

FLORENCE COUNTY LAND CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT



501 Lake Avenue, Room #249 Courthouse
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Department Administrator: Margie Yadro

Monday, August 3, 2015

6:30 PM

LAND CONSERVATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Florence County Courthouse

SECOND FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM

- I. **Roll Call:** The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by LCC Chairman Edward Wenger. Committee members in attendance included Supervisors Wenger, Jeanette Bomberg, Edwin Kelley, Gary Steber, and Susan Theer; along with Vice Chairman Yvonne VanPembrook and Farm Service Agency Representative, Todd Broullire. Also participating: Land Conservation Department Administrator Margie Yadro, and Zoning Administrator Rich Wolosyn.
- II. **Approval of the Agenda:** On a motion by Steber, seconded by VanPembrook, all were in favor to approve the agenda as posted on July 31, 2015.
- III. **Approval of Previous LCC Meeting Minutes:** Kelley moved to approve the July 6, 2015 LCC meeting minutes as drafted. Supported by Theer. All were in favor.
- IV. **Agency Partner Reports/Open Forum:** the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Headwaters Regional workgroup hosted a meeting earlier in the day to review funding assignments that address Farm Bill priorities within the region and state. District Conservationist, Michael Stinebrink, agreed to meet at a later date to follow-up with those that were unable to attend. Yadro had also participated in the recent Wisconsin Land + Water Conservation Association County Conservationist Conference meeting in Wisconsin Rapids. Topics of interest included Farmland Preservation Planning, along with the possibility of limiting nonresident property tax benefits to stabilize funding for conservation commitments and related programming.
- V. **Invasive Species Program Manager (ISPM) Summary:** Scott Goodwin supplied a handout update that showcased the county's Clean Boats, Clean Waters watercraft inspection project starting off August with nearly 4,000 people contacts to date. Several boat landings are reaching their total hours committed through the grant funded project. Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) monitoring is also underway on twenty-one local water bodies. Goodwin planned to confirm with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) a zebra mussel specimen taken recently from Loon Lake. Additional grant funds will be requested as opportunities become eligible. Yadro also reported that Wild Rivers Invasive Species Coalition (WRISC) Coordinator, Emily Anderson, had sent current correspondence to an e-mail contact list of road managers to stop mowing wild parsnip and other flowering invasives. The Summer 2015 edition of the WRISC newsletter features Florence County's CBCW project along with a workday planned at the Crossroads Community Gardens in Florence for honeysuckle treatment and spotted knapweed removal. Anderson reported a new invasive thistle found in Florence County; the Musk Thistle and provided an informational handout. Yadro plans to participate in a youth invasive species presentation at the Theer Family Tree Farm in Spread Eagle, present an educational exhibit at the Florence County Fair; and participate in Bridge Snap Shot day with the Wisconsin River Alliance where staff and volunteers will be conducting invasive species monitoring at bridge locations in a state coordinated effort.
- VI. **Administrative Summary:** Conservationist Margie Yadro
 - a. **Discussion/Action – Farmland Preservation Plan (FPP):** Yadro and Wolosyn had met recently to further discuss resources and impacts from criteria set for the county's FPP update. Questions such as: should a minimum size parcel be determined for income tax benefits per acre for FPP land committed for 15 years? Should FPP benefits be piggy backed with Managed Forest Law (MFL) property tax incentives? How do Zoning restrictions affect property owners mapped into FPP exclusive agricultural zones? How much more planning and enforcement staff time will be needed if FPP zoning is changed, where property owners will also be required to be in compliance with state standards while seeking county certification? Wolosyn gave a demonstration of the mapping capabilities from the County's GIS data. On a motion by VanPembrook, supported by Broullire, all were in favor to restrict FPP parcel size to a 20 acre minimum of single or total adjoining parcels that are not

under MFL agreements. All were in favor.

