be more likely to result in elevated levels of copper and/or lead if those elements are included in your plumbing system.

Barron County has a balance of $12,853.71 that was carried over from the initial study.