

**Waushara County Watershed Lakes Council**  
**P.O. Box 634**  
**Wautoma, Wisconsin 54982**

**Meeting Minutes**  
**February 8, 2020**

Gary Wisbrocker, Pres. W4921 Wilson Rd. Waupaca, WI 54981  715-258-0790 <a href="mailto:gwisbrocker@gmail.com">gwisbrocker@gmail.com</a>	Dan Trudell, V-Pres. W10708 S. Huron Rd. Plainfield, Wi 54966  608-852-5269 <a href="mailto:dant@peakperform.net">dant@peakperform.net</a>	Bill Van Dongen, Treas. N1628 S. White River Rd. Wautoma, WI 54982  920-787-0956 <a href="mailto:bevandwo@gmail.com">bevandwo@gmail.com</a>	Marty Wilke, Sec. N877 Spring Lake Est. Dr. Neshkoro, WI 54960  920-566-4605 <a href="mailto:amwilke@centurylink.net">amwilke@centurylink.net</a>
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The February 8, 2020 WCWLC meeting was called to order at 10:02 am by Gary Wisbrocker. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. Twenty-one people were in attendance, including Mike Kapp/Waushara Co. Board; John Jarvis/Waushara Co. Board; Robert Sivick/Co. Admin.; and our DNR guest speaker Chris Kolasinski. 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 legislative bills for lake districts:

- 1) SB335/AB360 (now 2019 Wisconsin Act 99) was signed into law/effective 2/7/20 (provides a process in the event of a recount request during a district meeting where more than one candidate is nominated for an elected board position): <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2019/related/acts/99.pdf> ; and
- 2) SB559/AB600 is scheduled for senate floor session voting – deals with when competitive bids are required for contracted work/materials for a district - threshold cost increased to \$10,000: <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2019/related/proposals/sb559.pdf> .
- 3) SB501/AB551 made the news after a family dispute about pier placement (sister) vs. who owned the land under the lakebed (brother who refused permission for pier). The case went to the State Supreme Court, which sided with the landowner and resulted in Wisconsin Realty Association’s concerns that this may be a statewide property rights issue. But it only affects waterfront property owners along flowages who do NOT have a deed clarifying riparian rights (which should be stated in deed). The public trust doctrine still is intact and issue is simply of competing property rights. Proposed bill is still in committee: <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2019/related/proposals/sb501.pdf>

Both Assembly and Senate are working on proposed bills that were the result of the Water Quality Task Force’s report with 13 recommendations dealing with Wisconsin’s water quality issues. It is expected that approximately 5-6 bills could pass both Assembly floor sessions (legislative year ends in February) and Senate floor sessions (legislative year ends in March). Some bills will hopefully be brought back when the next legislative session begins after fall elections. These bills include - adding county conservation funding; PFAS; lead service lines exposure; coal-tar based sealants; private well compensation funding/eligibility; funding for failing septic systems; possible changes to lengthen the groundwater standards process; municipal flood control grant programs; biomanipulation projects aimed at improving lakes/impoundments water quality; an Agricultural-focused program to work with farmers on water quality practices/crop insurance coverage; a nitrate pilot grant project thru DATCP; private well-testing grants/mapping/outreach & education; and finally - SB779, which is a bipartisan bill to establish a continuing funding source called the “Water Fund for our Future”, similar to funding implemented in Minnesota and Ohio: <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2019/related/proposals/sb779.pdf> .

Mel Heaney reminded members that “Welcome to Waterfront Living” packets are available to member

groups (5 folders to start with), and may be picked up from him after a meeting.

Robert Sivick informed the members that sometime in late March/April of this year, the county plans to hold a public meeting to discuss the solicited proposals from architects/contractors that the county requested to consider upgrades/improvements to the courthouse's building/heating, etc. as well as functionality to adapt to current needs/uses/accessibility and possible repurposing of the courthouse for its citizens and employees.

Dan Trudell noted that the DNR's Central Sands Lakes Study/CSLS received additional funding (approved by the Joint Finance Committee 1/7/20) to continue data collection and modeling work related to high capacity well pumping effects on surface waters in the central sands region. The DNR plans to offer a public webinar during 2020 summer to discuss their work, and submit their report to the legislature in 2021.

### **Agenda, Minutes, Treasurer's Report**

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

Gary asked if anyone had changes/comments re: the November 9, 2019 Minutes. There were none offered. Dan Trudell moved that the minutes be accepted as written, and Mel Heaney seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

Bill Van Dongen presented the Treasurer's Report, noting that 23 water groups have paid their dues for the current FYAug19-Jul20. Groups that haven't paid for this year were asked to submit their dues.

As of 1/20/20:

Total Useable Funds Available:	\$ 1,650.82
Total Environmental Education Funds	\$10,333.86
Total Savings Account (including Environmental Ed Funds)	\$ 1,599.00

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

### **Old Business**

### **New Business**

**Healthy Lakes & Rivers Grant-funded Program**- Guest Speaker: Chris Kolasinski, WI DNR Water Resources Specialist from the Oshkosh Office.

