

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

DATE: September 13, 2022

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

OTHERS PRESENT: N. STADNYK, R. HANSEN

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

Public Comment: None.

Minutes: DuSell/Kalepp motion to approve minutes from August 3rd. Motion carried.

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

Next Meeting Date: Tuesday, October 11, 2022 @ 8:00 am

Wildlife Damage Claim Program: Zesiger asked for approval of the wildlife damage program budget paid for by passthrough funding. Schmitt/Kalepp motion to approve wildlife damage funding. Motion carried. Zesiger shared the 2022 crop price proposal. Committee members discussed changing prices for soy beans and cranberries. These prices are based on the current market taking into consideration the volatility of the prices in the area. Price changes are set to \$14.45 for soy beans and 45.01 for cranberries. DuSell/Meyer motion to set crop prices for 2022 with discussed changes. Motion carried. Zesiger requested approval to set date for wildlife abatement to December 20th. DuSell/Schmitt motion to approve date for wildlife abatement program as presented. Zesiger noted 32 enrollees in the damage program. This year, bear damage is down substantially. Nearly 1,000 bears have been trapped over the last 3 years.

NRCS Report: Besasie updated committee members on several programs running through the NRCS. Important dates have been set: the fiscal year is set to October 1st and the Flagship Program batching date is November 4th. Besasie provided local office reports with reorganization and staffing. Sawyer County is now sending crop reports to the Ladysmith office. Besasie is taking responsibilities within the Medford office as staffing is changing.

FSA Report: The local FSA office is preparing for a new hire starting in a month. Fall crop reporting is coming up in mid-November. ARCPLC sign up will be opening. Another open position will be available after September 15th.

Land Conservation & Development Department: Stadnyk provided an update regarding the vacant Land Information position. The GIS position will be on the agenda for approval from County Board in September. The new GPS units have been integrating well with all three departments. An informational session for the county highway renaming will take place on September 20th from 3 to 6 at True Townhall. All landowners and town clerks will be notified with a mailing.

Land Conservation Report

Animal Waste Storage Applications: No new applications. Stadnyk explained the hog farm permit expired and any further work will require them to reapply.

Out of County Travel: Stadnyk asked for approval to travel to Hayward on September 23rd for a drone demonstration. DuSell/Kalepp motion to approve out of county travel. Motion carried.

Shoreland Program Update: Stadnyk explained the success of the program with nearly 50 people contacting the department. Only 2 site visits are left for the remainder of the project. A total of 10 projects can be funded. Stadnyk plans on preparing a list of landowners to complete contracts. Many of the landowners favored placing log structures on their shoreline instead of rip rap. Overall, landowners are receptive of the county program.

Pulaski Lake Info: Stadnyk reported follow-up information about a landowner who had concerns with Pulaski Lake. A site visit was conducted to explain changes in the lake due to natural processes. The issue was addressed with the landowner. Stadnyk provided evidence to the committee about increasing rainfall and other factors determining the level of Pulaski Lake.

2023 Budget Discussion: Stadnyk clarified the new budget was adjusted through the Finance Department. A wage discussion will follow once the study is completed.

Purple Loosestrife Control Project: Stadnyk explained an upcoming project the LWCD office plans to undertake with DNR personnel to control purple loosestrife. This invasive plant was introduced in landscaping and is now climbing up Hwy 27. At this stage, the plant will be cut off and sprayed to reduce the spread along the highway. In the future, beetle control may be used to eradicate the species.

Adjourn: Meyer/Kalepp motion to adjourn at 9:02 am. Motion carried.

Minutes prepared by Rachel Hansen.