

**LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION BOARD
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH
MEETING MINUTES**

**January 7, 2025
Microsoft Teams Meeting**

Item #1 Call to Order – Roll call, open meeting notice, approval of agenda, approval of January 7, 2025 Committee meeting minutes.

Call to Order

The Advisory Committee on Research (“Committee”) to the Land and Water Conservation Board (“LWCB” or “Board”) met via videoconference on January 7, 2025. The meeting was preceded by public notice as required by Wis. Stat. § 19.84. The meeting was called to order by Committee Chair Ron Grasshoff at **9:02 am**.

Committee Members Present

Members: Ron Grasshoff, Brian McGraw, Monte Osterman, and Katy Smith (on behalf of Tim Anderson). A quorum was present.

Committee Advisors Present

Advisors: Dr. Francisco Arriaga and Amber Radatz.

Approval of Agenda

Motion

Osterman motioned to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by McGraw, and the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Motion

Osterman motioned to approve the draft minutes of the September 3, 2024 meeting minutes as presented, seconded by McGraw, and the motion carried unanimously. The approved minutes shall be posted as the official meeting record for publication on the LWCB website.

Item #2 Discuss Previous Educational Opportunity (Chelsea Zegler's Presentation)

Ron Grasshoff, Committee Chair, opened the discussion on reflection of the first committee-suggested educational opportunity to the Board. This educational opportunity had invited Chelsea Zegler to present to the Board on the topic of outreach education.

Ron Grasshoff had shared Zegler’s presentation with Jim Baumann, a water quality specialist with 35+ years of experience, who provided comments about the topic. In his comments, Jim discussed an ongoing debate that environmental standards are equally as important as agronomic standards in research projects. The discussion ultimately resulted in agreement that socio-economic perspectives

on Phosphorus management practices are equally important. The committee was provided a copy of Baumann's comments after the meeting.

It was noted that Chelsea Zegler had moved on to a new position, but that her research on outreach and educational opportunities associated with Phosphorus management would continue at UW-Extension. Grasshoff and Osterman discussed the potential for encouraging training for land conservation departments on the topic of Phosphorus management. It was determined that Grasshoff would write to Matthew Kreuger of the Wisconsin Land & Water Association to discuss potential training opportunities for Phosphorus mobility and management practices, whether existing or as a potential new training module, through the State Interagency Committee (SITCOM).

Overall, the Committee determined that Zegler's presentation was a valuable education topic and wanted further presentations on phosphorus capture and leaching issues in terms of socio-economic incentives for farmers to incorporate Phosphorus management practices on their farm, as well as learning more about cost-share programs available for these management practices, and potential training opportunities for land conservation staff across Wisconsin. Radatz suggested addressing soil erosion as well, as it is another approach to limiting phosphorus mobility.

Item #3 Review Workplan and Discuss how to Track Educational Opportunities to Form Recommendations

Ron Grasshoff, Committee Chair, opened the discussion to review the current workplan for future goals related to educational opportunities.

The committee also discussed the creation of a list of presentation opportunities that have occurred, including information such as who presented, their contact information, presentation notes, and future goals related to presentation reflection.

The committee plans to continue planning educational opportunities for the Board and updating the Board on educational opportunity planning progress during Board meetings. Katy Smith discussed that the Board meetings have the opportunity for up to 5 educational presentations per year.

Item #4 Discuss 2025 Educational Opportunities (Farm Sustainability Rewards and other Topics)

Ron Grasshoff, Committee Chair, opened the discussion to discuss Board educational opportunities during 2025.

The next educational opportunity for the Board is a presentation by Wisconsin's Greenfire organization on their Farm Sustainability Rewards project on February 4th, 2025. Greenfire's pilot project works to develop financial reward payments for achieving environmental goals on a continuing, farm-wide basis for qualifying producers for issues such as nutrient loss, soil erosion and greenhouse gas emissions.

The committee prepared a list of questions for Greenfire's presentation:

- What's next for their research? Specifically, is there a plan for future implementation beyond the initial 2-year program, and is there plans for the project to be scaled up?
- How does the Farm Sustainability Rewards Project integrate with existing cost-share programs, if at all?

- How do they ensure enough participation in the program to create meaningful feedback? What’s the source of funding for the project? Is the project have enough incentive that it’s meaningful to the producer and can produce change?
- How does their project advance the needs of county conservation departments?
- How the Board can support their work?
- Discuss the economic and social impacts on producers of a rewards program specifically:
 - What are the **economic barriers** that need to be overcome to convince producers that participation in a rewards program will benefit them personally/financially?
 - What are some **social barriers** that limit change in Land and Water Programs that would otherwise contribute and improve the quality of life in local communities i.e. a Land Ethic for the “Greater Good.”

Beyond February 4th presentation, the committee discussed another presentation opportunity for the April 1st Board meeting. Amber Radatz and Dr. Francisco Arriaga suggested a presentation from Paul Mitchell, director of the Renk Agribusiness’ Institute at University of Wisconsin - Madison (UW Madison) and Jeff Hadachek, an assistant professor at UW Madison, to discuss socio-economic incentives and threshold to motivate change in behavior in agricultural and conservation. Mitchell has a background in agricultural economics and Hadachek researches economic strategies for nitrate management, as well as analyzing the effectiveness of producer-led watershed projects.

Item #5 Member Updates with Possible Discussion

This item was not discussed.

Item #6 Planning for the next Advisory Committee meeting

The Committee should expect the following at the next meeting:

- Reflect on the Greenfire presentation
- Update on outreach for the potential Mitchell and Hadachek presentation

Item #7 Adjourn

Motion

Osterman motioned to adjourn, seconded by Smith, and the motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 10:18am.

Respectfully submitted by,

Kirsten Biefeld, Bureau of Land and Water Resources
 Division of Agricultural Resource Management
 WI Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection