

Conservation/UW-EX Education Committee
Monday, November 11, 2024 Minutes
Oneida County Courthouse, County Board Room and Virtually by ZOOM

Committee Members: Chair Collette Sorgel, Linnaea Newman, Lenore Lopez, Robb Jensen and Chris Schultz.

Others Present: Karl Jennrich, Michele Sadauskas, Beckie Gaskill, Eric Rempala, Ted Rulseh, Amber Rehberg, and Jessica Young. Jonna Jewell on Zoom.

1. Call to order and Chairperson's Announcements:

Chair Sorgel called the meeting to order at 1 p.m. The meeting was properly posted and handicapped accessible and ADA compliant. The symbol /s/ represents a valid virtual attendee's signature.

2. Approve Agenda: A motion by Schultz/Newman to approve the November 11, 2024 Agenda with the order of items at the Chair's discretion. All ayes; motion carried.

3. Approve Minutes: A motion by Jensen/Lenore to approve the minutes of October 14, 2024 as presented. All ayes; motion carried.

4. Dates/Location of Future Meetings:

Monday, December 9, 2024 at 1:00 p.m. Oneida County Courthouse; County Board Room.

The scheduling of this meeting is contingent upon the needs of the Land and Water Conservation Department in regard to the Oneida County Comprehensive Land Use Plan. UW Extension will not be presenting at the December meeting.

5. Public Comment:

Eric Rempala (Oneida County Clean Waters Action - OCCWA) stated that the OCCWA Planning & Development Committee has raised concerns regarding the excessive language promoting development and extraction on county and state lands. This language reflects the concepts of the American Stewards for Liberty (ASL). Recommendations from the Great Lakes Timber Professionals were accepted, with much of them adopted that incorporate much of the American Stewards for Liberty language. The chairman had a conversation with Margaret Byfield (Executive Director, ASL) and the Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association where they acknowledged the involvement of Byfield in creating the document that was presented to the County. One excerpt from the recommendations stated, "All available county and state land shall be considered for economic and residential development." The American Stewards for Liberty advocate for development and extraction on public lands, which conflicts with our local conservation ideals.

Rempala met with the Wisconsin Council on Forestry and toured the Pelican River Forest, where all promises were fulfilled, exceeding expectations. The roads were in use by locals, and the foundation managing the land is focused on sustainability and forestry, demonstrating thoughtful management. No county representatives attended this meeting to coordinate or observe. If the county wishes to be involved, they need to be present to stay informed.

The budget process for the state is happening soon, and there are groups working to put together recommendations on how to spend PFAS funds, and where to allocate them.

6. Urban Forestry Grant: City/County Service Agreement

The City of Rhinelander has been awarded the Urban Forestry Grant and is collaborating with the Land and Water Conservation Department (LWCD) to provide pollinator services and outreach. This initiative represents a new grant and partnership. Currently, an agreement is being drafted to meet the approval of both the City Council and County Corporation Counsel. However, the agreement is not yet ready for review.

Given the possibility of not having a December CUW Committee meeting, Sadauskas inquired whether CUW Committee members would be willing to approve the agreement once it has been sanctioned by the County Corporation Counsel, City Council, and LWCD. The city must have the agreement by December 4th in order to include it on their meeting agenda. The final approved agreement is needed before January in order to commence work promptly.

Sorgel/Jensen made a motion to proceed with the grant application, contingent upon approval by the City Council, Corporation Counsel, and LWCD. All ayes; motion carried.

7. Ordinance Amendment #13-2022 to Amend Chapter 9: Shoreland Protection Ordinance.

Sadauskas received the amendments from the Planning & Development (P&D) Committee and reviewed the changes with the CUW Committee.

The first bullet point was removed because Corporation Counsel indicated it would not comply with current law and would not align with the Shoreland Protection Ordinance. They also did not allow selective cutting in place of clear cutting.

The second bullet point regarding mitigation was approved in regard to selecting language, allowing staff of LWCD some flexibility in determining the type of vegetation to be replaced. Corporation Counsel recommended including a section on discretion to provide LWCD with more options. LWCD will work with P&D to refine the exact language.

In the vegetation buffer column, Corporation Counsel's edits removed the term "natural vegetation." They explained that the language could be more specific, which Sadauskas views positively as it allows for more precise terminology.

8. Amending Chapter 2 of the Oneida County Comprehensive Land Use Plan Ordinance.

Sadauskas mentioned that most of the items were fine and proceeded to provide the Committee with an overview of the details in the revision letter sent on August 16, 2024.

- On page 2-7, line 1: the word "weeds" was replaced with "aquatic plant growth".
- On page 2-7, line 6: Oneida County Land and Water Conservation Department was changed to Oneida County Land Information Office.

