



Monroe County Natural Resource and Extension Committee

Regular Monthly Meeting – July 8, 2020

Monroe County - Board Assembly Room –Sparta, WI

Committee Members present: N. VanWychen, D. Pierce, R. Luethe, R. Sherwood, J. Schmitz

Not Present: K Raymer (FSA Rep)

Also Present: J. Roll (History), C. Saxe (UW-EXT), B Halfman (UW-EXT), J. Goede (4H), A. Anderson (Health Educator), V. Kast (UW-EXT), C. Ziegler (Forestry & Parks), T Townsell (Ft. McCoy), B Micheel and B Richardson (Land Conservation).

The meeting notice was posted in compliance with the open meeting law.

Call to Order: Chairman N. VanWychen called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m.

Public Comment Period: None

Approve Minutes from the June 10th NR & Extension Meeting: The committee reviewed the minutes. A motion was made to approve the minutes as presented by D. Pierce, second by R. Sherwood. Motion carried 5-0-1.

Deke Slayton/Bike Museum: (Report Attached)

Local History Room/Wegner Grotto:

1. **Review May Report:** J. Roll reviewed report. (Report Attached)
2. **Review May Expenditures:** J. Roll reported nothing needed further explanation.

Motion made by D. Pierce to accept June Report and Expenditures, second by R. Luethe. Motion carried 5-0-1

County Farm Education Funds: None

Extension Office Business:

1. **Review June Expenditures:**
2. **2021 Budget Discussions**
3. **Agriculture Report:** (Report Attached)
4. **4H & Youth Development Report:** (Report Attached)
5. **Health & Well-Being/FoodWise Report:** (Report Attached)
6. **AED Update:** Discussed UW contract with Monroe County.

Motion made by R. Sherwood to accept June Report and Expenditures, second by J Schmitz. Motion carried 5-0-1.

Land Conservation Department:

1. **Review June Expenditures:** B. Micheel reviewed monthly expenditures.
2. **Budget 2021 Discussion**
3. **Cost Share Approvals:** Motion made by R. Luethe to approve Cost Share Agreements for Michael Hansen and Jack and Karen Leis, second by D. Pierce. Motion carried 5-0-1.
4. **Approve nominations for 2020 Conservation Farmer and Conservationist of the year:** Micheel revealed the 2020 winners that were nominated by the Land Stewardship Awards Committee.

Conservation Farmer David and Diane Brueggen. Conservationist Maurice Amundson. Motion made by R. Luethe to approve the 2020 Conservation Farmer and Conservationist, second by J Schmitz 5-0-1

5. **County Conservationist Report:** B. Micheel reviewed report. (Report Attached)
6. **Land Use Planner Report:** (Report Attached)
7. **Soil & Water Conservationist Report:** Richardson reported on construction activities and industrial sand mine bankruptcies. (Report attached)

Forestry & Parks:

1. **Forestry & Park Updates:** C Ziegler reported on Park revenue, snowmobile trail funding and Safety Inspection results. (Report Attached)
2. **Review Forestry & Parks May Expenditures:** Reviewed monthly expenditures.

DNR Forestry Reports:

1. **Warden:** None
2. **Forestry:** (Report Attached)
3. **Managed Forest Law Program:** None

Reports:

- NRCS Report:** (Report Attached)
- Fort McCoy Update:** (Report Attached)

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be held, **Thursday August 13th** 2020 at **11:00 a.m.** at the Monroe County Board Assembly Room in Sparta.

Adjourn: Motion made by R Luethe to adjourn, second by D Pierce. Motion carried 5-0-1. Meeting was adjourned at 10:28 a.m.

Recorder: Bryce Richardson



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
MONROE COUNTY

Extension Monroe County
206 South K Street
Sparta, WI 54656
Phone: (608) 269-8722
Fax: (608) 366-1809
Wisconsin Relay: 711

Agriculture Extension Agent: Bill Halfman

Agriculture Program Highlights June 3 through July 2, 2020

The Ag Agent has continued to respond to people via phone calls, e-mails and press releases to help address various needs.

