

Coon Creek Community Watershed Council (CCCWC) November General Meeting Minutes

Coon Valley Conservation Club

November 6, 2024

Eat & Greet! Food Served: 6:00 p.m.

Meeting: 6:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order and Roll Call @6:30pm

The meeting was called to order at 6:32PM by Eric, Sydney, and Monique. Roll call was taken with attendees sharing something they are grateful for since this is November, the month of Thanksgiving.

2. Marc's Fascinating Flashbacks

CCC camp study - wildlife food plots, buckwheat, etc some left standing, some being harvested. Mixed results but the animals came and ate it.

3. Secretary's Report

Monique shared the Secretary's Report and a motion was made by Tim Hundt to approve. A 2nd motion was made by Ron Leum. Motion carried.

4. Treasurer's Report

Sydney reported that the CCCWC just received a \$26,000 DATCP grant and there is approximately \$90,000 in the bank at this time. A motion was made by Brad Robson to approve the Treasurer's Report and a 2nd motion was made from Orlan Bakkum. Motion carried.

5. Updates

a. Grants

- i. The Nature Conservancy (assistance for tree and shrub planting)

A decision on this will be made next month in November. Working with TNC to determine specifics - stay tuned. Vernon County tree sale provides fiberglass stakes (taller and more support, also not susceptible to rot).

- ii. Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (assistance for cover cropping)

b. Federal flood control dam decommissioning

All three resolutions have passed, waiting to hear back from the Feds. Mlsna is just about completed with the decommissioning. Samer said he could share photos of the process taken from his drone. Willow trees need to be planted. You can see it from the road to get an idea of what is to come.

6. New Business

- a. Walking with Water zine vol. 2: Place

We are very excited to release the 2nd zine - part of the oral narrative from over a year ago. Lessons learned was the first zine. Caroline printed these off. Practice is in production. It has been 2 years in the making!

b. DATCP Conference: Feb 25, Plover, WI.

We have to present for the grant. Stay tuned for more information. Just flagging that for the future.

c. Natural Resources Conservation Service Cooperative Agreement

We have continued to look for funding sources and good work is being done. One of the ideas that came from Bob Micheel- going into a cooperative agreement with NRCS. To assist with staffing and things like that - we are exploring this process. We would need a host to host us and we are working up a proposal at this time and do not know much beyond that. And we know that NRCS has a proposal out there that is in development - they want to do something in a watershed and are interested in meeting with us. Can there be a meeting of the minds - yes. This is what we know and it could be a truly good opportunity. More to follow and ask questions. NRCS is trying to figure out how to directly fund watershed councils, but they haven't figured out how yet. We need to have a host that we feel comfortable with. We have been connected with Habitat for Humanity to potentially partner with - they serve in 5 counties. We have met with them more than once - they do 60% of their work in the city of La Crosse. They hired a sustainability director - Renew the Block - Matt Hanwell's works closely with them on MSPs with urban population and address storm water. Everyone is really excited about this opportunity.

NRCS is overarching and we need a host to be in partnership? We are too young yet so it would be a cooperative agreement. Why choose Habitat for Humanity - NRCS would shift money to HfH and be our fiscal agent. We would still be our own 501C3. That is the general idea. The amount of money would be substantial. We are going to apply for the moon - if we are going to sustain this organization.

What kinds of positions are going to be created. You have to call positions names that NRCS would like to fund... run the organization, marketing and outreach, education, bookkeeping, funding marketing to put ideas out there.

What is the mission - what is the long term project? Pilot project - watershed wide multiple approaches. Building a resilient community, health, social fabric, economics - but when you think about these 2 pieces - cooperative agreement and proposal is a pilot project. Large scale projects like in the 1930s, 90 years ago. This is what we talked about with the decommissioning...

Marketing and messaging - Sydney has done an amazing job doing press releases, putting out the zines. Tim brought out a few journalists and things have spurred from that effort including 2 videos produced on the watershed. Fishers and Farmers in Missouri enacted a 10 part series of videos and asked us to be part of that. They told the story of the watershed. Then PBS came out and contacted us to do a story about the dams - but we need to move beyond that so then we had to film something with Here and Now on Friday, Nov 15, 2024 . We are on the news today on Channel 13 that aired at 6pm. WEAU.

*** Garland McGarvey - lives 2.5 miles from Norskadalen on Jore Road. On that walk everyday I think we live in the most beautiful area. Rustic Road Program petitions need to be filled out and need to work with Hwy Commissioners to get this thing approved. This will immediately draw people to the area - County P from Coon Valley all of the way to Hwy 27 - it would be one of the longest Rustic Roads in the State. People say why not continue on, but that is the project now. What makes something a Rustic Road? The speed limit goes down to 45 mph. There would never be any commercial advertising on the road. Always looking for interesting things along a path like that. Village of Coon Valley, some of the best trout fishing, the scenery, and Norskadahlen, motorcycle groups, UTVs, bicyclists, people running, walking - staying active. Possibly looking at the Skiing Hall of Fame here. The City of Westby Mayor and Council are interested in this - not sure where it should go if it does come here. Orlan Bakkum met with the Town of Coon to support this project. Hwy Commissioners from 2 counties working on this. If anyone wants to sign the petition, you need to live in Vernon or La Crosse County. The signage comes from state money for those things.

*** Brad Robson - UW Extension folks WWandH conference is coming up in december - Producer Led Farmers are talking about how to get the word out to the larger community and demonstration projects. Early Bird registration is Nov 16, 2024 . It's a good conference with round table discussions.

7. Next meeting date and location – December 4, Coon Valley Conservation Club;
Watershed Winter Social

Plan to just have a holiday gathering - maybe NRCS would come to talk about the cooperative agreement.

Adjourn the meeting Tim and Kevin - motion carries.

8. Presentation: Nancy Wedwick and Sydney Widell report on community perspectives regarding the Coon Creek Watershed Plan.