



CONSERVATION CHRONICLE

Newsletter of the Land Conservation Department

To promote the awareness of Sauk County's natural resources and to provide technical assistance for their productive use, enhancement, and preservation.

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Now is the Time for Nutrient Management Planning



Nutrient management planning has been the topic of much discussion throughout the agricultural community in Wisconsin over the last ten years. Our first plans were cost shared as a tool to improve water quality, then as fertilizer prices rose many farmers started doing plans because of the savings they generated, and in 2002 nutrient management plans became required by law to better protect surface and groundwater quality.

As we head into the 2009 crop year, there is agreement that these plans make sense both economically and environmentally and because of these benefits we have some added incentives that make 2009 the year to do your plan.

Funding for 2009

State grant funds are available to help implement nutrient management on your farm in 2009. Approximately \$90,000 in cost-sharing money is available through the Land Conservation Department to pay producers to come into compliance with Wisconsin's Nonpoint Runoff Pollution Rules, NR151. The Runoff Rules went into effect in 2002 and require all farmers who apply nutrients to cropland or pasture to have a plan in effect as of January 1, 2008. If your plan is not complete, now is your chance to get help and meet the state requirements. We will be asking to see your nutrient management plan when a spot check is completed, if you apply for an animal waste storage permit, or if a complaint against your farm is filed with our office.

The funding provides a one-time payment of \$28 per cropland acre upon completion of your plan. A signed Soil and Water Resource Management Contract must be completed and on file with our office to qualify for this cost sharing. Contact Mike Stanek to develop a cost-share contract.

2009 Nutrient Management Planning Classes Available

As mentioned above, nutrient management planning is now required through the state's Nonpoint Runoff Pollution Rules. A plan is also becoming part of the eligibility requirements for program participation. The Farmland Preservation Program, Priority Watershed Program, and Targeted Runoff Management Program all require participants to develop and actively follow a nutrient management plan if manure or commercial fertilizers are applied to cropland or pasture. Preparation and

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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 for 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, please call 355-3245 or attend one of these meetings.

FPP Meeting Schedule

Date	Time	Town Hall
Jan. 6	10:00-3:00	Franklin
Jan. 7	10:00-3:00	Troy
Jan. 8	10:00-3:00	Honey Creek
Jan. 20	10:00-3:00	Ironton
Jan. 21	10:00-3:00	Westfield
Jan. 22	10:00-3:00	Prairie du Sac

Zoning certificates for all towns are available at every meeting. If you are unable to attend the meeting in your town, you may attend any other town meeting.

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implementation of a plan will soon be a part of the everyday operations on all farms in the state. One of the best ways to comply with this rule is to develop your own plan. Farmers that attend a certified nutrient management seminar are qualified to prepare a plan each year for the farms they own or operate. Two farmer nutrient management classes are being scheduled for 2009. The classes will be held in February and March. Completing this course will result in a completed 2009 nutrient management plan and the ability to do your own plan in future years.

The tuition fee is \$500 for the entire program.

This includes three classroom sessions, an optional SNAP-Plus computer training class, and all the necessary technical assistance you require to complete your plan. The LCD has available 20 tuition vouchers to repay you for the entire class expense upon plan completion.

Classes and tuition vouchers are limited to the first 20 applicants, so do not delay. Your soil tests should be completed before class begins, as we will be working with your tests, your maps, and your cropping plans.

Contact Mike Stanek at the LCD office at 355-3245 to sign up or if you have any questions.

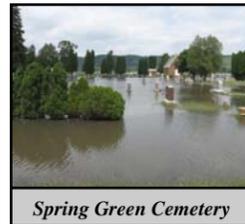
Where Is This?



If you recognize where this is located, send us your answer along with your name, address, and phone number by January 30 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 Katie Peper for correctly identifying the flooded Spring Green Cemetery

on Highway 60. The Spring Green area was one of many areas in Sauk County impacted by the floods this year. Elevated groundwater tables flooded over 4,200 acres in the area damaging over 60 homes and thousands of acres of cropland.