Common questions that have been addressed over the past month are: farm land rental rates, farm land sale values, hay prices, hay land rental rates and standing hay prices, fertilizer questions, crop enterprise budgets, vegetable garden questions, commercial tomato plant management, woody brush identification and control, shade and fruit tree problems and management, insect identification and control, custom farmer machinery operation rates. A number of news releases were also written for the local papers.

The Ag Agent participated in an interview with WXOW to discuss the crop growing season and the old saying corn knee high by the 4th of July.

The Ag Agent has continued to work with other agents to develop fact sheets for direct marketing meat, and hay storage fact sheets and decision tools, and a hay pricing decision tool. We are also working on plans for cow-calf related materials to be used for newsletters and newspaper columns in place of our annual fall beef cow-calf workshops.

The corn nitrogen plot has had the sidedress treatments applied and the hops nitrogen plot has had the petioles sampled for nitrates and the remainder of the nitrogen applied. A project has been completed to measure yield and forage quality of a farmer's fields who harvested cereal rye as forage. It is part of a statewide effort to collect validated on farm data on cover crops used for forage yields and quality.

Due to the sustained increased rate of infections in the area we were advised to not hold tractor safety.

COMING SOON

- July 8th -Monroe County/La Crosse County StrongBodies virtual classes begin
- July 13th -Monroe County Safe Community Coalition meeting



Joshua L. Goede

Coming Back Online

Wisconsin 4-H and Positive Youth Development are working on the phase in. There is a process to start programming again. The Agent has submitted paperwork for two programs and has volunteers looking to offer more programs. We are looking at what programs to offer with a mix of digital and limited in person options. There is much thought given to safe interactions during in person programs.

Camps/Adventure Days

We are pivoting our overnight adventure camp into two Adventure Days. On August 5th we will canoe the Kickapoo. We will then have activities and educational presentations at Wildcat Mountain State Park. August 6th will be biking on the Sparta-Elroy Trail. We will go from Norwalk to Wilton. The activities will be in the Wilton Community Park. The agent is preparing the planning sheet for approval of this event.

Shooting Sports

The county volunteers are going to hold off on plans for Shooting Sports until we gear up for Air Rifle and Archery if we can have the program in February of 2021.

Agents 4 Change w/ Monroe County Safe Community Coalition

The Agent is exploring a method to hold a training in late summer for high school youth to become versed in community change and AODA Education. The training would be provided through the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America and funded through Monroe County Safe Community Coalition.

Dairy Promotion

There were no clubs that created a traditional June Dairy Month window as they had done in the past. We did have some great dairy promotions though, we had two clubs send dairy products home in school lunches. The Cashton club created a social media challenge to post favorite dairy photos and foods.

STEAM @ The Library Project

This project is being adapted digitally and moving to summer programming in conjunction with the libraries. The Cashton Librarian has been helping to see what this could look like. This will be Sierra's first project

Senior Recognition

Our Seniors did not have a normal graduation, so 4-H created a spot lite for each recognizing them, and their time in 4-H. They started being posted to Facebook on July 1st.

Virtual Project Meetings

We had the first virtual club meeting on June 30. We were able to discuss the role of pets in our lives. Future topic will include Bird watching, Soil health, and livestock projects.

Camp in a Box

The Area 13 Educators created a Camp in a Box program to bring Summer camp home to the family. Monroe County has extended this program to help Ft. McCoy with their programming this summer as well.

Advanced Space Academy

The Agent is moving ahead cautiously with plans for the January 2021 Advanced Space Academy. Wisconsin 4-H has 13 youth enrolled. The program is being opened to Minnesota 4-H for the remaining 12 seats.

Ideas Being Built

In this new way of doing things there are several Ideas that The Agent and Summer Assistant will be developing further. We are looking at

- STEM Times is a mail program where members will receive program materials and instructions
- Virtual Exhibition for projects, including an educational component.
- Looking into new community service project with Jr. Leaders
- Small Group day camps for later in the summer.

