



# CONSERVATION CHRONICLE

Newsletter of the Conservation, Planning, and Zoning Department

*To conserve natural, cultural, and community resources by promoting, planning, and implementing efficient and effective programs.*

Volume 23

Number 2

September 2012

## Much to See and Do at Fermentation Fest

Weaving through the spectacular Driftless Area around Reedsburg is the 50-mile-long Farm/Art DTour, a journey that can be traveled by car, private bus, motorcycle, or bicycle. As the main attraction exploring the timeless connections between land and people, the Farm/Art DTour complements the cooking demos, food samples, and culinary seminars on the menu at the nationally-acclaimed, ten-day-long Reedsburg Fermentation Fest, running October 12 through 21.

Billed as ‘A Live Culture Convergence,’ the Fermentation Fest is a delicious and educational way to hone your cheese making or baking skills, join internationally renowned “fermentation fetishist,” Sandor Katz, author of *Wild Fermentation*, to ferment your own sauerkraut and dill pickles, or sample a spectrum of live cultured and homemade dishes at Reedsburg from Scratch. With numerous culinary classes on all things fermented – including chocolate, sourdough bread, kombucha, kefir, beer, wine, hard cider, sausage, and corned beef – there’s plenty to taste. Plus, workshops on beekeeping, raising chickens, and making compost jump-start participants eager to live the good life.

The Farm/Art DTour combines art, live performances, educational exhibits and breath-taking scenery. On the DTour are captivating ephemeral art installations by leading national artists as well as six, unique artist-made roadside culture stands. There are also “Field Notes” where a hayfield as well as a dairy farm, wetland, or cornfield are interpreted for visitors, plus “pasture performances” by such musical groups as Graminy. Visitors never know what to expect around the next bend, hill, turn, or town.

“Sandor Katz, our featured workshop speaker this year, says that ‘fermentation is the flavorful space between fresh and rotten where the world’s most

prized delicacies exist’,” explains event organizer Donna Neuwirth, executive director of the award-winning Wormfarm Institute. “He really understands the complexity of the ‘live cultures’ employed in this ancient practice. Fermentation is transformation from grain to beer, milk to yogurt, cabbage to Kimchee, hayfield to stage, and from one kind of community to another. During the transformational process, nutrients and flavor develop and energy is released – the perfect ingredients for an annual festival.”



“The art installations along the DTour punctuate the landscape and capture our sense of place,” adds Neuwirth. “One of the featured artists this year, Martha Glowacki, will install *Earth and Sky*.” Found on the map that guides travelers through the Farm/Art DTour, Glowacki’s

sculptures frame two particularly fine landscape views. One frame, surrounded with a wreath of twisted vines, looks towards farmland. The other frame, surrounded by models of constellations and planets, looks up to the sky.

The Conservation, Planning, and Zoning Department (CPZ) is proud to be a partner for Fermentation Fest. For the latest information, see [www.fermentationfest.com](http://www.fermentationfest.com)

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# Tools Available to Measure Electricity Use

Are you looking for some no cost or low cost ways to reduce your energy expenses? Now is an excellent time to make a few changes to reduce your energy bills as well as help conserve our natural resources.

One way to monitor your home's energy efficiency is by using a Thermal Leak Detector. You just scan across the area that you want to inspect and the light changes to red for warmer spots and blue for cooler spots, detecting air leaks. Conservation, Planning, and Zoning Technician Serge Koenig noted, "I was able to find cold air leaking into our house through areas around our windows, doors, and sill plates. There is no easier method of finding these small air leaks than using this Thermal Leak Detector. The air leaks were increasing our home energy use and reducing comfort. I have been systematically addressing the air leaks through insulation, caulking, and installing new gaskets." A Thermal Leak Detector is available for loan free of charge from the CPZ Department by contacting Gail Greve at 355-3245 or [ggreve@co.sauk.wi.us](mailto:ggreve@co.sauk.wi.us)



Serge Koenig using the Thermal Leak Detector

Another great way to determine which appliances and electronics are costing you the most money is to get an energy meter. The Sauk County UW Cooperative Extension Office and the Conservation, Planning, and Zoning Department both have a Kill-A-Watt® electricity usage monitor available to be loaned out by contacting Lynn Zick at 355-3250 or [lzick@co.sauk.wi.us](mailto:lzick@co.sauk.wi.us) or Gail Greve at 355-3245 or [ggreve@co.sauk.wi.us](mailto:ggreve@co.sauk.wi.us). The Kill-A-Watt® electricity usage monitor measures how much electricity an appliance is using and displays the value on the meter's screen by plugging the appliance into the meter and then plugging it into an outlet. It can be used to measure the electricity usage of refrigerators, clothes washers and dryers, televisions, computers, and more.