VII. Discussion/Action – Grant funded projects and proposals

a. **Lumberjack RC&D Community Improvement Grant Projects:**

- i. Yadro reported on the Crossroads Community Garden activities building construction agreement entered into with contractor Schwedersky Builders of Niagara and the Florence Utility Commission. Materials are now on order and should be installed within the next three to four weeks, weather permitting.
 - ii. A recent update with Maintenance Manager, Bill Witynski, at Florence Schools stated that one water bottling filling station has been installed at the high school with another one planned for the Library/Cafeteria area. The 3rd station is scheduled for the Elementary School though he has some plumbing challenges to overcome. Witynski anticipates project completion by December 31, 2015 which is in line with the grant proposal.
 - iii. Yadro had provided a poster handout to the Lumberjack RC&D Council prepared for final project reporting and website posting for the Lake Emily Spawning Reef construction. All stakeholders seemed well satisfied. Yadro intends to continue pursuing projects for 2016 grant funding consideration.
- b. **Invasive Species projects:** an upcoming meeting is scheduled with WDNR Lakes Specialist, Jim Kreitlow, for possible rapid response funding and confirm new invasive species findings. Goodwin continues to explore roadside invasive species mapping and plot gps way points taken for European Marsh Thistle and Wild Parsnip along several roadsides in the Town of Aurora. Yadro followed up with a copy of Wisconsin's "Noxious Weed" statute.
- c. **DATCP Conservation projects:** Yadro had submitted a general waterway permit application to WDNR liaison Jon Simonsen for a culvert replacement permit on the Long Lake outlet crossing on Fay Lake Road. County Highway Commissioner Jeff DeMuri will apply for a similar permit for a culvert replacement on Buckskin Lane for Florence County. Two landowner contacts are requesting streambank protection resources for the Menominee River in Spread Eagle. A follow up is planned with WDNR staff involvement.

VIII. Discussion/Action – Conservation Legislation/Resolutions: from the recent Conservationist Conference, Yadro reported a more in-depth discussion for recommending nonresident landowner's ineligibility for farmland tax rates.

IX. Discussion/Action – Financial Reports:

- a. **Land Conservation 2016 Budget Proposal:** Yadro provided a Land Conservation Department 2016 budget spreadsheet that projected revenues from multiple funders, in addition to \$16,769 in local levy. If further grant funds can be secured, Yadro recommends consideration of sustaining one fulltime conservationist, one full time conservation specialist, one part time AIS monitoring assistant, along with watercraft inspectors added as funding allows. The levy request was proposed at a 2% increase over the 2015 rate (\$328). Kelley moved to send the draft budget proposal to the Audit & Budget Committee for final consideration. Supported by Steber. All were in favor.
- b. **Connections Newsletter 2016 Budget:** Yadro presented a newsletter budget reduced by 46% over last year to allow for one distribution of the county newsletter with any additional printings billed directly to participating departments and entities. The 2016 budget for the yearend review edition was estimated at a total of \$2,550. On a motion by VanPembrook, supported by Theer, this budget request would be sent through the County Clerk's office to the Audit & Budget Committee for final approval. Motion passed.

X. Discussion/Action – July Expense Vouchers: totaled \$10,151.98 which included two invoices from Bay Lake for FPP development, a quarterly invoice for the Wildlife Abatement program, an annual invoice for UWEX for the shared agricultural educator position, and an AIS grant project equipment purchase. On a motion by Bomberg, supported by Steber, all were in favor to approve the bills for recommendation for consideration of payment by the Audit & Budget Committee.

XI. Future Agenda Items/Upcoming Meetings: August 5 WRISC BoD meeting, Forest Co. Courthouse; August 20 NCLWCA Summer Tour in Lincoln County

XII. Next Meeting Date: Tuesday, September 1 at 6:30 PM

XIII. Call for Adjournment: On a motion by Steber, supported by Theer, the meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Margie Yadro

Florence County Conservationist
Land Conservation Department Administrator