

MINUTES
 CONSERVATION, EDUCATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
 THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2015
 WOOD COUNTY COURTHOUSE, ROOM #114, WISCONSIN RAPIDS WI

Members Present: Hilde Henkel, Gerald Nelson, Robert Ashbeck, Kenneth Curry, Bill Leichtnam and Harvey Petersen

Member Excused:

Staff Present: Land Conservation Staff – Shane Wucherpfennig, Tracy Arnold, Adam Groshek and Lori Ruess

Others Present: Dillon Epping, Golden Sands RC&D, District #14 Supervisor Dennis Polach, District #17 Supervisor Joseph Zurfluh

1. **Call CEED Committee Meeting to Order.** Chairperson Hilde Henkel called the CEED meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.
2. **Public Comment.** Robert Ashbeck asked for an update on phosphorus loading to the Mill Creek Watershed. Shane explained; in the near future he will be working closely with Jason Grueneberg to schedule a roundtable discussion and invite Wood County Town Boards to attend.

Supervisor Joseph Zurfluh asked to speak when agenda item number five is discussed.

3. **Review Correspondence.** Tracy Arnold handed out a copy of the letter she mailed to Badger Sandstone, which listed everything that needs to be corrected/completed before she can sign-off on the final reclamation. This was a specific site that was addressed in the recent DNR audit report. A copy of the audit report was included in the October CEED and County Board packets.

4. Land Conservation.

- A. **Golden Sands RC&D Update – Dillon Epping.** Dillon Epping, AIS Coordinator for Portage, Waushara & Waupaca Counties introduced himself and explained he was attending the meeting because Chris Hamerla was unable to attend. Dillon gave a brief summary of the 2015 Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) educational programs that took place in Wood County. They included:

- a. Clean Boats Clean Waters watercraft inspections, 230 people contacted in 43.25 hours.
- b. Distribution of AIS material to local bait shops.
- c. Delivery of AIS identification book and two DVD's to Library.
- d. AIS presentation to Port Edwards School.
- e. AIS Booth during the WI Trappers Association Convention.
- f. Local Television and radio interviews covering Snapshot Day and purple loosestrife work for 2016.
- g. Inspections and replacement (if necessary) of AIS signs at boat landings.

Dillon also reviewed future AIS education opportunities for RC&D to work with Wood County. He stated the top three invasive species in Wood County are Eurasian watermilfoil, reed canary grass and purple loosestrife.

Ken Curry asked if there was any data on AIS indicating if species are increasing or decreasing. Dillon stated that there is no specific data that shows a decrease in AIS species, but it is an important effort and it is making a difference.

- B. **Open Bids for Weiler Dairy, LLC's East Side Feed Storage Leachate Runoff Collection Project and Approve Low Bid.** Chairperson Henkel opened the bids received for Weiler Dairy, LLC east side feed storage leachate runoff collection project. Bids were as follows: J&S Weiler Concrete - \$57,915.00 and Weiler Dairy, LLC by Russ Weiler - \$54,150.00. It was noted that both bids do not include a price for the control box.

Motion by Kenneth Curry to approve and accept the low bid in the amount of \$54,150 from Weiler Dairy, LLC for the purpose of determining cost-share for the Weiler Dairy, LLC east side feed storage leachate runoff collection project. Second by Bill Leichtnam. Motion carried unanimously.

- C. **Wildlife Damage Program Update – Tracy Arnold.** Tracy Arnold gave an update on the Wildlife Damage Abatement and Claims Program (WDACP). The WDACP is a program that assists farmers when wildlife damages their agricultural crops. The program provides damage prevention assistance and partial compensation to farmers when wild deer, bear, geese and

turkeys damage their agricultural crops. There are two enrollment options: managed access, which limits two hunters per 40 acres or open access which allows unlimited hunters. A list of farmers enrolled in the WDACP is available on the DNR website. Tracy is responsible for keeping the database up-to-date with Wood County enrollment information.

Fencing is an abatement measure that is used mostly for cranberry marshes in Wood County. Currently there are 32 fences in Wood County with one new one in progress. These fences are under contract for 15 years.

- D. **Approve 2015 Wildlife Damage Abatement and Claims Program Crop Prices.** Tracy Arnold provided a spreadsheet with 2015 statewide and local crop prices for the Committee to review. She collects crop prices throughout the year and calculates a yearly average to arrive at a price per bushel/ton to use for crop damage payments. The calculated averages are: field corn - \$ 3.58/bushel, soybeans - \$8.87/bushel, oats - \$2.61/bushel, other hay - \$83.28/ton and alfalfa - \$115.89/ton.

Motion by Gerald Nelson to approve the 2015 Wildlife Damage Abatement and Claims Program crop prices as presented. Second by Robert Ashbeck. Motion carried unanimously.

- E. **Provide the Committee with County Ag Statistical information.** Shane Wucherpfennig explained that he incorporated the Ag statistical information in the PowerPoint presentation that he will be presenting for agenda item F.
- F. **Review the Department Mission, Programs and Staffing Needs.** Shane Wucherpfennig presented a PowerPoint presentation outlining the Land Conservation Department's (LCD's) mission and an overview of current programs and services offered by the LCD. Informational slides in the presentation included:
- Mandated and non-mandated programs administered by the LCD
 - Wood County crop production and crop acreage
 - Wood County dairy farms
 - LCD program goals
 - The history of LCD
 - LCD funding

