NORTH CENTRAL AREA

Land and Water Conservation Association

Florence, Forest, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Oneida, Portage, Vilas and Wood

Meeting Date: 2/6/24

Meeting Location: Oneida County Courthouse – Hosted by Oneida County LWCD

In Attendance: Kayla Littleton – Forest County, Katie Bahr-Bender – Langlade County, Tom Boisvert – Lincoln County, Michele Sadauskas – Oneida County, Linnaea Newman – Oneida County, Shane Wucherpfennig – Wood County, Kendra Kundinger – Wood County, Carolyn Scholl – Vilas County, Stephanie Boismenue – Oneida County, Jonna Jewel – Oneida County, Joane Lund – Oneida County, Cathy Higley – Vilas County, Kirk Langfoss – Marathon County, Kirstie Heidenreich – Marathon County, Caleb Armstrong – Marathon County, Patty Benedict – Portage County

Counties Present: Forest, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Portage, Wood, Oneida, Vilas

Others Present: Michael Steinbrink – NRCS, Tom Melnarik – WTCAC, Tom Jerow – City of Rhinelander, Kelli Myers – WI Land+Water

1. Kirk Langfoss called the meeting to order at 12:24 p.m.
2. Introductions were done of those in attendance.
3. Approval of Agenda.
    a. **A motion to approve the agenda as presented: Carolyn Scholl – Vilas County, Seconded by Shane Wucherpfennig – Wood County**
        i. **Vote: All ayes, no nays, motion carried.**
4. Approval of 8/25/23 meeting minutes.
    a. **A motion to approve the minutes as presented: Carolyn Scholl – Vilas County, Seconded by Shane Wucherpfennig – Wood County**
        i. **Vote: All ayes, no nays, motion carried.**
5. Secretary's Report
    a. Tom Boisvert informed the group that he is the NCLWCA representative to the Legislative/Administrative Committee for WI Land+Water. As such, he will try and inform the group of various topics that are discussed within this committee.
    b. Tom mentioned that a bill to prohibit harvesting antlerless deer in the northern forest zone has been proposed by several legislators. Tom asked WDNR Wildlife Biologist Brad Koehle if this would impact the State's Wildlife Damage, Abatement, and Claims Program (WDACP). Brad Koehle stated that this was not the author's intent, but that impacts could still potentially happen.
    c. Tom stated that ATCP 50 is in the process of being updated. A meeting to discuss the changes in ATCP 50 will be held at the Lincoln County Service Center on April 23rd. Carolyn asked what some of the changes entailed. Tom stated that changes have been made to certain cost-share practices

(primarily cropland), cost-share rates, literary changes, and several new conservation practices have been added.

d. No other significant Leg/Admin news at this time.

e. A motion to approve the Secretary Report as presented: Michele Sadauskas – Oneida County, Seconded by Carolyn Scholl – Vilas County

i. Vote: All ayes, no nays, motion carried.

6. Treasurers Report
    a. Kirk Langfoss provided a report.
    b. Kirk reminded everyone that the budget was adjusted to meet the winter meeting/area contest expenses. These expenses are outlined in the bylaws.
    c. Kirk stated that NCLWCA is doing well as an organization, and at the end of 2023 the organization had about a $1,000 surplus for the year. Kirk stated that NCLWCA has had increasing finances for many years, and suggested that our funds could be utilized more.
    d. Kirk will be looking into the CD account to see if we could have a better interest rate. Carolyn and Shane discussed this with Kirk.

e. A motion to approve the Treasurer's report as presented: Shane Wucherpfennig – Wood County, Seconded by Kirstie Heidenreich – Marathon County

i. Vote: All ayes, no nays, motion carried.

    f. Motion by Shane, Seconded by Kirstie
7. NCLWCA Income Tax Filing Discussion
    a. Kirk is working with Wisconsin Land+Water to ensure that NCLWCA is following the correct tax filing practices. Kirk will continue to research what NCLWCA is required to submit for tax purposes.
    b. Kirk stated that he cannot find any records stating that we are a tax exempt organization. Kirk is researching what is needed to be filed with the State and Federal Governments.
    c. Carolyn questioned if there is an income amount that may determine what NCLWCA is required to submit for tax purposes. Kelli mentioned that the amount is $50,000 – if NCLWCA is under that amount only the 990 tax form is needed.
    d. WI Land+Water is working on a guidance document for best management practices regarding Area Association functions.
8. By-Law Discussion – Board of Directors Membership
    a. It was discussed that the Vice President position is currently vacant and must be filled by an LCC representative.

