

**DRAFT**  
**Buffalo County Minutes**

**Committee/Board:** Land Conservation Committee

**Date of Meeting:** Thursday, December 5, 2019

**Electronic and Hardcopy Filing Date:** Tuesday, December 10, 2019

The regular meeting of the Land Conservation Committee was called order at 3:05 p.m. by Chairperson Nettie Rosenow. Roll call showed that Don Black, David Linse, and Don Hillert were present for all or part of the meeting. Others present for all or part of the meeting: Carrie Olson and Kristin Foehringer.

**Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes:** Hillert made a motion to approve the November 7, 2019 minutes as presented, seconded by Black. Motion carried.

**Public Comments regarding posted agenda items:** None

**USDA- NRCS/FSA Report:** No report

**Land Conservation Technician Report:** Chair Rosenow asked Kristin Foehringer, new Land Conservation Technician, to introduce herself and report her relevant background education and job experiences. A discussion was held on forest management, ecosystem management, erosion in woodland, and forestry practice requirements. The committee asked about the difference between agricultural and forestry best management practice conditions and what the county land conservation could require. There was a discussion about phosphorus runoff and sediment loss occurring from woodland erosion. Kristin commented that building soil health and reducing sediment loss in the landscape will require looking at the entire ecosystem and a watershed approach will be critical.

**Conservation Cost Share Projects:** The December Cost-Share Report was shared. A conservation dam flood repair project was completed on Ann Thewis property. The county CapX2020 share for the project was \$4500. All landowner proof of payments and contractor invoices for cost-sharing have been received. Olson reported that the dam repair program is now officially closed with \$160,500 total CapX2020 funds expended for this program. A total of 84 flood-damaged dams were restored with 52 landowners participating. Black made a motion to approve cost-share payments as presented, seconded by Hillert. Motion carried.

**Groundwater Quality and Well Sampling Program:** A Buffalo County groundwater quality and well sampling program proposal has been developed through a collaborative effort by the Human Health and Services, UW-Extension, and Zoning Departments. Olson reported that a resolution to support funding the one-year proposal from the county CAPX2020 fund (minus grants captured) will be presented to Human Health & Services Committee. Olson indicated the goal of the program is to identify and analyze groundwater quality data through grid sampling of private well water across Buffalo County. Outreach report materials developed by the UW-Stevens Point Center for Watershed Science and Education will be provided to the public after the well sampling program has been completed. There was a discussion about source analysis testing which will be used as a follow-up test to determine the source of select high nitrate wells. The committee gave consensus to support the groundwater quality and well sampling program.

**Multi-Discharge Variance (MDV) Funding Program:** Olson asked the committee to support Land Conservation department's participation in Wisconsin's Multi-Discharge Variance (MDV) funding program managed by the WI-DNR. Buffalo County's estimated total allocation for 2020 is \$33,000 for the entire county, with \$28,000 expected from the Buffalo-Whitewater watershed. Olson explained that the funding is generated by wastewater treatment facilities across Wisconsin and distributed to county conservation departments to reduce phosphorus runoff to surface waters from agricultural sources. Buffalo County will receive funds by March 1<sup>st</sup> of next year after application and development of a watershed plan describing the agricultural best management practices that will be implemented within the watershed. Discussions were held about specific best management practices and project locations. The committee agreed that Rose Valley watershed was priority location in order to combine funding with an existing project to achieve the greatest potential to decrease phosphorus per acre. Priority cost-sharing practices selected by the committee included a combination of field edge buffers, streambank protection, and streambank buffers to achieve the highest phosphorus filtration and runoff reduction. Black made a motion to approve county participation in the Wisconsin DNR Multi-Discharge Variance funding program as presented, seconded by Linse. Motion carried.

**County Conservationists Report:** Olson reported that Buffalo County Land Conservation will pay annual dues to WI Land and Water for their advocacy, support with staffing grants, training, technical standard changes, and groundwater protection support. The dues has been accounted for in the annual budget.

**Chairperson Report:** Chair Rosenow reported on an opportunity to link best management practices with incentives in order to promote conservation programs. Specifically, Rosenow cited an Iowa demo program for risk management where crop insurance companies gave farmers \$5 for every acre of cover crop planted. She encouraged consideration of other risk management programs, including grass waterways on critical farmland, alternate crop rotations, or cover crop incentives.

**The next meeting** was scheduled for Thursday, February 6<sup>th</sup> at 4PM. No January meeting will be held.

**Public Comments Not Relating to the Agenda** None given.

**The meeting was adjourned** at 4:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carrie Olson  
County Conservationist