Lumberjack RC&D Council Meeting Minutes
APRIL 30, 2026 at 9:30AM
Host: Oneida County – Northwood Golf Club, Rhinelander

COUNCIL MEMBER ROLL CALL

	VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT in BOLD (includes first seat, alternate or proxy)	OTHERS PRESENT
Florence	Excused	Shawna Broullire
Forest	Tom Tallier	Kayla Littleton
Langlade	Doug Curler	Katie Bahr-Bender
Lincoln	Bill Bialecki	
Marinette	Wally Hitt	Sheri Denowski, Michal Ebsch
Menominee	Jeremy Johnson	
Oconto	Pat Scanlan	Ken Dolata, Tim Cole, Dale Mohr
Oneida	Linnea Newman	Michele Sadauskas
Shawano	Lynn Tober-Steinke	Scott Frank
Vilas	Beckie Gaskill	
At-Large	Steve Heimerman – Oconto Bob Mott - Oneida Mary George – Vilas Arlyn Tober – Shawano Mark Orlovsky - Forest	Staff: Rosie Page, Derek Thorn, Tracy Beckman, Coleman Kaiser, Brianna LeFebre
Past President	Wayne Plant - Lincoln	

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Bialecki at 9:35am. Members faced East and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

INTRODUCTIONS: Those in attendance introduced themselves and a roll call appears in these minutes.

REVIEW/APPROVE AGENDA: Motion by George/Plant to approve the agenda as presented. Motion Carried.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Rosie Page is leaving WHIP after 12 years and returning to Canada. She was thanked for her service and wished well.

MINUTES: Members reviewed the minutes of the 1/29/26 Council Meeting and the 4/16/2026 Executive Committee meeting. Motion by Hitt/Tober-Steinke to approve the minutes as presented. Motion Carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Mott presented the Treasurer's report dated 3/31/206 which included a balance sheet, budget update and project update. The checking account balance on 3/31/2026 was $292,713.64 and a total fund balance of $1,032,851.61 which is a difference of $130,015.39 less than last year at this time. Motion by Tober/Gaskill to approve the Treasurer's report as presented. Motion carried.

FIA UPDATE: Coleman Kaiser gave a presentation updating the following:

> State of WI CFI – Kaiser reported that under the USFS restructure, CFI plots will no longer be funded. These are P2 plots that are contracted as part of our FIA/CFI WDNR Agreement. WDNR intends to fund the plots but will need to hire someone to create the program, software and policies. They believe it will take the full year so there will be no CFI plots from 9/1/2026 to 8/31/2027.
> IMPACT: One employee will be let go. We will lose $438,671 in billable plot income and the cost for payroll/benefits ONLY will be $491,127.39 which does not include Lumberjack overhead, vehicle, lodging, per diem, office and any other expenses. The estimated loss is $60k leaving us with FIA, Urban FIA and two UP MI contracts that renew.

CFI P3 Plots – These summer only plots are being phased out completely and the WDNR has set an earlier deadline for their completion to 7/1/2026. Typically, these plots don't start until April 15th, but since they've moved the deadline up, they allowed an April 1st start.

FIA P2 Plots – This is the bulk of FIA work, and these plots can be done year-round. Currently WI is one of just a couple states that has a blended workload for these plots. In most other states, either USFS employees complete them, or they are fully contracted out. In Wisconsin, the USFS does half of them and Lumberjack does the other half. It has worked out this way because of the different ways states use data and Wisconsin does more intensified planning than other, less forested states. This may be an opportunity if the USFS contracts out ALL these plots. That would mean Lumberjack could bid on not half, but all the FIA P2 plots in Wisconsin. Coleman also feels this may be the last time there is a 5-year contract offering. He feels they will go to two- or three-year contracts.

