



# 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.*

Volume 20

Number 1

July 2009

## Westside Elementary Rain Garden



Reedsburg now has a demonstration rain garden for all to see at the Westside Elementary School. Financially, this was made possible via a Webb Fund grant. Work and planning was done by the Reedsburg School District, the city public works crew, Zobel Excavating Contractors, Sauk County Land Conservation, students and teachers of Westside and Summer Outdoor Adventure Club (SOAC).

The idea of a rain garden is to capture runoff water and direct it into the groundwater, thereby reducing the volume of water entering local waterways like the Baraboo River. Rain gardens are made by creating a shallow depression (6"-10") and blanketing the excavated site with native wildflowers, grasses and sedge species. If enough rain gardens are installed, they can reduce the severity of flooding.



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Reedsburg created a stormwater utility in the fall of 2008. Homeowners and businesses can receive a 25 percent credit on their stormwater utility assessment if they take steps, such as rain garden installation, to reduce the stormwater runoff. Contact the City of Reedsburg for more information at 524-6404. Come and watch it grow and bloom this summer.

# Farmland Preservation: Past and Future

The Farmland Preservation Program (FPP) has been an important part of conservation efforts in Sauk County and throughout Wisconsin since 1979. Early in the Program's history, the county recognized its benefits and adopted an Agricultural Preservation Plan to assure farms in the county would qualify for the tax credits available. The first participants signed Farmland Preservation Agreements covering from 10 to 25 years. Through the agreement, the landowner agreed to follow a conservation plan and to not divide the land or sell it for development purposes. In turn, the state offered a tax credit based upon the property tax level and the farm income. The Program was often recognized as a model for a state farmland preservation effort.

The Program worked well and many farms signed agreements to meet the conservation goals and receive the tax credits. Based upon this early success, eight towns chose to amend their local zoning to include exclusive agricultural zoned areas. This zoning eliminated the need for individual agreements, protected a larger area, qualified more people for tax credits and paid a higher credit amount to participants. Meanwhile, many of the original agreements were expiring. Those farmers in exclusive agriculturally zoned areas did not need to renew an agreement; they qualified because of the zoning. Farms outside of exclusive agricultural zones renewed their agreements and locked in credits for the next 10 to 25 year period.

During this time, however, there were many other changes taking place in rural Sauk County. Land values were driven up by the demand for rural lands - not only for farming, but also by the demand for rural homesites, open space, wildlife habitat and hunting lands. At the same time, the farm economy was not doing well and farmers were looking for income to survive. Many farms sold less productive parcels for cash. Family members often took jobs off the farm for the added income and benefits.

Little was being done to update the Farmland Preservation Program. As a result, the Program was

losing effectiveness. Tax credit formulas that included non-farm income penalized the operation for wages brought home from outside employment. Restrictions on dividing parcels meant land was being sold in 40-acre parcels rather than smaller amounts that may have been satisfactory for a home site. Implementation of use-value assessment reduced property taxes, but it also reduced the credits received. These factors made farmers question whether they should re-enroll when their agreements expired. Participation levels in Sauk County went from as high as 602 farms in 1987 to only 525 last year. Likewise, the average credit dropped from over \$2,000 in the late 1980s to only \$766 last year. The same situation occurring in Sauk County was seen statewide.

Participation levels dropped from 25,000 farms receiving credit to less than 19,000 participants, and their average credit went from over \$1,700 to \$625.

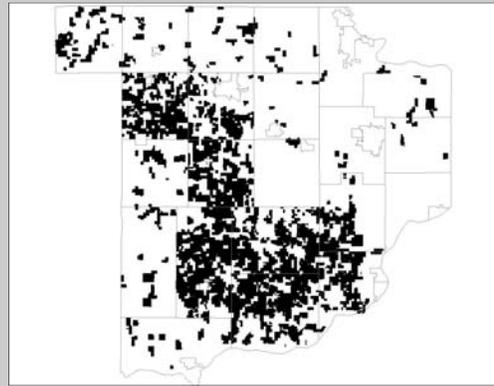
Because of the decline in participation and the benefits provided, there was discussion of eliminating the Program.