- On page 2-7, table: all bodies of water listed will be referred to as lakes and not ponds. They will keep the 278 lakes between 10 and 50 acres, and the next three categories will be combined and referred to as lakes as well.
- On page 2-23, 4th paragraph: the original statement is what they want and they will not be moving it out of the natural resources section.
- On page 2-28, goal 2 policy: add back in “Improve forestry management to promote productivity of forest products, protect wildlife habitat, water quality, and provide recreational opportunities” from the 2013 policy.
- On page 2-29, goal 3 policies, 4th bulletin point: changed to “Address erosion through sound erosion control methods and methods” and removed “and retaining walls, etc.”
- On page 2-29, goal 4, added policy: “Increase awareness of corridors and landscape connectivity and encourage retention of a natural area network connecting open areas, wetlands, and woodlands.”

Sadauskas will review the revisions and give the Committee an update accordingly.

9. Fall 2024 Land + Water Conservation Board (LWCB) Election of LCC Members.

The CUW Committee needs to select three out of five individuals to nominate for the Land & Water Conservation Board. Sadauskas will enter the chosen names into the online system for voting. The Committee decided on Monte Osterman, Rebecca Clarke, and Terry White.

Sorgel/Newman made a motion to pass the names on. All ayes; motion carried.

10. Notification of Hearing & Resolution: to Consider Altering a Highway in the Town of Minocqua.

(Agenda item #10 was discussed after agenda item #11).

This is to inform the CUW Committee about the upcoming hearing and resolution. If anyone has comments, they will be shared; otherwise, this is just for informational purposes.

No one on the Committee had comments.

11. Lake District Reports:

(Agenda item #11 was discussed while the tallies were counted for agenda item #9).

Lenore Lopez reported on Horsehead Lake. Financial report and balance stood at \$27,088.43. Financial records were reviewed and found to be in order. The 2024 Onterra AIS Survey detected varying amounts of curly-leaf pondweed plants that were mature with turions present. The survey did not detect Eurasian water milfoil. David Averbeck was reelected as Treasurer. Black Crappies are no longer on catch and release restrictions.

12. PFAs Update:

No new updates to report.

13. Office Reports

- a) Budget Actual.

b) Invoices Paid

Committee acknowledged and received agenda items 13a & 13b, as presented.

14. LWCD Items to Include on Next Agenda:

- Comprehensive Plan
- Lake District Reports
- PFAS Update
- Office Reports

15. Public Comment:

None.

16. Area 4 Extension Director Update – A. Rehberg.

a) UWEX Status Update:

Rehberg announced that she will be offering support and leadership to an additional three counties (Price, Taylor, and Lincoln) but does not expect this to impact Oneida County. The aim is for this to be a six-month solution as part of a broader strategic plan. A new tribal administrator has been hired, which will provide additional support.

The Wisconsin Counties Association Extension and Education Committee with Extension Staff developed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that reinforces and clarifies our partnership with counties. The MOU is non-binding and will not affect or change the original contract in any way, but will provide additional guidance/processes for a visioning session, key performance indicators, and plan for work communications.

- i. Staffing and Communication Plan: Oneida County is fully staffed. Anne Williams, Oneida County and Forest County 4-H Educator, will be stepping back from Forest County 4-H.
- ii. Program Development for City of Rhinelander: Amber is working on developing a program with the Ethics Committee. The program is titled “Serving with Integrity, Honesty, Accountability, and Fairness” and the purpose is to support all elected and employed city officials in their efforts to respond and react in the best interests of the community and constituents they serve; upholding ethical standards by not just following rules and regulations, but by demonstrating a commitment to serving the public good for all.
- iii. Nicolet Facilities & Partnership Update:
 - a. Rent Agreement for FY 2025:

The current discussions focused on the rent/lease agreement with Nicolet have brought up an opportunity for Nicolet and UW Extension to reflect on the nature of our current partnership and consider ways to expand that partnership to more than just a contractual lease.

Sorgel and Holewinski met with Nicolet College President and VP of Innovation regarding the Extension Office Lease at Nicolet and the cut in funding for that lease in the FY2025 Oneida County Budget. No definitive decisions were made during this meeting, but Nicolet is aware that Oneida County is willing to pay \$5,000. Nicolet College appreciates and values the potential partnership with Extension being located on campus and is exploring a more strategic approach to our partnership moving forward that may allow for reduced rent in exchange for building out programming that aligns with both Nicolet and Extension's mission.

Following the meeting, Rehberg, Area Extension Director, met with Al Javoroski, VP of Innovation at Nicolet to brainstorm and start building out what a partnership between Extension and Nicolet might look like moving forward; how it can be effective, mutually beneficial, and most importantly provide programming and resources that meet the needs of Oneida County residents. While a reduction in rent costs is a positive aspect of the partnership, it's important to take into consideration the added time and resources that will be required to support additional programming and services within the new partnership agreement with limited staffing.

Rehberg and the Extension Staff will continue to work with Nicolet to build out the partnership and plan for the future.

17. UWEX Office Reports

- a) Budget Actual.
- b) Invoices Paid

Committee acknowledged and received agenda items 17a & 17b, as presented.

18. UWEX Items to Include on January Agenda:

- Area 4 Extension Director Update
- November & December Office Reports
- 2024 Annual Report – Approval for Possible Presentation at County Board Meeting in February 2025
- MOU Review

19. Adjournment: Chair Sorgel adjourned meeting at 2:06 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jessica Young, Recording Secretary