Month Report

Over the last month, I have been part of organizing and leading some programming for the county. Josh and I try to meet up in some form at least once a week, but sometimes more either by phone or zoom to discuss what is all going on and what needs to be done throughout the week and working through starting to plan future programs

4-H Partnership with Public Libraries: I came up with 6 different STEM activities and experiments to do with 5 rural local libraries, Cashton, Norwalk, Wilton, Kendall, and Ontario, that can be done at home for grades 3-6. I worked with Josh to record and post videos for each of the activities/experiments. Once they were posted I went through to make sure they were properly closed captioned. I got all the materials that we were going to supply for the kits, assembled them, and deliver a couple of kits to each library every other week or so.

MOCO 4-H Trivia: Josh and I have been working together on putting together a trivia night for families in MOCO 4-H. We have 6 different categories, WI 4-H, Local MOCO 4-H, 4-H Alumni, and just some fun general trivia.

4-H Senior Recognition: In recognition of our 4-H graduating Seniors I emailed them asking for a graduating high school, 4-H Club, Years in 4-H, and a favorite memory of being in 4-H along with a photo of themselves. Once I received them, I created an online poster of them that will be posted to our social media sites to honor all their dedication to our organization and wish them well into their future.

Animal ID photos: Before the fair was canceled, I worked on compiling all the Animal ID photos that were submitted and put them into folders and organized by family, species, and animal tag numbers. I continued this project a little bit after the fair was canceled to have a record of the animals that were entered to attend 2020 fair.

Camp in a Box: I am working alongside the Area 13 agents on organizing, planning, and assembling their camp in a Box. We meet about twice a week to discuss what we are going to need to move forward and who oversees what activity. I am in charge of overseeing and putting a camp in a box manual together. As agents put the information and instructions of each activity into the google drive, I go to an organization and let them know what I still need to complete the manual. In the manual, we have a section for each activity as well as parent resource page with contact information, link, and interesting information that goes along with our camp theme, Under the Stars.

Other planned programs: I have assisted in planning weekly virtual 4-H meetings, but they have not taken off yet. I have started looking into other programs that will take place early in August, they include Clover Camp, Online Science Academy, and Adventure days. But have not gone too far in depth while waiting to hear back some feedback from our survey we sent out regarding these programs.

I also do other random tasks that are given to me to do around the office.

April Anderson

Monroe County Nutrition Coalition

Our June meeting was cancelled. Kayleigh, the coordinator of this coalition, asked me to help with the Harvest of the Month materials. For each fruit and vegetable, I will provide a recipe and information on how to select, prepare, store, and use it.

Monroe County Mental Health Coalition

The June meeting was held virtually. We discussed the details of the community conversation that we are going to hold virtually through the Viterbo Voice (Vital Opioid/Substance Abuse Instruction through Community-Based Experiential Learning) Grant. The title of the community conversation is "Promoting Mental Wellness in the Midst of a Pandemic". Topics that will be covered include: the benefits of mental health services, crisis management and self-care, and adjustments in challenging times. We are aiming to have the conversation before the end of August, but we may push the date back if more time is needed to prepare for the event.

HEAL (Healthy Eating, Active Living)

Monroe County employees have been working hard on the Summer STEPS challenge for a little over four weeks. Two teams have made it their destination already! Each member of these teams will receive a \$10 gift card to Kwik Trip. Unfortunately, the sponsorship request I submitted to Kwik Trip to cover the prizes for this program was denied. Consequently, funds from the Family Living account were used to cover the cost of prizes.

FoodWise

I completed the online course "FoodWise: Healthy Choices, Healthy Lives". The Color Me Healthy work group has been discussing ways this curriculum can be provided virtually in the event we are not able to provide direct education in person.

StrongBodies

StrongBodies virtual classes provided by the state team are on break and will resume on Tuesday, July 7th. Monroe County and La Crosse County Extension Educators have partnered to offer virtual classes for Monroe and La Crosse county participants. Classes

begin Wednesday, July 8th. Approximately sixty participants have registered. Some participants needed equipment and arrangements were made to provide it to them.

