



### Who Should Enforce Manure Runoff Regulations?

The Land Conservation Committee held a public hearing March 7 concerning proposed revisions to the Sauk County Animal Waste Storage Ordinance. The original ordinance, passed in 1990, required that all manure storage facilities constructed in the county meet design and construction standards to protect groundwater. The ordinance has not been revised since its passage and needs updating due to changes in the state regulations.

The Committee proposed to modify the ordinance in order to comply with state statutes but also to expand the ordinance to cover other manure runoff concerns.

The changes would assign responsibility to the county Land Conservation Department (LCD) to address situations where polluted runoff from manure is contaminating streams or where the concentration of animals in a stream prevents the maintenance of sod cover.

Comments received at the public hearing, however, were overwhelmingly in opposition to these changes for a number of reasons and have certainly directed the Committee to re-evaluate the proposed revisions.

Runoff pollution has been identified as a critical resource protection concern and has been prohibited by state statutes since 1997. Responsibility for enforcement of these rules is assigned to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The idea behind the proposed change was to better protect our local resources and better serve the farmers and other residents of Sauk County.

The prohibitions in the proposed ordinance are basic resource protection guidelines agreed to by both agricultural and environmental groups as part of a statewide animal waste management task force. These prohibitions were recognized as critical pollution source controls that need to be implemented to protect our water resources as well as protect the image of the agricultural community.

The problem, however, has been the ability to enforce these prohibitions. Staff shortages in the DNR have resulted in a minimal ability to respond to complaints. With a local ordinance, county staff could respond to the issue and address the problem. The Committee felt LCD staff would also provide better service because of their extensive experience in

designing and implementing the necessary pollution control practices at reasonable costs. By assuming this role the county would also gain priority ranking for grants that would help farmers address the concerns.

*(Continued on page 2)*



The proposed ordinance changes would give the LCD authority to address sites like this.



Governor Doyle proclaimed 2006 as the "Year of Soil" recognizing the importance of this valuable natural resource!

#### APPLICATION DEADLINES

The deadlines for two state programs that can help reduce your taxes are looming soon. The last day to apply for a new **Farmland Preservation** agreement is June 30 to be eligible for 2006 income tax credits.

The **Managed Forest Law (MFL)** program can reduce property taxes on wooded acreage. The deadline for MFL applications is July 1 to be eligible for 2008 implementation.

For more specifics on either of these programs, call our office at 355-3245.

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#### Inside...

- Plan for Manure Storage Cost Sharing ..... page 2
- Solving a Barnyard Mess ..... page 3
- Watch Out for Emerald Ash Borer!..... page 4
- Thumbs Down to Firewood Hitchhikers ... page 4
- Keeping an Eye on Ash ..... page 4
- Multiflora Rose, Barberry, etc. .... page 5
- Watershed Project Review ..... page 6
- CRP Soil Rental Rate Changes ..... page 6
- Welcome, Gail!..... page 6
- Where Is This? ..... page 7
- Residents Learn About Their Water!..... page 7
- Application Deadlines..... page 8

(Continued from page 1)

An important aspect of the rules is the fact that cost sharing needs to be available to enforce the requirements of the rules. By taking the issue on locally, gaining grant preference, and keeping costs down, the Committee felt that both farmers and the water resources would be better served.

However, the strong opposition means more work needs to be done. The concerns voiced at the hearing will result in a broader discussion regarding the best way to serve the agricultural community and protect water quality.

The Committee is also interested in more input. View the proposed ordinance on the county website at [www.co.sauk.wi.us](http://www.co.sauk.wi.us) under "Current Events and News - Full Listings" and then select "Sauk County Ordinance 26 - Draft." Please send your comments to [jvanberkel@co.sauk.wi.us](mailto:jvanberkel@co.sauk.wi.us) or call 355-3245.

## Plan Ahead for Manure Storage Cost Sharing

The USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has offered cost sharing for waste storage structures for several years through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Cost sharing has provided 70 percent of the cost of the structure. If the program is funded again in the 2007 federal fiscal year (October 2006-September 2007), there are several items applicants will need to submit by the end of a sign-up period to be eligible. Interested applicants should note the following requirements for the cost sharing:



Federal cost sharing may be available for installation of manure storage structures

- All owned and rented cropland where wastes are spread must have a conservation plan.
- The applicant must show ownership or provide rental agreements to demonstrate the availability of one acre of cropland per 1,000 pounds of live animal weight.
- Soil samples consistent with the UW-Extension Publication A2100 must cover this entire acreage.
- A preliminary or complete design of the manure storage facility must be submitted. The design must meet NRCS standards,

include cost estimates and soil borings, and be stamped by a **Wisconsin registered professional engineer**.

