

(approved by committee on 9/19/2022)

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 Auditorium – 14200 Washington Avenue

Monday, 6:00 p.m., August 1, 2022

SUMMARY MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING

Committee Members Present: M. Osterman, R. Grove, T. Wishau, G. Horeth,
T. Rutkowski, T. Greil

Committee Members Excused: T. Hincz, J. Eckman

Committee Members Absent: O. White

Youth in Governance Excused: Charles Letsch, Rabeka Liberto

Staff Present: C. Sampson

1. Chairman M. Osterman took roll call and called the August 1, 2022, Racine County Land and Water Conservation Committee meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
2. A motion by T. Wishau, seconded by G. Horeth to approve the minutes from July 11, 2022. The motion was approved (6-0) by the Committee.
3. M. Osterman made sure everyone had received a copy of the Racine County Land and Water Resource Management plan. C. Sampson gave the timeline for the plan approval process.

G. Horeth shared that he was on the Citizen's Advisory Committee to assist with the plan and felt it is a very comprehensive document. G. Horeth continued to suggest that moving forward, the Committee could receive updates regarding the goals and action items in the plan. M. Osterman agreed and the Committee will be updated on accomplishments approximately every six months.

T. Rutkowski asked what the largest change was compared to the previous plan. C. Sampson stated the Producer Led Program is the largest change in the plan along with the soil health movement. This is a new State program since the last plan was written.

T. Greil said that as a farmer, in the past he was mostly focused on profitability, but now he has added a conservation mindset to his farming operation. He hopes the Watershed Protection Committee of Racine County can continue to build on momentum with more farmers by continuing field days and research at Case Eagle Park.

A motion by G. Horeth, seconded by T. Rutkowski to approve the Racine County Land and Water Resource Management Plan 2023 -2032 and forward to the Economic Development and Land

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Use Planning Committee. After some discussion, the motion was approved (6-0) by the Committee.

4. M. Osterman discussed the waiver language received by Corporation Counsel with the Committee. The language waives liability to event holders, producers, sponsors and organizers as well as “event partners” at field days and other conservation events. The waiver language also acknowledges that participants may be photographed and agree to allow their photo, video, or film likeness to be used for any legitimate purpose.

G. Horeth asked if it was necessary to have everyone sign a waiver document. C. Sampson said typically there is a list of registered people and the names are checked off and they are given a folder when they arrive. C. Sampson stated they would probably have everyone sign a form upon checking in. After a long discussion on whether signing a form was necessary, it was decided unnecessary due to the language, which says, “This event is open to the public. By attending and/or participating in the event, participants are deemed to have given full release of liability”. R. Grove motioned to include the waiver language on the brochures and online for field days and other conservation events, seconded by T. Wishau. The motion was approved (6 – 0) by the Committee.

5. M. Osterman gave an update on WI Land & Water. M. Osterman said he was re-elected as the WI Land & Water Board Chair. M. Osterman said every five years the Board re-focuses on strategic planning and that process is beginning. The Board is going to focus on securing full funding for the Soil and Water Resource Management Program statewide.
6. M. Osterman gave an update on the National Association of Conservation Districts. M. Osterman said there was a long discussion about a \$150,000 loss to their investment portfolio. NACD is going to try to reduce risk in their investment strategy.

M. Osterman continued to say they are restructuring all of the committees and sub-committees. There is an effort to create an Executive Director’s organization. The Midwest Region voted to support this.

M. Osterman said NACD is accepting grant for soil testing. These are due in November. There is also an effort to collect data on carbon sequestration.

M. Osterman stated he had a long conversation with Terry Cosby, the NRCS-USDA Chief. Terry was very optimistic about getting more conservation on the ground. This year there is \$8.5 billion in NRCS contracts on the ground which is processing about \$20 million per day. There are 17 counties across the United States in which they are starting urban agriculture pilot program. There are going to be urban districts separate from their existing conservation districts.

7. C. Sampson gave a short history of the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program followed by a recorded webinar on the WI Land and Water website. R. Grove asked if the Racine County boundary can be adjusted to include the eastern part of the county. C. Sampson stated he will contact WI DATCP for the procedure to do this. C. Sampson also pointed out some examples of CREP on the air photos on the Racine County GIS website.
8. T. Greil said the Summer Field Day is proposed for September 15th. The field day is going to have a soil pit, rainfall simulator, in field research plots and a cover crop examples.

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9. G. Horeth provided information regarding the Waterford Dam. G. Horeth said the issue is if the dam is required to send 37 cfs (cubic feet per second) of water over the dam at all times and the water level drops a foot, there could be a lot of challenges around the impoundment. G. Horeth said the WWMD is collecting this information to try to understand the Waukesha Water Diversion impacts.

T. Rutkowski has identified the Ecojustice Center as a partner and will coordinate the new urban agriculture staff person, when hired, with the center to discuss possibilities and opportunities.

10. USDA Reports: No reports were submitted, but USDA NRCS did share the opening for the Urban Agriculture Conservation position for the Union Grove Field Office.

11. Other business: A resolution came through EDLUP and the Executive Committee as a potential referendum vote on a citizen's right to clean water. M. Osterman stated that he spoke in favor of it, but the resolution did not pass. R. Grove said a resolution that comes out of a Committee to the Board tends to have a better chance to pass rather than an individual supervisor's resolution to the Board. M. Osterman said there were a lot of unanswered questions regarding the resolution, possibly causing it to fail.

12. A motion by T. Rutkowski / R. Grove to adjourn at 7:36 p.m. The motion was approved (6-0) by the Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Monte Osterman, Chairman
Land Conservation Committee

Chad Sampson, Recorder