b. A motion to nominate Linnaea Newman as Vice President: Michele Sadauskas – Oneida County, Seconded by Kirstie Heidenreich – Marathon County

i. Vote: All ayes, no nays, motion carried.

    c. Kirk discussed that NCLWCA's board of directors is comprised of one LCC and LCD member from each member County. Kirk also pointed out that NCLWCA rarely, if ever, has had full representation from the board of directors.
    d. Tom stated that each County tracks their board of director representatives differently, and many of those representative contacts may be out of date. Each County should confirm that they have one LCC and LCD representative. These representative contacts should be sent to WI Land+Water so that they are cataloged.
    e. Discussion occurred regarding whether a simple majority voting structure may be more fitting for the organization. It was determined that this would not blend well with the WI Land+Water bylaws and may cause additional confusion. This was not explored further.

9. Discussion on LCD and LCC Member Involvement in NCLWCA
    a. Kirk asked how our organization may be able to get more LCC and LCD representation at our meetings.
    b. Carolyn and Shane both agreed that LCC representation has declined in recent years. It was also discussed that NCLWCA's role has changed since the WI Land+Water resolution process was revised.
    c. Kelli said that NCLWCA is not alone when it comes to LCC participation. Many Area Associations are experiencing similar issues.
    d. Carolyn stated that guest speakers used to come to NCLWCA meetings. It was discussed that these meetings had more of a purpose when a guest speaker or special presentation was provided. It was agreed that this may be a good way to bring more members to each meeting and encourage participation.
    e. It was also discussed that meetings with a policy component may also garner attention. It was agreed that this may be a good way to bring more members to each meeting and encourage participation.
    f. Tom asked Kelli who is encompassed in the NCLWCA email list. Kelli stated that all LCC and LCD members from each County should be included, but that each County should review the email list to ensure that contacts are correct. Kelli stated that she would provide this list after the meeting. There are not many agency/organization contacts on this list, but it was discussed that this may be another way to garner more attendance at NCLWCA meetings if agency/organization representatives were included.
    g. It was discussed by Shane that NCLWCA may want to consider offering a virtual meeting option at each NCLWCA event when applicable. It was discussed that more people may be interested in attending if they do not have to drive or allocate a large portion of their day.
10. President's Report
    a. Steve Kircher was unable to attend the meeting today.
11. Youth Education Update
    a. Patty Benedict provided the report.
    b. Poster and Speaking Contests
        i. The 2024 theme is "May the Forest Be With You Always".
        ii. Area first place posters are due to Kim Warkentin by Wednesday, February 7th, 2024.
        iii. The State contest will be held March 6-7 during the Annual Conference at the KI Center in Green Bay, WI.
    c. WI Envirothon
        i. Date is Friday, April 19th, 2024 at the Wisconsin Lions Camp in Rosholt, WI.
        ii. Current issue is "Renewable Energy for a Sustainable Future".
        iii. The 2024 National competition will be held from July 28th – August 3rd, 2024 at Hobart and William Smith Colleges in Geneva, NY.
        iv. Please consider including a $55 contribution (or more) in your budgets for the WI Envirothon.
        v. The YEC appreciates the NCLWCA sponsorship!
        vi. Volunteers are always welcome. Contact Tracy Arnold.
    d. Conservation Camps
        i. The middle school camp for students entering grades 6-8 will be held June 9-12, 2024 at Upham Woods in the Wisconsin Dells.

ii. The high school camp for students entering grades 9-12 will be held June 17-20, 2024 at the North Lakeland Discovery Center in Manitowish Waters, WI.
iii. Male counselors are needed for the middle school camp.
iv. Help get the word out with local contacts.
v. Scholarships are available.

e. Silent Auction
i. Items are needed for the silent auction. The silent auction will be held at the annual WI Land+Water Conference.
ii. Online bidding will begin prior to and continue throughout the conference.
iii. Silent auction proceeds support youth education programs: WI Envirothon, Poster and Speaking Contests, and two Conservation Camps.