- A Management and Site Assessment Worksheet (available from the NRCS office) must be completed by the engineer as part of a site evaluation.
- Applicants with a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) completed by the private sector before the end of the sign-up were given priority for funding in 2006. This may be the case in 2007 also. Cost sharing for development of a CNMP is available through the EQIP program.

Applications that meet the above requirements will be ranked with all other waste storage applications in Wisconsin. Only the highest ranking applicants are funded.

Since sign-up periods are short, interested producers should start planning now to meet the requirements of the cost-share program. For more information, contact the NRCS office at 355-4420 or visit their website at [www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov).

## Where Is This?



If you recognize where this is located, send us your answer along with your name, address, and phone number by June 23 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.

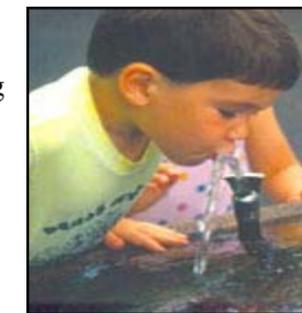
Congratulations to Betty Repka for correctly identifying the new sign located south of the Sauk County Health Care Center on Pine Bluff Road in the December Conservation Chronicle. She received a Farm & Fleet gift certificate.

Restoration activity on the 80-acre parcel belonging to the Sauk County Health Care Center is currently in progress. Approximately 30 acres of wetlands have been restored on the site along with 3,000 feet of streambank restoration. Controlled burns, tillage operations, spot spraying, and prairie plantings are also underway to restore 20 acres of the property to its native prairie vegetation.



## Residents Learn About Their Water!

Nearly 100 residents from the towns of Franklin and Spring Green gathered recently at the Kraemer Library in Plain to receive the results of their drinking water tests and to learn more about the quality of the groundwater in their area. Jenny Erickson, Sauk County UW-Extension Agent, opened the program with a brief overview of groundwater basics. Kevin Masarik, UW-Extension Specialist from the Stevens Point Center for Groundwater Education, described each of the drinking water tests, discussed the results, and suggested possible actions to alleviate any water quality issues.



Over 20 percent of the 135 wells tested contained nitrate concentrations that exceeded the health standard of 10 parts per million. Although most of the high nitrate wells were located in the Town of Spring Green, there also were a large number of shallow wells in the southwestern portion of the town well below the nitrate standard. One explanation is that the groundwater recharge area for these wells is located in the county forest. Natural landscapes like forests act as sponges soaking in and filtering the rainwater. Results like these help demonstrate

the relationship between groundwater quality and local land uses.

Many homes also participated in a Triazine screen, which is an indicator for Atrazine and other related pesticides. None of the wells tested contained more than the health standard of 3 parts per billion.

The towns of Spring Green and Franklin, the Sauk County UW-Extension, Land Conservation Department, and Public Health sponsored the drinking water program to make sampling easy and convenient and raise awareness of the importance of private well testing. Public water systems are tested regularly, but private well owners are responsible for testing their own wells. Owners should test their drinking water every one to two years and at different times of the year. Sampling bottles for a "Homeowners Test Package" which includes tests for nitrate, coliform bacteria, pH, alkalinity, hardness, conductivity, corrosivity, and chloride can be obtained at the Sauk County UW-Extension Office in the West Square Building downtown Baraboo. Contact the UW-Extension office at 355-3250 for more information.

## Watershed Project Review



The Narrows Creek/Baraboo River (NBR) Watershed Project, which began in 1989, officially came to an end in 2005.

Preliminary results are showing a much improved river system because of the project. Over 200 landowners installed conservation practices to help the

project meet or exceed most of the goals established in the watershed plan.

One of the criticisms heard throughout the state about these large scale Priority Watershed Projects has been the lack of sufficient data to show their effectiveness. To address this concern, staff from the Land Conservation Department, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and University of Wisconsin-Extension are gathering additional data to demonstrate the effectiveness of this successful project. While documentation exists to show impressive pollutant runoff reductions from the

individual practices installed, physical in-stream data is more difficult to obtain.