Spring Green Cemetery

Dell Creek Cost Sharing Ends in 2009

Time is running out to participate in the Dell Creek Priority Watershed Project. The project focuses on improving the water quality in the lakes and streams in northeast Sauk County by reducing runoff and erosion from barnyards, streambanks, and croplands. If there are any problems on your property, now is the time to contact our office while cost-share assistance and staff are available. The watershed project can provide all engineering services and 70 percent cost-share assistance to help install needed practices.

This is the final year of a ten-year project that has brought significant reductions in sediment loading and runoff pollution and resulted in improved water quality for our streams and lakes. The project covers the area north of Reedsburg, heading up toward Lyndon Station, and to the east to the Wisconsin River and the Dells. Many landowners in this area were affected by the flooding last summer. If your land has suffered erosion damage, we may be able to help. Remember, this is the last year to take advantage of this financial assistance.

Staff will review any erosion or water quality concerns you may have and help in whatever way we can. If you have questions about the project or the type of assistance we can provide, call Brent Bergstrom or Serge Koenig at 355-3245.

Manure Digester Seminar

Sauk County West Square Building
Baraboo, WI
January 13, 2009

Want to learn about manure digestion, anaerobic digestion, or biogas? This seminar will focus on the options for developing a manure digester and the regulations and financial aspects for a manure digester. For more information, please call 355-3250 or 355-3245.

Bluebird Houses for Sale

How would you like to extend that holiday goodwill into the next year by helping our local youth and environment? Youth Environmental Projects of

Sauk County (YEPS) has teamed up with the Sauk County Boys & Girls Club to build brand new bluebird houses from lumber graciously donated by Tom and Sue Holmes of Glenville Timberwrights, a "Green" Home Builder since 1998 in Sauk County. The

hand-made houses are for sale for \$8 a piece with all proceeds going towards funding transportation and environmental activities throughout Sauk

County. These hanging houses are ideal for the yard, open field, golf course, or anywhere you would like to invite one of Mother Nature's beautiful bluebirds to stay.



If you would like to purchase one or two or even three of these bluebird houses, simply send \$8 for each house to YEPS at 505 Broadway, Suite 232, Baraboo, WI 53913 by February 1. Please make checks payable to YEPS. The houses will be

available after March 9 at the Land Conservation Department. The LCD also has instructions available if you would like to build your own.

Have Your Say!

Sauk County is planning for the future and we need your help. Since April some of your friends, neighbors, and community leaders have formed a committee to help develop a plan, "To Position Sauk County for the Future." To learn more about the planning process, get involved, and share your ideas visit: www.saukplan.org or contact Mark Steward, Director of Sauk County Planning and Zoning at 355-3285.

Animal Waste Ordinance Update

The Land Conservation Committee (LCC) will be continuing work on the Animal Waste Storage Ordinance this coming winter. The original ordinance was adopted in 1990 and has not been changed since. The purpose behind the change is to address implementation of the nonpoint runoff pollution rules adopted by the state and to better qualify the county farmers for state cost-share grants. The first draft of the revisions to the Animal Waste Ordinance were prepared late in 2005. A public hearing on the proposal, however, raised a number of concerns.

Since then, the LCC has attempted to clarify some of the areas of concern, reconsidered the added requirements that were proposed, and evaluated the impact of the proposed changes on grant applications. They have also worked with an Agricultural Advisory Committee to get a better insight into the concern of the agricultural community. The LCC is now ready to bring the latest draft forward for review and a public hearing. They are asking for your input over the next several weeks by phone, letter, or email. Any needed modifications could then be made in

time for a public hearing to be held in conjunction with the LCC's January or February meeting.

The latest draft can be viewed through the county website at www.co.sauk.wi.us. Most of the changes originally proposed remain in the ordinance but some wording has been changed. The major changes or additions are: to adopt the four prohibitions identified in state law to allow for local enforcement of these rules, require abandonment if a storage unit is not used for two years, specify the standards to be met for abandonment, require an inspection and permit when there is a transfer of ownership for units installed before 1990, and raise the permit fee amounts.

Take some time to review the ordinance and provide your comments. Also, watch for a future announcement regarding the public hearing on the changes. Our goal is to update the ordinance, but we also want to make sure we get it right so we do not have to repeat the process too soon. Your comments and contributions can help us to accomplish both goals.