12. County Updates
a. Florence County
i. No update available.
b. Forest County
i. Kayla Littleton gave an update.
ii. Several shoreline projects are planned to be completed during the 2024 season.
iii. Forest County is trying to get caught up on cost-share projects so that funds are not extended each year.
iv. Another new NMP has been completed.
v. Forest County is planning on partnering with Oneida and Vilas Counties for purple loosestrife programming during the 2024 field season.
vi. Several wells were tested throughout the County for PFAS. At this time, no wells are affected.
c. Langlade County
i. Katie Bahr-Bender gave an update.
ii. Katie asked about the summer tour and how each County has budgeted for the expenses in the past. Kirk discussed that the summer tour expenses are able to be reimbursed through NCLWCA.
iii. Katie has been working with local schools and senior centers to do more educational outreach regarding various conservation topics.
iv. Langlade County is currently working on revising their land and water resource management plan.
v. NMFE classes are being held this winter for area producers.
d. Lincoln County
i. Tom Boisvert gave an update.
ii. Planned cost-share projects include: 3 shoreline stabilization projects, several grazing projects, 2 stream crossings, and 4 grassed waterways.
iii. Lincoln County is participating in the LMPN program again this year.
iv. The Lake Nokomis Concerned Citizens donated funding for an additional AIS LTE.
e. Marathon County
i. Kirstie Heidenreich gave an update.
ii. The County is completing two small scale TRM grant projects that were combined with NRCS EQIP funding.

iii. Working to get a groundwater program up and going. There is an older groundwater plan that exists, but it was never implemented. The County Board approved several hundred-thousand dollars to implement this project.
iv. Marathon County has been using WDNR ARPA well compensation funding – approximately $400,000 dollars have been used through that program so far.
v. Applied for a grant through the EPA – "small community, big problems". Taking inventory of all the manure storages, wells, and associated data to prioritize where well testing should occur.
vi. Prioritizing using NMP cost-share for areas with high nitrates.
vii. Working on the Fenwood Creek 9KE plan. Lots of cover cropping, reduced tillage, etc. has been implemented. The County is trying to be better story tellers about these practices.
viii. A grazing conference hosted by Marathon County is on April 5th, 2024.
ix. Currently updating the Farmland Preservation Plan.
x. Caleb Armstrong provided an Eau Pleine Partnership for Integrated Conservation (EPPIC) update. EPPIC was awarded a producer led grant through DATCP. The Nature Conservancy awarded EPPIC a grant as well. The Nature Conservancy Grant focusses conservation efforts on leased land. The landowners are incentivized instead of the producer.
xi. Marathon County staff will be assisting Vilas County in various water sampling/monitoring activities during the 2024 field season. This allows Marathon County staff to gain experience while also assisting Vilas County in their efforts.

f. Oneida County
i. Michele Sadauskas gave an update.
ii. Pre-bid meetings were held this past week for several shoreline stabilization projects. Michele stated that it seems that contractors are more available now than in years past.
iii. Three students from Oneida County are going to Middle School Conservation Camp this year. Oneida County has provided scholarship opportunities to all three students.
iv. Joane Lund has been working on their lake classification system – this work is supported through a WDNR surface water grant. A second advisory group meeting was held to see how many classification groups there should be and what the protection activities should be as well. This project was partially driven by enhanced wake concerns.

g. Portage County
i. Patty Benedict gave an update.
ii. Applied for an additional Healthy Lakes and Rivers grant that is expected to fund between 20 and 25 shoreline practices.
iii. Several grazing projects are being implemented throughout the County.
iv. A well testing project is underway within the County.
v. The water quality specialist position is currently vacant.

h. Vilas County
i. Carolyn Scholl gave an update.
ii. Watershed protection plan is being wrapped up. One of the biggest lessoned learned from this is to try and get a group of people interested in completing protection activities on the landscape.
iii. Vilas County will be renewing their land and water conservation plan.
iv. Vilas County will continue to complete more protection plans in the future.

v. A grant proposal was submitted for targeted lake management activities. This was submitted in the County Grant category within the WDNR surface water grant program.
vi. A WDNR Healthy Lakes Grant was submitted. Carolyn stated that Cathy Higley has really grown this program within the County.
vii. Vilas County will be participating in the Lake Monitoring and Protection Network again this year.
viii. An AIS supplemental grant proposal was submitted. Vilas is hoping to get an additional LTE hired through this grant. This LTE would be specifically focused on decontamination, monitoring, and Japanese knotweed control.
ix. The pollinator program partnership with Oneida County is going strong. Two new pollinator gardens, and a seed library have been established.
x. Mapping of wetlands is occurring throughout Vilas County. This is related to protection activities – especially related to wild rice.
xi. A contractor workshop to focus on shoreland practices will be held in the coming months.
xii. Vilas County completed its first NMP.

i. Wood County
i. Shane Wucherpfennig gave an update.
ii. Wood County will be updating their land and water plan this year.
iii. The Farmland Preservation plan is going to be updated this year as well.
iv. Several MDV projects are underway throughout the County.
v. Working through implementing their 9KE plan.
vi. A SEG innovation grant was awarded for implementing harvestable buffers and cover crops.
vii. An ARPA proposal is still going through County Board. The proposal entails a four program series of harvestable buffers, no till, cover crops, and field events. Nitrate mitigation may be funded through this proposal as well.
viii. A groundwater study is still underway. The County has been involved in the groundwater study for 4-5 years. Through this study nitrate locations have been identified and prioritized.

