

“Not Committee Approved”

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

DATE: February 8, 2022

ROLL CALL: T. DUSELL, R. STOUT, M. QUADE, W. MCBAIN, M. SCHMITT, N. BESASIE

OTHERS PRESENT: N. STADNYK, R. HANSEN

Open Session: Meeting called to order @ 8:05 am

Public Comment: None

Minutes: McBain/Stout motion to approve minutes from December 14th. Dusell abstained from the vote. Motion carried.

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

Next Meeting Date: Tuesday, March 15th, 2022 @ 8:00 am

Wildlife Damage Claim Program: Stadnyk reported on behalf of Zesiger. Wildlife damage claims have been completed and mailed out for review. Crop damage from deer is being processed from last year. Currently, a wolf tracking is being performed.

NRCS Report: The USDA office is now opened with up to 50% staffing. February 25th is the batching date for the Conservation Stewardship program. This is a holistic conservation program which serves to fund projects for landowners. Ranking for the EQIP program has started to take place as 44 projects were submitted for funding. Besasie mentioned working to find project funding both locally and nationally. Projects may be brought to the County for assistance through LWCD grants. Forestry work is also being completed through the NRCS including projects focused on Golden Warblers.

FSA Report: Quade provided information on changes made to FSA representative status. According to new regulations, FSA members present at LCC meetings should be regarded as individuals of the ag community. Board members are no longer specifically representatives of FSA as per a request from the County Executive Director for the USDA FSA. The committee discussed these changes and would like to continue receiving monthly updates from the FSA. It was suggested a representative from the FSA office would attend LCC meetings to report updates. Stadnyk provided recent updates from FSA including program deadlines, eligibility, and new committee members.

Land Conservation & Development Department: Stadnyk reported the Zoning Department has received 29 land use permits and 5 sanitary permits this year. Numbers are similar to 2021 so far and are projected to continue increasing from previous years.

Stadnyk stated the Land Information Department has a few upcoming trainings. There are 3 individuals attending the WLIA conference at the end of the month and 1 person traveling to Orlando for training on our 911 database. Land Information is still working on developing accurate foundational layers for web guide data. Remonumentation data collection is also being addressed for advanced accuracy. The committee made remarks about boundaries changing and property ownership. Stadnyk clarified any landowner dealing with issues is considered a civil matter.

The Land Conservation Department was awarded \$13,000 through the DNR Surface Water grant. This will fund up to 50% of the 5 upcoming shoreland projects. The annual poster and speaking contest was an overall success this year. The Jr Division speaker won the area contest and will be advancing to the state competition. Our yearly tree sales are going fast and plans to distribute orders are set for early May. The aerator on Audie Lake is up and running better than previous years. A discussion was held on submitting a statement regarding the wolf population in the state. Members of the committee suggested resubmitting a statement that was written in 2010. Motion by Dusell/McBain to approve review of the statement at the next County Board meeting. Motion carried.

Land Conservation Report

Animal Waste Storage Applications: None

Out of County Travel: Stadnyk requested travel approval to Burnett County for a meeting. Schmitt/Dusell motion to approve travel request. Motion carried.

AWS Ordinance Language Update: Stadnyk stated the AWS Ordinance was brought to the NRCS for review. It was suggested current standards should be the basis of the ordinance and to take into consideration a grandfather clause for current compliance. Updates will be provided in March.

Outreach: Stadnyk discussed introducing a pollinator habitat for the community with project donations. A field day is currently in the works for early September to educate farmers on rotational grazing, no-till, and cover crop practices. To drive interest for the LWCD, Stadnyk proposed having a satellite office in several locations throughout the county. Discussion was held offering ways to bring conservation practices to the community. The farm show is set for 2022 and a booth has been reserved for the LWCD.

Invasive Species: Stadnyk has been planning another invasive species seminar for the end of February or early March. It was also noted the department is looking at having a field trial for treating Buckthorn. Several techniques were suggested to treat the species including using goats.

NMM Report: The annual notices were sent out for non-metallic mining. As of recent, there are 47 active pits with 480 acres being mined. Reclaimed mines total 27. The department is looking into hiring an intern this summer to map NMM with drone imaging.

Pigeon Creek Dam Status: Stadnyk reported there is a monitoring agreement with the DNR to check on the spillway and beaver dam. The grant application is ready for submission.

FSA Representative: Refer to information presented in the FSA Report.

Land & Water Conservation Board Voting: Stadnyk provided the committee with a list of potential candidates for the Land & Water Conservation board. Each member can vote for 3 candidates to represent the board. Voting is due by March 4th.

Adjourn: Dusell/McBain motion to adjourn at 10:30 am. Motion carried.

Minutes prepared by Rachel Hansen.