



Winnebago County

The Wave of the Future

**LAND CONSERVATION COMMITTEE (LCC) MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, AUGUST 4, 2025**

A. Call to Order

Convene:

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

Present:

- **LCC Members:** Bruce Bohn, Chuck Farrey, Kristl Laux, Tim Macho, Doug Nelson, Dan Stokes & Doug Zellmer
- **LWCD Staff:** Chad Casper, Director, Jody Bezio, Administrative Associate
- **Other(s) present:** Levi Schultz, NRCS, Gordon Hintz, Winnebago County Executive
- **Absent:** None

B. Confirm meeting/agenda has been properly public noticed in accordance with County policy.

Chairman Farrey confirmed with Director Casper that the meeting had been properly public noticed.

C. Approval of Minutes

1. July 7, 2025, Meeting Minutes

*A **ZELLMER/NELSON** motion to approve the minutes **passed 7-0**.*

D. Public Comments on Agenda Items

None.

E. Agency Reports

Levi Schultz, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), reported that the NRCS is planning an organizational restructuring. Specific details of the reorganization are not yet available at the local office level. Schultz will provide further information once the plan has been officially rolled out from the federal level.

F. Director's Report

1. Soil Health Field Day

Director Casper invited LCC members to attend the upcoming Soil Health Field Day, hosted by the LWCD on August 21 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Todd Messerschmidt's farm, located at the corner of Highway 44 and County Road FF in Oshkosh. Lunch will be provided.

Topics will include weed management, combine cleanout, legume cover crops, an update on the Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Program (NOPP), a discussion with the Muddy Bottom

Farmers producer-led watershed group, and an overview of Winnebago County's Soil Health Challenge program. Presenters include staff from UW-Madison Division of Extension.

2. Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration (NRDA)
Director Casper provided an update on the NRDA Grant, a federal grant previously awarded to the LWCD for the breakwall project on Lake Winneconne. Although the funds had been placed on hold by the federal government, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has now confirmed approval, and an updated award letter has been issued. Director Casper reviewed the next steps in the project and answered questions from the committee about the winter construction process for installing a breakwall.
3. Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Permit (MS4)
Director Casper explained that the LWCD has historically managed Winnebago County's MS4 permit on behalf of the Highway Department. He reported that the Highway Department is in the process of hiring a consultant to assume responsibility for managing the permit going forward, with a request for proposals (RFP) expected to be issued this week. The LWCD will continue to oversee the illicit discharge portion of the permit.
4. County Corner
Director Casper shared examples of the "County Corner," a front-page ad space in several local newspapers that the County has utilized this year. The LWCD has been featured twice, once in May and most recently on July 23. Bezio, Administrative Associate, informed the committee that the LWCD will have one additional ad space this year to promote Plat Book sales coinciding with the publication of the new 2026 edition.

G. Committee Chair's Report

1. Waterways Program and Conservation Project Permitting

Chairman Farrey updated the committee on concerns that the DNR is not recognizing certain federal exemptions for farmland practices in their permitting process. As Chair of the WCA Agriculture and Environmental Land Use Steering Committee, he added the issue to the committee's agenda. WCA staff met with the DNR, and Tom Nedland (DNR) gave a presentation to the steering committee. Nedland stated that the DNR's attorneys' are of the opinion that current state law already addresses these exemptions, and therefore no new administrative rule is necessary.

Chairman Farrey expressed disagreement, stating that the response does not adequately address local permitting challenges. Director Casper and LCC Member Stokes shared a current example involving difficulties with a grassed waterway project on the Stokes Farm. Executive Hintz informed the committee that his office has also reached out to contacts in Madison to request assistance in addressing the DNR permitting issues currently being experienced.

H. Business Items

Action may be taken on any business items.

1. Request Authority to Apply for and Accept a Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grant
*Following a brief review of the status and progress of the "Muddy Bottom Farmers" Producer-Led Watershed Group, a **NELSON/LAUX motion** to recommend authorizing the LWCD to apply for and accept a Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grant **passed 7-0**. The LCC forwards this*

recommendation to the Personnel & Finance Committee, and subsequently to the County Board for final approval.

2. Action Item - Winnebago County Water Quality Improvement Program (CSAs) – 25-08, Marohn Farms Inc., Waterway System and Wetland Restoration Project
*Following a review of the CSAs, a **BOHN/STOKES motion** to approve CSA 25-08, Marohn Farms Inc., Waterway System and Wetland Restoration project **passed 7-0.***
3. Action Item - LWCD Spirit Fund Program Cost-Share Agreements (CSAs) – SFP-BMP-25-15, Tom Trevarthen Well Abandonment Project
*Following a review of the CSAs, a **STOKES/MACHO motion** to approve CSA SFP-BMP-25-15, Tom Trevarthen Well Abandonment project **passed 7-0.***
4. Review Land & Water Conservation Department Project Lists
Director Casper reported that nearly all \$88,000 budgeted for the 2025 Water Quality Improvement Program (WQIP) has been allocated to Cost-Share Agreements (CSAs) for conservation projects. He emphasized the importance of the Spirit Fund Program (SFP) in bridging funding needs through the end of the year. Casper also noted that his 2026 budget request includes an increase in WQIP funding from \$88,000 to \$100,000.

The LCC reviewed and acknowledged the new projects on the lists.

I. Adjourn

A motion made by NELSON/BOHN to adjourn the meeting at 9:39am passed 7-0.

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