

Tri-Creeks Land Use Committee Meeting
Thursday, January 10, 2019 – 1:00 PM
Monroe County Land Conservation Department, Sparta, WI

Those in attendance were: Eric Epstein, Dick Thiel, Bob Micheel, Armund Bartz, Camille Bruhn, George Johnston, Jim Neumann, and Ron Luethe.

Introductions were made. Agenda items were reviewed. Ron Luethe and Bob Micheel discussed the Land Use Planner position in Monroe County. Three candidates applied and none were selected due to lack of land use planning and grant writing experience. The position will be re-posted and qualifications for the position re-done to attempt to attract more qualified candidates.

Committee members provided the following updates on plan data gathering activities:

Dick Thiel provided a first draft of the mammal list. He will incorporate comments concerning the mammal list from the committee and add column(s) to document mammals sighted on adjacent properties and occurrences. Dick has requested help from the committee to verify sightings of mammal species. Verification data can be emailed to Dick at: old2toes@gmail.com

Camille Bruhn presented data from targeted watershed sampling (2017) at locations within and downstream from the Tri-Creeks watershed. Camille will be summarizing the data and developing a report.

Eric Epstein has developed a one-page description of the Tri-Creeks Watershed area. He is also developing vegetation description section and will provide a draft for review by the committee. Eric will also be working on a draft of a bird list.

Bob Micheel provided an update review of existing agreements the county has within the lands of Tri-Creeks. The 5-year agreements are up for renewal in 2019. The bid documents will be going out in February 2019. Bob asked for comments on management options for the cropland within Tri-Creeks. One potential is to create a buffer on the cropland adjacent to the creek using the CREP (Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program) to create the buffer and still provide income for the land taken out of production. The use of cool season grasses within the buffer area is the preferred option. There was also discussion to create a specific area for wood turtle nesting sites. There was also discussion on putting the field north of the creek into permanent cover (grasses or trees) to prevent damage to the field and the roadway leading to and across the creek and up to the field. Bob will need to consider this option against the need for cropland income. He also mentioned the need for all the cropland within Tri-Creeks will need to meet the allowable soil loss tolerance (T) based of the soil types and putting some areas back into hay rotation. The county may also want to consider keeping the crop rental income dedicated to the Tri-Creeks property (rather than going to the county general fund) and budget from the general funds to manage the lands within Tri-Creeks. As part of the Tri-Creeks budget Bob mentioned the need to identify and fund potential land acquisition for sensitive areas adjoining Tri-Creeks as well as funding for dam management, invasive species control, and forestry management.

Extension has a drone that could be used to do a fly over of the property to document its current condition. A LIDAR flight for Monroe County will be done in 2019. It will be a good dataset to compare with the current LIDAR data, especially after the recent flooding events.

Ron Luethe – Emergency Management Services – Ron will contact Jim Stoikes and Chad Marti from the local Fire Department and First Responders to set up a meeting with Bob Micheel and Darlene Pintarro from Monroe County Emergency Services to review the local emergency contact information, map the

emergency access points for Tri-Creeks, and response to potential emergency needs concerning the dam structure.

Background – History – Dick Thiel has reviewed the history within the 3-ring binder provided by land conservation. Dick will continue to research the history of the property including land use changes and impacts to local and adjacent property owners.

Wood Turtles – Dick Thiel and Eric Epstein – Wood turtle data that was collected over the years was turned over to John Pauli, UW-Madison. The data needs to be compiled electronically from paper copies including hand drawn maps by a workstudy an/or grad student at the UW. Dick will follow-up with Mr. Pauli to assist in the interpretation of the data into an electronic format.

Recreation-Public Access Management – Ron Luethe – No updates.

Other plan items:

Armund Bartz will develop a list of species of concern for the Tri-Creeks property.

A list of fish species will also need to be developed for the management plan.

George Johnston, Land Use Planning Committee member and Ridgeville Township resident stated he would be interested in volunteer opportunities for data gathering and other plan activities for Tri-Creeks.

The committee welcomes the offer and extends the invitation to anyone else on the committee or the community who desires to help out with any of the data gathering/plan activities.

The next meeting of the Tri-Creek Land Use Planning Committee will be held early April 2019. Ron Luethe will send out a separate email to solicit dates. The meeting will be held in the conference room at the Monroe County Land Conservation Department, 820 Industrial Drive, Suite 3, Sparta, WI beginning at 1:00 PM.

At the next meeting we will continue the process data gathering and plan development.

Respectfully Submitted,
Ron Luethe