

(approved by committee on August 1, 2022)

RACINE COUNTY LAND CONSERVATION

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RACINE COUNTY LAND CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

Also Known as a Subcommittee of

THE RACINE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND LAND USE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Ives Grove Public Works Conference Room – 14200 Washington Avenue

Monday, 6:00 p.m., July 11, 2022

SUMMARY MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING

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

Committee Members Excused: T. Hincz, O. White

Youth in Governance Excused: Charles Letsch, Rabeka Liberto

Staff Present: C. Sampson

1. Chairman M. Osterman took roll call and called the July 11, 2022, Racine County Land and Water Conservation Committee meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
2. A motion by R. Grove, seconded by T. Rutkowski to approve the minutes from June 6, 2022. The motion was approved (7-0) by the Committee.
3. M. Osterman stated that Wednesday morning is the election for officers on the WI Land & Water Board in which he is currently the Chair. Monte is hoping to maintain the Chair position. He stated about half of the Board is new.

M. Osterman said the Urban Agricultural Committee mission statement has been completed.

M. Osterman said he was elected as the Southeast Area Land and Water LCC Representative and Brian Holt was the alternative. C. Sampson remained in the position of Secretary.

M. Osterman also stated that he will be attending the summer NACD annual meeting in Puerto Rico next week. G. Horeth asked where in Puerto Rico. M. Osterman stated San Juan.

C. Sampson said the County Conservationist summer meeting was taking place on July 14, 15.

4. M. Osterman referred to the memo regarding liability coverage for County events such as Field Days, Summer Tours or other types of events. M. Osterman said the State clause does not cover any County or Area events.

M. Osterman said he contacted Corporation Counsel and spoke with Erika Motsch and found out that through Racine County's structure that the County is self-insured.

R. Grove asked T. Greil if the farm group has insurance coverage. T. Greil said the Watershed Protection Committee does have insurance coverage for themselves while conducting farming activities at Case Eagle Park as well as coverage for events.

M. Osterman stated that Erika explained that anyone coming onto public property automatically waives liability. M. Osterman stated the signage is not necessary, but some language will be on a waiver form for future events for attendees to sign when they register. G. Horeth asked if we had to take out additional insurance. M. Osterman said that Corp Counsel deemed that unnecessary. M. Osterman continued to say they will have that language for the August meeting.

T. Greil stated this year's field day will have a soil pit, rainfall simulator, and a couple stations out in the demonstration plots.

5. M. Osterman asked if the Committee if there were any comments on the report on Land & Water Conservation activities over the past 5 years. G. Horeth stated that he would like to see more information on the Waukesha Water Diversion knowing the concern of many residents about lower water levels on the Fox River due to the diversion. M. Osterman stated this document is looks back rather than looking forward, but we'll definitely keep this on the Committee's radar.

M. Osterman said he was impressed with the number of EQIP and CSP contracts. M. Osterman stated the MS4 modeling indicates our runoff reduction is less than twice the required limits in pollutant load and this shows the positive impacts of conservation.

C. Sampson stated there has been over \$1 million of construction costs on projects put on the ground over the past 5 years. This includes federal, state, county and landowner payments. C. Sampson continued to say the Soil & Water Resource Management Program is the main program used to fund staff and projects.

C. Sampson said the Farmland Preservation Program is also a main stay for the farmers in the County. Farm inspections are conducted every four years and a \$7.50 per acre tax credit is available to eligible farmers.

R. Grove said that Racine County always spends its cost share allocation on projects and often requests additional funds. C. Sampson confirmed this is the case.

T. Wishau asked if some improvements could be made to the John Margis Wildlife Area (park). C. Sampson is aware of the issues at the park, but the cost-share from the State cannot be used on County land. This could be a Parks Committee agenda item.

6. M. Osterman asked C. Sampson to give an update on the status of the LWRM Plan. C. Sampson stated that he received comments from Andrew Craig and Jesse Bennett from WDNR. Most of the comments were incorporated into the plan. C. Sampson also received comments from Lisa Trimble at WI DATCP and put them into the plan. C. Sampson said he was a bit vague on some items such as NR 151 compliance and enforcement, so he spelled out more specific information in the plan.

M. Osterman pointed out the approval dates for the plan. The Land and Water Conservation Committee will approve the plan on August 1st. The Economic Development and Land Use Planning Committee will approve the plan and send a resolution to County Board on August 15. The first reading at County Board will be September 13 and second reading will be on September

27. The final plan will be presented at the Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Board on October 4, 2022.

7. T. Greil stated the Field Day will be September 9th at Case Eagle Park. The research plots have been planted and will be ready to be discussed. Also, pollinator habitat has been planted.

8. Committee Supervisor Projects:

T. Rutkowski has identified the Ecojustice Center has a group called Farm Corps and the group is interested in regenerative agriculture and carbon sequestration. He asked if funds may be available to support this effort. M. Osterman suggested researching NRCS funding mechanisms. C. Sampson stated that he would give T. Rutkowski some potential grant information.

T. Greil's wants the brush cleared on the bicycle trail from Rochester up into Milwaukee County. C. Sampson suggested contacting Parks Staff or the Public Works and Parks Committee about expanding brushing on the bike trails.

J. Eckman has taken some aerial photos of Eagle Lake, Brown's Lake, and the Marina. J. Eckman showed comparative photos of Eagle Lake and Brown's Lake. C. Sampson stated that Eagle Lake is a eutrophic lake that has a lot of internal issues. G. Horeth requested some footage over the Fox River and Tichigan Lake.

T. Wishau suggested improvements at John Margis Wildlife Area (County Park). This includes erosion control, trail improvement, and other action to make improvements.

R. Grove stated the County owns a lot of land on the Root River. The trees from dead falls and other debris are very prevalent and should be removed from the river. The downed trees cause erosion as well as prohibit navigation. R. Grove reached out to staff of the parks department to see if downed trees can be removed. R. Grove will continue to research solutions.

G. Horeth said he would provide information regarding the Waukesha Water Diversion. Then, we can use this information to provide objectives and goals.

9. USDA Reports: No reports were submitted, but Racine County Land and Water Conservation is working with NRCS and FSA to re-enroll CRP and CREP participants.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Monte Osterman, Chairman
Land Conservation Committee

Chad Sampson, Recorder