

RESOLUTION #1

REGARDING REDUCTION OF AGRICULTURE PHOSPHORUS LOADING TO GREEN BAY AND LAKE MICHIGAN

WHEREAS, the Fox River is the largest contributor of phosphorus (P) (21 percent) to Lake Michigan of all tributary streams as determined by USGS, and

WHEREAS, the Fox River is the third largest contributor of sediment to Lake Michigan of all tributary streams as determined by USGS, and

WHEREAS, the Total Maximum Daily Load and Watershed Management Plan for Total P and Total Suspended Solids in the Lower Fox River Basin and Lower Green Bay identifies 45.7 percent of total P loading and 65.8 percent of Total Suspended Solids coming from agriculture, and

WHEREAS, loading of P and sediment to Green Bay and Lake Michigan negatively impacts water quality, fisheries, wildlife, beaches, recreation, property values, tourism and jobs that are crucial to northeastern Wisconsin.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that agriculture producers that receive Federal farm subsidies and CAFOs that participate in the Wastewater Wisconsin Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (WPDES) Permit Program should be required to have a completed farm conservation plan that:

1. Conducts soils tests once every four years on crop fields that are over 50 ppm P.
2. Requires grassed waterway and buffer strip installation on fields greater than 50 ppm P as required in current P index 590 requirements.
3. Requires that manure storage facilities are adequate for one year's worth of storage for the number of livestock in the operation and that the manure storage facility be properly fenced.
4. Requires ownership or operation up to three acres, depending on soil types, of cropland for every animal unit so adequate land is available for land disposal of waste, thereby creating a simplified nutrient management plan and promoting sustainable agriculture.
5. Requires nutrient management plans be monitored to verify the plan is actually being followed by tracking soil P levels on individual fields.
6. Does not allow any feedlot or feed leachate runoff to reach waters of the state.
7. Requires crop fields to be maintained at or below T values for soil loss. Cropping practices, precision field applications, constructed wetlands, sediment control basins and other options may be chosen by landowner.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the following compliance measures be put in place for noncompliance:

1. Failure to meet any one of the requirements above eliminates eligibility for federal farm subsidy payments and state Working Lands Initiative credits for a year or until compliance achieved.
2. Cost share will not be provided for CAFOs or landowners receiving federal farm subsidy payments to obtain conservation compliance.
3. Yearly inspection and certification by conservationist is required.
4. Schedules of compliance required for noncompliance farms.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association forward this resolution and its proposed action and compliance items to Federal legislators, State legislators, and the North Central Region of the National Association of Conservation Districts to enact policy to help reduce and move toward prevention of P loading to Green Bay and Lake Michigan.

Adopted by the Lake Michigan Area Land & Water Conservation Association October 14, 2011.
WLWCA Board of Directors unanimously recommended consideration of this resolution as amended on November 4, 2011.

WLWCA approved this resolution on December 9, 2010.

RESOLUTION #2

RETAIN AGRICULTURAL TAX CLASSIFICATION ON LANDS ENROLLED IN THE WETLANDS RESERVE PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the U.S.D.A. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) is the nation's premiere wetland restoration program; and

WHEREAS, the WRP is a voluntary program to restore and protect wetlands on private property; and

WHEREAS, the WRP offers landowners financial incentives to restore and protect wetlands that have been drained for agricultural production; and

WHEREAS, the WRP offers landowners three options: permanent easements, 30-year easements, and restoration cost-share agreements of a minimum 10-year duration; and

WHEREAS, the restoration of wetlands yields benefits for the entire State of Wisconsin including: improved water quality and groundwater recharge; flood protection; improved open space and rural aesthetics; increased wildlife habitat for migrating birds, fish and other wildlife; reduced soil erosion; and

WHEREAS, state tax law rewards some farmers and penalizes others for restoring wetlands and floodplains on their farms because property tax benefits for the conservation activities are tied to the program rather than the practice; and

WHEREAS, wetlands restored through the federal Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and several other Farm Bill programs maintain agricultural tax classification; and

WHEREAS, lands restored through the WRP, also a federal Farm Bill program are reclassified as undeveloped land for property tax assessment purposes; and

WHEREAS, in more than 850 Wisconsin communities, this reclassification leads to property tax increases ranging from \$5 to \$175 per acre (2008 data); and

WHEREAS, these penalties discourage landowners to enroll in the WRP and discourage the installation of much-needed conservation practices designed to reduce soil erosion, flood hazards and polluted runoff;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Wisconsin Land & Water Conservation Association supports retaining the agricultural tax classification on lands enrolled in the WRP.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Wisconsin Land & Water Conservation Association urges the Wisconsin Legislature to modify state statute to retain the agricultural tax classification on lands enrolled in the WRP.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the Wisconsin Land & Water Conservation Association that a copy of this resolution shall be forwarded to the Governor of the State of Wisconsin, State and Federal legislative representatives, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service State Conservationist, the North Central Region of the National Association of Conservation Districts, and the Wisconsin Counties Association urging adoption of a similar resolution.

Adopted by the Southeast Area Land & Water Conservation Association on October 21, 2011.
WLWCA Board of Directors unanimously recommended approval of this resolution as amended on November 4, 2011.

WLWCA approved this resolution on December 9, 2011.

RESOLUTION #3

REQUESTING INCREASED RESOURCES BE DIRECTED TO PREVENT ASIAN CARP FROM SPREADING TO INLAND WATERSHEDS THROUGH THE ST. CROIX AND WISCONSIN RIVERS

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association recognizes water-based tourism, recreational boating, and sport and commercial fishing as important industries in the region and on the Great Lakes; and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin, has a thriving tourism economy based on fishing, boating, recreation and the aesthetic beauty of inland water bodies which brings in millions of dollars in revenue per year to the regional economy; and

WHEREAS, residents and tourists have a strong connection to the region and cherish the natural resources inland water bodies have to offer to its residents and visitors; and

WHEREAS, Asian carp have been detected in the Mississippi River and are threatening Wisconsin waters including the Wisconsin River and the St. Croix River; and

WHEREAS, any movement of Asian carp from the Wisconsin and St. Croix Rivers into inland waters of Wisconsin threatens the ecological integrity, biological diversity, and economic health of the region and neighboring watersheds; and

WHEREAS, if the species of Asian carp present in the Mississippi River basin enters and establishes a breeding population within Wisconsin's inland lakes and tributary river systems, their presence will severely and negatively affect the region's entire ecosystem resulting in a large financial loss to the region; and

WHEREAS, Asian carp are long-lived, fast growing fish that can reach up to 20 years of age and nearly 100 pounds in weight consuming up to 40 percent of their body weight per day in organisms occupying the lowest trophic levels, undermining the entire food web and causing devastating crashes to the native fish populations; and

WHEREAS, recognizing the Asian Carp presents a problem to the entire Mississippi Watershed, it is imperative that aggressive action be taken to safeguard the ecological and economic integrity of Wisconsin's water bodies and the Mississippi Watershed; and

WHEREAS, Minnesota is committing personnel and financial resources towards preventing Asian carp from spreading north along the Mississippi River and its tributaries, of which the St. Croix River is one; and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin has not yet committed significant resources to preventing the Asian carp from spreading upstream of the St. Croix River, potentially infesting inland waters; and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin has the opportunity to cooperate and collaborate with Minnesota in this regional effort to safeguard the inland waters and tributary river systems of the upper Mississippi River, including the St. Croix River.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Wisconsin Land & Water Conservation Association, to urge the Wisconsin legislature and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to commit personnel and financial resources to cooperate and collaborate with Minnesota to prevent Asian carp from invading Wisconsin waters.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution shall be forwarded to the Wisconsin Department of Tourism, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the Mississippi River Basin Alliance, Wisconsin and Minnesota's State and Federal legislators, the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the North Central Region of the National Association of Conservation Districts.

