



**DODGE COUNTY CONSERVATION/EXTENSION COMMITTEE
MINUTES
January 26, 2026**

The Dodge County Conservation/Extension Committee met Monday, January 26th at 8:30 AM in the Dodge County Administration Building, 1st Floor Auditorium, 127 East Oak Street, Juneau, WI.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Andrew Johnson – District 9, called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM.
2. **PRESENT:** Following members: William Foley, Lake Representative; Ken Weninger, Member of the farming community, Dale Macheel; John Kraus Jr – District 4, and Lisa Derr – District 32. Absent: Benjamin Priesgen – District 16

Also present: Cheryl Lohry, Administrative Support Specialist; Dave Frohling, County Board Chair; Cameron Clapper, County Administrator; Michael Burg, Wildlife Specialist; Sawyer Schmidt, Natural Resource Conservation Service; Matt Peplinski, Farm Service Agency; Jon Duckert, Conservation Technician; Marie Witzel, Positive Youth Development Educator; and Manuel Pena, Regional Bilingual Dairy Educator.
3. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** No one appeared for public comment.
4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Foley made a correction to the minutes. Add Lizzy's last name of Reitzloff. Macheel moves to approve amended minutes from November 24, 2025. Second by Foley. Motion was approved 6-0.
5. **UPDATE ON AREA DIRECTOR UW EXTENSION POSITION RECRUITMENT (ANDREW JOHNSON):** Johnson updated the committee the status of recruitment efforts for filling the UW-Extension Area 14 Director (includes Dodge County) position from Jeremy Solin, Assistant Dean, UW-Extension. The first batch of applicants was interviewed on January 16 and 17, 2026. Two finalists were selected and will be interviewed on January 30, 2026.
6. **UPDATED ON UW EXTENSION AI TRAINING PROGRAM (ANDREW JOHNSON):** Johnson reminded the committee that a UW-Extension AI Training Program will be coming to Dodge County Administration Building on Friday, January 30, 2026, from 9:30 a.m. to noon. The guest speaker will be UW-Extension Professor Bill Oemichen, an attorney who specializes in risk mitigation.
7. **ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE ON COUNTY CONSERVATIONIST (CAMERON CLAPPER):** Administrator Clapper updated the committee that the new County Conservationist will be Melissa Knipfel. She will be starting February 19th where she will bring several years of experience along with her including having had worked for the conservation department here at Dodge County.

CHAIRMAN JOHNSON MOVED TO AGENDA ITEM #9

8. **OTHER AGENCY ADVISOR MONTHLY UPDATES ON SIGNIFICANT WORK ACTIVITIES & ISSUES:**

Sawyer Schimdt updated that committee that NRCS Field Office is working on their ranking deadline for January 30th for Environmental Quality Incentives Program application received in this past year. They are waiting on guidance from National Office on guidance on whether this date will be adjusted. Currently they don't have their cost estimates finalized, or fund pools loaded in their software. All of their payments for work completed in Fiscal Year 2026 have been certified and paid for both CSP and EQIP. They have had lots of grazing interest across the county recently. Jared Winter from Dodge County LWCD has been great helping us get grazing plans and construction designs back in a timely fashion. Some of these applications will be included in the ranking pool. The majority of the applications we are seeing this go around include cover crops, no-till, pollinator, high tunnels, grazing type practices. They should expect sometime in March hearing which of the ranked applications will be selected for cost share.

Matt Peplinski updated the committee that FSA DMC sign up has started with a deadline of February 26th. SDRP phase one and two are now underway with a deadline of April 30th. FSA COC election is also now underway. Ballot count set for February 12th. The only candidate is Roger Parpart. No news yet on the Bridges program or CRP.
9. **CONSIDER GRANTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS FOR DODGE COUNTY FARMERS HSHW, AND DODGE COUNTY ALLIANCE:** Johnson updated the committee that in the past the committee gave \$750.00 to the Dodge County Farmers HSHW and \$750.00 to the Dodge County Alliance. Motion by Derr to approve giving

\$750.00 to Dodge County Farmers HSHW, and Dodge County Alliance. Second by Foley. Motion was approved 6-0.

