



2005 Outstanding Tree Farmer Has Powers!



*Congratulations Tom Powers
2005 Outstanding Tree Farmer*

Good things happen to people who do good things, and Tom Powers is a testament to that fact. This year's Outstanding Tree Farmer recognition for Sauk County and for the Southwest Wisconsin District has been awarded to Tom Powers. This recognition acknowledges not only his passion and success at forest,

grassland, and water management, but also his outreach to others promoting good land stewardship.

Tom, in partnership with his wife Coreen and nephew Mike, own 214 acres certified by the American Tree Farm System. The land is located about a mile north of White Mound County Park in southern Washington Township. Coreen and Mike are quick to tell you that Tom is the main cog in the system when it comes to land management. For the past 25 years, he has been and continues to be passionate about all aspects of land management from planning and research to implementation and maintenance.

Tom's enthusiasm and desire to share his land management successes and failures extends beyond himself. He has hosted three forestry field days including a joint Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association/Ruffed Grouse Society field day that received coverage in the Capital Times. A group of six men hunt on his land in return for doing work on the farm. They assist with timber stand

Twenty-five years of active management by Tom Powers is difficult to capture, but it can be summarized as follows:

- Installation of three spring fed ponds
- Hand planting and maintenance of 2,000 hybrid poplar and 6,850 pine and spruce
- Machine planting and maintenance of 13,200 pine, spruce, oak, and ash
- The first direct seeding of acorns in Sauk County on one acre
- Two timber harvests of over 100,000 board feet
- Timber stand improvement on 25 acres
- Installation and maintenance of 22 acres of prairie
- Installation and maintenance of 13 acres of savanna
- Establishment and maintenance of 4-5 miles of trails

improvement, firewood cutting, tree planting, and general building and maintenance needs. Each of them owns forestland in the same "neighborhood" and now practices forestry on their properties after "learning by doing" at Tom's farm. Tom showed his plantings to a local service vendor who as a result has

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Farmland Preservation Meetings

The Sauk County Land Conservation and Planning and Zoning departments have scheduled the annual meetings for zoned towns to distribute zoning certificates to participants in the Farmland Preservation Program (FPP). To be eligible for a certificate, you must have at least 35 acres of land in a town that is zoned Exclusive Agriculture and it must have produced at least \$6,000 per year or \$18,000 over the past three years in gross farm products. To find out if you qualify, call 355-3245 or attend one of these meetings.

| Date | Time | Town Hall |
|---------|------------|--------------------------------------|
| Jan. 3 | 9:00-3:00 | Franklin |
| Jan. 3 | 2:00-3:00 | Spring Green (Village Office) (1) |
| Jan. 4 | 9:00-3:00 | Honey Creek |
| Jan. 6 | 9:00-3:00 | Ironton |
| Jan. 10 | 9:00-3:00 | Prairie du Sac (2) |
| Jan. 12 | 12:30-3:00 | Reedsburg |
| Jan. 13 | 9:00-3:00 | Troy |
| Jan. 24 | 9:00-3:00 | Westfield |

(1) Village extraterritorial zoning
(2) Zoning certificates for town of Sumpter and the villages of Sauk City and Prairie du Sac will also be available at this meeting.

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505 Broadway - West Square Building
Baraboo, WI 53913
(608) 355-3245

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planted several thousand seedlings on his own land in the past three-five years. He has also tried to persuade neighboring landowners to limit cattle grazing on creek banks that feed into White Mound Lake.

Tom has observed increased numbers of hawks, owls, eagles, mink, otter, deer, and fox over the years on his farm. Much of that can be attributed to improved habitat. He intends to keep the land intact and in his family "forever."

Congratulations to Tom Powers as the 2005 Outstanding Tree Farmer for Sauk County and for the Southwest Wisconsin District!



Since 1990, Tom has planted trees over 22,000 pine, spruce, oak, ash, aspen, and cherry on over 35 acres. Tom says that plantation success has come from weed control in the early years after planting, and then patience. He annually donates 3-7 Christmas trees to his church.

What is an American Tree Farm?

The American Tree Farm System is a nationwide forestry program. It was established in response to concerns that America's private forests were being cut at unsustainable rates without reforestation. It all began in 1941 when the first Tree Farm was designated in Washington State. The Tree Farm's purpose was to demonstrate sound forest management practices to area landowners.

Its mission: *To promote the growing of renewable forest resources on private lands while protecting environmental benefits and increasing public understanding of all benefits of productive forestry.*

Currently the American Tree Farm System has 33.2 million acres of privately owned forestland and 80,000 family forest owners who are committed to excellence in forest stewardship in 46 states. These individuals hold the key to the kinds of forests, forest activities, and forest resources future generations of Americans will enjoy.



