

# Coon Creek Community Watershed Council (CCCWC)

## Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Coon Valley Conservation Club  
Wednesday, October 16, 2024  
Monique, Maggie, Kevin, Tim, Sydney, Tucker, Zach, Nancy, Marc, Eric

1. Call to Order by Nancy Wedwick @ 6:05PM
  
2. Open to everyone (*5:00 pm to topics covered*)
  - a. Secretary's Report - Motion was made to approve minutes by Zach and seconded by Tim. Monique reported on scanning non-digitized minutes and agendas. These are posted as image files on the shared drive. She will next work to convert files to PDFs to have Tim and Sydney upload to the website.
  
  - b. Treasurer's Report  
Bank balance: \$89,247.20  
Official signers still need to go to the bank and complete their paperwork
  
  - c. Old Business
    - i. Vernon Co Board update: Flood Mitigation Alliance - Ben Wojahn has resigned effective immediately October 15th. Matt Albright will be the interim supervisor for the VC LWCD.
  
    - ii. Hill Country Watershed Alliance Update - Nancy was unable to attend. She did resign her position as Vice President for a variety of reasons. Explored the opportunity as a collaborator rather than a member to make things simpler since the CCCWC does not have a need for a fiscal agent. Consensus by board on proceeding as a collaborator rather than a member. Share equipment, advocating for one another, keeping lines of communication open.
  
    - iii. Grants

1. DATCP PLWPG - Kevin has been contacted by an individual looking for support. Sydney mentioned someone contacted us via email. Some folks have planted cover crops/alternative perennial crops, but have not requested reimbursement.
  - a. Should have a meeting at Orlan Baakum's farm to see his efforts in action. Interview or video of him would be helpful, especially putting something in along the woods.
  - b. This may be an easier sell if there were annual payments like CRP.
  - c. Perhaps folks just need to know about different options.
  - d. At this point, it is really too dry for planting...
  - e. We should develop something that outlines the different pots of money we have for people to do things with - then a marketing campaign could follow
2. TNC Conservation Innovation Challenge - Kevin asked if we can roll the money over each year? Sydney will follow up to determine more. Ricardo talked about some of their programs where funding could be provided upfront, say about 80%. This is such a barrier for folks to have the funding up front so such alternative programs are really helpful.
  - a. Kevin would be comfortable to offer reimbursement or provide money upfront. Good to think about ways to protect the funds and ways to spend down the grants.
  - b. Would there be a way to sign an agreement? This is our application, this is our budget, this is what we spent it on - so maybe this is an option to explore.

- c. Monique likes the idea of letting people decide the turn around time of payment, add in a reporting component?
- d. Kevin would be more hesitant about buffer plantings
- e. Tucker recommended documentation via a camera
- f. Motion by Monique: Pay 80% for the following practices up front: alt perennial crops such as field borders, shrubs, and trees as long an agreement is signed and as long as the funder agrees to this procedure. Kevin 2nd the motion. The agreement should state if the seed is not planted within 3 months of the intended planted date all funds will be returned to the watershed council. Contract should include this date. Motion passes unanimously.
- g. Zach likes the idea of them documenting with photos and Sydney recommended giving the remaining 20% at the time of review by a CCCWC representative.
- h. Eric clarified that the intentions of documentation are to showcase ideas and encourage stories from people. Other projects to farm ponds, drop structures, and other practices to put on the landscape. Lots of folks cannot access this work without having the financial security to do these things.

### 3. Surface Water Grant/Gulf Hypoxia

Nancy: We have not met any further with the grant team. DNR came to the last meeting, and stayed late. Terrain is shifting with gulf hypoxia. VSN was willing to revisit the budget, Vernon Co reallocated a

small portion to CCCWC as well. Council interest in continuing involvement with the Gulf Hypoxia project.

d. New Business

i. Habitat for Humanity Partnership

Nancy: Oh my gosh!!!!!! How do we establish something a little more long term?

