

Golden Sands Resource Conservation & Development Council, Inc.
Forestry/Agriculture/Wildlife Committee Meeting Minutes
July 22nd, 2021
Lake Helen Park/Online

Attendees: Al Barden (Member-at-Large); Brent Tessmer (Taylor); Hannah Butkiewicz (Golden Sands RC&D Staff); Asa Plonsky (Golden Sands RC&D Staff); Rachel Bouressa (Golden Sands RC&D Staff); Merlin Becker (Member-at-Large); Al Drabek (Marathon); Jacob Fluor (Golden Sands RC&D Staff); Kyle Kettner (Golden Sands RC&D Staff); Sam Welch (Golden Sands RC&D Staff); Robert Ashbeck (Wood).

CALL TO ORDER: Tessmer called the meeting to order at 10:25 am.

INTRODUCTIONS: Everyone introduced themselves.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A motion from Drabek, seconded by Barden, to approve the minutes from the May 2021 meeting was passed.

PROJECT UPDATES:

Cooperating For Woods and Wildlife/Demonstration Forests: Fluor reported that outreach to landowners to form cooperatives is ongoing, especially in Green Lake County. Landowners were called and sent postcards. Landowners are invited to meetings where a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) forester and wildlife biologist explain the benefits of participation in a Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP) landowner cooperative. Demonstration Forest events are being planned for August and September at the Hendricksen Woodland in Adams County and the Bear Crossing Woodland in Taylor County. Butkiewicz reported that Golden Sands RC&D applied to the U.S. Forest Service Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) Forest Restoration grant program. The project proposal focused on mitigating effects of oak wilt and includes partnership with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

Central Wisconsin Invasives Partnership (CWIP)/Northeast Wisconsin Invasives Partnership (NEWIP): Plonsky reported that field season work has continued, including spotted knapweed and Japanese knotweed treatments. CWIP has decided to include Marathon County in its partnership, so that it now covers eight counties. NEWIP held a meeting on June 3rd. Each group (CWIP and NEWIP) submitted an application to the U.S. Forest Service GLRI Cooperative Weed Management Areas grant program. The CWIP application focused heavily on roadside and trailside invasives. The NEWIP application focused on partnerships with county parks and the Oneida Nation. Upcoming events for the two groups include a Forest Invasive Plant Field Day in Waupaca on August 7th, a Prairie Invasive Plant Workshop in Westfield on September 11th, and a Muir Park Invasive Plant Field Day in Montello on October 2nd.

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Cooperative Agreements: Kettner introduced himself as the new NRCS co-employee soil conservationist working out of Westfield. So far his work has included lots of training, following up on Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) projects, and coordinating a soils field day at the Boston School Forest in Portage County. Welch introduced himself as the new NRCS co-employee soil conservation technician working out of Medford. He recently graduated from UW-Stevens Point and his current work includes training, field visits, and outreach to landowners. Butkiewicz reported that Golden Sands RC&D recently submitted an application to fund future NRCS cooperative agreements. If funded, this project would provide \$4.8 million in

funding, for over four years, to support various staff including: grazing planners, an irrigation technical service provider, soil conservation technician interns, and a forest habitat management coordinator. Many of these positions would write management plans for producers, which would allow them to access cost-share funding through NRCS programs.

Bluebird And Bat Houses: Butkiewicz reported that there have been no additional bluebird or bat house sales.

Tree Shelters: Butkiewicz reported that Amanda Burzynski manages most of the tree shelter sales. The total sales from tree shelters in 2021 was about \$23,800. This is not a measure of profits.

Waupaca County Conservation Field Day (WCCFD): The event will be held in-person this year at Hartman Creek State Park on September 24th. An alternative date, in case of severe weather, is set for October 1st.

NACD Technical Assistance Project/Managed Grazing: Bouressa reported that she has met and exceeded the number of plans required for the current NACD grant. She received some additional funding by reaching out to the NRCS state grazing coordinator and partnering with Marathon County. Some of this funding is from the GLRI program. The additional funding will help to write more plans. The first pasture walk of the summer was held on July 19th. The next one is planned for July 29th in Green Lake. Two more pasture walks are planned for later this summer. A workshop called "Heal Your Land with Regenerative Agriculture" is also being planned with NRCS, UW-Extension, and the Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems (CIAS). When asked where to direct farmers interested in grazing, Bouressa recommended the Grassworks website, which has lots of resources available.

Little Plover River Appreciation Field Day: Golden Sands RC&D hopes to hold it in 2022. Amanda Burzynski and Amy Thorstenson are looking for additional funding and are doing general coordination.

STEVENS POINT AREA NEIGHBORHOOD GARDENS (SPANG): Butkiewicz reported that all beds are rented this year and that there is an engaged site captain at each garden. The Cornell-Whitney garden holds regular garden workdays. Staff are pursuing grant funding to purchase a new sign.

NEW PROJECTS: None

OTHER BUSINESS: Ashbeck asked about Golden Sands RC&D's involvement with double cropping and interseeding cover crops in Portage and Wood Counties. Kettner said that these practices are becoming very common on a national scale. Butkiewicz said that she would share the contact information for the Golden Sands RC&D's Soil Conservation serving that area, Tristyn Forget. Forget will know more about these practices in those counties.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Drabek, second by Becker, to adjourn at 11:06 am. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Asa Plonsky
Temporary Recording Secretary