Your input over the next several weeks by phone, letter, or email will be appreciated!

Contractors' Meeting

The Land Conservation Department will again be holding a contractors' meeting this winter. We are looking for input from readers, whether you are a landowner or a contractor, regarding any concerns you may have had with projects that were installed over the past season.

This will be our first contractors' meeting since 2005. During the past few years, we have used a newsletter to provide new specifications or explain construction issues. This venue has allowed us to inform contractors regarding new techniques and approaches that may be approved and specifications that have been updated; however, it has not allowed for the group discussions and feedback that are useful as we try to improve our service.

Attendance at this meeting will qualify contractors for bidding on our 2009 projects. Input from anyone who has worked on our projects, either as a landowner or contractor, would be appreciated in preparing the list of meeting topics. If you have issues you want to address or items to suggest for the agenda, please email them to Brent Bergstrom at bbergstrom@co.sauk.wi.us or call 355-3245.

Mirror Lake Improvements

One of the goals of the Priority Watershed Project in the Dell Creek area is to reduce sediment contributions to the streams, rivers, and lakes in the area. The project inventory identified significant sediment loading, especially in Dell Creek which flows into Mirror Lake, resulting in poorer water quality and a degradation of fish habitat. Because of the project's success over the last ten years putting in conservation practices, we should see significantly less sediment deposited in these waters and a steady improvement in water quality and the fishery for everyone to enjoy.

Taking advantage of this prospect of an improved lake, the Mirror Lake Management District went even further to assure the maintenance of these water quality and fishery benefits. The west end of the lake had seen steadily declining conditions. Sediment made navigation into Dell Creek difficult, weed growth on the sediments obstructed passage, and the very shallow waters eliminated the breeding habitat needed by some of the game fish in the lake. To address this problem, the Lake District began a campaign to dredge out some of the sediment deposited over the last 125 years. Through a lot of hard work and dedicated effort, along with the help of our local legislators, the

District was able to obtain funds through the state budget to remove this sediment. Removing these existing deposits, combined with the reduction of future sediment contributions through conservation practices, should improve the conditions on the lake for years to come.

The District received more good news when the expenses for removal of these sediments came in under the estimated amount. The group was then able to expand the contract to remove even more sediments from the area near the public beach in the state park. This should provide much improved conditions for visitors and residents alike at this popular swimming beach.



Last spring's floods that took out Lake Delton also did damage to the Mirror Lake dam. Sauk County, as the dam owner, has budgeted for those repairs in 2009 and will be initiating that project this coming summer. With the improvements in water quality and fish habitat due to the watershed project, the improvements in navigability and swimming from dredging, and the repairs to the dam itself, we as residents can expect to continue to enjoy Mirror Lake for a long time to come.

Land and Water Resource Management Program

The first deadline for 2009 Land and Water Resource Management (LWRM) program applications is January 9. If you need financial or technical assistance to address an erosion or water quality problem on your property, call 355-3245 to have us mail an application or download the form at www.co.sauk.wi.us/_forms/lcd_lwrn_app.pdf. As you can imagine with the flooding, we received numerous requests as landowners harvested crops and found considerable damage.

Applications received by the January 9 deadline will qualify for the first round of funding. All projects are rated according to guidelines in our Land and Water Resource Management Plan. These guidelines include the type of practice needed, rate of erosion, sediment delivery, phosphorus loading, protection of structures such as roadways or cropfields, fisheries or wildlife values, and cost. This first round of applications will commit up to 65 percent of the available funds and initiate the survey, design, contracting, bidding, and permitting that may be required in order to be ready for construction early in the season.

The remaining funds are reserved for other needs that may come up during the calendar year. Later applications will be put onto a list, ranked as to severity, and offered contracts as funds become available.

Forest Improvements Popular in Sauk County

DNR Foresters Rick Livingston and Paul Kloppenburg are busy with about 105 landowners in Sauk County actively managing their woodlands with the assistance of cost-sharing dollars. Livingston states that cost-sharing assistance through either the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) or the Wisconsin Forest Landowner Grant Program (WFLGP) is popular mainly because of simplicity. "A landowner with a forest management plan can apply through our office for a project or practice listed in their management plan. Once the grant is awarded, the project parameters can be set up by us, then the landowner has up to two years to complete it. Payment is made once the project is successfully done and after final inspection."