Adopted by the Northwestern Area Land & Water Conservation Association on October 28, 2011.

WLWCA Board of Directors unanimously recommended approval of this resolution as amended on November 4, 2011.

WLWCA approved this resolution on December 9, 2011.

RESOLUTION #4

REQUESTING CHANGES BE MADE TO CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARDS INCORPORATING RECOMMENDED ADAPTATIONS FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

WHEREAS, conservation of natural resources in Wisconsin is not a new challenge but one that will become more difficult based on predicted climate changes; and

WHEREAS, recently, changing precipitation patterns have threatened to eliminate or even reverse progress toward minimizing soil erosion impacts on water quality; and

WHEREAS, according to the USDA-NRCS National Resource Inventory, soil erosion has decreased in Wisconsin from 1982 – 1997, but losses from soil erosion are now increasing in recent years; and

WHEREAS, according to the Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts (WICCI) Soil Conservation Working Group 2011, a relatively small fraction and number of precipitation events each year cause most of the annual soil loss from agricultural fields, but there is evidence that highly erosive precipitation events are increasing in frequency, and furthermore, climate change models are predicting intensification of the hydrologic cycle in the future; and

WHEREAS, according to the same report, simulation models that combine future climate conditions with soil erosion calculations indicate that in the absence of appropriate adaptation actions, soil erosion in Wisconsin could more than double by 2050 compared with the 1990s; and

WHEREAS, climate change in Wisconsin is likely to increase the severity and frequency of high flows and high water levels; trending toward wetter conditions and more intense rainfall; and

WHEREAS, climate models also predict increases in cold season precipitation and increases in the ratio of rainfall to snowfall, potentially increasing the frequency of damaging flooding from rivers, lakes, and groundwater; and as a result of these changes, we can expect increases in the magnitude and frequency of high flows in streams and rivers, as well as high water levels in streams, rivers, lakes, and impoundments; and

WHEREAS, according to the WICCI Stormwater Working Group, scientific knowledge about the potential increase in magnitude and frequency of precipitation is sufficient to warrant immediate changes in the methods we use to plan, design, and manage stormwater-related infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, more frequent and severe rural stream and river flooding caused by increased rainfall, and shifting precipitation patterns that favor more rain during periods of low infiltration and evapotranspiration are expected; and

WHEREAS, it is recommended that the state develop and implement a long-term plan for developing continuous hydrologic simulation models of stream flow for critical watersheds; and where appropriate, the models should be coupled to groundwater models; and

WHEREAS, it is recommended that new minimum design and performance standards specifically extend to the 100-year storm event and require regular updating with the most recent rainfall statistics; and

WHEREAS, it is recommended that updates to design and performance standards follow periodic updated estimates of high water profiles based on revised rainfall data; and

WHEREAS, it is recommended that new metrics be developed for sustainability of soil and water resources, assigned values of T (tolerable soil loss) are generally not adequate to meet current water quality standards; and

WHEREAS, it is recommended that human resources be provided to facilitate broad adoption, at the local level, of the practices we know can reduce soil erosion and to ensure compliance with existing rules as a critical step in Wisconsin's ability to mitigate impacts from climate change.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Wisconsin Land & Water Conservation Association, to encourage the Natural Resources Conservation Service to consider the recommendations regarding climate modeling put forth by the Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts when updating design and performance standards; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the Wisconsin Land & Water Conservation Association, that the Wisconsin legislature provide the resources needed to adequately address impacts of climate change in the state by following the recommendations outlined in the Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts report for increased local human resources and changes to design and performance standards based on revised rainfall data.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution shall be forwarded to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the United States Geological Survey, and the North Central Region of the National Association of Conservation Districts.

Adopted by the Northwestern Land and Water Conservation Association on October 28, 2011.
WLWCA Board of Directors unanimously recommended approval of this resolution as amended on November 4, 2011.

WLWCA approved this resolution on December 9, 2011.

