



MINUTES

August 21st, 2020 (to be approved)

Present: Fred Strand; Marty Milanowski; David Zepczyk; Charly Ray; Ben Dufford-Co. Conservationist; Melissa Kraft-LWCD Asst; Andrew Teal-AIS Coord., Ramona Shackelford-NCWMA Coord; Dave Schultz-Wildlife Damage Specialist

Absent: Gary Haughn-NRCS; Melissa Netz-FSA Rep; Travis Tulowitzky-Cons. Tech.; Ted Kohler-USFWS;

Meeting was called to order at 9:00 am.

Introductions round table.

MOTION: Approval of Minutes (May 15th, 2020) – **Marty Milanowski/Dave Zepczyk** – *motion carried.*

Public Comment: Fred asked if there is anyone who would like to address the committee. None. Fred closed public comment.

Agency Staff/Partners Reports:

- a. NRCS Update: Paul Johnson is retiring end of August, however, Johnson intends to work part-time in that office two days a week beginning in November.
- b. USFWS Update: Ben noted they are working remotely from home. They are funding a couple wetland projects so we continue to work with them, mainly USFWS biologist Ted Koehler.
- c. WDNR Update: Ben noted that Todd Naas is retiring Sept. 4th, 2020 and Ben doesn't think they will replace his position right way as he heard there is a freeze on hiring in that office for likely a year.

Discussion/Possible Action- Budget Amendment-DNR Knotweed Control Grant:

Ben noted that the amendment is needed for carry-over grant funds from one of the DNR Knotweed Control Grant's that Ramona oversees.

Motion: *by Marty Milanowski, 2nd by Pete Tetzner to forward the Budget Amendment to the full County Board for approval. Motion carried.*

Discussion/Possible Action- Deer Farm Inspection Report:

Ben gave a quick summary of how the Cervid Study Committee was formed and the goal of that committee.

Ben discussed that in August, a recent study was done by Ben Dufford-LWCD and Rob Schierman-Zoning. They conducted fence inspections of two deer farms in Bayfield County. Pictures had been taken of the area and Ben provided them to the LCC members for the meeting. Ben further explained that the Antler Ridge deer farm consists of approximately 6 miles of fence. They found some areas that need work and the owner has the work lined up to be done the 2nd week of September. Once it is completed, Ben and Rob will inspect the farm again. No one is onsite maintaining or working at the game farm. Question raised about what should be done with

the elk that is known to have escaped from the game farm. Deer and elk are kept on the farm. Other questions raised were on how to track every animal that is in the farm and how to move forward. Ben noted that the DNR inspected the farm 2 years ago. Charly Ray suggested that a letter to the landowner and one to the DNR should be sent out asking for documentation of past visits/inspections. It was also suggested the need to find out what the process would be to close game farms that aren't being maintained or run. Fred noted that the DNR is responsible for the fence inspection and DATCP is responsible for the animals inside of game farms. Fred supports Charly's recommendation of two letters being drafted and reviewed by Bayfield County's corporation counsel before they are sent out. It was noted that the repairs be made by mid-September and a follow-up inspection is done. Fred also noted that the focus is compliance, not penalty, regarding the game farms inspections.

Ben discussed the results of another inspection that he and Rob had done at the Bratley deer farm. Ben noted that the farm was very well maintained. The farm is roughly 325 acres and is located south of Herbster. The farm has two layers of really good fence and two strands of electric fence as well around the perimeter of the entire farm. They have LED monitors and will get alerts on their phones if anything is wrong with the fencing. Deer are kept on the farm. They have records of the deer including the deer born and genetic charts of deer and their health and information on what they purchase and what they would like to purchase. Ben said the farm was found to be in compliance. Tim Bratley asked that Ben let the county board/committee know that they are invited for a tour of the deer farm if they would like. The committee agreed that a letter should be sent to the Bratley Farm stating that the farm is in compliance.

Discussion/Possible Action-CWD Program:

Ben said that he talked to Todd Naas, DNR. He noted that the DNR recently determined that they intend to test the deer again in the area. The goal last year was to test 300 deer however, they did not get that many samples for various reasons. Since DNR will be involved again this year, we now feel that we will need to hire an intern for similar duties as the program last year. An intern position was not budgeted in the 2020 budget, however, with the new information that the DNR will be testing in the area again, there is again a need for an intern position. Matt Bolen is willing to take the position again and we will be moving forward with the paperwork to get him on board. Because we did not anticipate hiring an intern when 2020 budget was done, we are letting the committee know that we may fall short and Mark A. is aware of it as well. We will try and raise as much money as we can for the cost of the dumpsters hopefully similar as last year. We will either place 4-5 dumpsters versus the 6 unless we can determine another good location as we do not intend to put a dumpster at the Clam Lake location because it didn't get used much last year.

