



February 25th, 2021 WTCAC Board Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order: At 9:00 AM

2. Roll Call

a. Tribal Representatives

- i. **Bad River** - Ben Connors Jr., Naomi Tillison, Loretta Livingston
- ii. **FCPC** - Not present
- iii. **Ho-Chunk** - not present
- iv. **LCO** - Brett McConnell joined at 9:37
- v. **LdF** - Not present
- vi. **Menominee** - Jeremy Pyatskowitz
- vii. **Mole Lake** - Nathan Podany
- viii. **Oneida** - Pat Pelky
- ix. **Red Cliff** - Not present
- x. **St. Croix** - Jeremy Bloomquist
- xi. **Stockbridge** - Paul Koll & Kellie Zahn

b. WTCAC Staff: Jeff Mears, Lacey Hill-Kastern, Jerry Thompson, Tom Melnarik, Jonathan Pruitt

c. Partners: Chris Borden (NRCS), Bill Barker (CALs), Greg Bussler (NASS), Christopher Deegan (APHIS PPQ), Eric Oliphant (BIA), Kira Kauffman (USFS), Katie Demrow (FSA), Jessica Mancel (RD), Ashley Andre (DATCP), Dan Cornelius (IAC), Rob Croll (GLIFWC), Angela Biggs (NRCS), Carleen Yocum (USFS), Pat Goggin (WLP)

d. Approval of the Agenda: Stockbridge (Paul Koll) made a motion to approve, Mole Lake (Nathan Podany) seconds. All in favor.

e. Approval of the Minutes: Mole Lake (Nathan Podany) made a motion to approve, Menominee (Jeremy Pyaskowitz) seconds. All in favor

3. Partner Updates

a. Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)

i. Plant Protection & Quarantine (PPQ) - Christopher Deegan

1. National side APHIS is an emergency response agency and is assisting with COVID vaccination efforts.
2. Locally helping with safeguarding native heritage efforts. Art Wagner just completed two videos on APHIS PPQ's mission for the College of Menominee Nation.
3. Spotted Lantern Fly - today there is an all-day regulatory call with state officials regarding this species. Christopher will share these details with WTCAC as soon as possible.

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- ii. **Wildlife Services (WS)** - Not present. Bob Willging did provide an update that they moved forward with hiring Payton Hamm as their 2021 WTCAC intern.
- iii. **Veterinary Services (VS)** - Not present
- b. **Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) - Ashley Andre**
 - i. Gov. Evers Unveils Historic Investment Proposal for Wisconsin's Agriculture Economy and Farm Families news release: <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/WIGOV/bulletins/2bf8e85>
 - ii. Governor Evers' Proposed Budget Invests in Agriculture commentary: https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/News_Media/20200215RomanskiAgBudgetOpEd.aspx
 - iii. Grant opportunity for Wisconsin farmers and business. Noon, March 26th is the deadline. Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin grants: https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/News_Media/BuyLocalBuyWisconsinGrantOpens.aspx
 - iv. The state hemp program will stay under the 2014 Farm Bill for the 2021 growing season. There may need to be an emergency rule to approve this. DATCP is continuing to work on the transition to the 2018 Farm Bill. Hemp is complicated as well as the farm bill transition. Hoping that Brian Kuhn will be able to join a WTCAC meeting in the future to provide more of an update.
 - v. Contact: Ashley Andre, ashley.andre@wisconsin.gov, (608) 224-5002
- c. **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** - Not present
- d. **Farm Service Agency (FSA) - Katie Demrow**
 - i. Waiting for a new state executive director to be named. Expecting more updates soon.
 - ii. Quality Loss Adjustment Program - Deadline March 5th <https://www.farmers.gov/quality-loss>
 - iii. ACR/PLC Programs - Deadline March 15th <https://www.farmers.gov/arc-plc>
 - iv. CRP Grasslands Deadline April 23 - <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/news-room/news-releases/2020/usda-to-open-signup-for-the-conservation-reserve-program-and-crp-grasslands-in-early-2021>