The presentation provided statistical information on crop production, dairy farms, programs, workload and FTEs. In 1982 the Land Conservation Department was established with 1.5 FTEs with just the basic Land Conservation Programs. In 1991 the Upper Yellow River Watershed and Port Edwards Groundwater programs were added as well as an additional 4.5 FTEs, for a total of 6 FTEs. In 1993 the Port Edwards Groundwater program ended and FTEs were reduced to 5. In 2000 the Land and Water Resource Management and the Nonmetallic Mining programs were added along with an additional FTE (6 FTEs). The current programs administered by the Land Conservation Department include: Farmland Preservation Program, Tree and Shrub program, Information and Education, Conservation Planning, Wildlife Damage Abatement and Claims, Land and Water Resource Management and Nonmetallic Mining. Shane added that these are the same programs that the Department administered in 2000 when the LCD had 6 FTEs and currently the LCD has 3.75 FTEs. Due to a shortage in FTEs the Land Conservation Department is not operating at full potential and he is proposing to increase the current Administrative Assistant's position from an 80% position to a full-time position (2015 hrs.) and create a new full-time Conservation Specialist position. With a full-time Administrative Assistant some of the clerical duties that are currently being covered by other staff could be shifted to the Administrative Assistant. The office would also have coverage until 4:30 p.m., especially important during the busy field season. Shane added that most of the additional hours for the Administrative Assistant position could be absorbed through grant money. He is proposing a full-time Conservation Specialist position to help with ArcGIS, Snap Plus, nutrient management, conservation planning, education and engineering assistance for the 2017 budget year. Lengthy discussion ensued.

Supervisor Zurfluh recommended, as a non-member of the CEED Committee, to immediately pursue a new full-time position.

Motion by Bill Leichtnam to approve the County Conservationist to prepare a position description for a newly created full-time position in the Land Conservation Department and present it to the CEED Committee for review at the December 2015 or January 2016 CEED meeting. Second by Kenneth Curry. Motion carried unanimously.

The Committee commended Wucherpfennig on his presentation and suggested that he email the PowerPoint presentation to the Executive Committee.

- G. **Discuss the Addition of "Water" to Land Conservation Department Title and Possible Action.** Tracy Arnold presented the idea to change the Land Conservation Department to the Land and Water Conservation Department, as water conservation is included in the LCD's Mission Statement. She added; many counties, including Portage County, have added "water" to their title. She contacted Peter Kastenholz and he didn't see an impediment from a legal perspective with adding water to the department title. Discussion ensued.

Motion by Gerald Nelson to change the Land Conservation Department title to Land and Water Conservation Department. Second by Bill Leichtnam. Motion carried unanimously.

Chairperson Henkel stated that Peter Kastenholz and Cindy Cepress should be contacted regarding the implementation of this name change and if there are any concerns with the implementation it should be brought to the attention of the CEED.

- H. **Discuss Don Aron Memorial Fund and Possible Action.** Tracy Arnold gave an update on the Don Aron Memorial Fund. Don was the first County Conservationist in Wood County. Upon his passing in 1993 a memorial fund was established by Don's family members. Individuals and agencies added to the fund; current value is approximately \$4,200. The intended use of the fund is to use the interest earned to provide annual scholarships to Natural Resource students or for environmental education. Due to low interest rates, the fund does not earn enough interest to provide an annual scholarship. The LCD and Finance Department would like to close out the memorial fund since it is not earning interest to support an annual scholarship. Tracy Arnold presented the following recommendations for use of the memorial fund.

- A legacy stone to be placed in the veteran memorial at the entrance of the Courthouse. (Don was a Vietnam Veteran).
- A scholarship for an outstanding LCD summer intern. Summer interns currently earn minimum wage.
- Donation to the Youth and Education Committee for the Discover Wisconsin Education Initiative.

Following her recommendations, Tracy showed a six minute clip of the Discover Wisconsin Education Initiative "Into the Outdoors". She stated it costs \$50,000 to produce one episode and currently Wisconsin Land + Water and its committees have raised \$15,000.

Ken Curry suggested that Don's widow be contacted before any decision is made on how to use the Don Aron Memorial Fund money. He personally knows the family and will contact them and update the CEED at a future meeting.

5. **Discuss Affiliation/Relationship with Judicial & Legislative Groundwater Sub-Committee.** Supervisor Zurfluh reported; the Judicial & Legislative Committee set up a Groundwater Sub-Committee. The sub-committee consists of Gerald Nelson as Chair, Bill Leichtnam, and Joseph Zurfluh. Supervisor Zurfluh added; with only three members on the committee, it poses difficulty talking about issues outside of meetings as two members equal a quorum. For the sub-committee to be effective it has to address groundwater and surface water issues. Therefore, Supervisor Zurfluh suggested the Groundwater sub-committee be a sub-committee of the CEED, due to the Ag connection, or part of the Health & Human Services Committee. A concern expressed by Chairperson Henkel was with the current workload, two committees would be a burden to the department's staff as they would have to free up time to attend more meetings. Following Kenneth Curry's recommendation, the consensus of the CEED Committee was to have Chairperson Henkel meet with Bill Clendenning, Chair of Judicial & Legislative Committee, Gerald Nelson, Chair of the Groundwater Sub-Committee and Lance Pliml, County Board Chairman to discuss this issue and bring back a proposal to the CEED.
6. **Schedule any Additional Meeting if Necessary.** No CEED meetings were scheduled at this time. Chairperson Henkel will schedule a meeting with Lance Pliml, Gerald Nelson and Bill Clendenning to discuss the affiliation of the Groundwater Sub-Committee.

7. Adjourn.

Motion by Kenneth Curry to adjourn at 12:40 p.m. Second by Gerald Nelson. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Minutes by Lori Ruess, Land Conservation Department
Review for submittal to County Board by Kenneth Curry (11-19-15)