Waushara County Watershed Lakes Council

P.O. Box 634
Wautoma, Wisconsin 54982

Meeting Minutes

November 9, 2019

Gary Wisbrocker, Pres. W4921 Wilson Rd. Waupaca, WI 54981 715-258-0790 gwisbrocker@gmail.com	Dan Trudell, V-Pres. W10708 S. Huron Rd. Plainfield, Wi 54966 608-852-5269 dant@peakperform.net	Bill Van Dongen, Treas. N1628 S. White River Rd. Wautoma, WI 54982 920-787-0956 bcvandwo@gmail.com	Marty Wilke, Sec. N877 Spring Lake Est. Dr. Neshkoro, WI 54960 920-566-4605 amwilke@centurylink.net

The November 9, 2019 WCWLC meeting was called to order at 10:04 am by Gary Wisbrocker. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance and a special appreciation of our Veterans for their service to our country. Forty-three people were in attendance, including Mark Piechowski/Waushara Co. Board; Mike Kapp/Waushara Co. Board; Donna Kalata/Chair-Waushara Co. Board; Robert Sivick/Co. Admin,; Scott Schuman/Superintendent-Co. Parks; Anna Cisar, AIS Coordinator - Golden Sands RC&D; Todd Wahler, Director - Land Conservation & Zoning Dept; Patrick Nehring - Waushara Co. UW-Madison Extension and our DNR guest speakers Adam Freihoefer/NR Program Manager-Div. Environmental Management; Aaron Pruitt/Hydrologist-Div. Environmental Management; Bob Smail/Water Resource Specialist-Div. Environmental Management; and Michelle Staff/Floodplain Management Policy Coordinator/State National Flood Insurance Program Coordinator-Div. External Services. The WCWLC board members introduced themselves: Gary Wisbrocker, Dan Trudell, Bill Van Dongen, Francie Rowe, Mel Heaney, Karen Reynolds and Marty Wilke.

Public Comments

Marty Wilke updated the members re: status of two 2019 proposed state legislations for lake districts:
1) SB335/AB360 which provides a process in the event of a recount request during a district meeting where more than one candidate is nominated for an elected position:
https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2019/amendments/sb335/sa1_ssa1_sb335 ; and
2) SB559/AB600 which increases the bid threshold cost requiring competitive bids for contracted work/materials:
https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2019/proposals/sb559 .

Mel Heaney reminded members that the 2019 "Welcome to Waterfront Living" packets are available to member groups (5 folders to start with), and may be picked up after the meeting. He also announced that the We Really Kare Fishing Club will hold their annual Fisheree the first weekend in February 2020. All proceeds go towards stocking fish, building fish habitat, etc. for Waushara Co lakes in the club, funded in part by raffle tickets that can be purchased now till the Fisheree on Kusel Lake.

Agenda, Minutes, Treasurer's Report

Gary asked for a motion to accept the Agenda for this meeting to be accepted as written – Dan Trudell so moved, and Karen Reynolds seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

Gary asked if anyone had changes/comments re: the August 10, 2019 Minutes. There were none offered. Mel Heaney moved that the minutes be accepted as written, and Mike Geier seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

Bill Van Dongen presented the Treasurer's Report, noting that 21 water groups have paid their dues for the current FYAug19-Jul20. A double entry for "Big" Silver Lake was corrected to instead list White River Lake Protection & Rehabilitation District as having paid their FYAug19-Jul20 dues.

As of 10/20/19:

Total Useable Funds Available:	$ 1,807.49
Total Environmental Education Funds	$ 10,260.01
Total Savings Account (including Environmental Ed Funds)	$ 1,740.67

Francie Rowe made a motion to pay the outstanding vouchers, Marty Wilke seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously. The treasurer's report was accepted into the record.

Old Business

Environmental Educational Grant – Dan Trudell, chair of the Environmental Educational Committee reported that the 2020 grant timeline (notice/applications submitted/project selected/grant money awarded) started in October with a notice published in the Argus (10/31/19) providing information to interested citizens/students of an opportunity to apply for the 2020 grant which will be an environmental educational project benefitting Waushara Co. citizens. The information was also provided to the middle/high school students attending the 4 district schools with Waushara Co. students. Anyone can apply. Contact Dan Trudell if have questions/would like more information: dant@peakperform.net .