An alternative to the Kill-A-Watt® electricity usage monitor is an energy meter called Watts Up? which is available at your public libraries at no cost, just like you check out a book. When plugged into an electrical device, the meter displays the unit's power consumption, counts the cumulative kilowatt-hour use, and calculates the cumulative cost of operating that device.

Many people may not be aware that even when a device is switched off, it may still consume electricity. Some of the biggest energy wasters are adapters for your iPod, phones, digital cameras, and so on. Even when TVs, DVD players, microwaves, and coffee makers are not being used, they are in a standby mode to power clock displays and remote controls. As long as they are plugged into an outlet, they are drawing power. 💧

## Survey Input Wanted on Programs

Although not every resident directly uses each program or service provided, the community as a whole benefits from the enhanced quality of life of all our neighbors. The survey is designed so that you can comment by program area on the value of county services provided by your tax dollars. Sauk County supervisors, elected officials, and employees are committed to keeping Sauk County one of the best places to live in Wisconsin and the nation. Doing so requires us to continually gauge the priorities of residents and adjust operations to meet changing needs.

Please complete the following survey in its entirety at:  
<https://www.co.sauk.wi.us/accountingpage/2013-budget-survey>



Conservation  
Planning  
Zoning

Thank you for helping make Sauk County a better place! 💧

## Where Is This?



If you recognize where this is located, send us your answer along with your name, address, and phone number by October 12 to the following address: Sauk County CPZ, 505 Broadway, Baraboo, WI 53913. One winner will be drawn from the correct answers and will receive a Farm & Fleet gift certificate.

Congratulations to Shirley Hasheider for correctly identifying the Harrisburg School on Hwy. B between Black Hawk and Plain. 💧



## Disaster Assistance Programs

Adverse weather conditions across the state and the ending of the disaster assistance programs in the 2008 Farm Bill have created numerous questions for producers potentially facing crop or livestock losses.

The Sauk County Farm Service Agency (FSA) encourages producers with current or pending losses due to adverse weather conditions, natural disasters, disease, or other conditions to document losses following the guidelines provided. Properly documenting losses may provide producers with the opportunity to participate in any new or continuing disaster assistance programs that may be authorized in the 2012 Farm Bill.

Producers need to also report all cropland and pastureland, even if they are not participating in other FSA programs, as previous disaster assistance programs required producers to file crops to qualify.

### **Crop Loss Documentation**

*Producers who suffer crop losses due to natural disasters may need to provide verifiable types of records, if they exist, or reliable records.*

*Verifiable types of records may include: sale receipts from buyers; invoices from custom harvesting; truck or warehouse scale tickets; actual measurements or appraisals by FSA, RMA or reinsured companies, LAs, feed company representatives, or FSA State Committee approved consultants; or similar records that represent actual and specific production data.*

*Reliable types of records may include: ledgers of commodity sales volume or income; income statements of deposits; register tapes; records to verify production input costs; producer diaries, ledgers, or receipts; pick records; other USDA program data (FSA loans, etc).*

*If the crop was sold or disposed of through commercial channels, acceptable production records include: commercial receipts; settlement sheets; ledger sheets or load summaries from warehouse, process, or buyer; or appraisal information.*

*If the crop was farm-stored, sold, fed to livestock, or disposed of through non-commercial channels, acceptable production records include: truck scale tickets; appraisal information; contemporaneous reliable diaries; or other documentary evidence, such as contemporaneous reliable measurements.*

Producers carrying crop insurance need to stay in regular contact with their agent so that the agent may provide assistance to ensure producers maintain eligibility for insurance coverage. Producers who do not market crops nor have appraisals performed should be keeping contemporaneous records of production. Changes may occur to the reporting and documentation with the passage of the new Farm Bill, but by reporting crops and maintaining quality documentation, producers may be able to meet the proper reporting and documentation requirements for any new disaster assistance programs implemented. Documentation should also be kept for losses of livestock, orchards, nursery trees, bushes, vines, etc.

