



STEERING COMMITTEE
Minutes of April 20, 2016 Meeting

Attendance

Present:

Committee Co-chairs: Pat Leavenworth and Tom Lyon

Committee Members:

Bill Berry, Ron Brooks, Kenn Buelow, Mark Cupp, Andy Diercks, Bill Hafs, Jim Hebbe, Paul Kent, Matt Krueger, Dick Lamers, Karen Nenahlo, Clay Norrbom, Randy Polema, Jessica Schultz, Mike Strigel, Curt Witynski, Paul Zimmerman

Support staff:

Scott Froehlke, Eric Giordano, Scott Hennelly, Jim Matson, Jim VandenBrook

Welcome by Committee Co-Chairs

Pat Leavenworth and Tom Lyon, Steering Committee Co-Chairs, welcomed committee members to the meeting. The Co-Chairs emphasized the importance of emerging food, land and water issues; the need for a long-term strategic vision for Wisconsin; and the importance of open discussion and collaboration among affected stakeholders.

Project Overview

Jim VandenBrook, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association (WI Land+Water) provided an overview of the Food Land and Water Project. WI Land+Water organized and is sponsoring the project, in cooperation with the Wisconsin Institute for Public Policy and Service (WIPPS). WIPPS Director Eric Giordano and WIPPS fellow Eric Froehlke assisted VandenBrook in presenting the overview.

Project Purpose

This project invites Wisconsin stakeholders of all kinds to look forward *together* – to take a strategic look at Wisconsin’s food, land and water resources, and the human demands that will affect them in the decades ahead. It is a chance to look beyond the concerns of the moment, to see the big picture, to learn and discuss, to build new working relationships, and to think about our shared resources in a more systematic, collaborative way. The hope is that we can build a shared strategic vision for Wisconsin’s food, land and water future.

Project Organization

WI Land+Water will implement this project with advice from the Steering Committee. Key elements include:

- *Workgroups*. The project will feature 4 stakeholder workgroups, each of which will focus on a key topic related to Wisconsin food, land and water (see below).
 - Each workgroup will meet 4 times to discuss its assigned topic, and develop Workgroup findings and recommendations.
 - Meetings will be facilitated.
 - Workgroups will meet separately, but at the same times and locations, so there will be opportunities for synergy between Workgroups.
 - Steering Committee members are welcome to attend Workgroup meetings, if they wish to do so.
- *Steering Committee*. The Steering Committee will meet 3 times:
 - First meeting (this meeting): Review overall project design, Steering Committee role and membership, and Workgroup role and membership.
 - 2nd meeting: Review interim Workgroup progress and direction (midway through project).
 - 3rd meeting: Review final Workgroup findings and recommendations, and proposed project report and conference.
- *Report and Conference*. A final report and conference will summarize and report on project results, and expand the discussion to a wider community.
- *Timetable*. This project will extend over a period of approximately 18 months, beginning with today's meeting.
- *Staff Support*. WI Land+Water and WIPPS will provide staff support.

Steering Committee members received written documents describing the overall design and organization of the project, and were invited to comment (comments summarized below).

Steering Committee

Steering Committee members received a draft Steering Committee charter and list of members, and were asked to comment (see below). The Steering Committee is designed to represent a broad range of stakeholder interests, and a high level of subject matter and institutional knowledge.

Workgroups

The project will create 4 stakeholder Workgroups, focused on 4 key food, land and water issues: Surface Water Quality, Groundwater Quality, Groundwater Quantity and the Future of Wisconsin's Working Lands. Facilitated meetings will promote discussion and, where possible, consensus on key issues and recommendations.

Steering Committee members received a draft charter and membership list (including co-chairs) for each Workgroup, and were asked to comment (see below). Workgroups are designed to represent a broad range of stakeholder interests, and a high level of subject matter and institutional knowledge.

Steering Committee Discussion and Comments

Project Purpose, Scope and Organization

Following discussion, Steering Committee approved the overall purpose, scope, organization and timetable of the project. Some questions and comments:

- *Question:* Are urban concerns adequately represented?
Answer: Urban communities, including metropolitan sewerage districts, are represented on the Workgroups. Workgroup charters also invite the Workgroups to address relevant urban concerns.
- *Question:* Will the final project report include policy recommendations?
Answer: The content of the final project report will depend, in large part, on Workgroup discussions and recommendations. Workgroup findings and recommendations will be included in the final report, which will be disseminated at the project conference and in various other ways. The Steering Committee will play a role in reviewing project findings and recommendations. There are no pre-conceived recommendations at this point.
- *Question:* Will there be 4 separate Workgroup reports, or one overall report?
Answer: Each Workgroup will have its own report, but these will be combined and synthesized in an overall report (there may be some overlaps). Workgroup facilitators will work together to develop common themes and approaches, where appropriate.
- *Question:* Will legislators, news media and the public be included?
Answer: The Workgroup discussions will be limited to Workgroup members and invited expert speakers. Workgroup meetings are not public hearings. But at the final report and conference state, we will broaden the process to include legislators, news media, a wider group of stakeholders, and the general public, as appropriate. The Steering Committee will advise on that process.
- *Question:* How will results be shared and publicized?
Answer: We will start with the final report and conference, and work outward from there. The Steering Committee will advise on communication strategies. As a nonpartisan organization representing a wide range of “grass roots” county government interests, WI Land and Water is sensitive to the need for a non-partisan, objective approach that builds on local and regional, as well as state level connections and perspectives.
- *Question:* How is this project different from other projects related to environmental issues.
Answer: This project is different because of its high level, long-term strategic approach, and because of the wide range of stakeholder interests that are represented. This is an effort to transcend the usual interest group and partisan barriers, and find “common ground” on issues that are important to all of us and to future generations. The response to date indicates that everyone is taking this seriously, and is coming to the table in good faith.

Steering Committee

Following discussion, the Steering committee approved the Steering Committee charter and membership list, with minor suggestions.

Workgroups

General

Following discussion, the Steering Committee approved the 4 Workgroups (including topics, charters and membership lists), with slight adjustments. Steering Committee members made some suggestions related to individual Workgroups (see below). WI Land+Water will finalize Workgroup charters and membership lists after considering Steering Committee recommendations, and will provide copies to the Steering Committee.

Steering Committee members asked whether project directors had considered other possible Workgroup topics, such as climate change and energy. *Answer:* Many topics were considered, but the list was narrowed to 4 in order to keep the project manageable. Other topics may be discussed in the Workgroups, to the extent that they have a bearing on the primary topics.

Workgroup on Surface Water Quality Issues

Steering Committee member suggestions included the following:

- *Background Materials.*
 - Wisconsin Nutrient Management Strategy and TMDLs (DNR).
 - National Academy of Sciences, “Achieving Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Goals in the Chesapeake Bay: An Evaluation of Program Strategies and Implementation.”
 - UWEX publication on community capacity building, presented at the 2016 Wisconsin Lakes Conference.
- *Workgroup Charter.* Some key questions to address:
 - What are our “bottom line” goals?
 - What will it take to achieve those goals? How long will it take?
 - Even if we had enough money, would the current system work?
 - How do we provide better compliance incentives (not just money)?
 - How do we measure progress?
- *Membership Suggestions:*
 - Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District representative;
 - USDA-NRCS representative;
 - State agency advisory representatives (especially DATCP and DNR)
 - Kewaunee County farmer;
 - Madison Clean Lakes Alliance;
 - Urban storm water agency representative;
 - Forest industry representative;
 - Retired UW-Extension expert.

Workgroup on Groundwater Quality Issues

Steering Committee member suggestions included the following:

- *Background Materials:*
 - Kent, *Wisconsin Water Law in the 21st Century* (free excerpts for this project, courtesy of the author).
- *Workgroup Charter.* Some key questions to address:
 - What standards currently exist?

- How, and where, are standards currently applied?
- Are current standards being enforced?
- How do we measure water quality, compliance and progress?
- *Membership Suggestions:*
 - Groundwater investigator.
 - County board supervisor.
 - Kewaunee County farmer.
 - Brewery.

Workgroup on Groundwater Quantity Issues

Steering Committee member suggestions included the following:

- *Scope:* Mainly Central Sands, but allow wider focus as appropriate.
- *Background Materials:*
 - Kent, *Wisconsin Water Law in the 21st Century* (free excerpts for this project, courtesy of the author).
 - WI Potato and Vegetable Growers Study.
 - Proposed groundwater bills from last legislative session.
- *Workgroup Charter.* Some key questions to address:
 - How does groundwater pumping affect surface waters? Other private wells?
 - Water access and enjoyment rights? Pumping rights? “Ownership” rights?
- *Membership Suggestions:*
 - Steering Committee member Andy Diercks (potato and vegetable grower).
 - Farmer from outside of the Central Sands.
 - Wisconsin Tribes.
 - Municipal water utility.
 - WI River Alliance.
 - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Workgroup on the Future of WI Working Lands

Steering Committee member suggestions included the following:

- *Background Materials:*
 - Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Program Structure
 - Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Program Implementation and Trends
- *Workgroup Charter.* Some key questions to address:
 - Adequate incentives for farmers?
 - Barriers and threats to farmland preservation?
 - Can we produce more food on less land, and still preserve water quality?
- *Membership Suggestions:*
 - Waupaca County representative.
 - UW agricultural economist.

Adjournment

By unanimous consent, the meeting was adjourned.