New Business

Groundwater Flooding - Waushara County; High Water Levels and Resulting Drainage Problems – what is the county working on to address short/long-term issues- Guest Speakers: WI DNR: Adam Freihoefer, Aaron Pruitt, Bob Smail and Michelle Staff; Waushara Co.: Todd Wahler.

Adam Freihoefer spoke briefly about our current groundwater status and noted that there are areas around the state that have also been impacted by increased precipitation and resulting saturation of the ground, higher groundwater and surface water levels causing flooding and drainage issues, with today's focus on the central sands region and Waushara County. Aaron Pruitt then discussed groundwater flooding vs. event-based flooding which together can exacerbate the resulting effects. Higher precipitation levels cause groundwater levels to build up for a longer time and then take longer to recede. Aaron also noted that this is a time when wetlands aren't able to absorb the increased groundwater since typically wetlands are in low spots and already saturated. Bob Smail used graphics to show precipitation and water level variations (early 1900's to present). He stated the central sands region is currently 2x the standard deviation above normal (Dane Co. is 5x above normal); monitoring well locations in Waushara Co. and the specific locations/water bodies where data is collected; specific lakes that have longer records (Huron Lake, Long Lake-Saxeville/Springwater) and those in the Central Sands Lakes Study (Pleasant Lake, Long Lake-Oasis, Plainfield Lake); groundwater level data being collected across the county. Bob also noted that Waushara County is the most monitored county in the state re: groundwater, and has the best water level data in the state. Michelle Staff then discussed the financial benefit of mitigation; how hydrostatic forces of water in flooding situations can cause damage due to unequal water levels on either side of structural walls, as well as when ground/water freezes during winter – all contributing to existing flooding problems. Michelle gave examples of mitigation choices – acquisition/demolition, relocation, elevation, "filling in" crawlspaces/basements (e.g. cement), moving utilities/duct work, creating small berms/floodwalls, and noted that some grants and loan funding is available through federal/state/local (municipality has to apply) programs to qualified citizens. Michelle clarified that flood damage is not covered in a homeowner's insurance policy and there is no federal/FEMA declaration for long term flooding effects.

The DNR presentation is posted on WCWLC-Home page: https://wcwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2019/11/WausharaCo_GW_Flooding_WIDNR_20191109.pdf

Todd Wahler then discussed the impacts of flooding, high water levels around Waushara County, noting that the county has a Hazards & Mitigation Management Plan, which are updated every 4 years and will need to be updated to include longer term management plans if possible for groundwater flooding effects, and possibly include whether any state or federal grant funding would be available and could be requested as specific problems are identified. Unfortunately, the saturation of groundwater seen now, especially around Hwy. 21/73 going east out of Wautoma, past Bughs Lake, Milty Wilty, towards Silver Lake and Irogami Lake, is located in an area of terrain that has a relatively flat grade differential – the area all around is so saturated with groundwater, that until we have an adequate period of dry weather that allows water to be absorbed or to evaporate, the groundwater levels will remain higher. Ultimately, the conditions Waushara County citizens are experiencing are beyond the county's control, and neither government nor citizen decisions have been able to provide satisfactory remediation. Co. Administrator Sivick also noted that the county is limited by resources/funding it has available to deal with flooding projects.

Q&A topics focused on the Big Hills Lake and Lake Napowan "breach" that had to be repaired; the drainage discussions between Silver Lake and Irogami Lake and what management choices will be decided; Lake Alpine and concerns about silt draining into their lake if water upstream is diverted towards their lake. All are concerns that now are being looked at, discussions ongoing and no easy solutions seem to be available. One issue raised was whether public landings with boat launching areas paved in concrete could be assessed for remediation/County Parks funding where there is heavy water runoff traveling along the edges and pavement causing more sediment and possible contaminants to enter the lakes. Superintendent Schuman (County Parks) said he would include assessment of landings in county parks associated with lakes during 2020, to determine whether repairs/remediation is needed and if any funding can be used to cover those costs. Another topic was the concern of trees along the shoreline that have been standing in water and are dying or showing signs of distress/damage. Todd stated that property owners should contact the Land Conservation Department, who can visit the property and mark the specific tree(s) and document which trees can be removed. The issue of "Ordinary High Water Mark" determination was also discussed, and Todd noted this measurement is based on historical water levels, erosion, surrounding tree roots/health/markings, and other "tell-tale" signs that are all assessed and then determined by the DNR, which may change over time (state statutes do not allow counties to set this mark). Todd suggested that water groups consider using a groundwater pipe gauge set in water as a measurement tool to monitor current levels, as some lake groups are using.

