

Conservation/UW-EX Education Committee
Monday, February 9, 2026 Minutes
Oneida County Courthouse, County Board Room and Virtually by ZOOM

Committee Members: Vice Chair Linnaea Newman, Lenore Lopez, and Chris Schultz.

Others Present: Michele Sadauskas, Stephanie Boismenu, Karl Jennrich, Levi Rhody, Eric Rempala, and Jessica Young. Jonna Jewell, Robb Jensen, Beckie Gaskill, and Collette Sorgel on Zoom.

1. Call to order and Vice Chairperson's Announcements:

Vice Chair Newman called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. The meeting was properly posted and handicapped accessible and ADA compliant.

Vice Chair Newman announced that UW-Extension will not present at this meeting.

2. Approve Agenda: A motion by Lopez/Schultz to approve the February 9, 2026 Agenda with the order of items at the Vice Chair's discretion. All ayes; motion carried.

3. Approve Minutes: A motion by Schultz/Newman to approve the minutes of January 12, 2026 as presented. All ayes; motion carried.

4. Dates/Location of Future Meetings:

Monday, March 9, 2026 at 1:00 p.m. Oneida County Courthouse; County Board Room.

5. Public Comment:

Eric Rempala (Oneida County Clean Waters Action) addressed agenda item #10 and expressed concern about the recent Planning & Development (P&D) Committee meeting. Rempala stated that the P&D Committee did not adequately address or discuss the CUW Committee's recommended language regarding shoreland protection and clear-cutting. He expressed disappointment that the work of the CUW Committee was not given recognition and stronger consideration.

Rempala reported that Oneida County Clean Waters Action (OCCWA) and the Oneida County Lakes and Rivers Association (OCLRA) collaborated to draft revised language that incorporates the P&D Committee's concerns regarding the CUW Committee's previous proposal. The revised language is more flexible and will be emailed to the CUW Committee. Rempala asked Committee to review revised language and provide input before the P&D Committee meeting on February 18, or before the public hearing on February 24. Rempala noted that the groups intend to request placement on the February 18 P&D Committee meeting's agenda. He emphasized that clear-cutting within the access/viewing corridors should not be permitted and stated that a reasonable compromise exists that will balance shoreland protection with P&D Committee discretion. Rempala asked the Committee to consider the revised language and provide support moving forward.

6. PFAS Update:

Rempala reported that the governor and state legislators indicated they are nearing a decision on distributing the \$125 million allocated for PFAS.

7. Attendance at Wisconsin Land + Water Conservation Association (WLWCA) 73rd Annual Conference (March 4-6, 2026) and 2026 Wisconsin Lakes Convention (April 15-17, 2026):

Vice Chair Newman expressed interest in attending the Wisconsin Lakes Convention in April to support JoAnne Lund, who will be providing both a demonstration and a lecture at the event, and to recognize Lund's efforts on the lake classification system.

Chair Sorgel and Lopez also indicated interest in attending the Wisconsin Lakes Convention in April. Vice Chair Newman additionally offered to attend the Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association event in March to provide support to Sadauskas, who will be presenting, if no other Committee members are able to attend.

Chair Sorgel/Jensen made a motion to invite any Committee members interested in attending either event and to approve their attendance, including payment of admission and mileage. All ayes; motion carried.

8. Citizen Member on CUW Committee:

The Committee currently includes a citizen member representing agriculture and is now exploring the addition of a second citizen member to serve as an advocate for the protection of Oneida County lakes and waters. Sadauskas will research how adding an additional citizen member may affect voting procedures and quorum requirements. From a legal standpoint, the Committee may include up to two citizen members; the agricultural representative is required by state statute, while the additional citizen member is optional.

The County Code would need to be updated to reflect any structural changes. An inquiry has been made with Tracy Hartman regarding the proper process for bringing on an additional citizen member to ensure compliance. The process would include a public posting of the position, an application period, and clarification on the funding source for supporting an additional member. Citizen Representatives are typically funded through the County Board budget, which will also be confirmed with Tracy Hartman.