Supporters throughout the state, however, emphasized the public benefits of the conservation requirements and land protection and the importance of this credit to the farm economy. The Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) responded by creating a Working Lands Initiative Steering Committee to focus on the future of Wisconsin's Farmland Preservation Program and ways to protect our agricultural and forested lands. The Committee was made up of individuals representing a broad array of land interests. Their work has culminated in the Working Lands Initiative program presently included in the state budget. The proposal would make major changes to the Program and could have an impact on many long-time participants. Some details will be developed as part of the administrative rules, but the basic principles are outlined in the "Working Lands Initiative" article on page 3. The new Program includes the most significant changes since the Program began. It changes the credit formula, eliminates agreements

*Supporters throughout the state, however, emphasized the public benefits of the conservation requirements and land protection and the importance of this credit to the farm economy.*

(Continued on page 10)

*The map shows the parcels of land actively participating in the Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Program. Approximately 42% of Sauk County farms are participating in this program. In 2008, 525 farm owners claimed the FPP tax credit on their income taxes. The average claim was \$766 and total credits amounted to over \$400,000. The large blocks of contiguous parcels are in eight towns of the 22 total in Sauk County that have adopted Exclusive Agricultural Zoning.*



## Working Lands Initiative

The Wisconsin Working Lands Initiative (WLI) in the proposed 2009-2011 state budget bill (AB 75) will:

- Modernize Wisconsin's 30-year old Farmland Preservation Program and enhance tax credits for farmers
- Improve farmland preservation planning and zoning
- Enhance soil and water conservation
- Authorize a matching grant program to purchase agricultural conservation easements (PACE) from willing landowners

### **Farmland Preservation through Exclusive Agricultural Zoning**

Farmland preservation zoning standards proposed in the WLI give county and local governments more flexibility, consistent with effective farmland protection. Tax credits for land under farmland preservation zoning would pay:

- \$7.50/acre if the land is under Exclusive Agricultural Zoning
- \$10/acre if under zoning and located in an Agricultural Enterprise Area (AEA)

### **Farmland Preservation Agreements**

A Farmland Preservation Agreement (FPA) is a contract between the State of Wisconsin and a farmer under which a farmer agrees to keep land in agricultural production in exchange for an annual income tax credit. To enter into an agreement, the farmer must have farmland in a designated Agricultural Enterprise Area and meet eligibility requirements.

### **What is an Agricultural Enterprise Area?**

An Agricultural Enterprise Area is a contiguous land area devoted primarily to agricultural use and locally targeted for agricultural preservation. The designation of an AEA by the state is based on a voluntary local application. Tax credits for land under agreements in an AEA are:

- \$5/acre if the land is not zoned Exclusive Agriculture
- \$10/acre if the land is zoned Exclusive Agriculture for farmland preservation

### **Eligibility Requirements for Agreements**

- 15-year minimum
- \$6,000/year gross farm revenue or \$18,000 over three years gross revenue
- Land use is agricultural, permanent undeveloped natural resource or open space
- Compliance with state soil and water conservation standards
- Property taxes paid by claimant

# Results from the 2009 Transect Survey

The Land Conservation Department recently completed its annual cropland erosion survey. This is the 11th year of the survey which provides us with a statistically accurate sampling of long-term soil erosion rates. The sampling of 682 points represents a total cropland area of about 186,000 acres. As we continue to add more years of data, the erosion estimates become more reliable and accurate.

Some data, highlights and staff observations from the 2009 survey include:

- The average countywide soil loss measured by the Transect Survey this year is 3.0 tons/acre/year. 80 percent of these fields have soil loss rates at or below 3 tons/acre/year, which meets compliance with state rules.
- 82.6 percent of fields have soil loss less than or equal to tolerable levels, in compliance with state rules.
- The remaining 20 percent have soil loss rates higher than tolerable levels, and 6 percent are eroding at rates three times tolerable levels, which is extremely high.
- The number of fields planted to corn is up from 2008 and the number of soybean fields is down. The number of fields in small grain and hay seems to remain about the same each year.
- 19 percent of our corn and soybeans are planted using a no-till planting system that leaves greater than 30 percent residue after planting.
- Each year we lose more transect data points due to their conversion to non-cropland uses.
- In general, the spring planting season appears to be one of the best in recent years with very few fields left unplanted.