Contact the Sauk County FSA office at 355-4420, Ext. 2, for more information. 💧

# ***Farmland Preservation Planning is in the works!***

The Sauk County Farmland Preservation planning effort is taking shape. As mentioned in the March 2012, issue of the "Conservation Chronicle," Sauk County has received a grant aiding in the development of an updated Sauk County Farmland Preservation Plan which will meet the requirements as set forth in Wisconsin State Statutes. The planning efforts are beginning and your input is needed. Check the Sauk County webpage at <https://www.co.sauk.wi.us> for various opportunities to be involved.

What might you find on the website? The schedule for the kick-off meetings will be posted here. These meetings provide a great chance for you to learn about the benefits and requirements of Farmland Preservation planning as well as have input regarding what you feel are the key issues and opportunities facing the agriculture community in Sauk County.



The email address found on the county webpage (FPPlan@co.sauk.wi.us) gives you direct communication access to the Sauk County staff, Brian Simmert and Janine Godfriaux-Leystra, who are facilitating the planning process. Through this email account, information may be shared regarding various efforts and exercises for the Farmland Preservation Plan.

Stakeholder group meeting times and places will be posted to this site. Stakeholder group members represent a cross section of the agriculture community. Stakeholder group meetings are working meetings. If you choose to attend a group meeting,

you can observe the work in progress, and if you choose, provide input during the public comment portion. Watch for updates at [www.co.sauk.wi.us!](http://www.co.sauk.wi.us) 

## ***Cropland Transect Survey Results***

Since 1999, Sauk County has been conducting this survey as a tool for collecting data on farming practices, crops grown, and as a sheet and rill soil loss measurement for purposes of analyzing program delivery and determining farming trends. Sauk County uses the Transect Survey and Software Program to measure soil erosion and cropping practices as part of a statewide effort to measure Wisconsin's statutory goal of "T by 2000."

The Cropland Transect Survey method was originally developed by Purdue University to collect conservation tillage and crop residue information. It was later expanded to obtain county and watershed data on tillage, crop residue, and soil loss. Survey results have shown that the transect method can produce a high level of reliability combined with a relatively short data collection process. When conducted properly, this cropland survey can provide 90 percent or more confidence in the accuracy of the results.



***Contour strip cropping of Ironton Township  
(2010 airphoto)***

*(Continued on page 5)*

## Data Summary

Data was collected in 2012 from 657 points and represents an estimated 186,000 cropland acres in Sauk County.

- The average countywide soil loss for 2012 is 2.7 tons/acre/year. Past soil losses were 3.4 tons in 2007, 3.0 tons in 2008 and 2009.
- 34,800 (18%) acres of cropland in the county are eroding at rates of 2 to 3 times tolerable soil loss levels, this means 6 to 15 tons of soil loss/acre/year.
- Only 3.2 percent of our cropland is using conventional clean tillage such as moldboard plowing.
- 48 percent of our cropland is using a mulch tillage system leaving 15-30% residue after planting.
- 22% percent of our cropland is using a no-till system leaving greater than 30% residue after planting.



*The lack of proper grassed waterways is still a problem in the county. Even a small gully can result in 10 tons of topsoil lost.*

## Observations

There are high percentages of corn and soybean acres.

Practices such as contour strips and grassed waterways are being removed from fields.

We continue to lose cropland data points each year due to roads, rural building and development. ♦

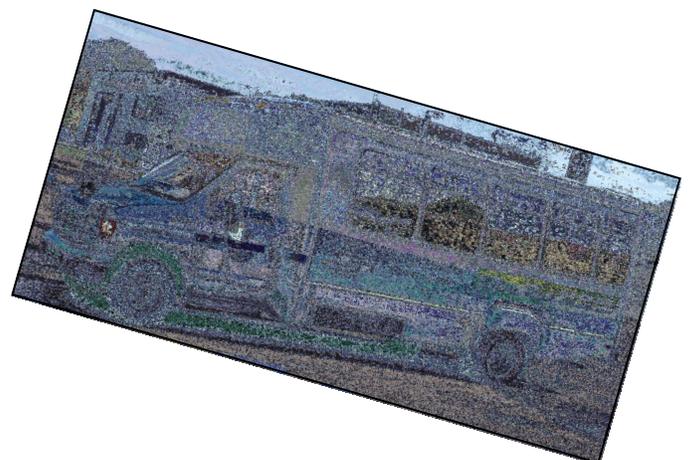
## Public Transportation Area Expands

**E**veryone, of ALL ages, in Spring Green, Plain, North Freedom, and Rock Springs is now being served five days a week by *The Bus*, Sauk County's daily fixed-route public transportation system. They are joining their friends in Baraboo, Reedsburg, Prairie du Sac, Sauk City, Merrimac, and Lake Delton in gaining access to reliable rural public transportation.

