

**SOUTHERN AREA ASSOCIATION**  
Wisconsin Land + Water Conservation Association

**Southern Area Counties:**

Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Grant, Green, Iowa, Jefferson, Lafayette, Richland, Rock & Sauk

**President:** Lisa Derr, Dodge County

**Vice President:** Kurt Calkins, Columbia County

**Secretary/Treasurer:** Annette Lolwing, Grant County

**Area Coordinator:** Lynda Schweikert, Grant County

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**August SAA Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, October 29, 2020**  
**Via Zoom Meeting**

1. Introductions & Business

- Meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Lisa Derr.
- Pledge of Allegiance.
- Roll Call of Counties – Columbia 1 staff 0 LCC, Dane 1 staff 0 LCC, Dodge 1 staff 1 LCC, Grant 2 staff 2 LCC, Iowa 1 staff 0 LCC, Lafayette 1 staff 0 LCC, Richland 1 staff 1 LCC, Rock 1 staff 0 LCC and Sauk 1 staff 0 LCC, Green 1 staff 1 LCC, Jefferson 1 staff 0 LCC. Others: Carl Gesch.
- Approval of Agenda – No additions or changes to the agenda. All in favor.
- Approval of August 13, 2020 Minutes – Motion by Richland/2nd by Dane. Motion Carried.
- Treasurer’s Report – Motion by Dodge/2nd by Rock. Motion Carried.

2. Partner Updates:

- a. DATCP – None
- b. DNR – Karl Gesch is the Nonpoint Source Program Coordinator. He reported that there are no impacts to their budget. JoAnna Griffin is working on the draft funding for the TRM Grants that will be finalized in December and also working on the TRM revised grant cycle for 2022. The open public comment period for the revised grant cycle 2022 ends on November 9<sup>th</sup>.
- c. NRCS – Mark Kulig, Assistant State Conservationist for field operations, Richland Center, reported on the financial assistance from the last fiscal year. The federal fiscal year ended on September 30, 2020. NRCS does not have their full budget yet and are operating under a continuing resolution through December 11<sup>th</sup>. The EQIP program did obligate almost \$34 million into 1,277 contracts. The CSP program for new allocations was over \$20 million for 342 new contracts, along with 193 renewals which included 235,000 new acres last year. The ACEP wetland reserves easements program, ended up with about \$14 million in financial assistance, nearly 1,900 acres. Around \$8 million was for the flood plain easements, 19 new easements, consisting of 1,300 acres. With the COVID-19 difficulties, the office continues to take proactive measures. The Service Center remains open; asking that producers that need to meet with staff to inquire

first via phone call, or email if they would like to meet in person. Much of the business has been conducted in the parking lot.

3. Discussion/Action on logistics for poster/speaking contests  
Justine Bula, Sauk County, reported that the speaking and poster contest will be all virtual this year. The form for the speaking contest is not correct. Speaking contest will be done by recording the student's speeches. Let Justine know the dates that your county will be hosting the speaking and poster contest. Justine will be working with the GIS Department to work on scanning the posters. Students and/or teachers may submit a photo of the poster. Deadline for the Area poster and speaking contest will be January 29<sup>th</sup>. Friday, February 5<sup>th</sup> is set for judging the speaking contest. February 3<sup>rd</sup> is set for judging the poster contest. The theme this year is "Healthy Forests = Healthy Communities". Iowa county asked if the students could do their poster as a computer graphic. Lisa suggested that it is difficult to judge hand drawn posters vs. a computer graphic poster.
4. Discussion Action on paying poster/speaking contest winners with gift cards.  
Lynda Schweikert asked the Southern Area Counties what their thought was regarding the prizes given to the winners of the poster and speaking contest. Agreement was to offer the winners a prepaid VISA gift card instead of checks.
5. Improving the Effectiveness of Resolutions – Kurt Calkins  
At the March Conference there was a resolution from the North Central Area regarding eliminating cost sharing for Nutrient Management. This led into a lengthy discussion. At the meeting it was acted upon by the Board of Directors to send that resolution back to the Leg/Admin Committee. The Leg/Admin. committee created a sub-committee as to how this organization handles resolutions, but also revisiting the entire policy making process. The Leg/Admin Committee reviewed the strengths and weaknesses of the existing resolution process. The main weakness is that a resolution process is the only way to draw attention to a policy making issue. Another weakness is that there is not enough informed discussion ahead of time where members can be educated on the associated issues prior to a vote at the annual meeting. The subcommittee recommends: 1. Better define and document existing Leg/Admin Committee policies, positions, and legislative priorities. A. Guiding Principles that are refreshed periodically. B. Policy Positions will be work in progress. C. Legislative & Budget Priorities, working with staff and organization. Kurt mentioned that it would be of interest to have a liaison between the Leg/Admin and the Area Association. Kurt mentioned to implement an interim resolution/policy-making process for 2020-2021 because we will not be meeting in person to present a resolution at the conference in 2021. The new process is: not to say that we will never have resolutions again, but the ultimate hope is that we have and utilize an internal process working to get at the issues that people would have tried to draw attention to through the resolution process. At the Board of Directors meeting they did adopt action items in the report.
6. Legislative/Administrative Update  
Kurt asked Matt about the funding status of the staffing grant that continues to be a big priority for the counties. Originally, they went to DATCP and said that we want full

funding for the staffing grant. DATCP asking for \$13 million compared to \$9.3 million last year. Matt is looking at dividing up what would have been the County Con meeting into 3 virtual meetings on 3 different days.

