

# MINUTES OF THE LAND & WATER CONSERVATION COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, March 16, 2009

Oneida County Courthouse - 1:00 p.m. – Committee Room 1

**Members Present:** Vice Chairman Wilbur Petroskey, Matt Matteson, Jack Martinson, Rod Kuczmariski, and Gary Baier

**Members Absent:** Tom Rudolph (excused absence), and Ben Brusco (TAG Member, absent),

**Others Present:** Nancy Hollands (County Conservationist), Jean Hansen (Conservation Specialist), Barb Payne (Secretary), Chuck Wickman (County Supervisor), John Potters (County Coordinator), Chuck Faber (OCLRA), Doug Evers (OCLRA), Bridget Fargen (Channel 12 TV).

## *Call to Order*

Vice Chairman Petroskey called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. in Committee Room #1 on the second floor at the Oneida County Courthouse. He noted that the meeting of the Land and Water Conservation Committee has been properly noticed in accordance with the Wisconsin Open Meeting Law and meets the Americans with Disabilities Act.

## *Approve Agenda/Approve Minutes*

Motion by Baier, second by Matteson to approve the current agenda and the minutes from the February 18<sup>th</sup> and February 23<sup>rd</sup> meetings with the order of agenda items at the discretion of the Vice Chairman. Motion carried, all ayes.

## *Set date for next meeting*

Vice Chairman Petroskey noted the next meeting date will be Wednesday, April 15<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m.

## *Public Comments*

Doug Evers was present representing the Long Lake Association. He stated that Long Lake is located in Harshaw and is a 110 acre lake. Evers is on the Board of Directors for the Oneida County Lakes & Rivers Association. (OCLRA). Evers stated at this time Long Lake is free of any aquatic invasive species. There are 35 families located on Long Lake. Evers expressed concern about the AIS in the lakes near the boundaries of Long Lake. The Bearskin Lake, which is approximately seven miles to the West, has AIS and East Horsehead Lake which is approximately five miles to the North also has AIS. The Nokomis Flowage is presumed to have a significant Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM) problem. The potential of spreading AIS from these surrounding infested lakes to Long Lake is of great concern. Evers stated the Long Lake Association does not have the man power to monitor the public landing(s). He stated Long Lake is an AIS free lake, and they would like to keep it that way.

The Long Lake Association feels it would be in Oneida County's best interest to keep the water bodies up in this area clean and clear as possible. Evers stated Oneida County needs to be a leader in the fight against AIS. Evers stated that the past two AIS Coordinators both did a very good job at educating the public, but more work still needs to be done. Aquatic invasive species education should be ongoing and the AIS program needs to be continued. Evers stated the Long Lake Association strongly feels Oneida County needs to fill the AIS Coordinator vacancy before the summer season begins. We need to keep the AIS program going strong to protect our northern waters from AIS invasions. Evers stated that assessments of lake properties have recently doubled and that translates into more County tax dollars being collected. Potential AIS infestations means decreased values and decreased values means decreased County tax dollars.

Chuck Faber, Vice President of OCLRA and President of the Lake George Association, was present. Faber stated Lake George is a 435 acre lake. It is a Class A musky lake, and the home of numerous varieties of fish. They do not have any aquatic invasive species in Lake George, except the Rusty Crayfish. There is a DNR public boat landing on Lake George. It is monitored by citizen volunteers. They work Thursday evenings, Friday evenings, all day Saturdays, all day Sundays, during fishing tournaments, and on all holidays from the beginning of fishing season through the end of fishing season in the fall. Faber stated it is critical to keep invasive species out of Lake George and all the lakes in Oneida County.

The Lake George Association feels it is imperative that we hire someone to fill the AIS Coordinator vacancy as soon as possible. If we don't fill this position, it will have a major negative impact on our county lakes. First of all if the vacancy is not filled someone has to administer the AIS program. The DNR will be looking closely at what the County does in regard to this issue. Faber's stated the educational process is a critical tool used in the past. The first line of defense is the volunteers that man the boat landings and inspect the boat traffic using these landings. Last year the volunteers at the Lake

George boat landing stopped half a dozen invasives from entering the water. Specifically EWM and zebra mussels were found and removed before boats were launched. Discussion followed.

#### ***Wildlife Damage Program Services for 2009***

Hollands reported that DNR will be setting the final 2009 County Wildlife Damage Program budgets by the end of March. Hollands reminded the Committee the 2009 deer management meeting will be held at James Williams Middle School the evening of March 24<sup>th</sup>. Hollands stated per diem and mileage reimbursement is available through the Wildlife Damage Program for those Committee members who attend. Hollands stated Ron Eckstein, DNR Wildlife Biologist, will be present at the April LWCC meeting to give an annual report on deer management for 2008.