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- e. **Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council (GLITC)** - Not present
- f. **Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)** - Not present
- g. **Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)** - Eric Oliphant
 - i. BIA received FY21 budget tables this week. The good news is the budget is higher than planned. Lots of programs will see an increase over the next couple of weeks. No one will be seeing reductions.
- h. **College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALs)** - Bill Barker
 - i. Chancellor set a goal of having everyone vaccinated by the end of the semester. Should have a busy field season with travel. Whatever we are doing is working. Not too much sickness on campus
 - ii. Working with College of Menominee Nation and LCO Community College on a tribal student grant. Trying to incorporate WTCAC goals into this grant and current framework for WTCAC interns.
- i. **Forest Service (FS)**
 - i. State and Private Forest Update - Carleen Yocum
 - 1. Deploying USFS employees to assist with vaccinations. It is a massive effort.
 - 2. GLRI CWMA - received 41 applications, ranked, and evaluated those, and we have a list of funded projects. We were able to fund half of the applicants. We hope to share that by the end of this week or early next week.
 - ii. National Forest Update - Kira Kaufman
 - 1. Passing on information from Paul Strong from the CNNF. Deeply saddened by the passing of Joe Rose Sr. and sent a letter for Kira to read at the meeting.
 - 2. Participating in the review of the interns. An excellent slate of candidates this year and appreciative of WTCAC's efforts
 - 3. Paper Birch maps should be available by March or April
 - 4. Penokee Mountain trail information
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/cnnf/recreation/wintersports/recarea/?recid=27757&actid=91>
 - 5. The forest charges a day-use fee of \$5 at the Penokee Mountain Trail to support maintenance and grooming. Regular users can also purchase an annual local forest pass



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for \$30 or a variety of national passes. Details about recreation passes are available at:

6. <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/cnnf/passes-permits/?cid=stelprdb5117803>
7. The forest posts weekly updates about ski trail conditions on its website at:
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/activity/cnnf/recreation/wintersports/?recid=27717&actid=91>
8. Nathan asked for more information about the mineral exploration. 3 BLM applications received. Letters will be sent to the Tribes shortly.

j. Intertribal Agriculture Council (IAC) - Dan Cornelius

- i. Zach Ducheneaux, former executive director of the Intertribal Agriculture Council, is the new administrator for the Farm Service Agency. The first time a Native American has led the Farm Service Agency. Kari Jo Lawrence has taken over as IAC Executive Director
- ii. Working on a joint 638 application with Oneida and Menominee and connecting to Red Cliff for fish and other tribes with wild rice and fish.
- iii. MOSES conference - indigenous seed to table session that Dan led yesterday. The two-hour workshop went well. They were able to get a discount code making this event free for tribal member producers.
- iv. ACER access and development grant for \$500,000, announcement not released yet. Dan is putting together a proposal for equipment for tribal producer demonstration sites.

k. Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC) - Rob Croll

- i. Did not come with a prepared update but will wing it.
- ii. GLIFWC wide a lot of work with the wolf hunt that happened this week
- iii. The Climate Change program has a publication coming out soon. Version 2 is looking at 68 beings and climate change Version 1 included 11.
- iv. The phenology project is still ongoing
- v. Just sent Lacey GLIFWC virtual internship opportunities for this year. Lacey will distribute with the board.