STRATEGIC PLANNING DISCUSSION: Members received a handout outlining the reasons the Executive Committee is seeking full council approval to begin the process of strategic planning. Heimerman and Mott went through the handout which included key focus areas, a proposed strategic direction, an outlined process, a financial snapshot and Lumberjack's current financial position. Beckman noted that we need a clear financial picture for just Lumberjack administrative costs and explained that 60% of the Executive Director wages/benefits are charged to the FIA budget so each time the council receives a budget update for just the Lumberjack class, it only accounts for 40% of the true expense. Heimerman expressed his idea to have our sponsored agencies and programs manage their own budgets which would include identifying not only direct but indirect costs (admin and in-kind). The process would also identify all Lumberjack administrative costs. Discussion then centered around the financial snapshot section. It was questioned because it shows three of Lumberjack's sponsored agencies with a net loss. It was noted that those figures include more than 12 years of votes by the Lumberjack Council to invest in the agencies by either approving Lumberjack project grants or outright budget line items. These investments were made to help the agencies pay for coordination and other programming not covered under their other funding sources. It was also noted that the net includes expenses for which we have yet to be reimbursed through WDNR & USFS's reimbursable grant programs. It was stated that we're not trying to point fingers, rather that we need to look at all the numbers to identify true costs and trends and that this is a starting point. Still, some felt that the language being used like 'burden' and 'loss' and 'pay for other 40%' suggest otherwise. Heimerman and Beckman tried to reassure members that the figures are being used for planning and to overall improve Lumberjack and give us a strategic direction. Sadauskas, as the chairperson for WHIP, felt caught off guard and would like to see all the numbers, not just the snapshot given. Beckman will share that information. She also suggested that the role of fiscal sponsor be made clearer. Beckman stated that will be part of the strategic process. While the council was in favor of the process, some questioned the messaging. Overall, the council wants to move forward with the process so to begin, members were directed to the S.W.O.T. worksheet in their packet. They were asked to be thinking about and helping to identify Lumberjack's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. In the coming months, the Executive Committee will be asking for their input. Tom Tallier noted that WI Land + Water just completed this process and their ED, Matt Krueger would be a good resource. It was also noted that Golden Sands RC&D has completed a similar process.

GRANT POLICY CHANGE/REVIEW/VOTE: Members of the Grant Committee met after the January meeting and presented their recommendations to the Executive committee at their April meeting. The handout outlines those recommendations approved by the Executive Committee for review/vote by the full council. After discussion, changes were identified and appear in the updated version below:

Requested Change to Policy Item #6 – Timeline/Meeting Format/Voting Policy

A. September 1st : Project Application Submission Deadline. Project applications received by this date will be considered for funding if they meet the following requirements: 1) received by the deadline of September 1st, 2) lists required match on the budget form and has a corresponding letter of support for each match item listed, 3) has completed all post project requirements (if applicant has been funded in the past.)
B. September 1st to September 30th, Lumberjack staff/Executive Committee will review project applications for mission alignment. If they feel more clarification is needed, that will be communicated to the applicant, and they will have until September 30th to adjust their application. No adjustments will be accepted after September 30th.

C. October 1st, staff will send a hard copy of each project application to the Council Members along with a ranking and a guideline sheet. These documents will help members formulate questions based on how they feel the project aligns with the Lumberjack Mission. All project applicants will receive a notice with information about their required presentation at the October Lumberjack Council meeting.

D. Council Members in attendance and eligible to vote will receive a ranking sheet. They will rank the projects from least favorite to most favorite with least favorite receiving the lowest number (1) and most favorite receiving the highest number (determined by the number of project applications.) Members should rank based on how they feel the project application aligns with Lumberjack's three mission points, Enhances Area Natural Resources, Promotes a Higher Standard of Living & Improves Quality of Life, Fosters Partnerships Between Public & Private Sectors, placing an emphasis on projects that show sustainability. It is at this time that members may advocate for their position regarding any of the projects being considered for the next round of funding. Following discussion, members in attendance and eligible to vote will complete the ranking sheet. Project Applications must receive at least 51% to be funded (the percentage is based on the number of members in attendance and eligible to vote.)

- Requested Change to Policy Item #7.B. Organizations that have received funding may not apply again in a subsequent year. If funded, they may only apply every other year.

- Requested Change to Policy Item #8 - A 25% match is required, 10% of the amount asked for must be in cash. Example: A grant of $10,000 is required to have 25% ($2,500) in matching funds/in-kind services, $1,000 of which must be cash.

- Change the in-person requirement for presenting at County L&W Conservation Committee Meetings to allow for virtual attendance to reduce the expense for multi-county projects. Change this language to be clearer about this requirement and make sure the guidance regarding this item has the same language in the application and on the checklist.

- Add language to the Grant Application Summary Section and the Formulation & Evaluation Section stating that emphasis will be placed on projects that show sustainability.

- Remove all references to $60K annual budget because the amount is set by the Council every year and may be changed by a majority vote.

- Adjust the date of policy change to include 4/30/2026

Motion by George/Hitt to approve the changes as discussed. Motion Carried. Beckman will update the policies and post them to the website.

PROGRAM UPDATES – Program Coordinators for FLOW, TIP & WHIP gave their updates.

RECOGNITION PRESENTATION FOR ROSIE PAGE: Beckman gave a presentation recognizing Rosie Page's contributions to WHIP over her 12 years as their coordinator. She will be missed.

LUNCH & PUBLIC COMMENT – Public comments were heard while everyone enjoyed lunch.

ADJOURN: The meeting was adjourned at 1pm

Submitted 5/7/2026 by Tracy Beckman for Arlyn Tober