This summer we will complete a variety of field examinations to test the water quality and compare it with our preproject data. Fish populations, macroinvertebrate studies, dissolved oxygen levels, temperature monitoring, habitat evaluations, and groundwater samples will all be closely analyzed.

The Farm Practices Inventory, which was done early in the Narrows Creek/Baraboo River Watershed Project, will again be performed as part of the review process. Nutrient management is the focus of this survey which looks closely at on-farm manure crediting and spreading procedures. Repeating the inventory should provide information on manure management changes over the years.

The studies will hopefully yield valuable data and provide a better measure of the environmental impacts from the project. Thanks to the excellent cooperation of all the landowners that installed pollution control practices, the project goals have been exceeded, and Narrows Creek and the Baraboo River are on the mend.

### CRP Soil Rental Rate Changes

If you had previously considered enrolling land in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) or Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and decided the payment was not enough, you may want to relook at the payment amounts. Cropland and pasture rental rates for CRP have recently changed. Many of the cropland rates in Sauk County have increased significantly. Call our office at 355-3245 for more information.

## Welcome, Gail!

Gail Greve joined the LCD staff as the Program Assistant in November 2005. She is very happy to be learning about the many diverse aspects of land conservation and hopes to be a valued member of the staff for many years to come. Her leisure time is spent reading, cooking, gardening, and caring for her husband, three teenaged children and pets.



## Solving a Barnyard Mess

A mess: a good description of many dirt barnyards, feedlots, and cattle lanes this time of year. A dirt barnyard along with some livestock is not a problem, but add spring rains and the result may be a muddy mess. If you add more rainwater from areas outside the barnyard, this mess begins to wash away. This muddy mix often ends up polluting any downstream rivers or lakes.

What can be done to solve this erosion and pollution problem? Expanding the yard can work, but it may require eliminating cropland or be impossible due to other site logistics. Some of the livestock could be moved to another area to reduce concentrations, but that is seldom practical.

Moving livestock may also just be moving the problem. The surface of the barnyard could be covered with a material such as concrete but this is expensive. If not done correctly, it could even worsen the problem. By far the easiest and most cost-effective method to control erosion and pollution from the barnyard is to reduce the amount of rainwater that reaches the yard. This can be accomplished by installing a clean water diversion system.

A clean water diversion system can include the installation of roof gutters or the construction of a diversion above the barnyard. Installing roof gutters is the best way to preserve the clean water and divert it around the barnyard. However, other measures may be required if additional water from the surrounding land flows across



Gutters installed to divert clean water

the barnyard. A diversion is typically used to solve this problem. A diversion is an earthen embankment constructed across the slope on a hillside used to channel water around a barnyard.

Once clean water has been captured from the building roofs and above the barnyard, it must be diverted to a suitable location where erosion or pollution is not a problem. The key is to fix one problem without creating

another. Well-designed roof downspouts, culverts, and graded outlets are needed to ensure that the clean water stays clean and the outlet will not erode.

Roads and animal lanes nearest the buildings on some farmsteads act as funneling points where complex travel systems converge. This is particularly true on dairy farms where livestock frequently return from pasture to the farmstead for water, milking, and feeding. The constant use of the lane makes these junctions susceptible to soil erosion. This problem can be solved by diverting water away from these lanes or applying a hard surface to protect and stabilize the lane.

These simple and cost-effective ways to address barnyard erosion and pollution problems can be tailored to the needs of your particular situation, so start planning now for your 2007 barnyard improvement projects. Cost sharing may be available through several state and federal programs. Technical assistance is available from NRCS and LCD. Call our offices at 355-3245 for more information.

May is American Wetlands Month



## Watch Out for the Emerald Ash Borer!



Be on the watch for another new invasive insect moving toward Wisconsin. The emerald ash borer, a native of Asia, has been slowly progressing across the Midwest from its first identified infestation in the Detroit area. Like most of our

invasive plants and animals, these borers are a minor problem in their native environment, but when they are relocated to a new continent without their natural enemies they cause extensive damage. The recent discovery of borers in Upper Michigan signals their spread across Lake Michigan, and they are expected to expand into Wisconsin within the next year or so. Perhaps slowing their progression into Wisconsin will allow time for management controls to be developed.

