



Thursday Note

An Update on Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Issues

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Thursday, May 7, 2009

Tough Times Demand Tough Measures

It seems like the only thing in the news that gets talked about more than swine flu is the bad economy. Times are tough, the government and organizations everywhere are feeling the fiscal pressure. WLWCA is no exception. Our dues revenues continue to be strong, but because of the strain on the state budget, the revenue that WLWCA receives from state agencies has declined dramatically.

In order to keep WLWCA going through this difficult time, the board of directors has decided to reduce the hours of the executive director for a temporary period in order to maintain a balanced budget for 2009. From the perspective of membership, WLWCA will continue to function as it always has. The same programs will be offered with the same quality as always. WLWCA continues to stay on top of the important issues that affect county conservation statewide. This arrangement will continue through the summer and all will be back to normal in time for fall area meetings and preparation for the 2009 WLWCA Annual Conference.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this, please contact julian@wlwca.org or the WLWCA office for immediate attention.

~Julian Zelazny, Executive Director

WLWCA Annual Conference: Call for Volunteers

The WLWCA Annual Conference is scheduled for December 9-10, 2009 at the La Crosse Center/Radisson La Crosse. WLWCA currently seeks volunteers from Western Area LCCs and LCD staff. The first conference planning committee meeting is scheduled on May 28, 2009 from 9:30 am-12:00 pm at the La Crosse County LCD office. Attendees may choose to participate via conference call (RSVP required for access). If you are interested in helping coordinate the WLWCA Annual Conference or assisting with the annual silent auction (benefiting WLWCA youth programs and funding the WLWCA State Conservation Awareness Poster and Speaking Contest), please contact Chris Schlutt at chrisschlutt@wlwca.org.

~Kirsten Moore, Office Manager

State Budget Update

First, a big conservation THANK YOU to all who attended the meetings of the Joint Finance Committee around the state. Turnout was very good in all locations and our concerns were well received in front of the committee. In addition to the participation of our membership, members of other conservation and environmental organizations spoke about the importance of county conservation staff. Protecting the staffing grant for county land conservation employees was a priority adopted by a broad coalition of organizations brought together by the Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters. Consequently, the joint finance committee heard from a wide variety of interested parties about the importance of our work.

The Joint Finance Committee is back in Madison working on the budget and has made a number of decisions, but they have not yet addressed any of our issues.

The two points we are making to the committee include restoring the funding to the staffing grant that was removed in the governor's budget proposal, and removing the dissolution of the Land and Water Conservation Board from the governor's proposed budget, leaving the LWCB intact.

WLWCA is working closely with WALCE to bring our positions to the committee and to illustrate the importance of maintaining county staff funding and keeping the LWCB. We are making some progress within the committee and have identified some strong champions there. The committee members are:

Senator Mark Miller, Co-Chair	Representative Mark Pocan, Co-Chair
Senator Dave Hansen	Representative Pedro Colón
Senator Lena Taylor	Representative Cory Mason
Senator John Lehman	Representative Jennifer Shilling
Senator Judy Robson	Representative Gary Sherman
Senator Julie Lassa	Representative Tamara Grigsby
Senator Alberta Darling	Representative Robin Vos
Senator Luther Olsen	Representative Phil Montgomery

If you know any of these legislators personally, please contact Julian at julian@wlwca.org or contact the WLWCA office. If you reside in the district of any of these legislators please contact them and express your support for saving the Land and Water Conservation Board and for returning the funding to the county conservation staffing grant.

As always, please call if you have any questions or concerns.

~Julian Zelazny, Executive Director

Middleton High School Wins 2009 Wisconsin Envirothon

Twelve top high school teams competed in the 2009 Wisconsin Envirothon on Friday, April 24, 2009 at the Wisconsin Lions Camp in Rosholt, Wisconsin.

The theme for this year's Wisconsin Envirothon was "Biodiversity in a Changing World." Event categories included examinations in Forestry, Soil Resources, Aquatic Resources, Wildlife, and an Oral Presentation where students acted as ecological consulting teams hired to present findings at a town meeting. Each oral presentation examined of the biodiversity benefits and consequences resulting from selling an economically endangered public nature area to a real estate development firm to build an "eco-friendly resort."

In a high-stakes competition, where the winning team receives a scholarship to attend the week long North American Canon Envirothon competition in Ashville, North Carolina, the scores were close, and the judging was difficult.

Overall category winners:

Third place, Luxemburg-Casco High School

Second place, Conserve School (Land O' Lakes)

First place, Middleton High School

Middleton High School will compete in the Canon Envirothon at the University of North Carolina in Ashville, North Carolina on August 2-8, 2009.

James Madison Memorial High School (Madison) and Wild Rose High School also had teams place in various competition categories. Other participating teams came from Mercer High School, and Newman Catholic High School (Wausau).