The American Tree Farm System has established standards and guidelines for property owners to meet to become a certified Tree Farm. Under these standards and guidelines, private forest owners must develop a management plan based on strict environmental standards and pass an inspection every five years by a professional forester who is certified as a Tree Farm inspector.

Becoming a member of the American Tree Farm System is simple and best of all free! It is a great way to receive baseline inventory and information about your forest, management recommendations to improve it, and periodic updates and guidance by a local professional forester.

For more information, contact DNR Foresters Rick Livingston (355-4475) or Paul Stearns (355-4476) or visit the Tree Farm website at <http://www.treefarmssystem.org/index.cfm>.

Where Is This?



If you recognize where this is located, send us your answer along with your name, address, and phone number by February 3 to the following address: Sauk County LCD, 505 Broadway, Baraboo, WI 53913. One winner will be drawn from the correct answers and will receive a Farm & Fleet gift certificate.

Sorry, but if you answered that the "Where Is It" from the last edition of the Chronicle was the county's classiest deer stand, you were wrong. It is actually an elevated watchman's tower located at the Mid-Continent Railway Museum in North Freedom. The tower was built for the Soo Line Railroad and was located at a busy intersection at the north end of their freight yards in Neenah, Wisconsin. The watchman could view both the train and automobile traffic and operate the lights and crossing gates manually to minimize delays. Ownership transferred to the Wisconsin Central when the Soo Line underwent bankruptcy proceedings, and the tower was then donated to Mid-Continent in 1991 when it was replaced by an automated system. If you have not visited the Railway Museum, plan on it for their upcoming Snow Train Weekend, February 17-19, 2006. It is a great show and just one more of the treasures within Sauk County.

Congratulations to Sandra Hamlet for correctly identifying the watchman's tower at the Mid-Continent Railway Museum in North Freedom in the August Conservation Chronicle. She received a Farm & Fleet gift certificate.



2005 Clean Sweep a Success

The Sauk County Board of Supervisors, through the Solid Waste and Land Conservation departments, again provided an opportunity for residents to properly dispose of their hazardous waste at a county-wide clean sweep held September 23 and 24. At times the lines were long, but people showed great patience and were very thankful for the chance to get rid of these materials. Over 17,700 pounds of aerosols and organic solids, 15,700 pounds of flammable liquids, and 50 cubic yards of latex paint were gathered up from basements and garages throughout the county, consolidated, packaged, and shipped away for proper disposal.



County Board Supervisor, Andrea Lombard, staffed the front lines for much of the two-day event and reported participants were very concerned about future opportunities like this as the county scales back its role in waste disposal.

"Again and again I heard people say this is a service that Sauk County should continue to provide," reported Lombard "but providing the funds for future clean sweeps could be a challenge." John Carroll, Sauk County Solid Waste Manager, explains that the funding for this clean sweep was from revenues generated by the operation of the landfill. Without this revenue, future clean sweeps will need a different source of funding.

"This was the highest participation we have had in any of our clean sweeps," reported Carroll. "Part of this may have been the fear that it would be their last chance." The concern is that without future clean sweep opportunities much of this toxic and hazardous material will end up in the everyday trash pickup or worse yet be disposed of in the 'back forty' or along the roads in the county. Either method could cause significant damage to our valuable groundwater resource.

Learn More About Wisconsin Wildlife

Under the cover of Wisconsin's winter snow and cold, nature continues to quietly perform her



miracles. Black bear cubs are being born in dens during the first week of January. Many animals begin their courtship and mating rituals in winter, providing an abundance of new life in the spring. By early February, horned larks are migrating north and later in the month, Canada geese arrive. Before you know it, March is here and the maple sap begins to flow. Birds return to their northern homes. Squirrels, fox, and wolves are born, and skunk cabbage begins to bloom.

You can anticipate the arrival of these events and many more by using the 2006 Wisconsin Wildlife Phenology Calendar. The calendar is a joint project of The Aldo Leopold Foundation, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the

University of Wisconsin Extension. Free copies of the calendar are available locally through the Sauk County Land Conservation Department.

Phenology is a branch of science that focuses on the relationship between our climate and recurring natural events such as flowers blooming and bird migrations. The calendar identifies the average date of phenological events for southern Wisconsin. The information



Aldo Leopold Shack

used to generate the calendar was gathered from a variety of sources but especially from the records kept at the Leopold Family Farm and Shack located in Sauk County. The recording of this phenological data for Sauk County is a tradition that originated with Aldo Leopold who recorded the data from 1936 until 1947 and has been carried on by his daughter, Nina Leopold Bradley, and others since 1974. The calendar shows

the average date of a wide variety of natural events for both of these periods. The change in these average dates over the 27-year gap is significant and represents a trend being found throughout the world in response to climate change.