General observations are also gathered, which helps staff target future conservation efforts. The lack of grassed waterways in concentrated runoff areas is still a major concern. Many sites suffered damage after last summer's extreme rains and the lasting effects are still visible today in those crop fields. Many producers did not repair the ephemeral and classic gullies, but instead used the "chisel it shut and crop through it" approach. The lack of grass in these concentrated runoff areas means they will continue to erode and deliver excessive sediment to low-lying areas and streams. Many fields are already suffering due to excessive sedimentation. The number of sites that need ditching or culverts cleaned is the highest we have observed. Sites like these are now suffering poor drainage, and this causes a loss of valuable cropland acres.

## Did you know that...

- Soil makes up the outermost layer of our planet.
- Topsoil is the most productive soil layer.
- Soil has varying amounts of organic matter (living and dead organisms), minerals and nutrients.
- Five tons of topsoil spread over an acre is only as thick as a dime.
- Natural processes (decaying plants and animals) can take more than 500 years to form one inch of topsoil.
- Soil scientists have identified over 70,000 kinds of soil in the United States.
- Different-sized mineral particles, such as sand, silt and clay, give soil its texture.
- Roots loosen the soil, allowing oxygen to penetrate. This benefits animals living in the soil.
- Roots hold soil together and help prevent erosion.
- Earthworms digest organic matter, recycle nutrients and make the soil richer.

*Information provided by U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, NRCS and listed on the Environmental Protection Agency website at <http://epa.gov/qmpo/edresources/soil.html>.*

## Survey Input Wanted

As part of the 2010 budget process, the County Board is looking for feedback from the residents regarding their priorities for county government. Sauk County offers programs and services in the areas of Conservation, Development, Recreation, Culture and Education; General Government Services; Health and Human Services; Justice and Public Safety; and Public Works. Although not every resident directly uses each program or service, the community as a whole benefits from the enhanced quality of life these programs provide our neighbors.

To gather input the county has posted an on-line survey at [www.co.sauk.wi.us](http://www.co.sauk.wi.us) to help gauge countywide priorities. The question in the survey is, "What should the priorities be for Sauk County government?" Please keep in mind that the survey is *not* asking "How are we doing?" This is an important question, and we encourage you to voice your opinion on "how we are doing" by e-mailing your comments to [citizen\\_participation@co.sauk.wi.us](mailto:citizen_participation@co.sauk.wi.us)

The survey is designed so that you can comment by program area on the value of county services provided by your tax dollars. For each service please click one box indicating if you feel programming should be decreased, maintained or increased.



## Dell Creek Priority Watershed Ends this Year

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. Under the watershed project, county staff 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 east to the Wisconsin River and the Dells. Many land-owners in this area were affected by the flooding last summer. If your land has suffered erosion damage, we may be able to help. This is the last year to take advantage of financial assistance toward erosion or water quality projects.

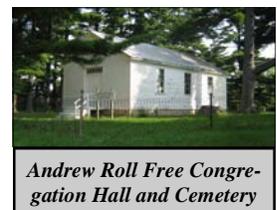
Staff will review any erosion or water quality concerns you may have and see if we can be of assistance. We would be glad to help in whatever way we can. If you have questions about the project or the type of assistance we provide, give us a call at 355-3245.

## Where Is This?



If you recognize where this is located, send us your answer along with your name, address, and phone number by August 28 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 Harley Boettcher for correctly identifying the Andrew Roll Free Congregation Hall and Cemetery which was established in 1863. It is located in the Town of Honey Creek on Slotty Road.



Andrew Roll Free Congregation Hall and Cemetery

## INVESTIGATING FURTHER:

# Carbon Credits



## Can You Sell Your "Carbon Credits"?

Recently you may have heard people talking about "carbon credits," "carbon trading," "carbon sequestration," and possibly even the "Kyoto Protocols." These phrases and other similar terms have increasingly become part of our language as energy companies, paper mills, factories and other industrial manufacturers are looking for opportunities to offset their greenhouse gas emissions through a market-based mechanism that would pay woodland owners to grow trees.

Sounds simple and the idea is certainly very interesting to many woodland owners who are looking for opportunities to generate income from their lands. But what are the opportunities and how can you get involved? Through a series of newsletter articles we will cover the issue, the opportunities and the commonly asked questions.

It all started at The United National Framework Convention on Climate Change, also known as the Earth Summit, held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Article 2 of the convention directly addressed the need to stabilize greenhouse gas emissions "at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic (human caused) interference with the climate system."

