

Iron County Land Conservation Committee Meeting
Wednesday, December 14, 2011
Iron County Forestry Board Room

1.) Call to Order: Gerald Luke called the meeting to order at 3:00 P.M.

Present: Gerald Luke, William Thomas, Tom Popko, Dale Wehmas, Vernon Moore, Heather Palmquist, MaryJo Gingras, Dave Schultz, Larry Youngs

Absent: Dennis DeRosso, Steve Smith

2.) Public Comment: none.

3.) Minutes: Motion to approve September 7, 2011 draft minutes Thomas/Youngs. MC.

4.) 2011-2013 Budget lapses: Gingras distributed a 2 page handout and discussed budget lapses for 2011-2013 from the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). DATCP has proposed a \$1.1 million cut to the soil and water general purpose revenue funds, which are used for staffing county conservation departments. This amounts to a 29% reduction in funding for county conservation staff. State statute Chapter 92.16 directs that *“the department (DATCP) shall attempt to provide funding under this section for an average of three staff positions per county...”* for soil and water management programs, yet the program is currently about \$4 million short of its statutory goal. Gingras distributed graph showing the reduction in funding for Land Conservation Department staff since 1997. State staffing grants have consistently fallen from \$13 million in 1997 when the program began to \$7.7 million in 2012, if DATCP’s proposed lapses are enacted. Gingras explained that counties continuously are being challenged with funding these positions more and more on their own. These types of cuts may dissolve some of the programs across the state if the funding cuts continue. WI Association of Land Conservation Employees (WALCE) and the WI Land and Water Conservation Association of supervisors (WLWCA) are meeting with legislators and DATCP this month to discuss funding sources to backfill the proposed lapse. They are currently meeting in Madison today to discuss transferring \$1.1 million in SEG nutrient management cost-share funds from the farm program to backfill DATCP’s proposed \$1.1 million GPR lapse in county staffing grants. This would still result in a shortfall of landowner cost-share programs, but it would be easier to absorb than increased cuts to staff grants. Gingras drafted a letter to send to Governor Walker, Representative Bewley and Senator Jauch to ask for them to support funding for conservation department staff. Motion to forward letter on to state Thomas/Youngs. MC

5.) Funding Resolution: Gingras drafted a resolution to have approved by County Board and forwarded to the state in regards to the funding shortfalls as described in previous agenda item.

Motion to send Resolution: Support for Land & Water Conservation Department Staff Funding to County Board Youngs/Thomas. MC

6.) Wildlife Damage Claim corn price: Dave Schultz distributed price quotes on corn bushel prices for corn claim losses. United Ag Services was \$6.40, Dan’s Feed Bin \$6.50, Mix Rite \$6.45, USDA Market \$6.21 to yield an average of \$6.39 /bushel. Kretzschmar Holsteins had 431 acres with 981 bushels of loss. Wehmas and Moore discussed removing USDA Market price estimate from Minneapolis because it doesn’t reflect trucking cost for corn. They suggested to increase average by \$.05 to offset lower rate from USDA estimate. Motion to set corn loss claim price at \$6.45 /bushel Moore/Youngs. MC.

7.) Wildlife Damage Claim: (Schultz) Bear kill permits were issued in Ashland, Bayfield and Iron County for corn damage. The results are: Iron County- Kretzschmar: 22, Ashland County- Morgan Peck:11 and Tom Kriskovich:4, and Bayfield County- Peter Lulich:5. One claim for Iron County for Kretzschmar. Four deer shooting permits were issued in Bayfield County and one permit issued in Douglas County. **Motion to set wildlife damage corn claim price at \$6.45 Popko/ Thomas. MC.**

8.) 2012 Cost-Share Requests: MaryJo reviewed project requests for 2012. We have approximately \$40,000 allocated for 2012 cost-share practices. The budget lapses that have been proposed are all targeted for staff funding not for cost-share. We have 13 projects requests for 2012 and upon review of rough estimates we may be short approximately \$1000 from funding all requests. We should not have a problem assisting these requests in 2012 because many projects come in under cost. However, MaryJo wanted to talk to Vernon Moore and Jim Clement about potential farm projects for 2012. Moore mentioned that he may have a Heavy Use Protection Area project for 2012.

9.) State permit application fee: Gingras discussed that she compiles permit drawings and fills out applications on behalf of landowners for state permits on conservation projects. This saves confusion for the landowner. However, it may take anywhere from 5-15 hours for Gingras to compile some of the drawings, surveys, and plans required for the application. Thus she feels the County should still offer the service to the landowner but charge a fee. Currently, most other counties do not provide this service. Gingras feels it is a very useful service and she believes the landowners would constantly be asking how to fill the permit work out anyway. Most of the water quality permits that Towns and landowners have to apply for they receive exemption from the fee for working through the Land Conservation Department. If they did the project on their own and applied for a permit on their own, most permit fees fall into a \$150 category. However there are some practices that do not allow exemption and some of those fees are as much as \$500. Gingras proposed charging a \$200 fee for drafting of permit applications for landowners. **Motion to make recommendation to County Board to set a \$200 minimum landowner fee per permit for drafting permit applications Youngs/ Thomas. MC.**

10.) Staff/ Conservationist Reports: Gingras and Palmquist provided written conservation reports that were distributed with agenda.

Dave Schultz (Wildlife Damage): Distributed written report. Deer donation was very low this year. Douglas County had 16 deer donated and seven together at the two sites in Ashland County. See notes above.

11.) Next Meeting Date: Meeting will be set for March.

12.) Adjourn: **Motion to adjourn at 4:15 pm Popko/Thomas. MC.**