"We're very proud of all our participants and volunteers who worked hard to make this a competitive and enjoyable learning opportunity," said Allen Carothers, WLWCA President. "We're looking forward to Middleton High School's participation in North Carolina."

The 2009 Wisconsin Envirothon was possible due to the partnership and sponsorship of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service; the Wisconsin Association of Land Conservation Employees; the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board and the Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin; the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point College of Natural Resources; the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and more. Visit our Web site at www.wlwca.org for a complete listing of all the 2009 Wisconsin Envirothon sponsors.

Schools, teams, agencies, conservation staff/supervisors, and organizations interested in more information about how to participate in the 2010 Wisconsin Envirothon on April 30 at the Central Wisconsin Environmental Station in Amherst Junction, Wisconsin, should contact Kirsten Moore at kirsten@wlwca.org.

~Kirsten Moore, Office Manager

Conservation on the Land Internship Program Update

WLWCA is pleased to announce that we are helping to sponsor and fund 34 internships this summer throughout Wisconsin. The COLIP is funded thanks to a federal earmark and the support of Senator Herb Kohl. This is a very busy time of the year for this program, as opportunities are posted and counties select their interns. This valuable program helps students obtain on-the-job experience and assists counties with their workloads. If you have any questions about COLIP, please contact Chris Schlutt at chrisschlutt@wlwca.org.

~Chris Schlutt, Program Coordinator

Would You Like Your County's 2010 Dues Waived?

As part of WLWCA's conservation awards program, the WLWCA board is promoting the Conservation Farmer of the Year award by waiving 2010 WLWCA dues for the county that submits the state winner. You have plenty of time to think about a worthy nominee in your county, as nominations should be submitted at the area level by August 28, with the area winner submitted to WLWCA by October 16. The other award being offered is for Outstanding Supervisor. It only takes a few minutes to nominate a supervisor and show your appreciation for the outstanding work they do. Nominations must be submitted to WLWCA by October 16.

Information and applications for these awards can be found on our Web site under *WLWCA Programs / Conservation Awards*. Please take the time to recognize a farmer or supervisor in your county who has gone above and beyond the call of duty to help preserve Wisconsin's natural resources. Contact Chris if you have any questions.

~Chris Schlutt, Program Coordinator

SOC Update

In April, the Standards Oversight Council (SOC) work team that has been crafting a new infiltration trench standard for the Dept. of Commerce finished addressing the first round of comments on the draft standard. The work team prepared responses to more than 60 comments received from a group of stormwater management experts and, in several instances, made key changes to the technical standard based on the comments. The next step is to ready the draft standard for distribution to the SOC listserv in order to collect additional comments in the broad review segment of the standard development process.

The new SOC work team charged with revising the NRCS 634 Manure Transfer technical standard held its first stand-alone meeting April 7. The team began prioritizing a comprehensive list of topics developed at a March joint meeting with the SOC team that is simultaneously updating the NRCS 313 Waste Storage Facility standard. An important accomplishment of the joint meeting was assigning topics to each team, including topics that will be addressed jointly. At the April 7 meeting, the manure transfer work team brainstormed on each topic, established priorities, and doled out research assignments to team members. Likewise, the waste storage facility work team held its first meeting on April 20. Key accomplishments of the meeting included categorizing the topics the team will be working on and brainstorming on the important issues relevant to each topic. Both work teams will continue to meet every three or four weeks. The 634 work team intends to complete its work by late fall 2009, while the timeline for the 313 work team extends into 2010.

~Kevin Hogan, SOC Coordinator



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Calendar of Events

WI Grazing School, River Falls	May 19-20
WSTC Meeting, Madison	May 21
LMLWCA Meeting, Marinette	May 22
Memorial Day, WLWCA Closed	May 25
WLWCA Board Meeting, Stevens Point	May 26
WLWCA Conference Planning Committee Mtg., La Crosse	May 28
LWCB Meeting, Madison	June 2
NCLWCA Summer Tour, Antigo	June 12
WLWCA Conservation Camp, Bruce	June 16-19
SAA Meeting	June 19
Sand Lake Conservation Camp, Crivitz	June 25-27
Conservation Observance Day, South Range	June 25-26
WLWCA Board Meeting, Location TBA Douglas County	June 26
WI SARE/UWEX Soil Quality In-Service, Marshfield	July 7-8
WALCE Board Meeting, Location TBA	July 15
WSTC Meeting, Location TBA	July 16
LMLWCA Area Summer Tour, Sheboygan	July 17
NACD Board Mtg. & Legislative Conf., Washington D.C.	July 18-22

*For more information, visit www.wlwca.org and click on
"What's Going On?"*

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