One of the main greenhouse gases of concern is carbon dioxide. The burning of fossil fuels for energy, heating and transportation has led to elevated levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Through the process of photosynthesis, trees remove and use carbon dioxide to create roots, branches, trunks and leaves. Therefore, trees and other green plants are seen as a potential solution to help slow down global climate change by removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and storing (sequestering) it as part of the permanent structure of the tree.

As a part of The United National Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Kyoto Protocol was established to create policies and measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Kyoto Protocol requires industrialized nations (the United States did not ratify these protocols and is not bound by them) to reduce their greenhouse gas emission to approximately 95 percent of their 1990 levels by 2008-2012. Countries that are unable to achieve this goal through direct reduction of emissions are allowed to "compensate" by buying credits from countries that have underused their emission allowance, by investing in "cleaner" energy technology abroad or by putting money into forestry or soil conservation.

Article 3.4 of the Kyoto Protocol provides an option to account for increases in carbon storage through forest management. Essentially, under these rules companies can offset the amount of carbon dioxide they release into the air through industrial processes by purchasing credits from individuals or organizations who can show they are decreasing atmospheric carbon dioxide through forest management or soil conservation activities. This is often referred to as Carbon Trading.

This is the first in a series of articles on Carbon Credits. We will address how Carbon Credits are traded on the Chicago Climate Exchange in the next newsletter. You can learn more about the Chicago Climate Exchange online at <http://www.chicagoclimatex.com/>

# Gypsy Moth Update

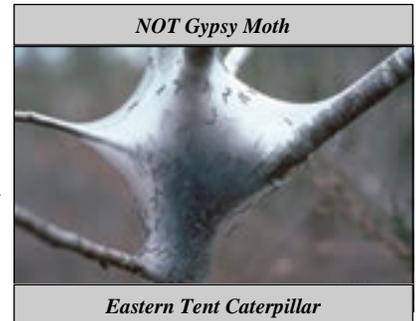


*Gypsy Moth*

July and August are a time to watch for gypsy moths on your property. Sauk County has seen the gradual movement of gypsy moths into our woodlands and increased damage from the caterpillars of this invasive pest. The highest populations have been found in state parks and other sites where vehicles, trailers and firewood moving into the area may bring along the attached egg masses. For the last few years, populations in the state parks have been sprayed with a biological insecticide to control their spread. Between the spray program and several cool, wet springs, the population has been kept under control, but there are still local areas with high numbers of moths that could be included in the state spray program.

The program requires a minimum infestation area of 20 acres with over 50 percent tree cover, a minimum population of egg masses per acre, and a local commitment to match the cost of the spray treatment. The cost for the spray treatment runs about \$50 per acre. In order to qualify, owners need to report the presence of the egg masses, have a count performed by the county or DNR and meet the criteria listed above. They could then qualify for next spring's spray program to reduce population levels in 2010.

Gypsy moths are often confused with the tent caterpillars that have been so common in recent years. Gypsy moths do *not* create the tent shelters associated with tent caterpillars. Good descriptions of gypsy moths, their caterpillars and egg masses are available at [www.gypsymoth.wi.gov](http://www.gypsymoth.wi.gov). Female gypsy moths are identified by their white color and the fact that they lack the ability to fly. The male gypsy moths are nondescript grey moths about ¾-inch in size. The egg masses are tan, fuzzy masses about 1 to 2 inches long. Each egg mass can hatch over 500 caterpillars. If you see egg masses in your woods, report it to the Land Conservation Department to initiate enrollment in the spray treatment program. To learn more about what you can do to prevent damage and the spread of gypsy moths, check out [www.gypsymoth.wi.gov](http://www.gypsymoth.wi.gov)



*NOT Gypsy Moth*

*Eastern Tent Caterpillar*

## Harvesting Forest Products on Your Property?

If so, the County Cutting Notice, Wisconsin State Statute 26.03 Harvest of Raw Forest Products may pertain to you. There are two parts to the law:

- √ No person may harvest any raw forest products (such as logs, pulpwood and bolts, Christmas trees, misc.) or direct the harvesting of any raw forest products from any land until 14 days after the County Clerk in which the land is located is notified of the person's proposal to harvest.
- √ No person may harvest any raw forest products, or direct the harvest of any raw forest products, from any land on which taxes are delinquent.

