

**Wisconsin Tribal Conservation Advisory Council Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 27, 2013
Madison**

Meeting called to order at 8:00 am by Pat Pelky.

1. Roll Call

Present: Bad River (Lacey Hill), FCPC (Nate Guldán, Al Murray), Ho-Chunk (Randy Poelma), LCO (Brett McConnell), Menominee (Jeremy Pyatskowitz), Mole Lake (Tina Van Zile, Roman Ferdinand), Oneida (Pat Pelky), Red Cliff (Gary Defoe Jr.), St. Croix (Katie Stariha, Tony Havranek), Stockbridge-Munsee (Greg Bunker)

A quorum is present.

Others Present: Jerry Thompson (WTCAC), Bob Battaglia(USDA NASS), Greg Bussler (USDA NASS), Randy Gilbertson (WTCAC), Keith Sengbusch (WTCAC), Tom Melnarik (NRCS), Shelly Allness (WDNR), Michael Connor (USFS), Jim Ruppel (EPA), Sherrie Zenk-Reed (NRCS), Tony Bush (NRCS), Chris Borden (NRCS), Greg Yakle (NRCS), Sherry Shaw (APHIS - VS), Susan Hunter (FSA), Jason Suckow (APHIS - WS), Joanne Cruse (APHIS - PPQ), Tracy Hames (Wisconsin Wetlands Association)

2. Approval of Agenda

MOTION: Motion to approve agenda. Motion by Menominee, seconded by Red Cliff. All ayes, zero opposed, motion carried.

3. Wisconsin DNR

The new WDNR Tribal Liaison and Land Policy Advisor, Shelly Allness, was in attendance and introduced herself to the group - she started in late January.

4. NRCS Update

Chris Borden gave the report on behalf of NRCS. The Continuing Resolution was passed into law, sequester retained. NRCS' budget will be affected; they will have to back fill certain positions. Conservation Stewardship Program was retained. EQIP funding was sufficient and it will not affect the Tribal set aside.

5. FSA Update

Susan Hunter - they are looking at a lot of cuts in travel/training in the agency. Susan talked in detail about the Microloans Program which is geared for smaller farming operations. The 45th General CRP Signup is May20 - June 14.

6. APHIS Update

JoAnn Cruse - There will be cuts in APHIS programs. An EAB Trap location map was passed out to all Tribal Reps.

APHIS Wildlife Services - Jason Suckow - No impact in their agency from sequester. He wanted to thank Tribes for their input in EA's for wolf management issues recently.

7. Forest Service Update

Expect cuts across the board in their agency. Right now they do not have a budget, hoping to find out in the next month. They do not know how the budget issues will affect student programs. They wanted to remind Tribes that they have technical expertise with insect/disease issues and are willing to come out on tribal lands to provide training/education. They have hazard tree training available as well. They talked about potentially restoring elm into rural areas of Wisconsin/tribal lands.

8. EPA Update

Jim Ruppel - there will be some program cuts-still figuring out which programs and what percent. All the Tribal TEA's have now been signed. Jim will be getting out to the Tribes starting in April to sit down and go over these agreements. Jim talked about Wisconsin mining legislation that just recently passed - still waiting on an official response from EPA. Jim will be heading up some calls the third Thursday of each month with Wisconsin Tribal Reps to discuss mining issues. Pat Pelky brought up the issue of EPA meeting with Tribal Reps more regularly, holding regular caucus meetings. Tina said she will set up a conference call.

9. Wisconsin Wetland Association Update

Tracy Hames - talked about the Wetland Reserve Program looking for comments on that. ACOE just submitted guidelines in the state for wetland permitting. If Tribes want to comment contact them. They will be working with Bad River and GLIFWC on the mining issues in the Penokee Hills. They will be doing some site assessments up in that area.

10. IAC Update

Dan Cornelius gave a power point presentation on Mobile Farmers Market. Running cargo van around the region to expand Tribal food producers and increase availability of fresh, healthy and traditional foods in Tribal communities. They're looking for Tribal producers and expanding markets. The Program will be based in Fond du Lac focusing on Northern Wisconsin and Northern Minnesota. IAC also just received a grant for an Agricultural Skills Workshops. This is a 3-year grant.

11. WTCAC Outreach Update

Randy and Keith - Keith was out in Arizona meeting with Navaho and Apache Tribes, he presented ISM methods and talked about the EQIP Program and new practices we implemented.

Randy was in Oklahoma doing outreach efforts. Eleven tribes represented at the conference. He gave a presentation on the history of WTCAC, EQIP programs and

implementing new practices. A lot of problems with drought issues in that part of the country.

12. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Motion to approve the February 21, 2013 WTCAC meeting minutes.

Motion by Menominee, seconded by Red Cliff. All ayes, zero opposed, motion carried.

