

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

**September 2, 2025
Microsoft Teams Meeting**

**Item #1 Call to Order – Roll call, open meeting notice, approval of agenda, approval of
May 6, 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 September 2, 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 **9:04 am**.

Committee Members Present

Members: Ron Grasshoff, Brian McGraw, and Monte Osterman. 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

McGraw motioned to approve the draft minutes of the May 6, 2025 meeting minutes as presented, seconded by Grasshoff, and the motion carried unanimously. The approved minutes shall be posted as the official meeting record for publication on the LWCB website.

Item #2 Public Appearances

Ron Schoepp, member of the River Alliance Board, SSWIG Producer Led Group and Lake Wisconsin Farmer Led Watershed Council, approached the board to discuss the potential need for further research on incentives of a state-wide cost-share program for farm equipment.

Schoepp attended the Dane County Supervisor Meeting at Siene Farm, August 21, 2025 in which the county’s cost-share program for farm equipment was discussed and found it to be a valuable practice and should be implemented on a state-wide scale. Schoepp noted that Producer-led watershed groups have been a great program for connecting farmers and implementing conservation practices on farms. However, the producer-leg programs are limited to implementing practices, not helping to get no-till

equipment on farms. Producer-led programs engage a farmer and aid in implementing conservation practices for 3 years. However, producers may stop implementing conservation programs after the 3 years is over. If a cost-share program helped that farmer to own and use no-till equipment, Schoepp says that the farmer is much more likely to use that equipment and continue to implement conservation practices for the life of the equipment. Schoepp shared an email with more information that will be forwarded to the Committee.

Osterman asked Schoepp if the goal was to get as many no-till acres as possible or get equipment on peoples lands and hope they will use it, who responded in that it would achieve both goals. Osterman noted that some counties are already buying equipment and loaning or leasing no-till equipment for a reduced cost allows a producer a chance to experiment and test before buying equipment. Schoepp discussed that there may be a capacity issue for counties that only rent out equipment, that one a limited number of people can use it at a time. Having a no-till equipment cost-share program would get more equipment in the hands of producers and farming more land. Additionally, when people have it on their farm, they will continue to use it rather than trying it once only.

Item #3 Reflection on Previous Board Presentations

Ron Grasshoff, Chair, opened discussion for the LWCB presentations not covered since the May 6, 2025 Committee meeting.

- **Jeff Messmann’s Wake Boating and the Environment, June 3, 2025 LWCB Meeting**

Jeff Messman provided an overview of how wakeboarding and similar water sports can harm local lakes by resuspending lakebed sediment can impact thermal layers in the water column and release nutrients. Additionally, ballast tanks can spread invasive species. Messmann noted there are many boat manufacturer lobbyists attempting to influence State legislators, making it difficult to pass legislation to for Wisconsin lakes. Messmann mentioned that local ordinances are currently being used to restrict and regulate wakeboarding as an alternative to Statewide regulation.

Dr. Francisco Arriaga shared that there was research coming from Minnesota ([A Field Study of Recreational Powerboat Hydrodynamics and their Impacts on the Water Column and Lakebed by Riesgraf et al.](#)) regarding detrimental findings of wakeboarding impact on lake beds and developed recommendations for the minimum standards powerboats should operate under, such as minimum depth of operation, for mitigating impacts to the lakebed and local ecosystem.

Grasshoff noted that while this is a hot button issue for local communities and water quality impacts, this topic may not be suitable for recommendations to UW System for research. A potential recommendation is for local communities to stay informed and share information between communities as it becomes available, such as the research paper mentioned above. Dr Arriaga made a the point that recreational activity can and does have an adverse impact on Land and Water Resources and perhaps the Land and Water Conservation movement should stay engaged in the issue.

- **DNR Joe Bennell’s Update on Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy, August 5, 2025 LWCB Meeting**

Bennell provided an overview of the current nutrient loss reduction strategy, which is an updated version from the original 2013 strategy effort.

Radatz discussed the benefits and drawbacks of the strategy and that the strategy is intended to address Gulf Hypoxia or the “Dead Zone” in the Gulf of Mexico. Previously, a 2013 nutrient loss reduction strategy was described as inadequate because there was no vision and no stakeholder engagement. Radatz discussed that there is no a set of standards for nutrient loss reduction at this point in time. It is, however, a strategy or process that uses data from agricultural best management practices from both agricultural research centers in Wisconsin and other midwestern states to inform decision making. Radatz also discussed the value the strategy can have on education and outreach implementation for UW Extension, as well as evidence to justify research needs for the UW System such as for grant applications, or similarly for counties who need to provide reasoning for implementing new best management practices. Overall, Radatz discussed that while the strategy is not a means for regulation, it is a guide to inform future decision making and could lead to numerical standards to reduce nutrient loss from agriculture to the environment

The Board may be able to provide input on what this strategy should additionally address.

- **Dr. Evan Larson’s Tree-ring Perspectives on the Long-Term dynamics of Water Resources in Wisconsin, August 5, 2025 LWCB Meeting**

Dr. Evan Larson presented on current research regarding the study of historic use of fire as a land management tool by indigenous people. One of his research projects focused on a Red Pine Stand along a dune system (Wisconsin Point) in the City of Superior. By using dendrochronology, he affirmed a fire history dating long before European colonization. His work also documents climate trends in the past few centuries. He argues that exclusion of fire in forest management has reduced ecosystem resiliency. Through tree ring analysis in the Driftless area, Dr. Larson identified an extensive Oak Savannah dominated ecosystem that was shaped by fire. Dr. Larson’s work is attempting to paint a picture for what the landscape looked like prior to colonization, and what traditional practices such as fire can be used today to better manage these ecosystems. Grasshoff mentioned that his work is supported by a Grant from Sea Grant it is described in the Aquatic Science Chronical.

Item #4 Workplan Review and Discuss Engagement Strategy for Future Presentations

Ron Grasshoff, Chair, opened discussion regarding the Committee’s workplan and education engagement for the Board. Currently planned presentations include:

- October, 2025 LWCB meeting: WI Land & Water and DNR’s Climate Change and LWRM Plans
- December, 2025 LWCB Meeting: Dani Heisler’s Introduction to PWLWP Grant Program

Osterman brought up the idea that instead of waiting till the next meeting after a presentation has appeared before the board to discuss what we have learned, that the Committee would vet presenters and critique the potential presentation to determine how relevant the presentation is to our goals and whether the presentation should go before the board. This may be a tactic moving forward once the Committee has identified initial topic/research focuses for recommendations to the LWCB.

Item #5 Member Updates with Possible Discussion

- Osterman noted that he had attended the Milwaukee Annual Meeting of the National Association of Conservation Districts in July, 2025 and agreed to summarize the meeting at the next Committee meeting.

Item #6 Planning for the next Advisory Committee meeting

The Committee should expect the following at the November 4, 2025 meeting:

- Review and discussion of educational opportunities of the past year in order to narrow topic focus for the Committee to develop recommendations on research gaps to the UW System and other stakeholders.
- Update regarding potential survey to the Board for member reactions to the 2025 educational presentations supported by the Committee.

Item #7 Adjourn

Motion

Grasshoff motioned to adjourn, seconded by McGraw, and the motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 10:25.

Respectfully submitted by,

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