



Winnebago County

The Wave of the Future

**LAND CONSERVATION COMMITTEE (LCC) MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, APRIL 6, 2026**

A. Call to Order

Convene:

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Farrey at 9:00am

Present:

- **LCC Members:** Bruce Bohn (via teams), Chuck Farrey, Kristl Laux, Timothy Macho, Dan Stokes & Doug Zellmer
- **LWCD Staff:** Chad Casper, Jody Bezio
- **Other(s) present:** Levi Schultz, NRCS, Mark Van Der Wegen, raSmith Engineering
- **Absent:** Doug Nelson

B. Approval of Minutes

1. February 2, 2026, Meeting Minutes

*A **ZELLMER / MACHO** motion to approve the minutes passed 5-0*

C. Public Comments on Agenda Items

None

D. Agency Reports

Levi Schultz, NRCS provided an update on the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), informing the committee that the program is currently in the contracting phase. A total of 42 applications were submitted, of which approximately 15 were selected for funding.

E. Director's Report

Director Casper thanked the committee for their service during the current term and recognized retiring members Doug Zellmer (4 years) and Chuck Farrey (24 years) for their years of dedicated contribution.

1. Samer's Bay Project Update

Director Casper provided an update on the Samer's Bay project. Favorable ice conditions earlier in the season initially suggested that ice-based construction would be feasible; however, a brief period of 50-degree temperatures and thunderstorms compromised the ice and halted those plans. Despite this setback, tree drop work was successfully completed

using available grant funds. The next anticipated construction window is after August 21, at which time work can proceed by barge.

Director Casper also provided an update on grant extensions for this project, noting that one grant has been extended through the end of August and that it appears likely a second grant will also receive an extension.

2. Annual Tree Sale

Director Casper informed the committee that the annual Tree Sale, held in partnership with the DNR, is taking place this week. Approximately 27,000 trees will be picked up locally, with an additional 80,000 delivered directly to one of the planting sites, totaling just over 100,000 trees distributed in Winnebago County this year. Tree planters and planting supplies are available for rent/purchase from the LWCD.

3. 2025 Annual Report

Director Casper shared the department's 2025 Annual Report, highlighting the significant amount of grant and community funding secured this year to support conservation efforts across the county.

4. Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

Director Casper reviewed the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and reported that there is a perpetual easement site that is in violation of its buffer requirements. The department will work with the landowner to reestablish the boundary and restore the buffer, and is coordinating with DATCP on potential enforcement steps if compliance is not achieved.

5. NR 151 Progress and Resource Analysis

Director Casper informed the committee of the NR151 Progress and Resource Analysis, a statewide initiative led by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP), and the Wisconsin Land+Water Conservation Association. The effort will assess overall compliance with NR151 (Agricultural Performance Standards) across the state.

In addition to evaluating current compliance levels, the analysis aims to identify potential gaps, including staffing and funding needs, as part of an ongoing review of NR151 implementation and effectiveness. Winnebago County has eight randomly selected sites (four livestock operations and four cropping operations) at which the LWCD will be required to conduct compliance assessments as part of the analysis.

F. Committee Chair's Report

Chairman Farrey announced that Bruce Bohn and Dan Stokes were reappointed to the LCC for a two-year term.

Chairman Farrey provided an update on the Winnebago County Waterways program, noting that the annual meeting typically held in January with the multi-county Executive Committee has not yet occurred, despite Farrey's efforts to get a meeting scheduled. He reported that the delay is due to one participating county's objection to the current reporting structure.

Chairman Farrey reviewed the program structure, which was established through a 2017 intergovernmental agreement to contract with a nonprofit organization to promote regional conservation efforts and secure grant funding. The Fox-Wolf Watershed Alliance currently holds the contract and, according to Farrey, has been a strong partner. Farrey explained that a main purpose of the annual Executive Committee meeting is for the nonprofit to present its work plan for the upcoming year. The county that has raised concerns has proposed shifting this annual reporting

function from the Executive Committee (comprised of County Executives, County Board Chairs, and LCC Chairs) to the Steering Team (comprised of LWCD directors and other key stakeholders).

Chairman Farrey expressed concerns with the proposed change, emphasizing that oversight of public funds provided to nonprofit organizations should remain with the governing body (County Board/County Executive) to ensure alignment with legislative intent and priorities.

As this was Chairman Farrey's final meeting prior to retirement, he noted that this issue will be carried forward to the incoming LCC Chair, with support from Director Casper, for further consideration and follow-up.

G. Business Items

Action may be taken on any business items.

1. Progress report/update on the Municipal Separate Stormwater Sewer System (MS4) Permit
Director Casper noted that raSmith has been contracted starting in 2025 to oversee the county's MS4 permit and related activities. Mark Van Der Wegen of raSmith provided an overview of the Wisconsin DNR MS4 program and presented the annual report summarizing required activities completed in Winnebago County.

2. Discussion on the Advancing Markets for Producers Grant

Director Casper shared a presentation from the Fox-Wolf Watershed Alliance (FWWA) on the Advancing Markets for Producers (AMP) grant which is replacing the former Climate Smart grant that was discontinued in early 2025. Grant funding under the re-brand is available through August 2028, with FWWA serving as the administrator. The grant provides 100% cost-sharing, along with additional incentives, for select conservation practices. The LWCD will help promote the program in Winnebago County and assist landowners with submitting applications to FWWA. Engineered practices will require technical services, and landowners will be referred to county LWCDs and/or private providers to obtain them. Landowners are eligible for full (100%) reimbursement under the grant for approved technical service costs.

Director Casper requested guidance on whether the LWCD should assess fees for technical services related to this grant and proceed with drafting a fee schedule. Any proposed schedule would be developed in coordination with Corporation Counsel and would require approval by the LCC, Personnel & Finance (P&F), and the full County Board. Chairman Farrey conducted a voice poll of the committee for their opinion on the matter. The majority expressed support for looking into a fee and requested that Director Casper proceed with the collection of additional information to bring back to the committee for further discussion, including proposed rates, the development process, and options for sunseting the fee at the conclusion of the grant period. Supervisor Laux abstained.

3. Action Item - LWCD Spirit Fund Program Cost-Share Agreements (CSAs) – SFP-BMP-26-04, Anne and Gary Lerch Rain Garden Project and SFP-BMP-26-05, Bridgewood Holdings of Neenah LLC Rain Garden Project

*Following a review of the CSAs, a **ZELLMER / STOKES motion** to approve LWCD Spirit Fund Program Cost-Share Agreements (CSAs) – SFP-BMP-26-04, Anne and Gary Lerch Rain Garden Project and SFP-BMP-26-05, Bridgewood Holdings of Neenah LLC Rain Garden Project **passed 5-0**.*

4. Review Land & Water Conservation Department Project Lists
The LCC reviewed and acknowledged the new projects on the lists.

H. Adjourn

*A **ZELLMER / STOKES** motion made to adjourn the meeting at 10:31am passed 5-0.*

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