Jensen emphasized the importance of determining who holds the authority to recommend appointments for the additional citizen member. If the recommending authority rests with the County Board Chair or another external party, the selected appointee may not align with the philosophy and goals of the lakes and rivers, potentially putting Committee work at a disadvantage. Sadauskas clarified that the application process would move through the Committee, which would select a

candidate, before forwarding the recommendation to the County Board for official appointment.

Vice Chair Newman/Lopez made a motion to add an additional citizen member to the CUW Committee to serve as a representative voice for the lakes and rivers of Oneida County. All ayes; motion carried.

9. Wisconsin Land + Water Conservation Association (WLWCA) Environmental Awareness Poster & Speaking Contest Update:

Oneida County had two youth, Ainsley P. and Sutton P., place first in the NCLWCA Area speaking contest, qualifying them to advance to the state competition in Wisconsin Dells.

Out of five divisions in the poster contest; Oneida County earned first place in four. Division winners included Brooks D. of Sugar Camp, Harper B. of Three Lakes, Makenzie M. of Rhinelander, and Sawyer S. of Three Lakes.

Winners at the state level may have the opportunity to compete at the national level.

10. Shoreland Protection Ordinance 9.95, 9.97, and Article 10 Update:

Sadauskas reported that there was no opportunity to read the shoreland protection letter at the P&D Committee meeting, no one expressed interest in learning more about the topic. There was also no opportunity to address the definition of “landscaping.” Sadauskas stated an intention to attend the upcoming public hearing on February 24 to address related concerns, and to speak about the landscaping definition at the February 18 P&D Committee meeting, if given the opportunity.

Jennrich shared that a recent discussion with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) included technical questions regarding the relationship between the general zoning ordinance and the shoreland zoning ordinance. The DNR emailed feedback and comments to Jennrich this morning, which have not yet been reviewed.

Newman expressed disappointment that Sadauskas was not given the opportunity to speak at the P&D meeting. Newman noted that evidence and photographic documentation of the issue exists and emphasized the need for an opportunity to present and voice these concerns.

11. 2025 Assembly Bill 449: Local Regulation of Accessory Dwelling Units Update:

Jennrich reported that the P&D Committee expressed concerns about the proposed legislation that would allow a second dwelling unit on a parcel that already contains a dwelling unit. P&D Committee members generally supported maintaining local control.

It was noted that discussions with the Wisconsin Counties Association indicate that the legislation does not appear likely to move forward in the Assembly in 2026. The P&D

Committee requested that Jennrich draft a resolution focusing on local control and on zoning districts that could allow second dwelling units, excluding single-family districts.

Jensen will gather additional information at an upcoming legislative conference to determine whether there is any significant state-level interest in advancing this legislation.

12. Lake District Reports:

Horsehead Lake: Report was submitted.

13. LWCD Upcoming Events:

- February 19, 2026: Wisconsin Land + Water Conservation Association (WLWCA) Environmental Awareness Poster Contest Award Party
- March 4-6, 2026: Wisconsin Land + Water Conservation Association (WLWCA) 73rd Annual Conference
- April 15-17, 2026: 2026 Wisconsin Lakes & Rivers Convention

14. LWCD Office Reports:

- a. Budget Actual – *January, 2026.*
- b. Invoices Paid – *January, 2026.*

CUW Committee received and accepted LWCD office reports for January.

15. LWCD items to include on next agenda:

- Shoreland Protection Ordinance
- Assembly Bill 449
- PFAS Update
- Citizen Member

16. UWEX items to include on next agenda

- Area 4 Extension Director Update
- UWEX Office Reports

17. Public Comment:

None.

18. Adjournment: Vice Chair Newman adjourned the meeting at 1:43 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jessica Young, Recording Secretary