



Wisconsin Land+Water Conservation Association

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WI Land+Water Legislative/Administrative Committee Guiding Principles and Policies

Mission: Lead Wisconsin Land+Water (WI Land+Water) activities related to conservation legislation and rule-making, and the administration of county land and water programs.

Committee Membership/Chair: A diversity of membership among Land Conservation Committee (LCC) and Land Conservation Department (LCD) representatives around the state is preferred, however, not required. Each Committee member must represent the entire state in their deliberations. Committee membership will be reconfirmed at the first meeting of the Committee following April county board elections of even-numbered years. At that time, Committee members shall select a Committee Chair/Vice Chair, appoint a Secretary, and commit to a two-year cycle for the Committee. The Committee may amend their membership during the two-year cycle at their discretion.

Advisors: Due to the diversity of legislative and administrative issues facing counties, the committee will call upon the best available experts for the specific issue under consideration. Advisors shall have no voting privileges.

Legislative Guiding Principles

1. Nonpoint Pollution Performance Standards
 - a. Support science-based *minimum* state nonpoint pollution performance standards for both agricultural and non-agricultural sources to meet clean water goals.
 - b. Support targeted performance standards in areas where implementation of nonpoint pollution performance standards has not resulted in achievement of water quality goals.
 - c. Support other approaches toward meeting water quality goals, such as Total Maximum Daily Loads and phosphorus compliance tools (watershed adaptive management, nutrient pollutant trading, Multi-Discharger Variance, etc.).
 - d. Support continuous peer-reviewed research, monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of state nonpoint pollution performance standards at meeting clean water goals.
2. County Land and Water Resource Management (LWRM) Plans
 - a. Support the LWRM Plan as a locally led foundational planning tool for county conservation program planning, including the implementation of nonpoint pollution performance standards.
 - b. Promote maximum flexibility in LWRM Plan content and format as long as they meet minimum state planning standards.

3. Program Implementation

- a. Promote cost-effective conservation laws and program policies that recognize and support the diversity of conservation issues and priorities that exist throughout the state.
- b. Encourage the integration of federal, state and local program implementation efforts into a seamless conservation program at the local level, including data sharing.
- c. Support maximum local control in implementing conservation programs, including voluntary and regulatory approaches.

4. Conservation Program Funding

- a. Promote a sustainable funding source for county conservation programs.
- b. Promote grants for county-led conservation programs such as watershed protection, nonpoint pollution prevention and abatement, surface/groundwater monitoring, point/nonpoint pollutant trading, invasive species control, shoreland corridor management and restoration, farmland preservation, woodland management, wetland restoration, wildlife habitat management, wildlife damage and abatement, storm water management, mine reclamation, conservation education, and conservation professional training.
- c. Support designated funding sources (including non-bonding sources) to bolster county conservation program implementation efforts statewide.
- d. Support the existing state statutory goal of providing minimum base level funding for an average of three conservation staff per county at a cost-share rate of 100/70/50% to implement county LWRM plans [per s. 92.14(6) Wis. Stats].
- e. Support only policies that promote equitable distribution of funding across counties, and oppose any policies that benefit certain counties at the financial expense of others. Support additional “new” funding sources for specific counties, once statutory funding obligations have been satisfied.

Administrative Guiding Principles

1. Encourage program cost-effectiveness and avoid unnecessary administrative work.
2. Recognize that the diversity of the state’s resource and political landscape often requires different approaches to the same problem.
3. Acknowledge that we can all learn from each other and avoid making the same mistakes.
4. Encourage program accountability through GIS-based progress tracking systems (i.e. site evaluations completed, BMPs installed, compliance verifications, etc.), in-field monitoring (water quality, AIS, water quantity, etc.) and meaningful annual reports.
5. Recognize that maximizing efficiencies and focusing on long-term impacts will need to be a priority as demand will outpace available funding.