It is the landowner's responsibility to file the County Cutting Notice, though a forester or a logger can file on behalf the landowner. The County Cutting Notice is free and it must be filed *each year* with the County Clerk where the land is located. In Sauk County contact the Sauk County Clerk at 355-3286 in the West Square Building, 505 Broadway, Baraboo. The Clerk checks with the Treasurer for unpaid taxes. The Clerk then

*(Continued on page 9)*

# New Manure Management Ordinance Goes to Board

The Land Conservation Committee is again moving ahead with efforts to adopt an expanded Manure Management Ordinance. The original Animal Waste Management Ordinance, adopted by the County Board in 1990, required permits for new storage facilities to assure they met water quality protection standards. The ordinance has remained in effect since then without modifications.

In 2002 the state adopted a new, comprehensive set of rules that address non-point pollution from both rural and urban sources. Several aspects of those rules applied to animal waste.

For the first time, any new storage facility installed in the state would have to meet the same standards in place in Sauk County since 1990. The rules also require that unused, abandoned manure storage facilities be properly closed. They also addressed manure runoff problems that could arise from various operations: confined animal feeding areas, overgrazing by livestock along streams, the mismanagement of storage facilities, and the unconfined stacking of manure near rivers or lakes. At the same time, grant criteria were modified to give preference to counties that assisted with the implementation of these rules.

The Land Conservation Committee began efforts to update our local ordinance in fall of 2005. At a public hearing in spring of 2006, the Committee received numerous objections regarding the ordinance. Since then, the Land Conservation Committee has worked closely with an agricultural advisory committee to make some modifications to the ordinance and clarify several issues and requirements. The Committee has now approved the ordinance and forwarded it to the County Board for consideration. As a significant issue, the new ordinance was presented to the Board at their June meeting and will be voted on at the July 21 County

Board session. The new ordinance will go into effect upon adoption.

The proposed ordinance addresses several new areas. It will require the closure of unused, abandoned storage facilities in accordance with state regulations. Abandoned storage facilities have been found to be a serious groundwater contamination issue. State rules require that they be properly closed if not used for 24 months. The county ordinance would reference this requirement and allow staff to assist with enforcement of this rule.

Closing these facilities is critical to groundwater protection to avoid any slow, continual leaching of manure into groundwater. It also serves future owners by assuring unused storage is either properly closed to avoid potential liability or emptied and protected from damage to make it available for future use. The county ordinance offers an option for the owner to empty and maintain a storage facility if reuse is a possibility. The state regulations do not identify this as an option.



*Newly constructed manure storage facility*

The ordinance will also require a permit for the ownership transfer of any storage facility installed before adoption of the original 1990 Animal Waste Management Ordinance. This ownership transfer permit will address serious pollution concerns that could result from the continued use of inadequate storage facilities. Structures installed before 1990 were not required to meet any standards, were not required to have concrete, steel, plastic or clay liners and were not required to have a minimum separation from groundwater or saturated soils. The ordinance provides for inspection and verification by county staff or a registered professional engineer to determine the facility's adequacy in protecting groundwater. Storage units that provide adequate protection will be permitted for future use. Those

*(Continued on page 9)*

(Continued from page 8)

without this level of protection would be required to either upgrade to provide this protection or be abandoned.

The proposed Manure Management Ordinance also incorporates the four agricultural manure management prohibitions that have been in state law since 1997. The law prohibits:

- (1) Overflow of manure storage structures.
- (2) Any unconfined manure stacking (piling) within water quality management areas (adjacent to streambanks, lakeshores and in drainage channels).
- (3) Direct runoff from feedlots or stored manure to waters of the state.
- (4) Unlimited livestock access to waters where high concentrations of animals prevent adequate sod cover maintenance.

These prohibitions have been in place and enforced by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) since 1997. Recent modifications made to the state program scoring guidelines now provide a 1.25 grant multiplier to applications from counties that incorporate these prohibitions into local ordinances. Including these rules provides a mechanism to alert farmers they may be in violation of the prohibitions and also improves their ranking for grants available to address the problem. Actual enforcement of the prohibitions remains the responsibility of the DNR through an agreement with the county. Our goal is to obtain the cost-share grants required to correct the problem without involving DNR by taking on this initial contact authority. The entire ordinance is posted on the Sauk County Website at [www.co.sauk.wi.us](http://www.co.sauk.wi.us) or copies are available at our office.

