

DRAFT
Buffalo County Minutes

Committee/Board: Land Conservation Committee

Date of Meeting: Thursday, July 11, 2019

Electronic and Hardcopy Filing Date: Monday, July 15, 2019

The regular meeting of the Land Conservation Committee was called order at 3:00 p.m. by Chairperson Nettie Rosenow. Roll call showed that David Linse and Don Hillert were present for all or part of the meeting. Don Black was excused. Others present for all or part of the meeting: Carrie Olson, Dennis Reimers, and David Danzinger.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes: Hillert made a motion to approve the June 6, 2019 minutes as presented, seconded by Linse. All in favor. Carried.

Public Comments regarding posted agenda items: David Danzinger commented that he was in attendance to learn about the Garden Valley #10 dam repair project status.

Agency Reports: Dennis Reimers, NRCS, presented the NRCS Report. Conservation program application deadlines were discussed, including EQIP, CSP, and CRP. Dennis spoke about three approved funding programs that include: Statewide Farmstead, Soil Health, and RCPP-Trout Stream Restoration. He also discussed the upcoming Northwest Driftless Local Work Group that will be held on August 8th from 9-11am at the Buffalo County Board Room in Alma.

Rose Valley PL566 #10 Dam Repair Project: Olson provided an update on the Rose Valley Dam #10 repair project. The contractors have started working on the embankment repair project and expect to be completed within two weeks, weather depending. Work installing the new dam gate and walkway structure will be completed after the embankment fill and rock drain materials have been placed. Enforcement actions were discussed due to contractor's work schedule exceeding the approved contract deadline.

Resolution to Support WI-DNR Sam Gordy's Slough Restoration Project: Olson presented a resolution to support funding a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WI-DNR) Mississippi River restoration project. The project is located in a Buffalo County backwater area of upper Pool 6. Olson reported that recent flood and high flow conditions have resulted in declining water quality, increased sediment, and reduced oxygen levels, which are critical for overwintering fisheries populations. The resolution requests \$5,000 CapX2020 funding to support the approximately \$100,000 restoration project.

Motion by Hillert, seconded by Linse to approve the resolution and forward to Finance Committee. All in favor. Carried.

2020 Department Budgets: Olson presented the 2020 Land Conservation and Non-Metallic Mining Reclamation Budgets. She reported that operating expense are expected to be comparable to previous years. The non-metallic mining budget is largely balanced through annual reclamation permit fees and with the decrease in mine operator's annual fees, the administrative expenses have been balanced.

Motion by Linse, seconded by Hillert to recommend the Land Conservation and Non-Metallic Mining budgets be forwarded to Finance Committee. All in favor. Carried.

Conservation Cost Share Projects: The July Cost Share Project Report was presented. Conservation cost share contract approvals and contractor invoices were presented for the Huber Grassed Waterway repair. All landowner proof of payments for cost-sharing have been received.

Conservation CapX2020 bluff prairie restoration projects included the Village of Nelson's Thrive! Park bluff restoration and Baecker Farms bluff restoration. Projects were cost shared with the US Fish and Wildlife Partners project, NRCS funding, as well as landowner match.

Motion by Hillert, seconded by Linse to approve and pay for the Cost Share Projects as presented. All in favor. Carried.

WI Land and Water Updates: Olson shared the recent Buffalo County Journal article, "Tom Schultz Instrumental in helping bring Conservation Project" that was written based on an article in the 2018 Annual Wisconsin Land & Water Conservation Report. The story describes the collaboration efforts between Buffalo County Land Conservation and Dairyland Power Cooperative in installing sediment control dams to reduce impacts from heavy rain events.

County Conservationists Report: None.

Chairperson Report Chair Rosenow questioned the committee about promotion of Soil Health Initiatives. She cited an example from a New York Times article to incentivize environmental conservation practices for farmers, with higher compensation rates going to small and midsize farms. She suggested that the committee look into a cost-sharing program to support cover crops. Discussion was held on cover crops and how to collaborate with other federal agency programs to increase payments. There was a discussion on crop diversity and markets for small grain or alternative crops.

Public Comments Not Relating to the Agenda None given.

The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, August 15th at 3:00 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Carrie Olson
County Conservationist