Major Functions and Activities of the Committee

1. Identify law and policy changes that are needed to improve land and water conservation programs and their delivery, and develop and implement strategies to make it happen.
2. Evaluate any legislative, administrative rule or policy changes that affect county land and water conservation programs, and develop and deliver position statements on behalf of WI Land+Water.

3. Advise the Executive Director on lobbying strategies, assist in the implementation phase, and monitor progress.
4. Make recommendations to the Board of Directors on members to represent WI Land+Water on external legislative or administrative rule committees, and report back with them to learn about their progress and assist in deliberations.
5. Facilitate opportunities for LCD and LCC members to meet and discuss common program administration issues and lessons learned, solve problems, or improve program services.
 - a. Provide input to Executive Director on semi-annual County Conservationist meetings.
 - b. Provide support to Professional Improvement and Technical committees on topics related to administrative and legislative sessions at the Annual Conference.
 - c. Create opportunities for new employees and staff to learn from the experiences of their experienced counterparts in different counties.

Roles of WI Land+Water Staff, Committee Chair and Committee Members and Related Policies

WI Land+Water Executive Director

1. Advise the Committee Chair on meeting agendas, prepare to discuss agenda topics, distribute materials as needed, and participate in all Committee meetings, except in casting votes.
2. Assist the Committee Secretary in documenting key discussions and Committee decisions in meeting minutes.
3. Advise the Committee on related law and policy issues, and recommend WI Land+Water positions and lobbying strategies.
4. Identify agencies and organizations who share similar positions and guiding principles of the Committee, and develop relationships with key contacts (“partners”).
5. Implement Committee decisions and strategies using best professional judgement, and represent the positions of the Committee working closely with contracted lobbyists, partners, and the Committee Chair. It is understood that the ED has some level of discretion to move forward with timely decision-making on legislative/policy issues.
6. Advise the Committee Chair on any changes in strategies that may be needed as an issue unfolds or evolves in the legislative or rule making process.
7. Work with the Committee Chair in providing the Committee regular updates on activities and any changes in strategies that have been implemented.
8. The ED may appoint other WI Land+Water staff to assist in some of the duties described above.

Committee Chair (or Vice Chair in absence of Chair)

1. Schedule meetings, prepare all meeting agendas and email meeting appointments and related materials to all Committee members at least one week before each meeting.
2. Chair the meeting, ensuring an equal opportunity for Committee members to provide input.
3. Seek consensus from Committee members on position statements, policies, and lobbying strategies. If consensus is not possible, seek “substantial agreement”, where all members may not agree on specifics, but will agree to support the decision in general. If substantial agreement is not possible, facilitate a vote on the topic following Robert’s Rules of Order.
4. Coordinate with the Executive Director on implementing Committee decisions and staying within approved Committee budgets, including contracted lobbying services.
5. Approve any changes in strategies that may be needed as an issue unfolds or evolves in the legislative or rule making process.

6. Work with the Executive Director in providing the Committee regular updates on activities and any changes in strategies that have been implemented.

Vice Chair

1. Perform the duties of the Committee Chair, in absence of Chair.

Secretary

1. Record meeting minutes, being sure to capture Committee Member attendance, significant policy discussions, Committee decisions, and any applicable motions or vote tallies.
2. Submit draft minutes to the Chair at least two weeks before the next scheduled Committee meeting.
3. If unable to attend a Committee meeting, delegate a replacement to record minutes.

Committee Members

1. Send suggested agenda topics to the Committee Chair as agendas are being assembled.
2. Read all meeting materials prior to the meeting. If unable to attend, email any comments to the Committee Chair ahead of the meeting.
3. Attend and participate in Committee meetings as much as possible:
 - a. Being respectful to all attendees of Committee meetings, and ensuring equal opportunity for all Committee members to provide input.
 - b. Working with the Committee Chair in establishing consensus or substantial agreement as much as possible on all Committee topics, or follow Roberts Rules of Order where applicable.
4. Support all Committee decisions during the implementation phase, acknowledging that changes might need to occur as issues unfold or evolve in the legislative or rule making process.