Rick Bott and his crew planted 3,000 hemlock into storm damaged woods with WFLGP cost sharing.

Both WFLGP and EQIP cost share forestry projects such as:

- Development of a forest stewardship plan
- Control of non-native plants such as garlic mustard, multiflora rose, honeysuckle, barberry and buckthorn
- Fencing cattle from woodlands
- Timber stand improvement (thinning, release, pruning)
- Tree planting



Jeff Saffron released and pruned oak saplings with cost-sharing assistance.

WFLGP covers about 50 percent of a project's expenses while EQIP pays a flat rate per acre for a project. Whether you apply for WFLGP or EQIP, both are quite comparable in terms of payment for a project.

WFLGP signup is continuous. EQIP signup runs from December 1 through January 30, 2009. Contact local DNR Foresters Rick Livingston (355-4475) or Paul Kloppenburg (355-4476) for additional information and an application.

USDA Conservation Program Signup

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has announced that the Sauk County signup for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program will be December 1 through January 30 for 2009 funding. EQIP is the primary federal program available to provide assistance to agricultural producers on farmland conservation practices.

There are more than 50 conservation practices that are eligible for funding. These include grass waterways, barn roof gutters, streambank repair, comprehensive nutrient management, and many others. EQIP offers payments based on a flat rate for each particular practice, so farmers know up front what the payment will be.

All eligible applications received by January 30, 2009, will be evaluated and ranked for funding. NRCS anticipates over \$13 million in funds for Wisconsin. Contact NRCS by calling 355-3245.

Tree and Prairie Seed Orders

Time to start planning your spring tree and prairie seed plantings! Whether you need a large quantity of trees, are putting in a small windbreak, or are trying to restore a small prairie, we can supply your needs.

Successful planting projects require certain planned steps. These include site evaluation for soils, slope, and vegetative competition. It also includes selecting the appropriate tree and shrubs species for the site, proper arrangement, spacing and planting techniques. Equally important for successful establishment is follow-up care such as mowing, mulching, and herbicide needs. Contact DNR Foresters Rick Livingston (355-4475) or Paul Kloppenburg (355-4476) for plantation planning assistance.

For information on the tree and prairie seed sale programs, call 355-3245. These programs provide an opportunity to purchase trees, prairie seed mixes, and shrubs for the spring planting season. Also, you can go online for more information at <http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/nursery/order/index.htm> or <http://www.co.sauk.wi.us/dept/land/> and first select Programs and then Tree and Prairie Seed Program.

Going Back to School

On November 15, forest landowners and managers went back to school, that is The Woodland School, to learn the ins and outs of conducting a timber harvest. After about an hour and a half of classroom presentation and discussion, the group spent the rest of the day visiting four properties in Sauk County that were in various phases of a timber harvest. DNR Foresters Paul Kloppenburg and Rick Livingston, along with Stewardship Coordinator Alanna Koshollek from the Aldo Leopold Foundation, educated students on using a timber harvest as a tool in accomplishing forest management goals. They emphasized that the landowner needs to be the major decision maker for their harvest and in most cases, should seek the assistance of a professional forester to establish and administer their timber sale. They also learned about selecting a suitable logger and harvesting equipment depending on site conditions and the importance of a detailed timber sale contract with terms understood and agreed to



Foresters Rick Livingston and Paul Kloppenburg discuss methods of tree selection for harvest.

by all parties. The harvest sites visited ranged from the initial stages of a harvest where trees were recently marked with paint for sale, to sites where harvesting was active, to sites where harvesting was complete. Discussions in the woods included property and harvest boundaries, selection of individual trees to be harvested, timing of a harvest, crop tree release, tree regeneration needs identification, utilization and slash options, control and prevention of invasive species, and trail establishment.

The Woodland School is sponsored through the Aldo Leopold Foundation with the mission of building conservation skills and desires in individuals and communities. A wide variety of conservation courses and events are scheduled through May 2009. A calendar of events can be obtained by contacting The Aldo Leopold Foundation, PO Box 77, Baraboo. You may also visit their website www.aldoleopold.org or call 355-0279.