Onboarding

Recently we learned tips for navigating the Employee Handbook. We also learned about educational technology resources that we can utilize such as Cam Scanner, which allows you to use your phone to scan documents.

Health Matters Newspaper Column

I submitted an article on dry canning, which is not a safe practice because even dry foods contain moisture. Moisture migration in dry foods can cause pockets of moisture to develop within a food or moisture to condense on the inside of the container. Once the container is sealed, these pockets of moisture could support the growth of mold, bacterial spores, or even some pathogens such as salmonella that are resistant to drying. Most recently I submitted an article regarding healthy eating on a budget. I included information on meal planning, tips for finding items with the best prices, and ways to save as you select items from all the food groups.

HCE (Home and Community Education)

HCE leadership decided to send out a June newsletter. I compiled and provided content for almost half of the June newsletter. Vicky, our administrative assistant, helped with the template and some of the content.

Professional Development

- Multilingual Zooms
- Chronic Disease Prevention Webinar: Physical Activity & Nutrition Trends
- Hydroponics Grow Towers

July 8, 2020 - Staff Report

Bob Micheel - County Conservationist

LCD Business:

- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) – Submitted 6 perpetual easement applications to DATCP for agreement development. Need a support letter signed by the chair to accompany the Oswald easement application because the committee holds a fishing easement on that same parcel. Both easements work in concert with one another in protecting the stream restoration project completed over 15 years ago, while enhancing water quality.
- Climate Change Task Force – Toured the Trempealeau County River emergency management system they implemented 8 years ago for flood monitoring. Finalizing type of equipment, communication service and implementation strategy for the Little La Crosse & Kickapoo watersheds. Pushed back the two watershed meetings scheduled due to COVID19 until July 21st and August 4th. Donations are now being accepted through the Kickapoo Valley Association to fund implementation of the CCTF objectives.
- Coon Creek Watershed – A private engineering firm (M&E Consultants) have been contracted with NRCS to conduct the watershed study for the Coon Creek & West Fork of the Kickapoo Watershed. The Monroe County Corporation Council is drafting the framework for the creation of a Joint Powers Board for the watershed, which encompasses the counties of La Crosse, Monroe & Vernon. A joint decision making process for the watershed is necessary as we move forward with the PL566 dams.
- Discrimination in the Work Place - Discussion

Meeting Schedule:

- July 9-10th – County Conservationist Meeting
- July 14th – Land & Water Board Meeting
- July 21st – Kickapoo Watershed Meeting
- July 28th – 580 Standards Team Meeting
- July 30th – Dept. Head Meeting
- August 4th – Little La Crosse Watershed Meeting
- August 5th – Climate Change Task Force Meeting
- August 12th - Natural Resource & Extension Committee meeting

July 8th, 2020-- Soil & Water Conservationist's Report

Bryce Richardson

- **Activities**

- Constructed Streambank Shaping for Marilyn Miessler (100') and Mike Austad (1500')
- Continuing construction on a waste storage abandonment for Andy Schaitel
- Site visits to assess damage to existing grade stabilization structures and streambanks.
- Assisting NRCS with Grade Stab and Streambank project construction. (Larry Geier, Charles Hushka, Odell Anderson)
- Hi Crush and Covia Industrial Sand mines have filed for Chpt. 11 Bankruptcies. Not sure how that will impact reclamation. Both have adequate financial assurance. Covia \$1.18 million, Hi Crush \$970,000. This may not be the last we hear of filings by local Industrial Sand Mines.