*Harvesting Forest Products on Your Property? (Continued from page 7)*

notifies the landowner, town chair and DNR forester. The DNR forester checks for tax law status and tax law Cutting Notice. Notification shall describe the land by quarter/quarter, section, government lot or fractional lot.

Citations can be as assessed as follows:

- Failure to file - Citation with forfeiture of \$186
- Failure to file if taxes are delinquent - Citation with forfeiture of \$753

A County Cutting Notice is not needed for: Fuelwood for home consumption, clearing land for agriculture, boughs for own use and up to five Christmas trees for own use.

Is your property enrolled in a Forest Tax Law program? You would then have to file a Cutting Notice and Report of Wood Products from Forest Crop and Managed Forest Lands (Form 2450-032, R 9/04).

The Cutting Notice proposes and reports harvesting on tax law land. The submittal of this notice is mandatory under Wisconsin Statute S. 77.06, and 77.86. Any person failing to file notice or report, or intentional filing of a false report, is subject to a forfeiture of not more than \$1,000 and withdrawal from the Managed Forest Law and double stumpage.

Harvesting must be done in compliance with the management plan or schedule and approved by the DNR forester. The Cutting Notice must be filed at least 30 days prior to the harvest. The DNR forester will field check the Cutting Notice for compliance with sustainable forestry and that the actual harvest is proper.

**Contact Paul Kloppenburg at (608) 355-4476**

**DNR Forester – Sauk County**

**505 Broadway – Room 202**

**Baraboo, WI 53913**

**[Paul.Kloppenbourg@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Paul.Kloppenbourg@wisconsin.gov)**

**or**

**Rick Livingston at (608) 355-4475**

**DNR Forester – Sauk County**

**505 Broadway – Room 202**

**Baraboo, WI 53913**

**[Richard.Livingston@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Richard.Livingston@wisconsin.gov)**

# Wildlife Damage Assistance Available

Sauk County is again participating in the Wisconsin Wildlife Damage Abatement and Claims Program (WDACP) for 2009. USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services will implement the program on behalf of the county. The program covers damage to crops by deer, geese, turkey, and bear. First emphasis is on damage abatement. Compensation for damages exceeding \$250, up to a maximum damage claim of \$15,000, may also be paid.

To be eligible for abatement you must:

- Own the crop
- Control hunting access on all contiguous land under the same ownership
- Allow public hunting
- Follow normal agricultural practices
- Be cooperative
- NOT charge any fees for hunting or access for the species enrolled
- Enroll in one of the three access plans: OPH (Open Public Hunting), MHA (Managed Hunting Access) or Act 82 (Shooting permit eligibility only, no access requirement, no additional program services and no claims)

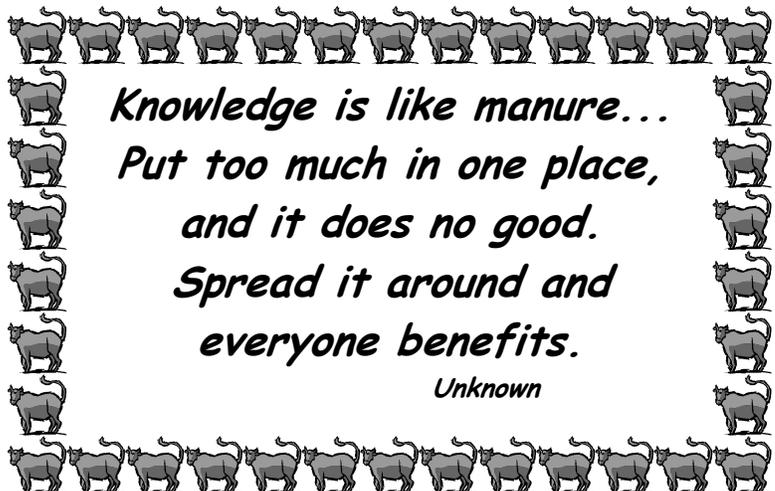
To be eligible for compensation you must:

- Notify USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services within 14 days of the first damage each year
- Follow the recommended abatement and all abatement points listed above
- Call each time you want an appraisal, ten days prior to anticipated harvest date
- Comply with the permit requirements, if a shooting permit has been recommended  
(If Act 82 Permit – not eligible for compensation)
- Not plant crops to attract deer, geese, bear or turkeys
- Maintain a hunting log, unless enrolled in OPH or Act 82
- Land must have been in cultivation or approved program for at least five years

If you have any questions, wish to request additional information, or would like to enroll in the WDACP for 2009, please contact USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services at 1-800-433-0663.

