

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

DATE: July 12, 2022

ROLL CALL: T. DUSELL, M. QUADE, J. KALEPP, J. MEYER, M. SCHMITT, R. STOUT, S. ZESIGER, N. BESASIE

OTHERS PRESENT: N. STADNYK, R. HANSEN

Open Session: Meeting called to order @ 8:00 am

Public Comment: None

Minutes: Kalepp/DuSell motion to approve minutes from June 14th. Motion carried.

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

Next Meeting Date: Wednesday, August 3, 2022 @ 2:00 pm

Wildlife Damage Claim Program: Zesiger stated much of his recent work has been meeting with farmers in anticipation of bear season. An update was provided on the elk in two local farmers corn fields. The methods have worked to manage elk in both fields and they have since left. Committee members questioned other methods to deter elk.

NRCS Report: Besasie reported there are two new staff members in the Ladysmith office. The NRCS has realigned the local work group for Rusk County. This means funding opportunities may target different areas. Water quality is a highlighted area for upcoming projects. New specialized staff can utilize their skill set to offer insight on project tasks. The Ladysmith office is now fully covering Sawyer County. Currently, 44 contracts are underway across all programs and 11 more are in the works.

FSA Report: Quade provided an FSA update from the County Executive Director. The Rusk County office is in the process of hiring a full-time Program Technician. Nominations for the FSA County Committee are open. Offices are busy with spring crop reports which are due July 15th. An Emergency Relief Program is available to help offset the impacts of natural disasters in 2020 and 2021. The FSCSC program is accepting applications for 2022.

Land Conservation & Development Department: Stadnyk reported land use permits are at 236 in the current year compared to 206 from last year. The 5-year average is 126. Sanitary permits are similar to the long-term average. ARPA funding was approved to purchase GPS units and replace 3 pieces of outdated equipment. The intern is working on land use mapping and gathering drone footage. The next project is collecting road centerlines throughout the county.

Land Conservation Report

Animal Waste Storage Applications: None

Out of County Travel: None

Pigeon Creek Dam Update: Stadnyk noted temporary repairs for the dam are scheduled for completion on July 13th by the Highway Department. Funding is conditionally approved for the project. A bill

received by Morgan and Parmley will be partially funded by the grant. Committee discussed reasoning behind dam improvements.

LCDD Compensation Analysis: Stadnyk provided committee members a comparison of wages gathered from the U.S. Census Bureau. Data showed average salaries of conservationists in WI. Rusk County is under the average pay scale based on results. Members of the committee discussed the wage study and understand there needs to be changes. Looking to improve wages/benefits for the future.

Shoreland Program Update: Stadnyk stated the program has been popular and 17 sites visits have been lined up. Many landowners are aware of rip rap, but the county is not funding it as a solution. Other methods are recommended such as log planting and native buffer strips. For future reference, lake associations may be contacted for projects.

Project Updates: Several projects are underway including waterway and bank stabilization, 2 manure storage abandonments, fencing, and a barnyard feed project. Committee members asked for an update on the hog project and how to proceed. Stadnyk mentioned attending the Farmer Appreciation Lunch put on by Farm Bureau. It was suggested the LCDD sponsor a tent next June. Motion by Schmitt/Stout to sponsor a tent at the Farm Bureau event next year. DuSell and Kalepp abstain. Motion carried.

Adjourn: Kalepp/Meyer motion to adjourn at 9:13 am. Motion carried.

Minutes prepared by Rachel Hansen.