Chris Kolasinski introduced the Healthy Lakes program by announcing that the program has been updated since its inception in 2014 to now offer more available grant funding each year and to include rivers. Healthy Lakes & Rivers remains a collaborative team effort that depends on private and public waterfront property owners, businesses, and the Wisconsin Lakes Partnership to promote and install relatively simple and inexpensive best practices benefiting habitat and water quality. This goal-oriented plan also includes funding, promotion, and evaluation strategies.

Chris noted that Wisconsin has 15,000 lakes and in Waushara County, lake/shoreline properties make up 25-34% of our county. The Healthy Lakes & Rivers program uses human behavior modification to address impacts from land development, aimed at habitat restoration and runoff and erosion control. The five best practices for a project are: 1) Fish Sticks (tree drop for fish habitat/absorbs wave action impacts-shoreline erosion); 2) 350-ft<sup>2</sup> Native Plantings (plants suited to a transition zone – bird/butterfly habitat, lakeshore, woodland, low-growing, deer resistant, bare soil areas); 3) Rock Infiltration (an upland location – excavated pit or trench filled with rock to capture/re-direct/pre-treat water runoff); 4) Rain Garden (landscaped

shallow depression with loose soil, native plantings suitable to moisture location – designed to collect roof, gutter, path and driveway runoff while also creating wildlife habitat and natural beauty); and 5) Diversion (a transition zone and upland practice that includes a diverter, water bar, and broad-based dip. Examples – lumber, shallow trench, berm to intercept runoff from a path/driveway and redirect to well-vegetated dispersion area or infiltration practice).

Each of these simple projects are ones that an individual property owner can complete thru the 75/25% grant, with a cap of \$1000 maximum for each project. If someone is part of an organized water group, or could participate thru a county project - consider how to contribute in a Healthy Lakes & Rivers grant-funded program. To date, Healthy Lakes Program has had 804 best practices completed by 474 property owners, in 28 counties for 81 lakes, using \$750,000 of funding - 294 projects were completed in 2019 alone.

A free brochure titled “**Get Started Brochure**” is available and can be ordered online at: <https://healthylakeswi.com/resources/>, scroll down to “Promotion Toolshed”; Tip: include this brochure in an annual mailing to your water group or have available at your meeting.

Plans, Fact Sheets, Grant Application Forms, FAQ, Contacts, Funding and administrative resources can be found on their website: <https://healthylakeswi.com/> To date – ALL grant applications have been approved!

#### Questions:

- John Jarvis asked if Healthy Lakes staff were aware of higher levels of nutrients entering lakes/streams and more shoreline erosion issues due to the flooding, higher amounts of precipitation we’ve experienced in Wisconsin? Has this caused more blue-green algae blooms? Chris said they were not compiling this data, but would agree there is more need to consider Healthy Lakes & Rivers’ best management practices.

- Dan Trudell/Huron Lake & Karen Reynolds/Gilbert Lake noted that after their Healthy Lakes native plantings/rain garden projects were completed, some of the projects were flooded and now they are worried the project work has been lost. Chris responded that if that happens, the project team offers initial advice of 1) don’t panic, and 2) wait to see over time how the plants may be able to recover. Some plants, especially if they were planted several seasons ago, may have been able to establish roots and although dormant during flooding/a recovery period, they could come back due to their native resiliency. 3) If there is plant loss or a project is destroyed, contact Ted Johnson, DNR Water Resources Specialist for Waushara County to discuss what can be done. Chris said that each problem would be dealt with on a case-by-case basis as to whether an extension in the project timeline is needed, if funds haven’t all been used – could then be used for more plantings, etc., and how much funding might be available. The staff wants to support project success.

- How close to the water should projects be? Rain gardens can be done anywhere and shoreland plantings should have some part of the plantings within 35 ft. to the shoreline.

Karen Reynolds showed pictures of rain garden, rock filtration and native plantings done at Gilbert Lake through a Healthy Lakes grant. The plantings at 2 years are well-established and thriving. One project was affected by flooding and will be assessed this year. They plan to apply for another grant for 2021-2022 since more property owners are interested. Karen offered these tips: start early, use the free brochure, promote the program on group’s website, communicate often to keep interest high, recommends using a landscaper with Healthy Lakes program experience – designs, possibly complete grant application, etc., and download the grant application early since it contains much information that is helpful to know.

Dan Trudell showed pictures of an additional property on Huron Lake that they cleared/cleaned of invasive terrestrials, and had then had native plantings put in. The plants have now been flooded by rising water levels and plants will be assessed this coming year. Dan may need to contact the DNR to discuss options.

Marty Wilke had pictures of the two rain gardens and a shoreline planting that they completed on their property late fall 2019 on Spring Lake. Their district’s grant covers 8 property owners with 16 projects over

2019-2020 and include fish sticks, rain gardens, native plantings and a diversion.

**Environmental Educational Grant** – Dan Trudell, chair of the Environmental Educational Committee reported that one application was received from Westfield High School for a 2020 environmental educational project benefitting Waushara Co. citizens. The committee will review the application.