## 7. County Roundtable

Columbia County: Kurt reported that with the new DNR Aquatic Invasive Species funding they have decided to formalize an agreement with Golden Sands RC&D which had expressed interest to them last year. Columbia county will be diverting their \$13,000 to Golden Sands RC&D to have them provide the Conservation Department with some staff and support. Columbia County is going through a complete recodification of their county ordinances. They had gone through the animal waste performance standard ordinance.

Dane County: Amy stated that their Corp Council is collecting comments on the P-Phos action plan proposal. Comments for the action plan are due the end of the month. They are still working remotely. They are not going back to the office. Working at getting their winter spreading permits in line. With the ordinance update from last year they are working on the certificate of use component. They have received over 150 applications that covers 300 storage facilities to getting site visits set up, making sure that they have NMP's, and have their safety features. They have also been working on storage facility closures.

Dodge County: John mentioned that they are teaming up with the Rock River Coalition for the Aquatic Invasive Species money. They will be doing an inventory of the Aquatic Invasive species in the county. The county wide well testing program is getting started late. The water testing kits will be sent out in a couple of weeks. They have received a 42% return rate on letters that were sent out. Finishing up a few projects. One waterway is being installed late in the season as they are utilizing carryover funds to construct. The tree sale program is in process. They changed their tree sale brochure. They used to charge a flat fee with taxes included. Landowners now must include the tax in with the tree order, is not working so well.

Grant County: Lynda thanked everyone for their patience. Her computer crashed yesterday, and she is using a loaner computer. Grant County is going with Upper Sugar River Watershed Association for the Aquatic Invasive Species. Construction is going full force. Just had a presentation on the new lidar. Lidar hasn't been flown for around 10 years. Finishing up with the FPP spot checks. They are starting their tree sale planning.

Green County: Todd stated that for his Aquatic Invasive Species, they have partnered up with the Upper Sugar River Watershed. They have hired out a firm to spray around 12 phragmites sites this fall. They are busy with construction doing streambank work and stream crossings. Working on a wetland restoration and a ditch plug. The County cost share program is going on now, expects the interaction to be low with the

landowners. Last month they did around 65 CREP and CRP contracts. Currently taking tree orders.

Iowa County: Katie stated that they will be utilizing the Upper Sugar River Watershed for their Aquatic Invasive Species funding. Working with Grant, Lafayette and Green counties to put on a webinar for landowners. The webinar is geared toward a better understanding of the soil, conservation concepts, and how to create a good lease agreement. Iowa county is in line to receive a large TRM grant. They are still spending MPD/phosphorus money. A good construction year.

Jefferson County: Patricia mentioned that the DNR Aquatic Invasive Species money will be used by Jefferson County/themselves. Patricia used to be the Water Resource Specialist and had done that kind of work for years. Patricia has been the interim and named Director since last April doing both jobs. Their 2021 budget was without a water resource position. She was successful in getting the funding to fund a position at half time plus benefits this year. Their tree sale has started and are halfway sold out of trees.

Lafayette County: Terry stated that they are also going with the Upper Sugar River Watershed for their Aquatic Invasive Species funding. Quite a bit of interest in county cost sharing for 2021. They are working with LASA on a milkshed project. The budgeting cycle decided to leave the Farmland Preservation position vacant and combine the Land Conservation secretary with the UW Extension.

Richland County: Cathy mentioned that they were thinking about cutting their Farmland Preservation Planner technician budget. The finance has voted to keep that position. With the lake protection; they were working with both the Upper Sugar River Watershed and the Golden Sands RC&D. Neither the Upper Sugar River Watershed nor the Golden Sands RC&D has any staff time to work in Richland County this year. They just sent in 80 water samples for Richland, Crawford 90+, and Vernon County 200+/- water samples. The difficult process with the well water testing is getting the sample bottles to the landowners. They are working on the tree sale utilizing new providers. Construction season is wrapping up, and Kenny is working on next year's projects.

Rock County: Andrew reported on the groundwater nitrate work group that addresses the high groundwater nitrates in the county. They are working on testing wells, test cover crop plots, different practices, and working on a private farm that has irrigated land. They are expanding their pollutant trading program agreements with the Uehara Winds and the Yahara River Watershed. Working with the city of Beloit, with their WPDES, wastewater standards. Working with the city of Janesville to implement conservation practices in the watershed. For 2021, Andrew will be 50/50 as Planning and Development, and Land Conservation. They will be hiring a new full-time person to cover the mix between a technician and a conservation planner position.

John stated that the 2021 Envirothon dues of \$55.00 is due on March 6, 2021, and the next SAA meeting is scheduled for March 3, 2021. Do we want to approve now, and

final approve it at the March 3<sup>rd</sup> SAA meeting? The decision was to pay the 2021 dues prior to March 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Motion to adjourn by Consensus. Next meeting: March 3, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. via ZOOM or to Be Determined depending on Virtual Conference.