

**DRAFT**  
**Buffalo County Minutes**

**Committee/Board:** Land Conservation Committee

**Date of Meeting:** Thursday, February 14, 2019

**Electronic and Hardcopy Filing Date:** Monday, February 18, 2019

The regular meeting of the Land Conservation Committee was called to order at 3:00 p.m. by Chairperson Nettie Rosenow. Roll call showed that Don Black and David Linse were present for all or part of the meeting. Don Hillert was excused. Others present for all or part of the meeting: Carrie Olson, Dennis Reimers.

**Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes:** Black made a motion to approve the December 13, 2018 minutes as presented, seconded by Linse. All in favor. Carried.

**Public Comments regarding posted agenda items:** None

**Agency Reports:** Dennis Reimers, NRCS, presented the NRCS Report. Reimers provided copies of the 2018 Annual Wisconsin NRCS Report. The EQIP Conservation program was discussed, including funding for activities such as: manure storage closures, grass waterways, conservation dams, and forest management practices. He also explained that a third signup would be available for farmstead projects, soil health initiatives, and Trout Unlimited funded stream restoration projects, with applications due May 17, 2019. He answered questions on cover crops, carbon sequestration, and soil health.

**The State of America's Farmland report:** An American Farmland Trust report titled, "Farms Under Threat: The State of America's Farmland" was reviewed. Chair Rosenow asked Reimers about the recommendation from the report to utilize the federal Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) and asked how it benefits farmers. Reimers explained it is a program that protects farmland from development through financial and technical assistance, along with a cooperating entity and provided examples. Olson described the upcoming UW-Extension Land Lease education program which will provide an example cropland long-term lease to non-farmer landowners that accounts for conservation practices on the land.

Committee members commented on several pressures to agricultural land, including farming steep slopes, CRP land conversion, consolidation, climate change, and soil loss from farming highly erodible land. Committee members expressed concern with overproduction and agreed that county level data about the loss of land will be important in the future. Recommendations from various committee members included raising the awareness of agriculture's importance, encouraging farmers to continue farming, and promoting a culture change that prioritizes agriculture.

**Rose Valley Watershed Project:** A Resolution to Support Rose Valley Watershed Program funding was presented by Olson. The program would utilize existing CapX2020 allocated funds from the County Flood Repair program and use it towards constructing new watershed dams in the Rose Valley Watershed. Approximately \$27,500 unspent funds are available and proposed to be used to protect the Rose Valley pond restoration. A large amount of sediment continues depositing into the recently

restored pond. Funds would be matched by the Town of Belvidere's Rose Valley watershed program as well as from the existing state and federal conservation cost-share programs. A \$2,000 Donation from Dairyland Power Cooperative's Conservation Fund was recently awarded in support of this program. Other funding opportunities and conservation practice needs were discussed.

Motion by Black, seconded by Linse to approve the Resolution to Support Rose Valley Watershed Project Funding. All in favor. Carried.

**Rose Valley Dam Repair Update:**

Ms. Olson provided an update on the Rose Valley Dam repair project. Over the past two months, a Change Order was approved by all parties to reflect new contract times and costs. All supplies and materials for the dam repair are stored at the Buffalo County Highway Shop. The temporary suspension of work will remain in place until road bans have been lifted. The updated contract deadline has been approved with a final completion date before May 31, 2019.

**Farmland Preservation Program Update:**

Ms. Olson provided an update on the County Farmland Preservation (FP) Program. Landowners have been inquiring about participation in the FP program and staff have been performing inspections. The Land Conservation webpage has been updated to reflect changes to the new FP Program. Farmers that do not have a nutrient management plan (NMP) will need one in order to meet the compliance requirements and have been working to get the necessary plan components.

**Conservation Cost Share Projects:** The January-February Cost Share Project Report was presented. The county flood repair cost share program included 5 Grade Stabilization Dams cleaned-out for 2 landowners. Invoices for completed projects under the repair program were submitted for: John Tietz and Wayne Flury. The landowner portion paid at \$11,383.99 and county share due is \$9,383.99. Motion by Linse, seconded Black to approve and pay for the Cost Share Projects as presented. All in favor. Carried.

**WI Land and Water Updates:** The West Central Area Business Meeting was held on Monday, February 11 in Eau Claire and included presentations from Pepin County and Eau Claire County Health Departments on their well testing programs.

**County Conservationists Report:**

- Buffalo County Bluff Prairie Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 28<sup>th</sup>
- Nutrient Management Farmer Education workshops began today, Thursday, February 14<sup>th</sup>

**Chairperson Report** No Report.

**Public Comments Not Relating to the Agenda** None given.

The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, March 7<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m.

**The meeting was adjourned** at 5:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carrie Olson  
County Conservationist