2020 Budget Status: Ben reviewed the 2020 budget to-date in detail. There was a discussion regarding one of the projects that we had anticipated doing this year of \$76,500 that we have been informed will not go forward now as the landowners backed out due to a tax issue concern they have.

Discussion/Possible action-2021 Wildlife Damage Budget: Dave Schultz discussed his budget projections in detail and handouts were available for the committee. The budget is up a couple thousand from last year. The salaries are the same as last year. Increase of \$400 extra is due to rent. Other fees are administration, etc. The program is funded by the state but facilitated through the county.

MOTION: by Marty Milanowski/ Dave Zepczyk, to approve passing the Budget figures for Wildlife Damage Abatement Program for 2021 as presented. Motion carried.

Discussion and Possible Action: 2021 Budget Proposal:

Ben discussed the 2021 Budget proposal in detail and the committee was provided with copies. DATCP Staffing revenue will be up from last year. Overall, there are no big changes in the budget and we continue to receive grants to fund the majority of our department.

MOTION: Marty Milanowski/Dave Zepczyk to approve the 2021 Budget Proposal as presented. Motion Carried.

Discussion/Possible Action- Non-Lead Partnership:

Fred discussed an organization to voluntarily not use lead ammunition and the County Forest supported it with a resolution. Fred asks if we would also want to add the encouragement to use non-lead ammunition during our CWD program education as it is becoming a problem. The Land Conservation Committee agrees that we should provide educational information regarding the issues caused by using lead ammunition.

2020 Fall Tour Discussion: Fred explained that the tour typically takes place the second week of October and asks the committee if we should have one this year and, if so, how should we proceed with Covid issues. Committee stated they would like to still have the tour on Friday, October 9th, and attendees will drive separately.

LWCD Staff Reports:

Andy Teal, via telephone, discussed his staff report which is on file. He discussed his typical annual conference(s) were done online this year instead of in person due to Covid concerns. He noted that Bayfield Co. Land Records conducted some drone surveys for invasive plants along some lakes in Bayfield County. Andy also noted he has been doing some mitigation work this year with oversight from Travis, Ben & Tracey Pooler. Andy gave an update on the status of invasives on various lakes and an update on grants. Due to covid issues, the CBCW-Iron River grant funds will be carried over to 2021 per discussions with the DNR. The CBCW-Lake Superior grant was sent back as we determined we were not going to take on that grant due to many changes with the funding requirements that we wouldn't be able to meet. The Friends of Eau Claire area lake asked Andy to present and talk about some lake mitigation issues via virtual conference and he noted that it went well.

Ramona gave a detailed staff update on her grants and her report is on file for the committee members review. She noted the boat wash was not allowed to be used for the majority of the season this year, per the Forest Service, due to the Covid concern. However, recently the Forest Service did give the okay for it to be used a little recently. Ramona discussed a project on Purple-Loose Strife Bio-Control that was recently completed. A video was put together to be included in the "Zoom" Invasive Species I.D. Day which is taking place this afternoon. Also, on June 5th she put out a Garlic Mustard video that is online for viewing if anyone is interested. Ramona will be doing a video on Buckthorn on Oct. 9th. They can be found on the NCWMA Facebook Website.

Dave Schultz gave his report which is on file. He noted that bear activity is much more pronounced this year and may be due to lack of food such as apple and berry crops that got dried up this spring. He has received three bear trapping requests so far this year. He is working on getting a couple shooting permits due to not being able to keep up with the trapping. The Deer Donation Program will be starting up soon so he will be working on that through the season. He noted each year they estimate how many bear there are and it was determined the population is down so they reduced the bear permits by a couple hundred. He was asked what happens when a nuisance bear is reported and he noted that the bear is usually moved about 25 miles from where it was trapped which is most likely to Iron and Ashland County area.

Melissa discussed her staff report which is on file. She noted she continues with her general office duties, such as; accounts payable/receivable, monthly reconciliations, budget, payroll, cost-share contracts, tracking, grant applications and reimbursements, etc.

Ben discussed Travis' staff report which is on file. Travis was unavailable for today's meeting. He noted Travis has been working on a lakeshore publication with a group that was formed to collaborate on the publication due to increased calls counties are receiving regarding shoreline damage. It is in the final stages of completion.

Ben discussed his staff report in detail which is on file. He noted he has been involved in discussions on the WI Land & Water annual conference next spring and has been participating in many other various online meetings and training sessions. He has also been called out to various sites for surveying and culvert projects.

Next meeting date: Fall Tour, October 9th, 2020, at 9:00 AM.

Meeting adjourned at 10:55 a.m.

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