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- l. National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) - Greg Bussler**
 - i. March Agriculture Survey for 2021 growing season. Released March 21st.
 - ii. Soon releasing Maple Syrup Survey. Results will be available on June 10th.
- m. Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement (OPPE) - Not present**
- n. Ruffed Grouse Society - Not present**
- o. Rural Development (RD) - Jessica Mancel**
 - i. Appointed positions are starting to trickle in
 - ii. Dawn Thompson was appointed as Director of the Office of Tribal Relations
 - iii. Michelle Wallace is acting state director until a new state director is appointed
 - iv. COVID information located on the website
 - v. We have a Tribal Report that was recently released.
https://www.rd.usda.gov/files/508_RD_TribalReport_2019.pdf
 - vi. March 31st Rural Energy for America Program Deadline
 - vii. Value-Added Producer Grant
 - viii. Additional funding will be available for COVID-related projects as well. <https://www.rd.usda.gov/coronavirus>
 - ix. USDA RD Programs & Services for Tribes
<https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/programs-services-tribes>
 - x. USDA RD Current Funding Opportunities
<https://www.rd.usda.gov/newsroom/notices-solicitation-applications-nosas>
- p. Central Regional Tribal Conservation Advisory Council (CRTCAC) - Pat Pelky**
 - i. An important player and Oneida Nation elder passed away, Loretta Metoxen, just yesterday.
 - ii. Went over new members for each of the regions. For the Central region, it was Loretta Metoxen, Pat Pelky, and Angela Biggs
 - iii. Trying to work together and give the charter some teeth. The regional directors are working with the acting chief. Not sure when the sign-off will be done.
 - iv. Working on how often everyone should be meeting. Each appointed person has a three-year role. Wanting to make sure the tribal liaison role is not just national but also regional. It is too



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much work for one national position. Wisconsin has had a lot of success with this in the region. Lots of changes working throughout the United States

- v. More than half the central team re-upped for another three years. Only four new members. Hoping to get together in person this fall.
- q. **Risk Management Agency (RMA)** - Not present
- r. **United States Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS)** - Not present
- s. **Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR)** - Not present
- t. **Wisconsin Lakes Partnership - Pat Goggin**
 - i. Thanks, Lacey, and Jeff for joining the NRI and providing a presentation on WTCAC. Pat provided Jeff information about the NRI
 - ii. Pat also sent Lacey and Jeff information on the Wisconsin Water Week and having an indigenous stream. Patty Loew will kick things off with a Plenary talk and Edith Leoso will be doing the opening prayer.
- u. **Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) – Angela Biggs**
 - i. Angela Biggs was present, so we bumped her to the top of the agenda. Lots of changes occurring with the administration. Terry Cosby from Ohio is still acting Chief.
 - ii. Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) classic application deadline is March 26th.
 - iii. There will be a second round in the EQIP WTCAC fund pool. There are still funds available. Please work with your tribal liaison in the field office for interested projects.
 - iv. NRCS is thankful for the good selection of candidates for the upcoming internship.
 - v. She reviewed the WWA videos, and they turned out amazing and is very pleased with them.
 - vi. Tom Vilsack was confirmed as Secretary of the USDA. Still hearing about the other appointments including Chief.
 - vii. Pat will provide a Regional Advisory Council (RAC) update later in the agenda.

4. **WTCAC Business Meeting Started at 10:19**

Present for business meeting: Chris Borden (NRCS), Thomas Melnarik (WTCAC), Lacey Hill Kastern (WTCAC), Jeff Mears (WTCAC), Nathan Podany (Mole Lake), Jerry Thompson (WTCAC), Ben Connors Sr (Bad River), Paul Koll (Stockbridge), Kellie Zahn (Stockbridge), Pat Pelky (Oneida), Jeremy Pyaskowit



(Menominee), Jeremy Bloomquist (St. Croix), Loretta Livingston (Bad River), Erin Hoffman (Innovative Funding), Brett McConnell (LCO), Tina Van Zile (Mole Lake), Jon Pruitt (WTCAC)

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a. NRCS Updates and EQIP - Chris Borden

- i. Wants to talk more about the matrix document. It has been very helpful for tracking the concerns that come up at Council meetings
- ii. Had a wonderful meeting at how the Council can assist with stream inventories.
- iii. Interest from GLIFWC to assist, Dawn White might be a helpful partner for developing the training for the tribal natural resources staff. Lots of emerging resources available right now.
- iv. EQIP program - Angela commits \$500,000 to the WTCAC EQIP funding pool and quite a bit is still available so if you are interested please let us know. Good time to reach out for the second sign-up.
- v. Good job on the EAB web series. It has been amazing. Appreciate being able to speak at it.
- vi. Shout out to Jonathon with helping to make sure Tribal lands are mapped in the FSA system.
- vii. Melissa Bartz joined at 10:46 am.
 1. Will there be Forestry Conservation Activity Plans available to sign up during the second sign-up. These will be part of the second sign-up. Opportunity for early start waiver even if people apply after the deadline. CAPS are not under the WTCAC funding pool, they are under the statewide competitive pool. Preference is applied towards Tribes, however.
 2. NRCS has multiple overlapping signups right now as Angela and Chris had mentioned.