Finally – the DNR staff at meeting were asked about the status of the Central Sands Lakes Study funding (previously Wisconsin 2017 Act 10 legislative-approved funding ran out on July 1st, 2019). The current funding request submitted several times this year, last in September, seems to be stuck in a legislative quagmire. Adam stated the DNR is pursuing their request, where it is, what is needed to move request to the Joint Finance Committee/JFC for review and approval. (Rep. Krug and Sen. Testin have stated their approval for additional funding, but are not on the JFC).

AIS Grant Program – Anna Cisar reported that a new Aquatic Invasive Species/AIS was identified in October 2019, in Marquette County (Lake Emery), and it is unknown if this AIS is present in other water bodies around us or will be present in the future in our lakes. Anna will be working in with the DNR to do lake monitoring next summer, focused on starry stonewort monitoring (although the focus of this monitoring will be within a radius around Emery). New AIS - Starry Stonewort (*Nitellopsis obtusa* L.)

AIS fact sheet: https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B_NZaFL-Ne2pT3kzX2J5TkotelU/view
Any questions - e-mail: anna.cisar@goldensandsrcd.org

Golden Sands RC&D is applying again for an AIS DNR grant and will need both letters of support and donated funds (just note pledged amount, no payment due until grant awarded in 2020). Both

letters and donations provide competing total points that are needed to be successful in receiving grants to cover Golden Sands' ability to work with their eight counties. Send your group's or your own personal letters of support/pledged donation to Golden Sands by 11/22/19 to include in their December DNR grant application/submittal. WCWLC submitted their letter/pledge of support today after motion to approve letter of support/$100 pledge was made by Arnie Wilke, seconded by Richard DeLisle, the motion passed unanimously.

Anna answered one question – What options does a water group have when dealing with "invasive growth" of a native aquatic plant? Anna noted that in some instances a plant can become a "nuisance native" and if a group has a Lake or Aquatic Management Plan, the plan should include a "point intercept survey" that could be used or a new survey conducted to document status of plant. The DNR would then have your submitted evidence and could determine if a control measure is indicated. Lake groups should contact their DNR Water Resource Management Specialist/Ted Johnson to discuss concerns, current findings and any approved management options (e.g. mechanical harvester).

Land Conservation & Zoning – Todd Wahler reported that contamination by nitrates in private well-water continues to be a state and central sands regional issue, with multiple counties engaged in projects collecting/testing private well-water samples. In this week's *Argus*, the frontpage main article co-written by Patrick Nehring/UW-Madison Ext, Todd Wahler and Ed Hernandez/LC Department, informed citizens of a Central Sands Groundwater County Collaborative/CSGCC initiative involving Adams, Juneau, Marquette, Portage, Waushara and Wood Counties and their staff, board supervisors: https://www.wausharaargus.com/latest-government/land-water-and-conservation-departments-form-central-sands-groundwater
The collaborative is submitting their funding request ($230,000) to the Water Quality Task Force so that those six counties can study nitrates data obtained from private well-water sampling, identify potential contamination causes, and determine appropriate actions based on findings while pooling the data and resources thru a multi-county approach that will include partisan-free education.

Todd also noted the past week's DNR public hearings held to start the process of updating NR 151 re: "targeted performance standards and prohibitions to abate pollution of groundwater by nitrates in sensitive areas". Todd stated the Land Conservation Department, and Public Health Department submitted letters of support and takes the county citizens' welfare seriously re: safe, quality drinking water.

Post meeting note: Ed Hernandez confirmed that the DNR grant-funded "Welcome to Waterfront Living" packets project paperwork was submitted to the DNR, all reimbursements received, and project is completed.

UW-Madison Extension - Patrick Nehring discussed possible economic impacts from a season of "slow no wake" restrictions on specific county lakes and tourism spending. Lodging rental revenues are up in 2019, and some credit is due the Tourism Committee's work and video that promotes tourism in Waushara County.