13. WI Land+Water Board Report
a. Carolyn will not be renewing her position on the board.
b. An election for this seat will be held in April at the next NCLWCA meeting.
c. Carolyn stated that Matt Krueger has been doing an excellent job to expand WI Land+Water. WI Land+Water is now an organization with a budget over a million dollars.
d. The 5 year strategic plan was approved. This will be highlighted at the annual conference.

14. Agency Reports
a. WI Land+Water
i. Kelli Myers gave an update.
ii. WI Land+Water is adding a part time position for financial and administrative work.
iii. Working with a new company that outsources HR.
iv. Kelli mentioned that there are raffle tickets available for the annual conference. Starting to think about LCC trainings for the year that would include an in-person component.
v. Michael Hook wanted to mention that the pilot program has started.
vi. Michael Hook asked if there would be interest in a northern area mentorship program. It was discussed that if any individuals in the northern area have questions, a phone call to any neighboring County would be the easiest way to gain knowledge.

b. NRCS

i. Michael Steinbrink gave an update.
ii. Ty Larson had encouraged NRCS to participate in these local meetings. Michael would like to continue being involved, and encouraged others to reach out to their NRCS representative.
iii. Lots of funding is coming through NRCS through the Inflation Reduction Act.
iv. Local municipalities/governmental organizations are generally not eligible for stream crossings. However, Michael stated that if the Tribes were involved and related this to a Ceded Territory concern, these crossings may then become eligible. The Tribe would need to be the applicant.
v. Michael reminded everyone that NRCS has the ability to complete cooperative service agreements with a County.
    1. Kirstie Heidenreich stated that Marathon County utilizes this for a staff position and that it has worked out very well for the County and NRCS.

15. 2024 Calendar Planning
    a. The Spring Meeting will be held on April 18th at 10:00 a.m. This meeting will be virtual and it will be hosted by Vilas County.
    b. The Summer Tour does not have a date set at this time.
16. Other Business
    a. None
17. Adjourn at 3:07 p.m.
    1. **Motion to adjourn: Carolyn Scholl – Vilas County, seconded by Shane Wucherpfennig – Wood County.**
        a. **Vote: All ayes, no nays, motion carried.**

Next meeting:
The Spring Meeting will be held on April 18th at 10:00 a.m. This meeting will be virtual and it will be hosted by Vilas County.

Host			
	Planning Meeting/ Area Poster & Speaking Contest January/February	**Virtual Spring Meeting May/June**	**Summer tour/Meeting August/September**
2023	**MARATHON**	**PORTAGE**	**FOREST**
2024	**ONEIDA**	**VILAS**	**LANGLADE**
2025	**PORTAGE**	**WOOD**	**LINCOLN**
2026	**VILAS**	**FLORENCE**	**MARATHON**
2027	**WOOD**	**FOREST**	**ONEIDA**
2028	**FLORENCE**	**LANGLADE**	**PORTAGE**
2029	**FOREST**	**LINCOLN**	**VILAS**
2030	**LANGLADE**	**MARATHON**	**WOOD**
2031	**LINCOLN**	**ONEIDA**	**FLORENCE**
2032	**REPEAT ORDER ALPHABETICAL**	**REPEAT ORDER**	**REPEAT ORDER**

Minutes taken and prepared by Tom Boisvert – Lincoln County, NCLWCA Secretary

Beyond the Business Meeting:
Before the business meeting the Area Conservation Poster and Speaking Contests were held. Oneida County was the host for the 2024 Area Contest, and the event was moderated by Michele Sadauskas. Winners from the Poster and Speaking Contests will be advancing to the State Contest in Green Bay, WI.

Judges for the Area Contest included:
Michael Steinbrink – NRCS
Tom Melnarik – WTCAC
Tom Jerow – City of Rhinelander Forester
Sandy Wickman – WDNR
Stephanie Boismenue – Oneida County
Joane Lund – Oneida County