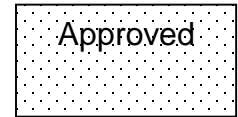


**Ashland County Land Conservation Committee**  
**January 11, 2024**  
**Ashland County Board Room**



LCC Present: George Mika, George Bussey, Pat Kinney, Gerald Richardson, John Weiner, and Charlie Ortman

Others: Dan Grady, MaryJo, Matt Bolen, Seth Hackbarth, Keresha Flint, Brad Koele (WDNR), Ben Dufford (Bayfield Co. LWCD), Heather Palmquist (Iron Co LWCD)

1. Call to order: Meeting called to order by George Mika at 10:00 A.M.
2. Introductions: Staff, LCC members, Bayfield and Iron Co. Conservationists, and Brad from WDNR.
3. Public Comments: None
4. **Approval of Minutes: Motion to approve September 28, 2023 minutes by Bussey, second by Weiner. MC.**
5. **Discussion and Decision for Wildlife Damage Program.** Brad Koele (WDNR Wildlife Damage Program Coordinator) presented the Wildlife Damage Program administered through Ashland County. The DNR cannot administer the program on behalf of a county. He discussed “Program Administration” versus “Program Implementation”. Implementation is who is providing the on-the-ground service to the landowner. Ashland County has historically implemented the program with a county employee. The program could also be implemented through a contract with USDA Wildlife Services, or through a private technician. 54 counties implement it through a contract with USDA, 13 counties implement it with county staff, and 3 counties implement it through a private technician. If the County decides to continue local implementation the WDNR would fund the position at 60%. However, Wisconsin Retirement System and health insurance benefits would not be eligible at the part-time rate. Heather Palmquist shared concern about having Wildlife Services implement the program because in 2021 when Wildlife Services administered the program, it left her trying to set corn prices and file reimbursement paperwork without anyone to help answer questions or assist in administrative challenges. Richardson shared that he spoke with several farmers and they want implementation to remain through the County. Other conversations ensued. George Bussey is in support of Wildlife Services implement the program. **Motion to approve Wildlife Services implementing the Wildlife Damage Program for the 5-Year Contract Term by Ortman, second by Kinney. MC.**
6. **Approval of Wildlife Damage Program 2023 Crop Damage Prices.** Bolen reported that Ashland County producers filed four corn damage claims in 2023. Bolen recommended a corn damage claim price of \$5.15 based on an average of the corn prices per bushel established by the USDA-report; Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection; and Sheldon Grain. recommended a soybean damage claim price of \$13.62 based on an average of the soybean prices established by the same groups. **Motion to set approve the crop damage claim prices for corn at \$5.15 and soybeans at \$13.62 by Ortman, second by Richardson. MC.**
7. Climate Change Adaptation Discussion: Deferred to next meeting.

8. Agency & Staff Reports: Seth Hackbarth, Scott Caven, Matt Bolen, & Gingras provided written reports.
9. Other Business: None
10. Next Meeting: TBD