

RACINE COUNTY LAND CONSERVATION  
14200 Washington Avenue  
Sturtevant, Wisconsin 53177-1253  
Phone: 262-886-8440 Fax: 262-886-8480

**RACINE COUNTY LAND CONSERVATION COMMITTEE**  
**Also Known as a Subcommittee of**  
**THE RACINE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND LAND USE PLANNING COMMITTEE**  
Ives Grove Office Complex Auditorium – 14200 Washington Avenue  
Monday, 5:00 p.m., October 19, 2020

**SUMMARY MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING**

Committee Members Present: M. Osterman, T. Hincz, M. Dawson, J. Eckman, T. Greil

Committee Members Excused: B. Nielsen, R. Grove

Youth in Governance Absent: A. Buchaklian, R. Niemiec

Staff Present: C. Sampson, Josh Holden USDA

Chairman M. Osterman called the October 19, 2020 Racine County Land Conservation Committee meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

Agenda Amendment: A motion by T. Hincz / J. Eckman to amend the agenda and add a transfer of \$14,000 from the Soil and Water Resource Management Program from Kenosha County to Racine County as an addition to agenda item #4. The motion was approved by the Committee (5-0)

1. A motion by M. Dawson / T. Greil to approve the minutes for the August 17, 2020 meeting. The motion was approved (5-0) by the Committee.
2. Josh Holden from the USDA Wildlife Services gave a short explanation of the WDACP budget. The DNR's Wildlife Damage, Abatement and Claims Program can be administered by the County or by the USDA. The crop damage in Racine County is typically caused by deer or geese. If damage is severe enough, then options are provided, such as permitted hunting, fencing or scare devices used on that animal population. The program is run by hunter license sales. Not a lot of people fully enroll in Racine County because owners do not want their property open for hunting. Supervisor Eckman asked what the difference was between the shooting permit and public access. J. Holden stated full enrollment is allowing public hunting and financial reimbursement for crop damage. A shooting permit only allows the permittee to hunt the targeted animal with no additional money for crop damage. C. Sampson stated the program is budget neutral for Racine County. M. Osterman asked if the funds were not used, do they roll over. J. Holden stated they do not. A motion by T. Hincz / J. Eckman to approve the Wildlife Damage Budget. The motion was approved (5-0) by the Committee.
3. Josh Holden explained the crop price proposal program. The budget uses the commodity State average on the crop prices, but since there were no claims this year, the price doesn't impact anyone in Racine County. The next item was to determine the 90% harvest date. M. Osterman asked Brian Gunderson when 90% of the crop harvest is completed. Brian stated around November 15. T. Greil said farmers typically shoot to be completely done with harvest by

Thanksgiving. A motion by T. Greil / M. Dawson to approve the crop price proposal. The motion was approved (5-0) by the Committee.

4. M. Osterman stated the next item is approving the transfer of \$19,580 in SWRM bond funds from Milwaukee County to Racine County and the transfer of \$14,000 in SWRM SEG funds from Kenosha County to Racine County. C. Sampson stated that the bond funding is used for tangible projects that you can see and usually need to be constructed with excavating / grading equipment. C. Sampson continued to say the SEG funding is typically used for nutrient management planning. J. Eckman asked if we had projects lined up to utilize the funding. C. Sampson stated "yes" and we'll discuss this more in agenda item #6. A motion by T. Greil / J. Eckman to approve the transfers. The motion was approved (5-0) by the Committee.
5. Information only: T. Greil stated the Winter Workshop is scheduled for February 12<sup>th</sup>. Rick Clark is the keynote speaker. Rick is a farmer from Indiana that spoke at the Cover Crops Conference in Steven's Point last February. Rick Clark has a phenomenal story to share. Rick has converted a conventional tillage farm to an organic farm in which the only expense is planting the seeds for his crops and cover crops. M. Osterman asked where the event was being held and T. Greil said the 11-75 in Kansasville or maybe a larger venue. T. Greil is hoping the covid does not limit the event.

T. Greil stated the Supervisor Eckman was at the fall field day and asked to share his opinion. J. Eckman said he learned a lot and the runoff demonstrations were powerful. The soil pit was educational seeing roots four feet deep into the ground. J. Eckman continued to say it was impressive to watch the farmers share experiences of what worked and what doesn't work amongst themselves.

J. Eckman believes he saw a plane being loaded for an aerial seeding at the Burlington airport as well. This was probably to broadcast seed a cover crop.

T. Greil said the 2021 grant application was sent to WI DATCP. The goal this winter is to find more sponsors for the group. C. Sampson said two members of the WPCR were in attendance, Brian Gunderson and Russ Weis. C. Sampson also stated the grant money for 2021 will be decided in a week or two.

6. M. Osterman asked C. Sampson to track projects and provide a list to the committee. The list was provided and C. Sampson gave an overview. The first page and a half are bond projects planned for 2020 and beyond. The second page includes the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) which Allison Hamm administers. The Fox River Commission projects included on the list are primarily shoreline protection or rock riprap. C. Sampson continued to say the third page includes SEG funds for nutrient management as discussed earlier in the meeting. The Watershed Protection Committee projects are included as part of the workload. The staff conducts non-metallic mining reviews as well as the farmland lease program, farmland preservation program, the multi-discharge variance program and the tree program.

M. Osterman stated the office is under-staffed and this Racine County office manages a lot of acres and get a lot of work done. He stated that the State has never met their statutory obligation for funding for staff or cost-share.

7. A discussion about the erosion along the Wind Lake Canal and current water levels due to the Rochester Dam. C. Sampson provided aerial photos from 2005 and 2018 to compare and see the erosion and widening of the canal due to erosion. Some land in the photos is owned by Brian Gunderson which attended the meeting to speak regarding the situation.

Brian Gunderson stated it is frustrating to pay to clean the canals and then he loses his ground into the canals. Brian also stated he has no say in the Rochester Dam and water levels causing erosion. Brian has been in contact with Dale Buser at SEWRPC to apply for a grant to do a study on the dam to show what the potential impact on water levels.

Russ Weis said the Racine County Drainage Board has passed a resolution to remove the Rochester Dam. He continued to say this is an issue not only on the Wind Lake Canal but other parts of the county.

M. Osterman asked how much land Brian has lost due to streambank erosion. Brian Gunderson stated it is difficult to say exactly how much land he has lost, but the worst erosion is between Hwy K and Malchine Road.

T. Greil stated the biggest issue is the City of Muskego continues to urbanize and this water goes through the Wind Lake Canal. He asked if there can be any maintenance fees charged across municipal lines.

C. Sampson stated a hydrologic and hydraulic study would need to be completed to show the impacts of removing or lowering the dam.

J. Eckman asked even if the same amount of water would continue through the canal, how does lowering the water level reduce the erosion.

B. Gunderson stated from his observations, when the water level is in the subsoil area, less erosion occurred. When the water levels are higher, the soil the is more erosive.

M. Osterman said a regenerative stormwater conveyance system can be used for more infiltration and dissipates the energy and improves water quality. M. Osterman suggested contacting Ellen Serenquenos at River Alliance to see how the dam removal can be accomplished.

8. M. Osterman asked if there was any other business.
9. A motion by T. Greil, seconded by J. Eckman to adjourn at 5:51 p.m. Approved (5-0) by the Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

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Monte Osterman, Chairman  
Land Conservation Committee

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Chad Sampson, Recorder