

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

***“Not Committee Approved”***

**DATE:** AUGUST 11, 2020

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

**OTHERS PRESENT:** N. STADNYK, A. KNOLL, T. HANSON

**Open Session:** Meeting called to order @ 8:05 AM by Stout.

**Public Comment:** None

**Minutes:** McBain/Schmitt motion to approve minutes from July 14. Motion carried.

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

**Next Meeting Date:** ~~Tuesday, September 15, 2020 @ 8:00 A.M.~~ Amended to reflect correct meeting date September 8, 2020 @ 8:00 A.M.

**Wildlife Damage Claim Program:** S. Zesiger provided current information regarding the Wildlife Damage Program. Trapping activity is mainly for bears with over 50 bears moved out of Rusk County last week.

**NRCS Report:** Ka Vang will be acting as the NRCS contact here in Ladysmith until December 2020. Contact info is (715) 532-3786, [kaying.vang@usda.gov](mailto:kaying.vang@usda.gov).

Rusk had 16 applications for Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). Of those 16, 13 were screened as high priority. Of those 13, 10 were selected for funding amounting to \$265,000. 23 EQIP applications were selected for funding with a total obligation of \$281,000.

The USDA local working group held it's statewide, virtual meeting on August 5<sup>th</sup> to discuss 2021 EQIP funding and priorities.

**FSA Report:** Sign-up for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) ends August 28<sup>th</sup>. Producers can access the application online at [www.farmers.gov/cfap](http://www.farmers.gov/cfap). If they are unable to complete it online, they can contact the local FSA office to schedule a phone appointment. The CFAP program provides direct support based on losses for agriculture producers where prices and market supply chains have been significantly impacted and assists eligible producers facing additional adjustment and marketing costs resulting from lost demand and short-term oversupply for the 2020 marketing year caused by COVID-19.

FSA is currently accepting applications and making payments through the Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program (WHIP+) to agricultural producers who suffered eligible losses because of excess moisture in 2018 and 2019. Signup opened March 23, and producers who suffered losses in Wisconsin from excess moisture, floods, tornadoes, snowstorms, and wildfires can still apply. To be eligible, producers must have suffered certain crop production losses or losses of trees, brush, or vines in counties with a Presidential Emergency Disaster Declaration or

a Secretarial Disaster Designation (primary counties only) for qualifying natural disaster events that occurred in calendar years 2018 or 2019. Also, losses located in a county not designated by the Secretary as a primary county may be eligible if a producer provides documentation showing that the loss was due to a qualifying natural disaster event. In addition to the recently added eligible loss of excess moisture, FSA will implement a WHIP+ provision for crop quality loss that resulted in price deductions or penalties when marketing crops damaged by eligible disaster events.

The deadline to submit completed reports of crop reporting acreage was extended through August 14<sup>th</sup>. The office has been working to load crop reports off of returned maps and get them out to producers for a signature as quickly as possible.

The deadline to enroll in the 2020 ARC/PLC Program ended June 30<sup>th</sup>. Producers can submit a late-filed application through September 30<sup>th</sup>. These applications will go to the County Committee to be acted on.

The nomination period for County Committee ended August 1<sup>st</sup>. Ballots will be sent to LAA's 3 and 5 beginning in early November.

**Land Conservation and Development Department:** Stadnyk reported that the new GIS Technician was hired and started on July 21<sup>st</sup>.

The current status of the 2020 aerial photography was also discussed.

### **Land Conservation Report**

**Animal Waste Storage Applications:** None.

**Out of County Travel:** None

**Devils Creek Watershed Project Update:** Stadnyk reported on the status of the Devils Creek project. Stream data is still being collected and staff have begun working with producers in the watershed to gather landuse information. Staff worked with Rusk County Forestry to test the use of a drone to inventory streambank erosion sites. The test was successful and verified that the drone will provide the detail needed, however, the flight will need to be conducted at leaf off, probably late October or early November.

Committee also reviewed the mailer that was sent to all landowners in the watershed

**CREP Program Participation:** The letter requesting inclusion in the State's CREP program was mailed to DATCP and we are awaiting their decision which will be made in early 2021.

**NR193 Surface Water Grant Changes:** Stadnyk reported on changes to the Surface Water Grant program and guidelines being made under NR193. Part of the changes involve the way the AIS program is administered. There are two options under the new regulations; either the county receives and administers the funding allocation or the county designates an agent to act as the AIS program provider. Traditionally, Beaver Creek Reserve has conducted AIS activities independently with the county and Lake Associations. Schmitt/Dusell motion to designate Beaver Creek Reserve as the counties designated agent for AIS related implementation of programs under NR193. Motion carried.

**LWRMP Discussion:** Committee briefly discussed the upcoming review of the Counties Land & Water Resource Management Plan. The review, conducted by DATCP, is scheduled for December 2020 and provides for a 5-year review of the plan and an opportunity to revise the plan to meet the needs of the county. Stadnyk will send a copy of the plan along with ideas for improvements to committee members for discussion at the next committee meeting.

**2021 LWCD Budget:** Stadnyk reviewed the current draft 2021 budget submitted to finance. The only significant change is inclusion of an administrative position and a conservation intern.

**Adjourn:** Schmitt/Meyer motion to adjourn at 9:23 AM. Motion carried.

Minutes prepared by Nick Stadnyk