

Iron County Land Conservation Committee Meeting
Thursday, February 14, 2013
Iron County Forestry Board Room

Approved
4/3/2013

1.) Call to Order: Luke called the meeting to order at 2:00 P.M.

Present: Dennis DeRosso, Larry Youngs, Tom Popko, Dale Wehmas, Vernon Moore, Gerald Luke, William Thomas, Heather Palmquist, MaryJo Gingras, Gary Haughn (NRCS), Dave Schultz (Wildlife Damage)

2.) **Public Comment:** None heard.

3.) **Minutes:** Motion to approve December 5, 2012 minutes as drafted Thomas/Youngs. MC.

4.) **DATCP reimbursement:** Gingras submitted final 2012 DATCP reimbursement for \$28,490.22 on February 7, 2013. The 2012 total reimbursement from DATCP was \$85,373. This was down from the budgeted amount as there were department cuts made in the state after our budget was approved.

5.) **2012 Annual Report:** Gingras and Palmquist developed an Iron County Land & Water Conservation Department 2012 Annual Report and submitted a copy to each committee member. Gingras asked DeRosso if she should provide a copy to all County Board members and he said it was not necessary. Gingras reviewed the report with the committee and noted the main revenue in 2012 came from DATCP Staff grant \$85,373; Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Lake Protection grant \$39,200; Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) grant \$32,300; DATCP Cost-Share bonding \$21,950; DNR AIS grant/Xcel Energy \$12,870; Native plant sale \$12,745; and Conservation Camp \$8,187. Total revenue amounted to \$229,796 and program management expenses totaled \$264,967 for a difference of \$35,171.

In addition, photos and project cost for five cost-shared practices are outlined in the annual report as well as photos and costs for three projects funded under Iron County's remaining share of the GLRI grant received through partnership with Northland College and the Chequamegon Bay Partnership in 2010. The Report describes education and outreach efforts by the Department including the annual Poster & Speaking contest, Envirothon, Conservation Camp and the Woods & Waters Project. The Department conducted a total of 72 field days, workshops and education programs with more than 950 students and adults in attendance. The Annual Report describes accomplishments through both the DNR AIS grant (2011-2013) and the DNR Lake Protection grant (2012-2014), including a 9,500 sq. foot shoreland restoration along 450 feet of shore at the Birch Point Condo Association on the Turtle Flambeau Flowage. Gingras reported that the Native Plant Sale generated over \$2,000 in profit, which is split with Ashland County as they help implement the program. More than 9,000 trees, 2,600 shrubs, and 3,966 grasses/wildflowers were sold through the program in 2012. The profits from the sale help fund scholarships for Hurley and Mercer students to attend the Crex Meadows Youth Conservation Camp in Grantsburg, WI. Gingras wrapped the Annual Report up with discussion about wildlife damage abatement and reimbursement provided in Iron County in 2012. Gingras asked for approval on the 2012 Annual Report. Motion to approve drafted 2012 Annual Report Thomas/Youngs. MC.

6.) ATCP Rule 50 revisions: Gingras updated the committee that the Department of Agriculture (DATCP) is currently revising Rule ATCP 50 which covers annual staffing grants to counties and cost-share grants to landowners. Several areas of the rule are being proposed for changes. Overall, if passed as drafted the rule will reduce that amount of cost-share dollars available to Iron County, will exclude use of cost-share on land owned by state and local governments, and it will limit cost-share for certain practices that are not required to implement performance standards and prohibitions on farms. In addition, DATCP will make allocations based on statewide priorities rather than allowing counties to receive funding based on their locally identified resource concerns listed in their Land and Water Resource Management Plans. Economic impact comments are being taken by DATCP until February 25, 2013 and public comments are being accepted through March. Gingras will draft comments for the public comment period through March and submit them on behalf of Iron County.

7.) Coastal Management Groundwater Well Testing Program: Gingras submitted grant application in November to WI Coastal Management for a request of \$12,903 to partner with Ashland County on a Groundwater Education & Well Testing Program. Gingras presented to project to the WI Coastal Management Board on January 23, 2013 and the project was recommended for funding. Final award announcements will be made in March. Many counties around the state have started education programs and well testing for private landowners to provide information about the quality of groundwater in the county and provide information to homeowners about land use and the impacts to drinking water especially in large agricultural areas.

8.) WLWCA Board Rep volunteer: Gingras asked for any volunteers to sit on the state WI Land and Water Conservation Association Board as the Northwest Representative. Meetings are held quarterly in Stevens Point and there is an annual meeting in March. Gingras offered to assist with a phone for teleconference if attendee could not make it to the meeting. William Thomas volunteered.

9) Conservation Reports:

NRCS: Haughn mentioned that Federal NRCS budget is not yet approved and if it does not get approved by March 1 then they will be looking at implement 22 furlough days per office. Iron County had 1 farmstead project requested for 2013. New EQIP programming allows for forest management projects, and Iron County has 5 requests for Forest Management Plans or practices. In Iron County, 2013 EQIP project requests is approximately \$30,000.

Wildlife Damage: Schultz (Wildlife Damage): Schultz processed year-end reimbursement claim for fourth quarter 2012 for Iron County and drafted the 2013 Cooperative Agreement for Bear Trapping for \$11,250. In 2012, the Kretschmar farm was the only claim for bear damage and shooting permits. 23 bear were trapped on his farm in 2012 and 18 bear-shooting permits were issued.

Staff Reports: Gingras and Palmquist provided written conservation reports that were distributed with agenda. Gingras asked if she could offer (3) \$150 scholarships for Iron County lake association members to attend the Wisconsin Lake Convention in Green Bay in April. No concerns were raised.

9.) Next Meeting Date: TBD

10.) Adjourn: Motion to adjourn at 3:20 Youngs/Thomas. MC.