

**RUSK COUNTY LAND & WATER CONSERVATION COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES**

***“Not Committee Approved”***

**DATE:** May 8, 2018

**ROLL CALL:** R. GIERKE, A. NICHOLSON, M. SCHMITT, B.MCBAIN, T. DUSELL,  
B. STOUT

**OTHERS PRESENT:** C. TESKY, P. RICHTER, J. KRELL, S. ZESIGER, K. STARIHA

**Open Session:** Meeting called to order @ 8:00 AM by Dept Head CeCe Tesky since it was a new committee and the outgoing chair was not present. Introductions were made.

**Election of Chair and Vice Chair:** Schmitt nominated Gierke for Chair. Nominations were called three times. Dusell/McBain motion to close the nominations and cast a unanimous ballot for Gierke. Motion carried. Roger Gierke took over chairing the meeting. Schmitt nominated Stout for Vice Chair. Nominations were called three times. Dusell/Schmitt motion to close the nominations and cast a unanimous ballot for Stout. Motion carried.

**Minutes:** Gierke/Schmitt motion to approve minutes from March 13, 2018. Motion carried.

**Next Meeting Date:** Tuesday, July 10, 2018 @ 8:00 A.M

**Public Comment:** Dusell discussed testimony provided by the Rusk and Sawyer County Farm Bureau at a legislative hearing at the end of April relative to wildlife damage that is occurring in the region. 85% of the wildlife damage claims in the state are occurring in this area. Sawyer County has the highest claims, followed by Rusk County. Some of the issues that were brought to the legislator’s attention were a request to lift the \$10,000 cap, having the damage prorated, getting rezoned, not requiring public hunting when there is nominal damage, giving the farmers the ability to sell kill tags to recover some of the losses and alarming traps. Bear hunters don’t want to shoot small bears and they are the one causing a lot of damage. There are public hunting issues when sites are put on the website as open to public hunting.

**Wildlife Damage Claim Program:** Zesiger gave an overview of his program for the new committee members. He handed out a list of program enrollees to date. There are two wolf projects in Rusk County currently. There was a verified wolf depredation south of Ladysmith and another north of Weyerhaeuser. Flaggery was installed. There was also a bear kill west of Weyerhaeuser. Wolves have not been delisted. Bear work is slow right now. Seth has done a lot of beaver work this spring. This includes Moose Ear and the South Fork of Main Creek for WIDNR trout habitat work and Lea Lake and the Fire Lane for the County.

**NRCS Report:** Richter introduced himself and gave an overview of his program. They administer the conservation programs from the Farm Bill. CSP sign up ended in February. There are 10 new enrollees in Rusk County, with an additional 4500 acres, mostly forestland. These contracts are 5 years. Alder sheering is done for the year. There were 31 participants this past winter. This is part of the Young Forest Initiative for the Goldwing Warbler. The American Bird Conservancy assists with these projects. A participant generally gets 3 years to complete the project. There is a Soil Health Initiative sign-up that ends May 18. There is the local workgroup meeting to be held August 8 from 10-12 at the Barron County Government Center. They set

priorities, discuss common practices and meet with other conservation partners. Anyone with an interest in conservation should attend. Our local workgroup is Rusk, Barron, Polk, St.Croix and Dunn Counties.

**Farm Service Agency:** Nicholson and Stariha gave an overview of the FSA programs including price support, loans and Ag Risk Programs. There are 1100 farms in Rusk County and 700 in Sawyer County. Stariha explained that the Margin Protection Program for milk price support has had some changes made to it. It will be more beneficial to farmers. June 1 is the MPP deadline. Crop reporting will need to be done by July 15. There was discussion about the price support programs offered by FSA. Farmers must pay for these insurance programs. The subsidies are not “free”. FSA was able to offer cost share for unmarketable storm clean-up in forested areas. FSA also has a Livestock Indemnity Program that offers cost share for livestock depredation caused by natural disasters such as winter storms.

**Land Conservation Report:** Krell gave an overview of the County Land and Water Conservation program. He gave an update on the Farmland Preservation Plan and 2017 Annual Report. He applied for 2019 SWRM and cost share funding. The Waste Storage ordinance will need to be reviewed because of updates in the construction standards. Projects include a waste storage abandonment, buckthorn eradication, well abandonment, barnyard runoff control and manure storage expansion. They are also working on a water facility for a rotational grazing site. There was discussion about the possibility of having a drainage district ordinance and the consensus was to not do it.

**Land Conservation and Development Department:** Tesky reported that she will be providing a presentation to county board in June relative to what the LCDD office does. There are no cost proposals for 2019. The nonmetallic mining reclamation program will be switched over to LWC.

**Animal Waste Storage Applications:** None

**Out of County Travel:**

Invasive Plants Field Day on May 23 in Barron. NW Area meeting and LCC Training on June 1 in Hayward. Dusell/Stout motion to approve Out of County travel. Motion carried.

**Adjourn:** Chairman Gierke adjourned the meeting at 10:25 AM

Minutes prepared by CeCe Tesky