Nick Smetana

- **Activities**

- Constructed a streambank restoration on the Little La Crosse River including 635 LN FT of Riprap, 3.25 acres of Obstruction Removal, 1130 LN FT Bank Shaping, 580' Field Shaping, and a 710' Emergency Grassed Waterway (Michael Hansen)
- Working on design following survey for Norm Kowitz
- Site visits to Quintin Schaitel's (MFL) and the Sparta VFW (Shoreline Restoration)
- Submitted plan modifications for David and Annette Kunes and Ricky Von Ruden

CREP

- CREP Seeding & Cost-Share Guidance (Randy Dreier & Mark Henthorne)
- CREP field shapes and cost estimator (Tom Simonson adjustments & Michael Hansen)
- Environmental Benefit Report – Randy Dreier

Cost Share agreement approvals

CN # 469-2020 - Michael Hansen 650 LN FT of Streambank Riprap, 580' Field Shaping, 3.25 acres of Obstruction Removal. Public Fishing Easement granted for 1500' of the Little La Crosse River.

CN # 470-2020 – John and Karen Leis 100 LN FT of Streambank Riprap, 475' of Bank Shaping, 1.0 acres of Obstruction Removal. Public Fishing Easement granted for 1650' of Heiser Valley Creek.

July 2020 - Land Use Planner's Report

Roxie Anderson

Activities:

- Comprehensive Plans – Meetings have been scheduled for July with Towns of Grant and Oakdale. Town of Glendale will meet with me when draft of Comprehensive Plan is ready for review. Town of Wellington has starting working on their Comprehensive update and has submitted data requests. Town of Little Falls has completed their Comprehensive Plan update and has submitted the draft to me for review and comment.
- Grant Funding Opportunities – Update on following grant applications:
 - Fishers and Farmers Partnership Grant – The grant application titled “Establish Real-Time Weather Monitoring Stations to Improve Success of Conservation Practices in Flood-Prone Areas” has been awarded \$36,086 in funding. Bob and I are working with the grant program manager, Heidi Kueler, to complete requirements to set up our project for grant administration. Part of the funding for this project proposal will go toward establishment of real-time precipitation and stream level monitoring stations, which will also fulfill one of the goals of the Climate Change Task Force. Funding should be available in August.
 - NRCS Cooperative Agreement Grant Opportunity – The grant application titled “Increasing Boots-on-the-Ground” and Conservation Planning Efforts to Address Soil Erosion Issues Due to Climate and Land Use Changes” was submitted June 15. The grant proposal requested \$164,000 in grant funding with a \$143,000 match. The application was not approved to move forward.
 - Voluntary Buy-Out Programs – I have been coordinating with FEMA, DNR, Coulee Cap and Alison Elliot (Zoning Director) to ensure that the properties that have been submitted for funding requests continue to move forward through application and review process. This has required communication and follow-ups on information requested by the grant program managers.
- Climate Change Task Force (CCTF) – I have been researching weather/stream monitoring stations and sensors and presented updates at the July 4th meeting. We met with Trempealeau County at Blair Mill Dam to see one of the water level monitoring stations they have installed. I also met with La Crosse County's Land Conservation Director and representatives from RECONYX to site test trail cameras. Bob and I also completed some monitoring station site planning and field tested cellular coverage. I continue to gather information and will prepare further recommendations for equipment.
- Tri – Creek Land Use Plan – I have taken a step further in putting together the information that the Committee has reviewed and discussed for the land use plan. The planning document outline and management goals and objectives have been drafted and posted online for review and comment. The committee met on June 25 and was provided with an update. We will continue to collaborate on the document narratives and data gathering efforts.

Meetings/Trainings:

- July 9 - Teleconference with Golden Sands to discuss Tri-Creek project
- July 14 – Town of Grant Comprehensive Plan Update meeting
- July 21 – Kickapoo Watershed Meeting
- July 27 – Town of Oakdale Comprehensive Plan Update meeting

Forestry & Parks Report (July) – Ziegler

Forestry:

- Invasive spraying –
 - Garlic Mustard – ski hill
 - Spotted knapweed – New Lyme
- DNR 3 year financial audit
- Started native seed collection

Parks:

- Safety Inspection: WI Dept of Safety & Professional Services (DSPS)
- Correcting 2 violation orders.
- Revenue: decrease by approx. \$34,000 from 2019

Snowmobile:

- Approving SNARS entries
- 2019-20 Supplemental Application approximately \$110,000

Other:

- Annual Partnership Meeting
- Dept Head Meeting