**Land Water & Education Committee – Request for citizen lake/water representative addition**

At the last WCWLC board meeting, a suggestion was made that it would be helpful and beneficial to request that Waushara County’s Land Water & Education Committee/LW&E consider appointing a citizen representative from the county’s water groups to the committee to add fuller perspectives, concerns, relay new/worsening problems (e.g. - AIS management options), funding limitations, and group activities that lake/river/water groups are involved in as part of their role in helping with lake and river management plans that protect the water resources around us. While county supervisors are assigned to the 20 lake district boards, there are over 33 public access lakes, 49 rivers/creeks in Waushara County and a citizen representative for all the water groups could provide a collaborative connection to the LW&E Committee at times when discussions relate to topics on recreational water use, riparian property owner issues, AIS funding/management, etc.

At the December 4, 2019 LW&E Committee meeting, that request was made by Marty Wilke to the committee. The committee members seemed receptive to the idea. Per Corporate Counsel for Waushara County, a resolution could be made, discussed/approved by the LW&E Committee, and then would need approval by the County Board. (The representative would not have committee voting rights, or be provided with sensitive county board communications).

Concern: Since there will be new supervisors/members assigned to the LW&E Committee after spring elections determine county board supervisor positions, and then committee assignments are published – the committee tabled action until the new committee is formed and meets to take up this request again. At that time, one suggestion is that the WCWLC designate this citizen representative (who is interested and willing to represent the county’s water groups) and provide the citizen’s name to the committee and County Administrator for review/possible action by the County Board.

Note: After this request was made to the LW&E at 12/4/19 meeting, a citizen from the farming community asked that the committee consider adding a citizen farmer representative to the committee. This request was also tabled but will be discussed again when the LW&E Committee meets after the April elections are completed. The current LW&E Committee members voiced concern that either representative not come from a politically connected organization.

**AIS Grant Program** – Anna Cisar submitted a report since she could not attend today’s meeting and noted Golden Sands RC&D should hear from the DNR this month as to whether they were awarded a 2020 Regional AIS grant (application was submitted in December). Golden Sands will notify WCWLC once the DNR AIS grant awards are published.

Anna also noted the **2020 Wisconsin Lakes & Rivers Convention Registration** is open and the **Agenda** is now available online detailing workshops and sessions offered. Dates: April 1-3, 2020 at the Holiday Inn Convention Center in Stevens Point. High water levels sessions are being offered. Website: <https://www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/UWEXLakes/Pages/programs/convention/default.aspx>

**Land Conservation & Zoning** – None

**Long Lake District/Oasis** – Betty Martin described Long Lake in the Township of Oasis near Plainfield, citing DNR’s data as a 40-acre, maximum depth of 14 ft., muck bottom, no-wake lake, with one public landing, and abundant Panfish, as well as Largemouth Bass and Northern Pike. The lake is bordered by two roads - one maintained by their township, and snow removal is contracted with the county. The lake has benefited by the increased precipitation in recent years, contrasted to 2008 when the lake had no water, to this past season when 6 pontoons as well as kayaks were out on the lake, and Long Lake had a 21 ft. beach, and the lake gained a depth of 5 ft.

Long Lake District has 70 property owners, the majority of whom are seasonal residents, has an assessed 2.5 mil rate, and holds two district meetings a year. This past year the lake district submitted a request/permit fee to the DNR to use a weed harvester, but the DNR’s review noted that since there were open navigation channels in the lake, a harvester was not needed/recommended.

Long Lake neighbors are also proud of their own nature photographer, Brian Wolf, whose photography is published in the *Our Wisconsin* magazine and has owned property on Long Lake for many years.

**Future Agenda Item Suggestions**

- Legislative update re: water quality legislation – Rep. Krug and Rep. Shankland
  - Fisheries-DNR/We Really Kare Fishing Club/TU presentation on Waushara Co projects, surveys
  - DNR presentation on updated Surface Water Grant process, Healthy Lakes grants including rivers
- Previous agenda items suggested:
- Economic impacts that riparian property owners provide to Waushara County – tourism and property taxes to support local municipalities
  - 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 by Waushara Co. representatives on the 6-county regional collaborative’s work/funding
  - Ted Johnson/DNR - discuss DNR’s experience, resulting effects and success with recent “Drawdowns” in central sands region and state (e.g. Buffalo Lake/Marquette, Wautoma Millpond, Lake Weyauwega, Amherst Millpond, Lake Winnebago).
  - Golden Sands – EWM beetle project – Amy Thorstenson
  - DASH - vendor presentation, lake group(s) experiences/comments

Dan Trudell made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Mel Heaney seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 11:34 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marty Wilke, Secretary

**WCWLC 2019-2020 remaining Meeting Dates:**

**May 9, 2020 at 9:00 am**

**August 8, 2020 at 9:00 am**

**WCWLC Board Members/Terms:**

Mel Heaney	(term 2019-22)	Bill Van Dongen	(term 2018-2021)
Karen Reynolds	(term 2019-22)	Marty Wilke	(term 2018-2021)
Francie Rowe	(term 2019-22)	Gary Wisbrocker	(term 2017-2020)
Dan Trudell	(term 2017-20)		