For only \$2 per ride, you can ride *The Bus*! Adults 60 and over, persons with disabilities, and students can board for \$1 per ride. Punch cards good for 10 rides are available.

*The Bus* schedule is available at the bus stops and on the Sauk County website at: <http://www.co.sauk.wi.us/adrcpage/transportation-services>

You can flag the bus to stop anywhere along its route to board or disembark. If you have any questions or are unable to get to a stop location or the bus route, please call 355-3278 or (800) 830-3533 and it is possible that you can be picked up. Dennis, Walter, or Tom will be glad to help you! ♦



# Taking Care of Your Plant Life

This has been a hard year for gardening! Trying to conserve water and keeping our plants alive was a challenge. Most of our lawns suffered death as they can only survive about two months without water. Be prepared for next year. The first priority is your trees. A soaker hose around the drip line is the way to keep them from dying.

In the vegetable garden, the more organic material put in the better. Use shredded leaves, garden debris, kitchen scraps (but no grease), and shredded newspapers. Organic material holds moisture and allows roots to go deeper into the soil. Raised beds are recommended; making the beds in the fall will give you a head start. Build your beds, start your yard cleanup, and fill in the bed with organic material.

Another way to conserve moisture and cut down on weeding is to layer five sheets of newspaper (black

and white, no glossy paper) over your beds and then mulch with straw or hay in the spring after a rain. Your garden will stay moist for several weeks depending on how thick your mulch is.



Do not water from overhead as the water will evaporate; soaker hoses are the way to go. This method works for perennial beds except use wood chips for mulch instead of straw.

Plan on planting a cover crop in September which will help reduce weeds and add organic material to the garden. Field peas, soybeans, annual rye, and oats work well.

Tilling vegetable gardens disturbs the micro-organisms that help your garden thrive. You do not need to till if your soil had enough organic material in it to keep it loose. 💧

## 2013 Tree and Shrub Sale Program



The Conservation, Planning, and Zoning Department will soon be accepting orders for trees and wildlife shrubs offered through the annual tree sale program.

Sauk County CPZ offers native Wisconsin species in bundles of 25 seedlings/species for \$25 (except for American arborvitae, which come 10 seedlings/bundle for \$10). New for 2013, we will also offer several variety packs of ten trees or shrubs, including an evergreen pack, a wildlife shrub pack, and a hardwood pack. Tree descriptions and the 2013 order form will be available on our website by the end of October, or you may call us at 355-3245 if you would like to receive the form by mail. The web address is <http://www.co.sauk.wi.us/landconservationpage/sauk-county-tree-sale-program>

Trees and shrubs will be available to pick up at the Sauk County Fairgrounds in Baraboo on April 26, 2013. Postcard reminders will be mailed approximately two weeks beforehand.

For large quantity planting, the DNR offers low-priced seedlings (minimum order of 1,000 seedlings or 500 shrubs or a variety of combination 300 tree and/or shrub packets). 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.

Call Sauk County CPZ at 355-3245 for more information or check online at <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/TreePlanting/order.html> or [www.co.sauk.wi.us/cpz/sauk-county-tree-sale-program](http://www.co.sauk.wi.us/cpz/sauk-county-tree-sale-program) 💧

## READ YOUR NEWSLETTER 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!

## WOODLAND SCHOOL WORKSHOPS

**Chainsaw Safety 2**  
Saturday, September 15

**Trail Planning**  
Saturday, October 27

**Chainsaw Safety 3**  
Friday, November 9

**Chainsaw Safety 4**  
Saturday, November 10

More classes are being added!

For more information visit  
<https://www.aldoleopold.org/WoodlandSchool/>  
or call Jen Simoni at 355-0279 x32

## *Rain Gardens Handled Drought*

The long drought this summer did not seem to negatively affect the rain gardens at Baraboo's East Elementary School. Plants typically used in rain gardens have very extensive root systems that allow them to find water and nutrients deep in the soil as well as fracture the soil to improve water infiltration. Rain gardens work to improve water quality by encouraging surface water to seep into our groundwater, thereby reduce flooding in our local waterways. 💧