Patrick reported that the second phase of Waushara County grant-funded private well-water testing for Nitrates/Chlorides was completed in October, covering the middle 6 townships/municipalities and sections of the area where well-water sampling data was not available previously (150 homeowners participated). The UW-SP Water Environmental Analysis Lab/WEAL is returning results currently to those homeowners, and the county staff expects their reports from WEAL towards the end of November. A public event is planned sometime in December to provide anonymous findings to the community. The goal is to use the baseline nitrates data to assess issues and create best management practices for those areas that need more protection, and provide data to the CSGCC multi-county collaborative in their work.

Gary Wisbrocker then presented Patrick with a plaque from the WCWLC "In deep appreciation for his many years of dedicated, outstanding service to the waters of Waushara County". Patrick received a standing ovation from the group.

White River Flowage Lake Management District – Mike Geier provided an overview of the White River Flowage (lower pond), located in the Township of Dakota – between Hwy 22 and Hwy 73, just north of Cty Rd YY. White River Flowage is 133 acres, with a maximum depth of 24 ft. and a mostly sandy bottom. In 1998, when Mike moved to the Flowage, he found an infested weed bed. During 1999-2003, he worked with neighbors to form a lake association to deal with their AIS management issues. He noted that in 2004, the White River Flowage was designated as "the worst body of water in the county". Yet in seven years as the group worked together, formed a lake management district in 2005, their designation changed to the "healthiest body of water in the county" in 2011. The district accomplished this with the use of a loan (repaid) and grants from the DNR to manage Eurasian Watermilfoil/EWM and Curly-leaf pondweed/CLP and brought the AIS acreage down to 0.5 acre/EWM and 3.5 acres/CLP. Then in 2015, Flowering Rush was discovered. (No flowering rush was found in the Wautoma Mill Pond). Through an emergency DNR-funded grant, the district, Golden Sands RC&D (overall management/assessment) and Wisconsin Lake & Pond (chemical treatment) responded with member/citizen volunteer efforts to begin hand-pulling removal and constant monitoring of flowering rush status. This September, the flowering rush survey revealed that no plants were found "above the water level" and at this point they have achieved a 99.5% control success. Newly emerging plants will continue to be pulled by dedicated volunteers as monitoring continues. The district has extended Golden Sands RC&D's contract through 2021 to conduct AIS surveys, and the White River Flowage hopes to apply to the DNR for a grant working on the river's channel flow pattern to support a vibrant fishing habitat. The White River Flowage district has 71 families, a 7-member board, their members pay fees between $50-250/yr. (based on property value), and district has a Total Assessed Value of $8.4 million.

Future Agenda Item Suggestions

- Economic impacts that riparian property owners provide to Waushara County – tourism and property taxes to support local municipalities

Previous agenda items suggested:

- Golden Sands RC&D representative to address water quality issues/nitrate contamination problems and what their council and board are working on, recommendations identified.
- Central Sands Groundwater County Collaborative/CSGCC – report/update on 6-county regional collaborative's work/funding by Waushara Co representatives
- Ted Johnson/DNR - discuss DNR's experience, resulting effects and success with recent "Drawdowns" in central sands region and state (e.g. Wautoma Millpond, Lake Weyauwega, Amherst Millpond, Lake Winnebago drawdown).
- Golden Sands – EWM beetle project – Amy
- DASH - vendor presentation, lake group(s) experiences/comments
- Healthy Lakes grant projects – DNR and local water groups that have participated experiences
- Patrick Nehring to expand on previous topic of Community-Based Social Marketing and use two WCWLC lake groups/their projects to show how groups could use strategies.

Mike Geier made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Bill Kehl seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 12:37 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marty Wilke, Secretary

<u>WCWLC 2019-2020 remaining Meeting Dates</u>:
February 8, 2020 at 10:00 am
May 9, 2020 at 9:00 am
August 8, 2020 at 9:00 am

WCWLC Board Members/Terms:

Mel Heaney	(term 2019-22)
Karen Reynolds	(term 2019-22)
Francie Rowe	(term 2019-22)
Dan Trudell	(term 2017-20)
Bill Van Dongen	(term 2018-21)
Marty Wilke	(term 2018-21)
Gary Wisbrocker	(term 2017-20)