13. Intern Program

We advertised 14 positions. We were short of funding for all the positions. Paul Strong and Barb Tormoehlen had been talking to folks in DC about the program and what we do. On Monday afternoon Jerry had an interview with USDA student employment program management from the Office of Assistant Secretary of Administration. They thought we had a very unique program and he is working with them on the MOU to get our internship program recognized as a Third Party Internship Program and then we can advertise through USDA. They will then be meeting with the Secretary of Agriculture and it could be in place to actually get our interns points this year for the pathway hours. This counts toward USDA employment.

The deadline was Saturday, at the deadline we had 7 applicants for the 14 positions, we had a late one that just came in last night (so a total of 8).

#1 – Dylan Jennings – Worked at NGLVC last year and it is the only place he applied for this year. Jason at NGLVC was glad to have him back. Jerry recommends NGLVC.

#2 – Allissa LaGrew – She worked last year at NGLVC, this was her first choice, and Jason would like to have her back as well. Jerry recommends NGLVC.

#3 – Charles Thannum – Applied for Civil Engineering Position with USFS at Park Falls. They would love to have him based on his resume. Jerry recommends him for placement in Park Falls.

#4 – Forest Gauthier – NRCS Shawano 1st choice, 2nd Choice was USFS in Watersmeet. Jerry felt his background was better matched for Watersmeet position.

#5 – Peter Houle – NRCS in Ashland – Jerry recommended this; Gary Haughn is willing to take him.

#6 – Lexi Freeman – from Stillwater, OK from Citizen Pottawatomie Tribe and goes to school at Oklahoma State. She is Majoring in Zoology and is interested in VS position.

#7 – Kelvina Lee – from New Mexico, she attends school at Crownpoint Tribal College and working toward a Veterinary Services Degree.

Jerry talked to Dr. Shaw about this, Jerry recommends placing them both with AHPIS VS which would leave APHIS WS without a person

#8 – Chase Quam – From Solon Springs and is a junior in High School. He is interested in NRCS Spooner position. Jerry would recommend placement there if they are interested in him.

We could fund 7 and Watersmeet USFS would support the other one.

MOTION: Motion to approve the hiring of the 8 interns. Motion by Menominee, seconded by Stockbridge-Munsee. All ayes, zero opposed, motion carried.

If we receive more funds, Jerry will repost the Shawano, Menominee, Oneida, and LCO positions. The Intertribal Timber Council may be able to assist with the Internship Program. Al Murray will send Jerry information. IAC also has a limited scholarship program as well; Dan Cornelius will forward Jerry information.

14. Stewardship Report

Barb Jansen – It is going well; she might be inquiring for some better quality photos and photo captions. A few more submissions this year so it will be a little longer, she doesn't have an RD portion, she can do the NRCS portion. They will be updating the graphs to 2012 and eliminating a couple of other graphs that dealt with the 2008 Farm Bill. We will leave the award picture as the second page. Please get feedback to Jerry on the history of WTCAC page (pages 3 and 4 of current report).

15. Forest Resource Coordinating Committee

Al Murray (FCPC) – there was a request from WTCAC for someone to apply for the Forest Resource Coordinating Committee (FRCC) with support from the State Conservationist and the FCPC Executive Council. The Secretary of Agriculture appointed him and he has made contact with ITC being it is focused on Forestry Issues. The FRCC reviews all federal agencies under the Department of Agriculture and make recommendations for what works and what doesn't. NRCS is the only one with the policy for consultation, why don't they all have that? This is the type of recommendation that can be made. Another recommendation could be the establishment of organizations like WTCAC across the country. It is a 3 year appointment and looking at the agenda for the first meeting, April 11th, he put together an issue paper. He feels it is important to bring whatever we have to the table. Tribes in the West have much better established relationships with the State Forestry Agencies. Al will resend the latest version. Please try to get it to him by April 9.

16. DNR Liaison

DNR Liaison, Shelly – she thought today was helpful and she has some notes on things she will be reaching out to people on already. She could put together summaries and let us know different things they are working on from there agencies. She feels that this could work. She would be happy and open to attending WTCAC meetings.

17. Executive Session

MOTION: Motion to go into Executive Session. Motion by Menominee, seconded by Ho-Chunk. All ayes, zero opposed, motion carried.

MOTION: Motion to leave Executive Session. Motion by Menominee, seconded by Red Cliff. All ayes, zero opposed, motion carried.

MOTION: Motion to approve the new employee handbook with changes. Motion by Menominee, seconded by Ho-Chunk. All ayes, zero opposed, motion carried.

MOTION: Motion to approve Red Cliff to use WTCAC's name in its grant application with a change in the EQIP funding wording. Motion by Stockbridge-Munsee, seconded by Menominee. All ayes, zero opposed, motion carried.