The calendar makes the observation of wildlife even more interesting and hopefully will encourage others to keep records of their own wildlife observations for future generations to enjoy. These types of observations can provide important information for future scientists and historians. The calendar contains beautiful monthly photos of wildlife in their natural habitats and a short feature column each month on threatened and endangered Wisconsin species. There are also reminders for erecting bat boxes, bird houses, and other seasonal things you may have been meaning to



do. For

more information call Land Conservation at 355-3245.

Preventing the Spread

Invasive plant species have quickly become the pervasive issue in forest management. Today a large number of our woodlands in southern Wisconsin contain one or more invasive species such as garlic mustard, multiflora rose, buckthorn, and Japanese barberry. These plants have the potential to quickly invade wild areas by outcompeting native species and decreasing wildlife habitat. Seeds from invasive species can be easily transported by equipment and vehicles, such as bush hogs, mowers, tractors, ATV's, and forest management equipment. A common way new plants are brought to a property is on logging equipment that came from an area that was infested. Seeds stick in the mud on tires, fenders, etc., fall off when the mud dries, and the seed is "planted" in a new place.

Why you do not want invasive plants in your woods:

- Thorns growing on many invasives will limit access to your woods
- Competition with native trees will interfere with regeneration
- Earlier spring leaf opening will reduce sunlight needed by trillium, wild geranium, and other spring ephemerals
- The changes to habitat can impact wildlife that you enjoy seeing, hearing, or hunting in your woods

The Sauk County Highway Department is now offering the use of equipment and facilities for loggers to clean their equipment to help control this spread. Landowners who are concerned with the introduction of invasive species to their property can require loggers to clean their equipment and direct them to facilities located in either Baraboo or Reedsburg.

Loggers interested in using this service must complete a liability waiver form prior to cleaning and pay a user fee of \$100 per cleaning. The Highway Department will provide all power sprayers and water. Equipment can be cleaned either inside their facility or outside depending on department needs at that time. For more information on this service, contact Steve Muchow at the Highway Department (356-3855) or the Sauk County DNR Forestry Office (355-4476 or 355-4475).



Garlic Mustard



Multiflora Rose



Buckthorn

Check out these websites to learn more about invasive plants:

- *WI DNR Invasive Species - <http://dnr.wi.gov/invasives/>
- *Invasive Plants Association of Wisconsin - <http://www.ipaw.org/>

Just call the Land Conservation Department at 355-3245 to request a copy of your free 2006 Wisconsin Wildlife Phenology Calendar!

The Economics of Rotational Grazing

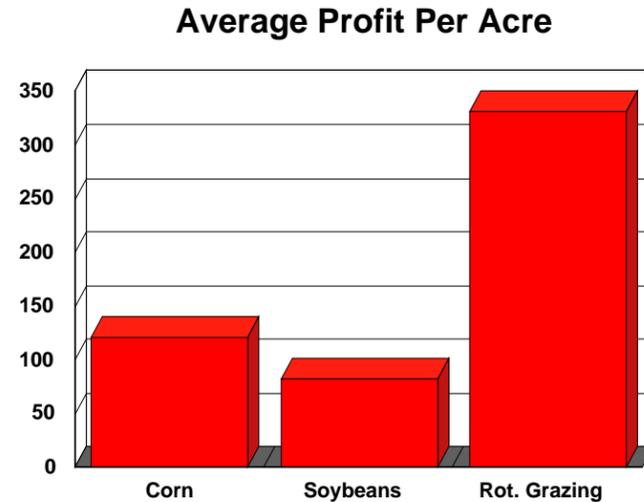
Corn, soybeans, alfalfa, milk, vegetables, beef, pork, wheat, oats, mutton, wool, etc. - they are all produced here in Sauk County. Landowners and operators grow these crops or raise these animals in a variety of conditions. However, the common approaches are to plant cash crops of corn or soybeans, raise beef cattle using a traditional pasture system, or milk dairy cattle in a confinement system. While all of these methods work well for the majority of farmers, other alternatives are available.

Management intensive rotational grazing is one option becoming more and more popular. It is an environmentally sound method of farming that produces reasonable profits without an expensive investment in buildings or equipment. The less hectic grazer lifestyle also seems to be appealing to many farmers.

Is rotational grazing the right choice for every agricultural enterprise? Certainly not. Many producers are realizing a satisfactory return from their confinement dairy, traditional beef operation, or their cash grain farm. Many enjoy the lifestyle. Other landowners are renting their land for row crop production and are satisfied with their rental agreement. If you are comfortable with your current operation - the investments, monetary returns, and lifestyle, then a management intensive rotational grazing system might not be for you. But, if you need more net income or if a significant workload does not leave time for leisure activities, then a managed grazing system might be the answer.