10. **CONSIDER GRANTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS FOR TOWN OF LEBANON USGS MONITORING STATION FOR 2026:** Johnson updated the committee that this should be the last payment to the Town of Lebanon in the amount of \$5,000.00. The Town will have to come back to the committee around budget time to request more funding if they want to. Motion by Derr to approve the final payment to Town of Lebanon for the amount of \$5,000.00. Second by Kraus. Motion approved 6-0.
11. **CONSIDERATION OF 2025 WILDLIFE CROP DAMAGE CLAIMS (MIKE BURG, USDA-APHIS):** Burg updated the committee that he had two Wildlife Crop Damage Claims to be approved. Motion by Weninger to approve the two claims. Second by Macheel. Motion approved 6-0.
12. **FARMLAND PRESERVATION UPDATES-NOTICE OF NON-COMPLIANCE (NON) AND CANCELLATION OF NON (JON DUCKERT):** Duckert updated the committee that he has one notice of non-compliance where the farmer wants to be removed from the program, and a cancellation of NON as the farmer is now compliant and would like back into the program. Motion by Kraus to approve the non-compliance and approve the cancellations of NON. Second by Derr. Motion approved 6-0.
CHAIRMAN JOHNSON MOVED BACK TO AGENDA ITEM #8
13. **APPROVE 2026 DUES FOR WI LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION, AND SOUTHERN AREA ASSOCIATION:** Johnson updated the committee that WI Land and Water Conservation Association fee is \$1,756.16 and in previous years the committee has approved also paying the Envirothon amount of \$65.00 which the Envirothon is to help support Youth Education, and SOC, which is to help offset the costs for the committee to review the technical standards we use, in the amount of \$175.00 for a total of \$1,996.16 and for the Southern Area Association fee, that is \$190.00. Total for both fees are \$2,186.16. Motion by Derr to approve dues. Second by Kraus. Motion approved 6-0.
14. **UPDATE ON TREE SALES:** Lohry updated the committee that the tree sale is still ongoing. As of date there are four species that are sold out: Fraser Firs, River Birch, Common Lilac, and American Plum. We have low stock on White Spruce, Colorado Blue Spruce, Black Spruce, and Serviceberry. We are looking forward to middle to end of April for a pickup day which will be held at the fairgrounds. A reminder postcard will be mailed out to participants at the end of March. Committee requested another update at the next meeting.
15. **UPDATE ON POSTER CONTEST:** Lohry updated the committee that four posters came in for the contest. Three from St. John's Lutheran School, Lomira, and one from Lomira Middle/High School. The department judged the posters, and the winning poster was taken to Dane County for the Area Contest to be judged on. If the poster wins there, the winner will move onto State. All four posters are on our webpage under Youth Conservation section if someone wishes to view them.
16. **COMMITTEE MEMBER REPORTS:**
 - **Lake Sinissippi District Meeting Updates** – Andrew Johnson discussed the committee members reviewed LMP goals, tasks, and timelines regarding the dredging design project. It was decided that three commissioners will take a deeper review with consultant from Hey & Associates to confirm completed tasks with dates. Members would like to have options available to constituents at the August annual meeting, with a goal of construction starting in 2027. Committee members discussed the issue of no to little snow level in the frozen lake, and the effect on the planned February water drawdown by the Hustisford dam. Shane will meet with Hustisford's new dam operator about the issue since lake levels are already lower than normal for this time of the year. Johnson will not be able to attend the next meeting on February 10th due to the WCA Legislation Conference in Madison.
 - **Beaver Dam Lake District Meeting Updates** – Bill Foley discussed with the committee that the committee met with DNR Fishery Bureau to review their planned activity at Trestle and Rakes Bay for the next few months. BDL District has completed all required preliminary tasks to permit DNR rough fish survey. Joe Kern has been promoted to City of Beaver Dam Forester and Parks Supervisor. Met to review potential projects we could offer assistance and collaborate on. City of Beaver Dam is considering Home Town status consideration which will benefit Town Center, Tourism and place emphasis on Lake assets. The BDL District is preparing initial scope for spring projects with RFQ's for the performance of a point intercept survey (PIS) at Rakes Bay and bulk purchase of native plants. The PIS is a sampling at various locations within the Bay for aquatic vegetation.

- **Fox Lake District Meeting Updates** – Dale Macheel discussed with the committee that Tracey has been working with EOR and the DNR to get the plant survey, which is required by the DNR, for lake management reported to the DNR in a format they require. The District has set aside \$500 to pay for any farmer in the Fox Lake watershed to pay for the \$50 admission to the February 4th Dodge County Farmers HSHW Soil Expo. Tracey sent out 89 postcards to the farmers with this offer. More discussion on soil testing wetlands was held, and it was decided that after the discussion with Mike Sorgi and Mark Roedle at their December 18th meeting, the District will wait for them to come up with a plan as they have offered to help. There are over 650 acres of wetlands along Cambra Creek that is owned by the DNR as a fish hatchery area.

17. NEXT MEETING: The next monthly meeting will be held on **February 23rd, 2026**, at 8:30 a.m.

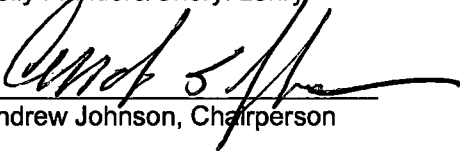
18. UPCOMING EVENTS: The Southern Area Meeting will be held on January 29th. The Dodge County Farmers HSHW will be hosting their annual Soil Health Expo on February 4th. The WI Land & Water Conservation Conference will be held on March 4-6th.

19. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: The committee would like an update on the 590 plan, and a committee representative will need to be selected for the Southern Area Committee.

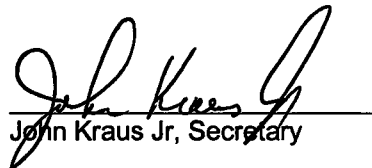
20. ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business to come before this Committee. The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 a.m. by Chairperson Johnson.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly Flanders/Cheryl Lohry,



Andrew Johnson, Chairperson



John Kraus Jr, Secretary