

Draft  
Buffalo County Minutes

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**Committee:** Land Conservation & Ag and Extension Committee (LCAE)  
**Date of Meeting:** Monday, October 4, 2021

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**Call to Order:** Meeting called to order by Dwight Ruff, Chair, at 6:00pm

**Members Present:** Dwight Ruff, John Sendelbach, Steve Nelson, Brad Schmidtknecht and William Bruegger.

**Others Present for All or Part of the Meeting:** Alec Sundelius, Mary Campbell Wood, Carl Duley, Annie Lisowski, Pat Malone, Tim Wucherer, Joe Krumrie, Nels Anderson, and Jacob Hernandez. Present virtually - Sonya Hansen

**Public Comment Regarding Agenda Items:** None

**Review/Discussion/Action - Minutes of the August 9, 2021, Land Conservation & Ag and Extension Committee Meeting:** Motion by Mr. Brad Schmidtknecht seconded by Mr. William Bruegger to approve the August LCAE committee meeting minutes as printed. Motion carried.

**Introduction of Jacob Hernandez, Private Land Biologist USFWS:** Mr. Jacob Hernandez, the private land biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) introduced himself to the committee. He is working with Joe Krumrie on a number of land and water related restoration projects with private landowners. He provides technical advice, cost sharing, and other assistance. He continues to work with landowners over the agreement period.

**Review/Discussion/Action - County Budget/Financial Plan for the Wildlife Abatement Program and Venison Donation Program:** Mr. Alec Sundelius shared his proposed county budget financial plan for Buffalo County. The only difference between this year's proposal and last year's is a slight cost of living increase. The contract includes participation in the venison donation program. There is no expense to the county if there are wildlife damage claims. The animals that are covered by this program include elk, turkeys, Canada geese, deer, and black bear. Mr. Sundelius recommends the committee approve the proposed budget. Motion by Mr. John Sendelbach with a second by Mr. Brad Schmidtknecht to approve the 2022 county budget and financial plan for the wildlife damage abatement program. The roll call vote was unanimous.

**Review/Discussion/Action - Update on Wildlife Abatement Program:** Mr. Sundelius doesn't anticipate any claims this year. Currently 2 deer damage and four bear damage are enrolled in the program and are following Mr. Sundelius' abatement recommendations. There is a bill in the state senate that would eliminate the county role in the abatement program. The legislature has not yet acted.

**Review/Discussion/Action - 2022 136 Contract between University of Wisconsin Madison Division of Extension and Buffalo County:** Ms. Malone presented the 2022 136 contract to the committee. The only real change is that the flat fee for educators has increased to \$43,600. Motion by

Mr. William Bruegger with a second by John Sendelbach to approve the 136 Contract as presented and enter into an agreement with UW-Madison Division of Extension. The motion was approved unanimously on a roll call vote.

**Educator Reports:** The written report is available in the Extension Office. Annie Lisowski led the group through a STEM activity using cyphers. This activity is one way to begin preparing students for further education in coding. The rest of her efforts are summarized in the Extension report.

Mary Wood shared an update as well. She is one of the key educators revising a national evidence-based program called “Parenting Inside Out” to a jail setting. The program will also incorporate a literacy component. She informed the committee that the local team has completed their TAD grant application. This grant includes an innovative component that addresses family impacts. Mr. Ruff praised this addition to the grant. Ms. Wood also noted that the Reality Check team will be meeting this month to discuss how to meet the schools’ needs for financial education. Check the report for other highlights.

Carl Duley is wrapping up his alternative crop projects. They will be adding some new varieties of winter crops. Mr. Duley also touched base with Mr. Sendelbach about harvest of his corn, bean, and nitrogen test plots. He is finishing up applications for his three county fiber hemp project. He did note that malting barley is in very tight supply. Other highlights are in his written report.

Mr. Steve Nelson requested that we add an explanation and discussion of the Agriculture Institute’s regional educator program to our next meeting agenda.

**Review/Discussion/Action – Update on Buffalo White Sands (BWS):** Resource Management Specialist Tim Wucherer informed the committee that the department received the footprint on the mining area and operation from Milestone Materials but has yet to receive it from Buffalo White Sands. This request was originally made at the July 27th meeting with Roberta Walls on behalf of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Dwight Ruff and Timothy Wucherer on behalf of Buffalo County Land Conservation, John Behling on behalf of BWS, and Candy Anderson and Tony Tomashek on behalf of Milestone Materials. An extension was granted to September 28<sup>th</sup>. He has been in contact with the Department of Natural Resources regarding options available for enforcement. A motion was made by Mr. Brad Schmidtkecht seconded by Mr. Steve Nelson to notify Buffalo White Sands through their attorney to provide an updated BWS footprint of operation to the Buffalo County Land Conservation Department by October 15, 2021, or they would be considered in violation and would be charged a forfeiture of \$100.00 per day. Motion carried.

**Review/Discussion/Action – Xerces Society Funds:** Conservation Technician Joe Krumrie informed the committee that he was contacted by the Xerces Society which is a science-based conservation organization that promotes pollinator health, endangered species conservation and pesticide free habitat. They are a non-profit organization and have funds available to sponsor projects. Technician Joe Krumrie indicated that these funds could be used for Bluff Prairie Restoration Projects to maximize funding. A motion was made by Mr. Brad Schmidtkecht seconded by Mr. William Bruegger to accept funds from the Xerces Society Fund for future projects to be identified by the department following department protocol for approval. Motion Carried.

**Review/Discussion/Action – Award of Bid on PL-566 Maintenance:** Conservation Technician Joe Krumrie requested bids for mowing maintenance for identified PL-566 structures that the County is responsible to maintain. He received bids from the following:

Highway Department - \$21.45/hour for personnel and \$51.90/hour for machinery (Exact amount of time needed to complete the work is not known by the Land Conservation Department.

J & J Diggers for entire project for \$2,500.00

Cole Olson for \$7,750.00

A motion was made by Mr. Steve Nelson seconded by Mr. Brad Schmidtkecht to accept the bid from J & J Diggers in the amount of \$2,500.00 and the Land Conservation to enter a contract with them with an itemized statement as to the hours devoted to each dam. Motion Carried.

**Review/Discussion/Action – Resolution to authorize Unspent CAPX2020 Funding Under Resolutions #17-05-01 & #17-12-02 to be Reallocated to PL-566 Operation and Maintenance Fund:** Chair Dwight Ruff informed the members that the County is responsible for PL-566 maintenance and that there are a couple of dams that will need repair in the very near future. The County was also informed that NRCS will no longer be doing inspections for the County and that the County will need to budget for these inspections. He stated that this resolution would transfer the unused portion of prior conservation projects to be reallocated to these maintenance issues. CAPX2020 funds were to be used for conservation projects. A motion was made by Mr. John Sendelbach seconded by Mr. William Bruegger to approve the resolution. A roll vote was taken: Mr. Steve Nelson – yes, Mr. William Bruegger – yes, Mr. Dwight Ruff- yes, Mr. John Sendelbach – yes and Mr. Brad Schmidtkecht – yes. Motion Carried.

**Review/Discussion/Action – Resolution to Enter into Repayment Agreement with Tell Farms, Inc. Using CAPX2020 Funds:** Chair Dwight Ruff explained that this project was awarded a Targeted Runoff Management (TRM) Grant in which the landowner signed a cost-share agreement of 10%. This project was very complex and challenging as it had started with Land Conservationist Carrie Olson and not all the paperwork had been completed prior to her leaving her position. When reimbursement was requested, there was an expenditure for curtains that was not allowed under the grant. Buffalo County is currently owed \$6,021.39 and was attempting to work with the landowner for repayment. The purpose of this document is to place into writing the contractual arrangement for repayment by Tell Farms to Buffalo County. Resource Management Specialist Tim Wurcherer stated that he had contacted the owners and that they were to get back to him as to what they felt that they could afford to repay prior to the meeting but had not.