Rotational grazing is the process of grazing animals between several pasture units. Because of the rest period involved, forage quality tends to be better and weed infestations lower. However, managed intensive rotational grazing takes rotational grazing to an even a higher level. By using more small paddocks, shorter grazing periods, and longer rest periods, the system maximizes forage quality, quantity, and weed control. By timing the grazing to the growth stage of the forage and allowing the ungrazed paddocks to renew energy reserves, the plants rebuild vigor.

Can it make money though? There have been many studies that have shown that a management intensive



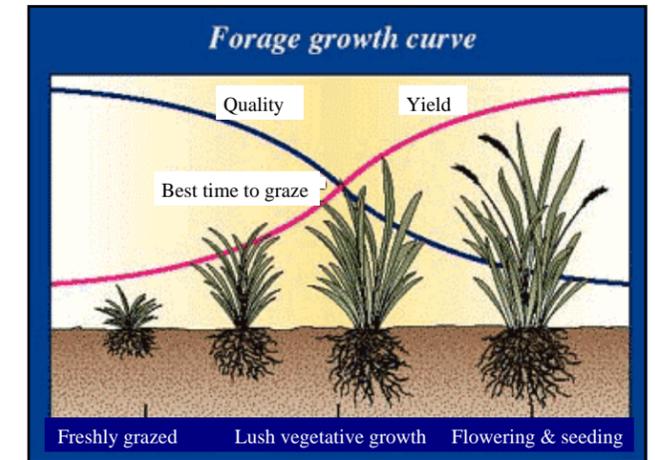
rotational grazing system requires less inputs and is very competitive with confinement systems. In fact, while gross production and revenues may be higher with a confinement system, managed grazing dairy operations have consistently shown higher profits per acre or profit per animal unit. A study by Tom Kriegl, UW-Madison Center for Dairy Profitability, found that “graziers were more profitable per cow and per hundredweight equivalent than their confinement counterparts” and that these farms “consistently showed higher net farm incomes from their operations” than confinement systems.

That may work for dairy, but how does management intensive rotational grazing compare to returns from row crop production? A recent study entitled the “Economics of Grazing Stocker Cattle as a Sustainable Alternative to Row Crops” by Nimrick, Oswald and Staff found that rotationally grazed stocker cattle consistently had higher net returns than corn or soybeans. They compared yearly revenue, variable costs, fixed costs, animal costs, pasture costs, and net return to the land resource. “Returns from corn production averaged \$121 per acre and ranged from \$76 to \$172. Returns from soybean production averaged \$83 per acre and ranged from \$71 to \$98. Returns for stocker grazing averaged \$331 per acre and ranged from minus \$36 to \$620. Average returns for stocker grazing were more than double that for crop production and exceeded that for crop production every year but one.”

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In summary, management intensive rotational grazing is a viable alternative for landowners and operators in Sauk County regardless of the type of animal raised. Although it may not be the choice for the majority of farmers, it should be considered when selecting an appropriate, profitable agricultural enterprise for your farm.



Trees and Prairie Seeds for Sale

Now is the time to plan your spring planting! Whether you need a large quantity of trees to meet the requirements of your Managed Forest Law plan or are trying to restore a small prairie around the yard, we can supply your needs. However, order soon as many species sell out fast.

The DNR nurseries offer many varieties of trees and shrubs. Orders must be in quantities of at least 1,000 seedlings, except for special wildlife, windbreak and shoreland packets that consist of 300 seedlings. For additional information contact the DNR Forestry Office at 355-4475 or 355-4476 or visit the DNR Forestry website: <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/forestry>.

For smaller plantings, the Land Conservation Department offers a variety of trees and shrubs in bundles of 25 as well as prairie seed packages or trays of prairie plants.

Order forms for either program are available through the Land Conservation Department at 355-3245.

Learn to Identify Winter Trees and Shrubs

Developing a “hands-on” ability to identify winter trees and shrubs will be the focus of an upcoming field class, with winter an ideal time to read the forest landscape. Learning the tricks for using bark, leaf scars, buds, branch form, and fruits as clues, participants will sharpen their plant identification skills and be better able to answer questions like: What will my woods be like in 5, 10, and 20 years? Are there any activities I might

consider that would benefit the long-term health of my woods? Which species should I encourage, discourage, or introduce? Participants will receive a *Landowner Tree, Shrub and Vine Checklist* and reference materials. The class will take place on Saturday, January 28, at the Aldo Leopold Shack and Farm. To find out more about this workshop, please contact the Aldo Leopold Foundation at 355-0279.