

MANITOWOC COUNTY  
LAND CONSERVATION COMMITTEE  
Meeting Minutes

September 21, 2023  
County Office Complex, Rm 300

LCC Chair, Catherine Wagner called the meeting to order at 4:45 p.m.

**Roll Call:** Catherine Wagner, Ryan Phipps, Biff Hansen, Tim Jadowski, Lee Engelbrecht, Michael Slattery and Ted Hoffman.

**Also, in attendance were:** David Wetenkamp (SWCD), Brian Maedke (USDA/APHIS), Erin Hanson, Trenton Brenny, Katherine Wendorf, Mary Gansberg, Stephen Easterly and Joshua Weidenhoeft (WDNR)

**Agenda: Motion** to approve the agenda was made by Lee Engelbrecht and seconded by Biff Hansen. Motion carried unanimously.

**Minutes: Motion** was made by Biff Hansen and seconded by Ryan Phipps to approve the August 17, 2023 LCC minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

**Public Comment:** None

**LCC Presentation (WDNR Liaisons Meet-n-Greet):** (6) NE Area Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) staff came to meet and share their names, faces and what they provide in their positions related to Manitowoc County. Each staff member took 5-10 minutes for introductions and to share current duties, projects and commitments they have working with citizens, volunteer groups, farmers, agencies and local governments. Information was shared on topics related to CAFO farms, water resource management and monitoring, grants, complaints, spills and farm runoff compliance, managing state wildlife areas and game law enforcement. Supervisors and LCC members discussed issues related to CAFO farm animal units, complaints, water resources of Manitowoc County and Lake Michigan, and wildlife damage issues. The LCC Chairperson, Catherine Wagner, thanked all for attending and taking the time to present their information.

**Wildlife Damage Program/APHIS:** Brian Maedke updated the committee on current Manitowoc County landowners enrolled in the wildlife damage program and details of the various claims. Brian also asked to attend the next scheduled LCC meeting to present information on the 2024 budget, damage cutoff dates and also entering into a new 5-year agreement with USDA/APHIS for continued support with the Wildlife Damage Abatement and Claims Program.

**Budget Review(s):** Reviewed SWCD 2023 budget ending August 31, 2023. Department Director shared with the LCC current status of the operating budget and increased printing costs.

## SWCD Department Activities – Discussions

1. **2024 Budget** – The soil & water director shared with the LCC, budget figures for the proposed 2024 budget in relation to the current 2023 approved budget. Some revenues have changed due to reduced statewide DATCP grant funding and some expenses have changed and needed adjustment, but the bottom-line is no major changes to budget compared to 2023. The proposed 2024 SWCD budget has been submitted and is being reviewed by the Finance Director and County Executive. As submitted, the county levy impact is less than 2023. The proposed budget may change and stay tuned to the County Executive's 2024 Budget proposal for details.
2. **Producer Led Group Update (PLG)** – Manitowoc County SWCD, UW-Extension and (10) area farm producers have been working on an initiative to form an all-inclusive farm community group that will focus on mentoring, soil health, water quality and farm sustainability in the county to provide a pro-active approach to improving land, soil and water. Led by farmers, the (10) area producers have agreed to be members of the start-up group and invest time, equipment and funds to get the group started towards 501C3 status. The SWCD and UW have collaborated with the newly formed group to develop and apply for matching grant funds from the Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection (DATCP). The group selected Michael Slattery to be president at this time and has chosen to call the new group the, "Seven Rivers Soil Cooperative", based on having producer members located in all (7) of the county's main watersheds. The group has agreed to move ahead and form the group regardless of grant funding. Cathy Wagner invited Michael Slattery and the PLG Group to update the committee as things progress.
3. **PLG & Cellcom Green Gifts Grant(s)** – In cooperation with the new producer led group a grant for \$7,000 was applied for from DATCP. In an effort to promote and foster outreach and educational activities with schools, community and farm groups a grant for \$5000 was submitted under the Cellcom Green Gifts program to purchase materials, supplies and equipment to outfit an enclosed trailer into a mobile classroom.
4. **November LCC Presentation** – The LCC has agreed to have the Between-the-Lakes (BTL) farm demo manager, Steve Hoffman (InDepth Agronomy) and farm demo operator, Greg Gries (Liberty Land Farms) to attend, sharing their knowledge about the BTL Farm Demo Group and its accomplishments.
5. **FPP Update** – DATCP staff have shared pending changes to the Farmland Preservation Program (FPP) with SWCD staff. The (2) main changes are proposed tax credits being adjusted from \$7.50/ac to \$10.00/ac and that land currently enrolled in the program under solar farms may become ineligible for participation. This is tentative and is being discussed at the state level.
6. **Wisconsin Land & Water Conservation Association (WLWCA)** – Known as WI Land & Water, this organization supports land conservation staff, land conservation committees and many partners in conservation activities, training, area associations, state funding actions and legislative proposals for conservation related issues. The organization has asked the LCC members to help with strategic planning efforts by providing feedback by filling out the supplied paper or on-line survey to focus guidance on current and emerging conservation issues around the state.

**7. SWCD Events** – SWCD director shared information on the various local field days and community events listed in the agenda. Supervisor Ryan Phipps asked about current well contamination found and if information can be shared with the LCC on well testing results from 2023. About 115 wells were tested at the County Fair Booth and with community testing, over 300 well tests were conducted so far. Data and maps are being updated and will be sent to all LCC members when finished. LCC member Ted Hoffman, commented on possible initiatives to reach out to local high schools for educational outreach. SWCD director shared that school events and outreach has taken place at the university and at various schools. SWCD staff will continue this effort.

**8. Upcoming SWCD Events** – Local events that the SWCD will be conducting to provide education and outreach activities was shared as listed in the agenda.

**USDA/NRCS Cost-Share Contracts/Amendments/Agreements** – Information and details on the (7) CREP & CRP contracts signed by the department director was shared. **Motion** by Ted Hoffman and seconded by Michael Slattery to approve. Motion passed unanimously.

**SWCD Cost Share Contracts/Amendments/Agreements:** SWCD director submitted a detailed document listing (25) contracts for various bmp's for review and approval with signature from LCC Chair, Catherine Wagner. **Motion** by Ted Hoffman and seconded by Ryan Phipps to approve contracts. Motion carried unanimously.

**Animal Waste Ordinance (AWO):** SWCD has processed and approved (8) AWO Permits.

**Livestock Facility Licensing (LFL):** SWCD has approved (1) new LFL; (1) LFL modification is in review and (2) new LFL applications are being reviewed.

**Next Meeting Date(s) & Time:** November 16, 2023, 4:45 p.m.

**Adjournment:** **Motion** to adjourn was made by Biff Hansen and seconded by Tim Jadowski at 6:16 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
David Wetenkamp  
Department Director

Minutes recorded: David Wetenkamp