#### ***County Cost Share Program***

Hansen reported that four landowners responded they are still interested in the 2009 Cost Share Program. Hansen commented she would like to get more advertising out to the general public on the cost share program. We are currently waiting for written confirmation on the DATCP final allocation plan for 2009 funding. The preliminary allocation for 2009 is \$61,394 for the cost share program. Committee discussion followed.

#### ***Update on State Aid Program Cuts & Staffing Impact***

Hollands reported the DATCP preliminary allocation plan shows that Oneida County would receive our 2009 Staffing & Support Allocation in the amount of \$118,346.00. The DATCP has reduced funding for nutrient management. At this time it doesn't appear our funds will be cut. Hollands stated there is the possibility of DATCP funding cuts for 2010 and 2011. DATCP will be coming out with their final allocation plan on or around March 31<sup>st</sup>.

#### ***DATCP Grant Application for Calendar Year 2010***

Hollands asked the Committee what amount we should request for the 2010 Cost Share Program. Hollands commented that the last couple of years we have requested \$100,000 and received funding in the \$60,000 range. The application deadline is April 15<sup>th</sup>. Committee discussion followed. Motion by Matteson, second by Martinson to apply for the DATCP landowner cost-share grant application for calendar year 2010 in the amount of \$100,000. Motion carried; all ayes.

#### ***Conservation Youth Camp Scholarship(s)***

Hollands stated we have a total of \$200 to send two students to Conservation Youth Camp. There are several youth camps being held this summer. The State Association sponsored youth camp is being held on June 16 - 19 in Bruce, Wisconsin. The cost for this camp is \$100 per student. The second youth camp will be held on June 25 - 27 at Camp Bird, which is located at Crivitz in Marinette County. The cost for this camp is \$50 per student. Committee discussion followed.

#### ***AIS Coordinator Position Vacancy***

Hollands provided the job description for the AIS Coordinator position. Petroskey commented he had received a call from Rudolph last evening from Florida. Petroskey expressed Rudolph's concern with the vacancy created by Holman's resignation. Petroskey stated that Rudolph expressed the importance of the Committee's support and action in moving forward with the appeal process to waive the mandatory six-month vacancy. Rudolph feels it is essential to fill this vacancy as soon as possible. Baier stated he agreed with Rudolph that we should take the necessary action needed to start the process today. Baier stated, even if all the invasives in our lakes were cleaned up, there will always be a need to monitor for future problems. Baier suggested Hollands and Hansen continue working on AIS until this vacancy is filled.

Potters stated he feels this position is necessary, but he also feels it may need partnering with UWEX in regard to the educational aspects. In consideration of the County's current financial concerns, Potters supports the six month vacancy policy. Potters stated he realizes the importance of the spring and summer seasons approaching. He still feels it is in the County's best interest to maintain the six month vacancy policy in regard to filling this vacancy. However, Potters stated that whether this position is filled or not, the final decision to move forward is up to the Land & Water Conservation Committee and the Labor Relations & Employee Services Committee. Committee discussion followed.

Motion by Matteson, second by Martinson to move forward with the process of appealing the mandatory six month vacancy policy recently passed by the County Board. Motion carried; all ayes.

Motion by Matteson, second by Kuczmariski to proceed moving forward to fill the Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator's position vacancy as soon as possible. Motion carried; all ayes.

Motion by Martinson, second by Matteson to write a letter to the Labor Relations & Employee Services Committee urging them to approve waiving the mandatory six month vacancy policy and to grant approval for hiring an AIS Coordinator as soon as possible. Motion carried; all ayes. Committee discussion followed.

***Update/Status of AIS Grants/Budget/Activities***

Hollands stated Oneida County's AIS grant application for \$200,000 was denied. Hollands stated Kevin Gauthier, DNR, contacted her on March 13. The DNR had held their ranking meetings on March 11 and 12. There were only five education and prevention grants funded state wide. Oneida County's grant was not included in the five that were funded. Gauthier had stated that Oneida County's grant ranked well, but DNR only had \$1,000,000 available. Five projects were funded at \$200,000 each. Hollands stated that in the past when the grant limit was lower, the funds were distributed to more counties, lake associations, and lake districts. Now if you are lucky enough to be one of those approved for \$200,000 that's great, but what about all the counties, lake associations, and lake districts that have their hands out and have received nothing during this grant cycle. Hollands stated we will be eligible to apply for another AIS grant in August. Hollands stated she feels we should definitely proceed with that option, but short term we do not have any DNR AIS grant funds.