## *Farmland Preservation: Past and Future* (Continued from page 2)

unless the farm is located in an agricultural enterprise area and initiates a state agricultural conservation easement program. Long-term county participants will have to look closely at how the changes affect them. The Land Conservation staff will work with you to allow you to gain the tax credit benefits and also to ensure the continued protection and conservation compliance benefits that go with participation.



## 2009 “Year of the Riverway”

Governor Jim Doyle has proclaimed 2009 as the Year of the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway to recognize the 20-year milestone of the project. The Riverway law was signed into law by former Governor Tommy G. Thompson in 1989, following years of public meetings and controversy. The legislation created the Riverway project along the final 92 miles of the Wisconsin River and also created the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Board, a new state agency responsible for administration of the unique and innovative scenic protection regulations.

“The Riverway is one of the most significant natural resources in southern Wisconsin. The magnificent scenic quality and relatively undeveloped bluffs and shoreline enable the river user to enjoy a high quality outdoor experience. The tens of thousands of acres of public and private lands include tremendous biodiversity and a rich array of flora and fauna. The amazing cultural resources tell the story of Wisconsin from the glacial period forward, beginning with the hunters of the Boaz mastodon through the effigy mound builders of 1,000 years ago to the early missionaries, explorers, fur traders and on to the settlement era and statehood,” according to Mark Cupp, Riverway Board Executive Director.

The Riverway Board will host a series of special tours, lectures and presentations to commemorate the two decade history of the project in July. Plans include canoe tours with large, voyageur replica canoes; tours of public lands within the Riverway, including state natural areas and effigy mounds sites; lectures on archeology, geology, social and natural history; and presentations on current and long-term management of resources within the Riverway. Events will be held at communities up and down the river valley.



*Riverway View from Ferry Bluff*

Cupp added, “Special recognition during the Year of the Riverway must go to private landowners who have property within the project boundary. The great success achieved in this project would not be possible without the cooperation of hundreds of landowners from Prairie du Sac to Prairie du Chien who have worked with the Riverway Board to assure the scenic protection objectives of the project are met. The gratitude of the Riverway Board and all who appreciate the beauty of the valley is extended to our partners in this endeavor - the private landowners of the lower Wisconsin River valley.”

The Riverway encompasses near 80,000 acres along the final 92 miles of the lower Wisconsin River and includes bluffs visible from the river as well as bottomlands, woods and prairies along the shoreline, abundant islands and the river itself. Permits are required for activities ranging from new structures to timber harvesting to utility facilities with the intent to preserve the scenic quality of the area. The Department of Natural Resources is responsible for land acquisition in the project area with property to be acquired from willing sellers only. Currently, over 47,000 acres are in public ownership in the Riverway. The area is popular for a variety of recreational pursuits including hunting, fishing, hiking, canoeing and wildlife watching.

The special events associated with the Year of the Riverway are listed on the Riverway Board website at [www.lwr.state.wi.us](http://www.lwr.state.wi.us) or interested persons may call their office at 1-800-221-3792 or (608) 739-3188 for more information.

**NEWSLETTER IS ALSO AVAILABLE ON THE WEBSITE!**

Would you prefer to receive an electronic copy of future newsletters instead of being mailed one? Please e-mail us at [conservation@co.sauk.wi.us](mailto:conservation@co.sauk.wi.us) if you would. When they are available, we will notify those interested in viewing the newsletter with an e-mail. You will be able to read them online on the county website at [www.co.sauk.wi.us](http://www.co.sauk.wi.us) This will help us reduce postage costs as well as the amount of paper generated!

Printed on Recycled Paper 

**Sauk County Land Conservation Department**  
**505 Broadway - West Square Building**  
**Baraboo, WI 53913**  
**(608) 355-3245**  
**[www.co.sauk.wi.us](http://www.co.sauk.wi.us)**  
**[conservation @co.sauk.wi.us](mailto:conservation@co.sauk.wi.us)**

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Permit No. 105

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED