

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

“Not Committee Approved”

DATE: JULY 14, 2020

ROLL CALL: B. STOUT, T. DUSELL, M. SCHMITT, J. MEYER, W. MCBAIN

OTHERS PRESENT: N. STADNYK, A. KNOLL

Open Session: Meeting called to order @ 8:01 AM by Stout.

Public Comment: None

Minutes: Dusell/McBain motion to approve minutes from May 12. Motion carried.

Payment Approval: Dusell/Meyer motion to approve payment approval report. Motion carried.

Next Meeting Date: Tuesday, August 11, 2020 @ 8:00 A.M

Wildlife Damage Claim Program: No report submitted.

NRCS Report: Reviewed report submitted by N. Besasie. NRCS is currently finalizing contracts for EQIP. There were 23 applications that have been approved for funding. Applications for the Conservation Stewardship Program are currently in the planning and ranking stage. There were a total of 16 applications and of those, 13 screened as high priority.

NRCS Wisconsin announced that they will be holding one statewide virtual Local Working Group meeting with a feedback survey to follow. Input from this meeting will be used to help set priorities for USDA conservation programs under the 2018 Farm Bill. The meeting will be held August 5, 2020 at 10a. Meeting information can be found at <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/wi/newsroom/releases/?cid=NRCSEPRD161401>.

NRCS in Ladysmith will be welcoming a new Soil Conservationist in early August. Bradley Selz will be the new addition to the team. Nick Besasie, Resource Conservationist, will be moving to the Altoona Field Office and it is expected that this position will be replaced swiftly. Patrick Richter will remain the District Conservationist covering Rusk County.

Farm Service Agency Report: Reviewed report submitted by M. Quade. The FSA office has a series of stages to move through in order to return to normal operation and they are moving through these stages as quickly as possible.

Sign-up for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program began on May 26th and continues through August 28th. The application is available online at www.farmers.gov/cfap. If they are unable to complete it online, they can contact the local FSA office to schedule a phone appointment. There are currently 89 applications approved for Rusk County producers.

FSA continues to accept applications for the Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program (WHIP+) to agricultural producers who suffered losses because of excess moisture in 2018 and 2019. Sign-up for WHIP+ opened on March 23. In addition to the recently added eligible loss for excess moisture, FSA will implement a provision for crop quality loss that resulted in price deductions or penalties when marketing crops damaged by eligible disaster events.

The deadline for crop reporting submissions is July 15th. Producer maps were mailed and staff are working on loading crop reports into the system. The deadline for enrolling in the 2020 ARC/PLC Program was June 30th. For those that did not file an application, they can late-file through September 30th.

The May DMC margin, which is the difference between the National milk price and the National average feed cost, was posted on June 30th, 2020 at \$5.37 per cwt. Anyone who enrolled at the \$9.50 coverage level down to the \$5.50 coverage level received a payment, which was mailed last week.

CLEAR30 is a new CRP pilot program that provides long-term water quality benefits by allowing producers to enroll eligible land into a 30-year CRP contract. Sign-up began July 6, 2020 and runs through August 21, 2020. Contact your local FSA office if you are interested in learning more about this program and to determine eligibility.

The nomination period for County Committee elections began on June 15th and runs through August 1st. Contact your local FSA office for more information or to complete a nomination form.

Land Conservation and Development Department: N. Stadnyk reported that interviews had been conducted to fill the GIS technician vacancy and a candidate has been selected. Pending committee approval, an offer will be made this afternoon.

Land Conservation Report

Animal Waste Storage Applications: None.

Out of County Travel: None

CREP Program Participation: Brian Loeffelholz, Wi-DATCP, joined the committee meeting via teleconference to discuss the CREP program and answer any questions about the program. He was able to answer all questions and provided guidance on the next steps in the process. Committee discussed the merits of the program and decided to move forward with participation. Dusell/McBain motion to have N. Stadnyk draft letter of intent for CREP participation and distribute to committee members for review and submittal to DATCP. Motion carried.

LCC Meeting Schedule: The committee discussed to option of returning to a monthly meeting schedule. Dusell/McBain motion to move to a monthly meeting schedule unless Committee Chair/County Conservationist determine a meeting is not required. Motion carried. Next meeting date changed to August 11 at 8a.

Devils Creek Watershed Update: Stream measurements and water sampling continue in the Devils Creek project and LWCD staff are beginning to look at upland landuse within the watershed and ramping up public outreach. We will also begin conducting streambank erosion

surveys within the next couple of weeks. The Rusk County Forestry Department will assist the LWCD in conducting the survey work by providing a drone.

TRM Grant Activity: We are still waiting to hear the final status of two TRM grant related projects in the Red Cedar Watershed. One has been tentatively approved and we are waiting for the final approval from EPA. The other has been through the screening process and is in the second stage of approval.

County Owned Dams: Stadnyk reported on the status of county owned dam maintenance. LWCD staff will be conducting brief inspections of all dams and record any required maintenance. Required 10 year inspection of the Murphy Lake dam has been scheduled for August, 2020.

Potato Creek Watershed Update: N. Stadnyk provided a brief description of the process of developing landowner contact lists using the available GIS data and how the process was applied in the Potato Creek Watershed.

Adjourn: Schmitt/Meyer motion to adjourn at 9:25 AM. Motion carried.

Minutes prepared by Nick Stadnyk