

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Clark Creek Flooding Study Presentations

Sauk County will host two meetings to present the preliminary data from a study of flooding issues on Clark Creek. The first meeting will be held in conjunction with the Land Conservation Committee meeting on January 20 at 9 a.m. in Room 326 of the West Square Building in Baraboo. The second meeting will be held in the evening of Tuesday, January 25, to provide additional opportunity for public attendance and input. The second meeting will feature an open house at 6 p.m. followed by a presentation at 7 p.m. The evening meeting will be held in Room B30 of the West Square Building in Baraboo. Both meetings will present the same information regarding the study. Sauk County has contracted with Montgomery Associates-Resource Solutions to evaluate the flooding issues and recommend measures to reduce the damage caused by flooding and sediment transport throughout the watershed. At these meetings representatives from Montgomery Associates will present their preliminary proposals for remediation efforts and take input from residents of the area and other interested parties regarding other issues, concerns and ideas that should be considered.

Clark Creek, located on the east side of Baraboo, has a history of severe flooding and has caused extensive damage since 1993. "The trigger seemed to be that 1993 flood event," according to Joe Van Berkel, County Conservationist. The July 1993 rains measured over 14 inches in 24 hours and severely damaged Devil's Lake State Park, the neighborhood of homes located along Highway 113, parts of the City of Baraboo and the upper reaches of Clark Creek. One person drowned in the 1993 flood and others were rescued by emergency management personnel in 4x4s, boats and even amphibious vehicles brought in from the Wisconsin Dells. National Guard troops spent much of the summer restoring the rivers and streams and repairing damage to the areas' homes and infrastructure.

Despite the work done, Clark Creek has never been the same. Local landowner Judd Maxwell reports flood events have since occurred along Clark Creek in 1996, twice in 2000, and 2008. "No one remembers Clark Creek flooding in the 75 years before the 1993 event and now we get a flood every time we get a two-inch rain," reports Maxwell. "The situation in Clark Creek has definitely changed," according to Van Berkel. "I think the 1993 storm was so severe it wiped out the structure in the upper end of Clark Creek. The twists and turns that made up the old stream, the defined channel and higher banks, and the obstructions and vegetation that used to be along the creek slowed the flow, allowed more infiltration and provided an overflow flood plain. All of this was destroyed in the 1993 flood. Now, in every big storm, the stream overflows its shallow banks and rushes down the steep terrain. The flood water picks up a huge load of loose sand and gravel as it cuts through the terminal moraine and then drops a lot of this transported sediment in the lower section near the Baraboo River."

Damage caused by the stream can occur in several ways. The stream is constantly eroding banks and undermining trees and shrubs in the upper reaches of the watershed. Flood events carry these trees and brush downstream until they plug a culvert, forcing the stream to find an alternate route down the steep hill and wiping out structures and facilities in its path. The stream overtops culverts and has caused extensive damage to both the state road and county highway in its path. It surrounds homes at

the bottom of the watershed with sediment and flood waters as the flow rate slows before entering the Baraboo River.

Despite state and county efforts to address the problems, the damage still occurs. However, through the use of funds made available for flood recovery through the State of Wisconsin Departments of Commerce and Natural Resources, some improvements could be on the way. Sauk County has used grants from these partners to fund this study of the watershed and propose some measures to reduce the recurrence and impacts of future floods. The County contracted with Montgomery Associates – Resource Solutions to study the watershed and develop a plan for addressing the problem. Montgomery Associates have now studied the issue and developed some potential measures that could reduce the flood impacts. The two meetings will focus on presenting these early results and gathering feedback from residents regarding the proposals.

Montgomery Associates will then use this input to develop their final report and recommendations for completion by February 28, 2011. For more information regarding these meetings please contact the Sauk County Land Conservation Department at 608-355-3245.

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