A motion was made by Mr. William Bruegger seconded by Mr. Brad Schmidtkecht to amend the repayment of the resolution to be a six month note and approve the resolution with the amendment. A Roll Call Vote was taken: Mr. Brad Schmidtkecht – yes, Mr. William Bruegger – yes, Mr. Dwight Ruff – yes, Mr. Steve Nelson – yes and Mr. John Sendelbach – yes. Motion carried.

**Review/Discussion/Action: South Nelson Watershed Repairs/Maintenance:** Conservation Technician Joe Krumrie informed the members that he is working with Peter Wurzer from DATCP on this project. There are two structures, a PL-566 dam and a CCC structure that need repairs. There is concrete repairs and sediment clean up that needs to be done. He has not received bids for the CCC structure nor is the landowner willing to cost share on the project. The projected costs for the PL-566 dam repairs are around \$15,000 of which the County is responsible. It has been

recommended that both repairs need to be done. Technician Joe Krumrie indicated that timeline for getting the repairs done yet this fall may be difficult due contractor availability. A motion was made by Mr. Brad Schmidtknecht seconded by Mr. Steve Nelson to table this matter for time to get cost estimates for the repairs of the CCC structure to bring back to the committee. Motion Carried.

**Review/Discussion/Action – Acceptance of Hazelnut Grant Award:** Resource Management Specialist Tim Wurcherer informed the members in February of 2021 this \$50,000 grant was written but not granted. Funds for this grant come from unused SEG appropriations and there are no matching fund requirements. He indicated that Buffalo County has been verbally notified that this grant is approved and that the formal notification will be received after the committee meeting date. The original grant was working with the City of Alma and may need to be modified to work with landowners. Agricultural Agent Carl Duley explained the need for work to be completed yet this fall and Hazelnuts providing a new agricultural opportunity for landowners. Resource Management Specialist Tim Wurcherer was requesting permission from the committee to accept the grant if awarded so that work can commence timely. A motion was made by Mr. Brad Schmidtknecht seconded by Mr. Steve Nelson to accept the Hazelnut Grant award with no cost-share from the County. Motion Carried.

**Review/Discussion/Action – Update on Water Sampling Program:** A request was made by the Administrative Coordinator to the Public Health Department to provide an update on the list of Wisconsin ID Wells as they have access to this information. As of this date, no response has been received. A motion was made by Mr. Steve Nelson seconded by Mr. John Sendelbach to table this matter to allow time for additional information to be gathered. Motion Carried.

**Review/Discussion/Action – Authorization to Apply for the Surface Water Grant:** Resource Management Specialist Tim Wurcherer stated that we previously have a surface water grant with DNR for AIS work done with Beaver Creek. This application is due on November 4<sup>th</sup>. The County received approximately \$10,500.00 last year. The goal of the grant is to improve surface water quality through detection, prevention, and control of Aquatic Invasive Species and monitoring water quality conditions. Buffalo County has designated Beaver Creek Reserve as its agent. There are no known matching fund requirements. A motion was made by Mr. William Bruegger seconded by Mr. Brad Schmidtknecht to approve the Land Conservation Department to move forward with application of the Surface Water Grant. Motion Carried.

**Agency Report:** No additional reports.

**Chairperson Report:** Chair Dwight Ruff indicated that additional interviews were in the process of being scheduled and that the members will be notified of the date and time in the event they want to participate.

**Conservationist Report:** Interim Land Conservationist Nels Anderson reported that he applied and received approval for an extension on the presentation of the Land and Water Use Plan to February. He stated that this was initially planned for December of this year. The extension would allow the new Land Conservationist to review the plan as well.

**Review/Discussion/Action – Determine next committee meeting date:** The next meeting is scheduled for November 1, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. Mr. Brad Schmidtknecht indicated that he may not be able to attend in person.

**Public Comments:** Mr. Steve Nelson stated that the Outdoor Recreational Plan has been completed and that the next step would be to present this plan to the County Board of Supervisors. Mississippi River Regional Planning has complied this report with county input.

**Adjournment:** A motion was made by Mr. William Bruegger seconded by Mr. Brad Schmidtknecht to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m. Motion Carried.

Submitted By:

Sonya J. Hansen, Recording Secretary