An infestation would be a tragedy because ash trees are an important component of both our native forests and our urban environment. Discovery of the pests would require drastic control measures to prevent its spread. The transfer of firewood between regions has been identified as the most likely source of new introductions.

The adult borer is only one-third to one-half inch long. Metallic emerald green wings cover a slender, bullet-shaped body. When it emerges in the late spring, it chews a 1/8 inch-wide exit hole shaped like a capital "D." Report any possible insects or any ash trees that appear to be infected to the Sauk County Forester at 355-4475.

For more information regarding this pest, visit the DNR website at <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/Forestry/FH/Ash/index.html>

### Keeping an Eye on Ash

Ash trees that are getting weaker (declining) can show the same symptoms from the emerald ash borer that they show from several other stress factors and diseases. Nevertheless, if your ash trees show three or more signs below, please immediately report these symptoms to the Sauk County Forester at 355-4475.

- Yellowing crown or branches dying back at the top of the tree
- A dying tree that sprouts new growth from the trunk or near the base
- Heavy woodpecker activity on the tree
- The presence of small, D-shaped holes about 1/8" wide
- Winding tunnels underneath the bark
- Bullet-shaped, iridescent green beetles present from June to August

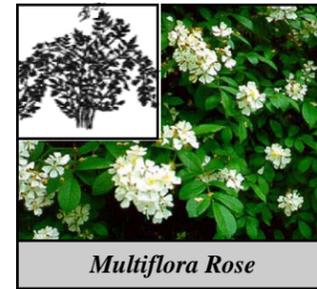
## Thumbs Down to Firewood Hitchhikers

Do not be a carrier! To lessen the odds of transporting emerald ash borer or other forest pests on firewood:



- Purchase firewood from the same general location where you plan to use it. Local firewood is less likely to introduce new pests and diseases into your neighborhood.
- When you go camping, leave your firewood at home and buy the wood that you need at your campsite or from a nearby vendor. Almost all state-run campgrounds have contracts with local firewood vendors.
- If you do move firewood around the state for camping or use at a cabin or second home, be sure to burn up your firewood supply before spring, when pests and diseases begin to emerge. If moving firewood in the spring and summer, store it under a tarp and bury the tarp edges with dirt. Do not leave any unused pieces behind.
- Only buy or move dry firewood that is free of bark. You will practically eliminate any chance of moving harmful pests and diseases this way, with the exception of gypsy moth egg masses which could be found on any outdoor surface in an infested area.

## Multiflora Rose \* Barberry \* Buckthorn \* Honeysuckle \* Garlic Mustard



Multiflora Rose



Japanese Barberry



Buckthorn



Honeysuckle

Do you recognize these invasive plants?

Do you have these plants on your property?

Do you want to help control them in Sauk County?

**Then give us a call!**

The Greater Sauk County Invasive Plant Team received a grant to inventory, map, and coordinate efforts to control these plants in the Baraboo Hills. We are going to focus the work in the Hills this year, but we would like to construct a map identifying where the plants are located in the entire county so we know where to focus efforts in the future. If you know of these plants on your land, please call Gail Greve at the LCD at 355-3245.

We would like to know:

✓ The invasive plants you have on your property (those listed above are our priorities, but you can add others if you have them)

✓ The location of the plants

✓ The density of their population on your property (i.e. a few here and there or a thick, impenetrable stand)

We will be mapping the locations, organizing classes to teach you about how to control the plants, and looking for other ways to help people eliminate these invasives.

Check out these websites to learn more about invasive plants:

<http://dnr.wi.gov/invasives>  
<http://www.ipaw.org>

### Why are we putting efforts into controlling plants like these?

- Because they were introduced from Europe and Asia and do not have competitors here, they grow aggressively, and crowd out other plants.
- In forests these invaders shade out native vegetation and reduce the health of the forest. They can also have long-term impacts on forest survival by preventing tree regeneration. The shrub species can be difficult to walk through, making it hard to cut firewood, or carry out other forestry activities.
- In pastures they reduce the forage available for animals.
- They decrease wildlife populations through the loss of habitat. Wildlife need diverse habitat with a wide variety of plants to provide shelter, food, and cover.



Garlic Mustard