***Report on Minocqua/Kawaugesa Lake Association Activities***

Chuck Wickman, representing the Minocqua/Kawaugesa Lake Protection Association, introduced himself. Wickman asked permission to read a letter written by Sally Murwin, President of the Minocqua/Kawaugesa Lake Protection Association. Wickman read from Murwin's letter as follows: The Minocqua/Kawaugesa Lake Protection Association will have completed Phase II of their Comprehensive Lake Management Plan this summer. The five-year study has been conducted by the US Geological Survey (USGS). The Lake Association will be treating EWM this spring in May. They will be chemically treating 21 acres. In June they will be introducing weevils as a means to introduce biological control. Their annual meeting will be held Saturday, June 27<sup>th</sup> at the Minocqua Country Club. Their first fund raiser for the year will be the Pig Roast and Lake Fair which will be held on September 25<sup>th</sup> at Torpy Park in Minocqua. Wickman stated this is a major fund raiser open to the public. The Lake Association is hoping the Land & Water Conservation Committee and Oneida County will see the importance of hiring an AIS Coordinator. Holman's leadership and expertise were extremely helpful to their Lake Association. Wickman stated Murwin also stated she appreciated the assistance she has received from Jean Hansen.

Murwin instructed Wickman in her letter to ask Mr. Martinson where he got his information regarding the AIS situation in Minocqua. Murwin stated she has been involved with this for many years, and we have never had a failure in treating EWM. Some sites had to be treated several times before we could see a difference. Murwin stated she does not consider this a failure. The Minocqua/Kawaugesa Lake Protection Association is completing Phase IV of their Comprehensive Lake Management Plan. That puts them ahead of most lake associations in the area. Wickman further stated Martinson could respond directly to Murwin regarding her questions to him. Martinson responded by saying he couldn't recall where he had received the information that Minocqua/Kawaugesa Lake Protection Association was unsuccessful in treating EWM, because the treatment was applied at the wrong time of the year. Martinson went on to further say he thought he had read this information in the Lakeland Times Newspaper. Martinson stated that he would give Murwin a call.

***Lake Districts/Agency Reports (FSA, NRCS, LWCD, UWEX, DNR, LWCB, WLWCA, & RC&D)***

***Bear Lake District*** – Martinson reported the Bear Lake District is still having meetings in regard to development around the lake.

***Mid Lake District*** – Petroskey had nothing new to report this month from the Mid Lake District. He reported they only hold one meeting annually, which is usually held in the July.

***Thunder Lake District*** – Baier had nothing new to report from the Thunder Lake District.

***Horsehead Lake District*** – No report was given as Rudolph had an excused absence.

***FSA*** – Kuczmariski reported the Farm Bill is going to be retooled. Almost all programs will be reopened and sign ups will be available in most of the programs. Kuczmariski stated this is really going to be a plus to most of the producers who qualify.

**NRCS** – No one present to report.

**LWCD** – Hollands thanked the Committee for moving forward with filling the AIS Coordinator vacancy. Hollands thanked the Committee for their continued support for this important position.

**UWEX** – No one present to report.

**DNR** – No one present to report.

**LWCB** – No one present to report.

**WLWCA** – No one present to report.

**RC&D** – No one present to report.

***Monthly Budget Review***

Motion by Matteson, second by Baier, to approve the monthly budget summary for December of 2008, Adj. II for the Land & Water Conservation Department, Wildlife Damage Program, and AIS Program. Motion carried; all ayes.

***Travel Authorization***

Motion by Matteson, second by Martinson to approve attendance at the following meetings. Motion carried; all ayes.

- March 20, 2009                      DATCP Training                                      Wausau, WI
- April 30, 2009                      Lumberjack RC&D Meeting                                      Shawano, WI

***Approval of invoices, purchase orders, and line item transfers***

There were no invoices this month.

***Items for the next meeting agenda***

Agenda items will be determined at a later date.

***Public Comments***

Bridgette Fargen from Channel 12 television thanked the Land & Water Conservation Committee for allowing her the privilege to tape parts of the meeting. She said it would be on the 6:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. Channel 12 news.

***Adjourn***

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m. Motion by Baier, second by Matteson. Motion carried, all ayes.

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Thomas Rudolph  
Chairman

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Nancy Hollands  
County Conservationist