Tucker met with Bob Micheel, who had a lead on 25/75 NRCS funding, which could be accessible through a host. Tucker was sent a job description from Heidi and thought when Tim went to a meeting in Galena, the moderators were HfH and Fishers and Farmers. Tucker shared that Heidi would put Tucker into contact with Amy Smith to discuss opportunities - Amy is a sustainability director for HfH. Somehow Tucker talked to her through the airport and to the gate and when Amy returned there was a lunch meeting with Nancy, Tim, and Tucker. Amy was impressed and interested! Would you be our host was asked but not discussed. We need a cooperative agreement to proceed. Amy was WAY past the agreement and ready for us to apply for \$30 million dollar projects. These agreements can run 2- 5 years and draw up the agreement, Habitat would be the host - and do the payroll thing. It is a cooperative agreement at NRCS. Kief Keily with Savannah Institute will provide help if not Habitat for Humanity. So we have 2 sources - through our strategic planning we have short term and long term goals. There are a few people wanting to work with Habitat over Savannah given their enthusiasm to work with rural communities and Vernon, Monroe, and La Crosse are part of this regional district. This would be one of the first of its kind. Amy turned us on to a \$20 million dollar EPA grant opportunity.

This would translate into money for staff. Tucker thinks to ask at the end of the meeting what we can do for habitat. “We don’t really need anything from you” - Amy reported back that their organization is very excited about this opportunity.

Tim shared that maybe getting some of these practices out there is via a ground up approach. There are federal dollars that get funneled down here, but channeled to the state, then to organizations. One of the frustrations with the stakeholders meeting seems to be an answer of: well that answer doesn’t fit into this or that program. This seems to have NRCS money on the ground.

We need to put together the guts of what we want.

Tucker said this is the 3rd wheel - the social component through Habitat for Humanity, NRCS, and the CCCWC. We have to build the support for the farmer and that is what is missing.

To move forward to formation of a cooperative agreement with HfH by Eric, 2nd by Marc, and unanimously passes.

Executive direct, Marketing efforts, and people doing the work need to outline and ask for the moon. There is more federal money and support right now more than ever. Amy lit up about the social fabric piece and adopting practices. Need to nourish a culture and climate and continue the work we are already doing.

Fishers and Farmers received money for a videography project about projects farmers are doing on the ground. We were asked to participate, and said yes. They set up a , meeting to discuss, and videographer was hoping to

interview Tucker on Oct 29. They asked Tim and Nancy if they'd like to be in the video. It would be great to involve Orlan? Eric and Bree? Marc?

- ii. Jem Grant- Sydney shared that this is due on November 1 for a marketing grant for May - could be a higher dollar amount (\$40,000) - you would get it for marketing efforts. Old schoolhouse tour on P and it could be a piece - having County P be a rustic road. If we could tie something together and the church is working on being a historical site. Drew just might fund this. We could bring watershed councils down here for exchange of ideas. We can't lose the fact of opening of fishing and we could have an economic impact at the same time. Tim's wife has applied 2 x's successfully. If you have numbers on attendance that really helps. MRRPC they can georeference credit card purchases in the area. Tucker makes a motion to apply for this grant. Nancy seconded this motion. Unanimously passed.
- iii. Strategic Planning

Nancy asked about hosting this with Sue Noble up at VEDA which would be awesome and needs to know if we are interested in this? We could invite anyone to attend. Zach makes a motion work with Sue Noble to host a strategic initiative. 2nd by Tim. Motion carries unanimously.

- iv. November meeting planning - Nancy recommends discussing the Nine Key Element Plan - may or may not include a guest speaker to this event. Invite Andrew Craig. Introduction to this effort.
- v. December meeting planning - social celebration - merry mixer

3. Other business: should we have packets?
4. Monique: We talked about meeting length of time, and we spoke about creating board packets.

Nancy: Could send out packets a week before the meeting? There are a lot of emergent issues that a packet might not work well to capture, but it could also help us streamline

Tim: These conversations take a long time.

Monique: Trying harder to keep things on task, sees it as the secretary's role.

Tucker and Tim note that committee meetings and habitat appointments will resolve some of these issues.

We should look at revolving loans opportunities for the next meeting!  
(Micro loans)

5. Next Board Meeting: Novembre 20, 2024 - missing board profiles - photos and bio

County involvement - overlap Tim is discussing with Emergency Management Crisis Campaign - how to get information out during these GIS - Brandon is calling the local media outlets. Make ourselves more available

FMA group opportunity - Comprehensive Planning Commission - overlap with land use and land control - moving toward zoning. Aftermath of flooding - people going back into areas that were devastated. This could create other properties. 21 properties raised in Gays Mills became flooded in 2 years.

6. Adjourn