



## Wisconsin's State Inter-Agency Training Committee

*SITCOM's Mission: To maintain and strengthen a statewide team of well-trained conservation professionals that carry on Wisconsin's rich history of conserving soil and water resources through a coordinated and efficient partnership.*

### Meeting Notes

Thursday, July 28, 2022 / 8:30-10:30 a.m.

**Present:** Stacy Dehne, Pete Wurzer, Drew Zelle, Kelli Neitzel, Matt Woodrow, Coreen Fallat, Karl Gesch, Nate Walker, Steve Becker, Pam Fiorito, Mike Stanek, Tony Real, Dan O'Connell, Kevin Erb, Emily Micolich, Dan Marzu, Isabelle Paulsen, Chris Schlutt, Michael Hook, Matt Krueger

**Absent:** Jamie Patton, Mimi Broeski, Jenna Mertz, Josh O'Niell, Josh Odekirk

**Looking Back:** March 22 Minutes approved by consensus

#### Looking Forward:

Isabelle Paulsen, WI L+W Conservation Training & Membership Services – introduction, background, and looking forward to moving forward with what Penny has accomplished.

COVID Restrictions Update, Impacts on Training, Potential for Future Hybrid Meetings

NRCS – State office - many have contracted it, not going to office unless critical. Preauthorized trainings (indoors), NRCS employees can attend outdoor at own risk. Don't know how long – probably several months. Planning trainings this fall but might get scrapped, may just do hybrid webinars. (Kevin – NRCS looks at CDC map by county on Thursday of each week to determine plan for the next week – masking required for high category counties)

DATCP – No restrictions

DNR – No restrictions. DNR sponsored trainings must offer (or highly recommends – not sure) a virtual option. Beginning to rethink in-person.

Extension – Focusing on outdoor events, but no restrictions

Dan Marzu – CALS – no one wearing masks on campus/using own discretion

Tony – No restrictions

**Other Challenges and Opportunities:** Shared Files Update

**ACTION:** Michael to send out email. What are your specific uses? What has been discussed that doesn't work?

**SITCOM Development:** Leadership, Roles, and SITCOM's Mission

Most important words: partnership, training, coordinated, well-trained, efficient (NRCS has expanded to 81 resource concerns, soil and water may not be enough anymore – evolving to be broader, including air quality issues). Well-trained conservation professionals.

**Spotlight Challenge:** Emphasizing Soft Skills within Training Experiences

*County Cons overwhelmingly report that the need for soft skills training and experience is high, but that most technical trainings do not offer the opportunity to develop them. What can we do to support this effort?*

Michael shared comments from the needs analysis interviews. Key soft skills must be a featured part of trainings; shared comments from county conservation meeting; overview of what are conservation soft skills. How can we get these skills implemented within our current training programs?

**ACTION:** Michael to share his slides as a PDF.

Breakout groups discuss ways SITCOM could support agencies in getting soft skills into our current programs

- Incorporate these skills into existing trainings, making it relevant to a specific training can show how that soft skill is used. Challenge with a variety of different backgrounds and perspectives, things are diversifying in conservation.
- Realization that soft skills are needed – prioritizing building these skills (encouraged by supervisor/acknowledged by individual).
- Scripting out role plays/scenarios, breaking out into small groups, then discussing – context specific. Many have access to self-paced training sources, especially NRCS, such as Ag Learn, LinkedIn learning, etc. Share resources.
- Different personalities and learning types – offer different learning options as folks learn differently. Personality evaluations, understand yourself first. Cross-training important. Buy-in to allow staff to attend.
- NRCS trainings – so much technical material to cover, often don't have time to offer soft skill development. Develop a conservation professional development series – keep them separate, ID staff, ask them what they want for professional development and start signing people up. Mike Stanek can play roles (landowner, e.g.). Steve B thinks some might log off if they try to incorporate that into technical sessions, not sure how to embed. Might work better at local level when less people are in attendance. Statewide modules, pull in professionals. Set up scenario-based trainings with landowners; need ability to communicate with different people. If not confident, that's where problems can arise. Difference between what's on paper in office and what happens in the field. Need to have landowner on your side so they understand; it's about being comfortable with conversation. How to instill that confidence - mentorship program – matching with experienced people; many don't get that opportunity. Helpful with technical topics – have mentor or colleague share project where they were involved from start to finish and share how it went.
- Look for right time and right place – conversations with individual agencies.

**“Homework”:** Identify two opportunities for SITCOM to support

**ACTION:** All members are charged to list what gaps exist in training and professional landscape. How might SITCOM support effort in closing these gaps. Bring two ideas to September meeting.

**Member Updates:**

AITCOM Updates - *Highlight or share something exciting, as well as 1 or 2 challenges you’re facing*

- Drew – Expecting a large crowd for Aug 23 tour – walk and talk – planning of practices, 4 sites, talk about in detail. Need for statewide streambank training – 580 and 582 (NRCS) – will there be hands on training? 1 event to move around state? Is something in the works? Steve B – Bart, Matt W, others are pulling together. Training in Sauk County being planned – 3 parts with first 2 virtual: 1) Mike D to share jobs and lay out concerns, project eligibility by needs – which projects did we take or not take; 2) some of the field inventory and evaluation methods from the standards; 3) visit Sauk County farm.
- Stacy – postponed lakeshore training, hopes to still get in. Planning stream crossing training early October; holding her own stream crossing training this fall; STEPL and APLE – working with Andrew Craig to get info out there.
- Pete – biggest challenges are COVID and NRCS restrictions, many delays. People at local level willing to train, fit some in this fall/winter. Incorporate a field visit or “real world” aspect – brings training home, good discussions. Need for basic level field skills training – trying to set up basic training list, standardize, put together so they don’t need to reinvent the wheel.
- Kelli – some things didn’t happen because of her absence; challenge is terrestrial plant ID – needs help from someone to train on that topic.
- Need someone to step in for SE area where Josh Odekirk was. Matt W reaching out to Ryan Glassmaker.

**2022 Workplan Updates**

Tony – Survey 123 with Andy, Winnebago County – hope to send something out Sept 6-16 – 3-hour training with a classroom component, then out in field for data collection. Andy putting together a guide on what participants will need for training.

**Other Training Updates**

Kevin – scheduling right now: ACPF technical training virtually and watershed non-technical both starting in Sept. Reach out if interested. Upper Midwest focused – will be forwarding to Isabelle and NRCS to promote.

Steve B – Sept. 28 Kathy Turner in NE organizing a farmstead soils investigation training, focus on identifying soil saturation, bedrock features, incorporate a geotechnical component.

**Training Evaluations and Highlights** - Isabelle emailed out to team.

**Ad-hoc Committee Opportunity: Operational Guidance Review and Revise**

**ACTION:** Michael to send out email on this. Quick review of what we currently do and other opportunities.

**Future Plans:**

Next Meeting: Tuesday, September 13, 8:30-10:30am

Future Meeting: Tuesday, December 13, 8:30-10:30am

Recommendations and Ideas for March Conference – bring to September meeting