RESOLUTION #5

SUPPORT MERGING WLWCA WITH WALCE AND THE REPEAL AND RECREATION OF THE WLWCA BYLAWS

WHEREAS, in fall of 2010, the Boards of Directors of the Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association (WLWCA) and Wisconsin Association of Land Conservation Employees (WALCE) each appointed five members to an ad-hoc committee to develop recommendations on the possible merger of the two associations, following guiding principles adopted by both Boards; and

WHEREAS, after much deliberation, the Ad-Hoc Merger Committee presented their preliminary recommendations to the WLWCA and WALCE Boards of Directors in spring of 2011, and both Boards unanimously supported the continuation of the committee's work, including an extensive outreach program to both memberships and the preparation of a merged set of bylaws; and

WHEREAS, in August 2011, the Ad-Hoc Merger Committee presented the results of their outreach efforts and draft bylaws for the merged association to the WLWCA and WALCE Boards of Directors during a joint Board meeting, and both Boards unanimously recommended approval of the proposed bylaws and the continuation of outreach efforts in preparation for a vote by both memberships at their next annual meetings.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the WLWCA membership hereby supports merging with WALCE and the repeal and recreation of the WLWCA bylaws dated 9/29/11, subject to the subsequent approval of said bylaws by the WALCE membership during their annual meeting in March 2012; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that upon WALCE approval of said bylaws, all eight of the current WLWCA Board of Directors shall serve as members of an interim WLWCA Board of Directors under the new bylaws until the WLWCA Board of Directors is reorganized following County Board elections in April 2012.

WLWCA Board of Directors unanimously recommended approval of this resolution on September 29, 2011.

Southeast Area Association unanimously passed a motion to support this resolution on October 21, 2011.

WLWCA approved this resolution on December 9, 2011.

RESOLUTION #6

OPPOSITION TO FURTHER LAND CONSERVATION STAFFING GRANT CUTS

WHEREAS, County Land and Water Resource Management Plans were added to Chapter 92 State Statutes in 1997 as a new method of addressing nonpoint pollution and other land conservation efforts in Wisconsin; and,

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 92.14(6)(b) Wis. Statutes, the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection shall attempt to provide funding for an average of 3 staff persons per county, with an average of \$100,000 per county for cost-sharing grants; and,

WHEREAS, the Soil and Water Resource Management program is currently approximately \$4 million short of meeting its statutory staffing grant goal; and,

WHEREAS, County Land Conservation staff supported by state grants have consistently decreased since the program began, from 219 in 1997 to 97 in 2012, under the 2011-2013 biennial budget and corresponding agency lapse proposal; and,

WHEREAS, the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection proposes to further reduce soil and water general purpose revenue funds, which are used for staffing of county conservation departments by 29 percent, resulting in a statewide reduction of \$1,100,400; and,

WHEREAS, this comes in addition to the \$1 million in cuts already approved in the 2011-2013 biennial budget; and,

WHEREAS, County Land Conservation staff play a critical role to our state's economy by assisting landowners obtain state and federal funds to help pay for their operations and the proposed cuts will therefore have a rippling negative impact on our state's communities, especially in rural areas;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association does hereby urge the Governor of the State of Wisconsin and all elected representatives in the Wisconsin State Legislature to reject further cuts to county land conservation staffing grants, recognizing the invaluable service that county conservation employees provide in managing and protecting Wisconsin's natural resources.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association urges the Governor and all elected representatives in the state legislature to transfer 1.1 million dollars in SEG nutrient management cost sharing funds to SWRM GPR staffing funds to backfill 1.1 million dollars in proposed cuts to staffing funds.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association encourages Wisconsin County Boards to pass similar resolutions.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Governor of Wisconsin, Secretary of the Department of Administration, Secretary of the Department of

Natural Resources, Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection and state legislators.

WLWCA Board of Directors unanimously recommended consideration of this resolution on December 8, 2011.

WLWCA approved this resolution on December 9, 2011.