b. Conservation Collaboration - Tom Melnarik

- i. Tom has a short update. Looking forward to the 2021 field season and is hoping there are more projects this field season. He has a couple of site visits scheduled for St. Croix and LCO. Working on the Spur Lake Project in Oneida County. Culvert installation on private property. Been taking AutoCAD classes and providing new NRCS employee training.
- ii. Looking forward to the 2021 field season. Still trying to move forward with a conservation planner trainer. When will the in-person part of the training be available?



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c. Tracking Matrix - Tom Melnarik

- i. February 11th and 12th WTCAC staff met with Chris Borden and went through each item one by one. One result of that process is the technical recommendations to NRCS staff. It is an annual process for new proposals to be included in the docket.
- ii. Now is the time to submit new proposals for the new EQIP sign-up.
- iii. Tracking Matrix was sent out to the board. It is also located on Google Drive and board members can review it at any time. Please look at it.
- iv. Jerry mentioned that Randy Gilbertson did develop something regarding maple syrup standards with the Tribes. Keith was working on the engineering components.
- v. WTCAC developed a ppt years ago with NRCS on how to develop new technical standards.
- vi. Jerry is going to work with Jeff on finding old executive director files regarding training that WTCAC developed in the past.

d. WTCAC 2020 report - Jonathan Pruitt

- i. Received an email from Tivoli today requesting a headshot of Tina and signature, with her intro letter for the report. This is the last bit of material needed to finalize the layout and it should be finished next week.
- ii. Were we going to do a board group photo? Try to schedule this with the board. Need to schedule one via zoom asap. Might be able to pull photos from previous meetings.

e. 2021 WTCAC Interns – Lacey Hill Kastern

- i. Oneida (Pat Pelky) made a motion to support Lacey’s recommendation and to repost for other positions without location restrictions until all positions are filled. Second by Bad River (Naomi Tillison).

5. Executive Session - Motion to go into executive session by Menominee (Jeremy Pyaskowet). Second by Oneida (Pat Pelky).

- a. Participants: Erin Hoffman, Jeff Mears, Jeremy Bloomquist (St. Croix), Jeremy Pyaskowet (Menominee), Kellie Zahn (Stockbridge), Naomi Tillison (Bad River), Nathan Podany (Mole Lake), Pat Pelky (Oneida), Paul Koll (Stockbridge), Tina Van Zile (Mole Lake), Brett McConnell (LCO) - Quorum present
- b. Financials - Erin Hoffman



c. WTCAC Employment Policies – Jeff Mears

6. Motion to go out of executive session by Oneida (Pat Pelky). Second by Menominee (Jeremy Pyatskawet). All in favor.
7. Motion to approve financials as an FYI by Oneida (Pat Pelky). Second by Menominee (Jeremy Pyatskawet). All in favor.
8. Motion to approve the employment policy manual by Stockbridge (Paul Koll). Second by Bad River (Naomi Tillison). All in favor.
9. Pat extended thanks to Jeff and his Team and the responsiveness of the WTCAC team. Really done a nice job of restructuring and bringing us to the next level. Naomi brought that she has been hearing a lot of nice things about the EAB web series and that it has turned out great.

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Adjourned at 11:45 AM

Next Meeting: March 25th, 2021 9 AM - 3 PM

Minutes submitted by Lacey Hill Kastern, Deputy Director on February 25th, 2021

Minutes approved by majority vote on March 25th, 2021. Menominee (Jeremy Pyatskawet) made a motion to approve Oneida (Pat Pelky) seconds. All in favor.

Jessica Strand