

# Sauk County, Wisconsin Conservation, Planning, and Zoning Department 2014 Annual Report

**2014 Mission:** To conserve natural, cultural, and community resources by promoting, planning, and implementing efficient and effective programs.

**2014 Vision:** The Conservation, Planning, and Zoning Department (CPZ) strive to integrate economic, social, and environmental strategies to enhance, improve, and maintain Sauk County now and for future generations.

## **Departmental Program Summary:**

The programs within the department were broken into several key components in 2012 and these continued in 2014. Below is a list of the various programs provided by the department. Some of the programs listed have additional subprograms associated with them.

1. **Planning:** Creation and implementation of local and countywide development or comprehensive plans. Administration of rezoning petitions, subdivision plats, planned unit developments, and certified survey map requests. The 2014 Chapter 7 Zoning ordinance increased the conditional use permit volume that the CPZ Committee handled and will continue to handle in the future.
2. **Badger Army Ammo Plant:** Staff provides support to the BOMC, attends and coordinates meetings, acts as the central location for documents, correspondence, etc.
3. **Code Enforcement:** Administration of the comprehensive zoning, floodplain, shoreland protection, subdivision, tower siting, rural identification, nonmetallic mining, private sewage, manure management, and the Airport Zoning ordinances of Sauk County. Included are ordinance amendments, violation investigations, and inspections to determine compliance.
4. **Permits:** In 2014 we budgeted \$136,500 for revenues and received \$138,299. This funding went to review, issue, and inspect land use, sanitary, and soils permits and applications.
5. **Septic Maintenance/Wisconsin Fund:** Administration of the scheduled pumping and inspection of private sanitary systems. Since 1979, Sauk County land owners have gained over \$3,550,000 in state assistance for replacing failing septic systems. In order for land owners to qualify the County must have a septic maintenance program.
6. **Rural Identification System:** Maintain a rural identification system in all the unincorporated areas of Sauk County. Staff assigns, maps, assembles, installs and GPS fire numbers. Once this takes place staff assigns fire protection, ambulance and post office districts. Notice letters are mailed to all districts and towns of the new addresses.
7. **Non-Metallic Mining:** Staff handled permitting, reclamation plan review and inspection, financial assurance review, reporting requirements, public hearings, enforcement and fees retention are all associated with this program. Staff is also required

to collect a fee amount for the State and then supply that reimbursement to them along with the annual report.

8. **Natural Beauty Council:** The Council assists with projects such as displays at local fairs, Earth Day activities, clean ups at the local landfills, and prairie burns and plantings.
9. **Baraboo Range Monitoring:** Continued monitoring of easements purchased through the Baraboo Range Preservation Association program. These easements must be monitored in perpetuity.
10. **Board of Adjustment:** Charged with enforcement of the county zoning ordinance, special exception permits, variances, and any challenges to the administrative decisions. This is done through a Quasi-Judicial hearing process. The 2014 Chapter 7 Zoning ordinance reduced the special exception permit volume slightly.
11. **Recycling/Hazardous Waste/Clean Sweep:** The Conservation, Planning, and Zoning committee handles responsibility for recycling and hazardous waste disposal. These efforts involve advising and providing educational resources regarding recycling and the coordination of the county Clean Sweep initiative to properly dispose of household, agricultural and very small quantity generator waste. In 2013 a pilot program began for assessing Agricultural Plastics, this program was successful and was added to the annual budget for 2015. Results will continue to be assessed on an annual bases for budget approval.
12. **Dam Maintenance:** Department oversees management and compliance with state safety standards for the dams owned by Sauk County. Work is performed in conjunction with Parks staff responsible for similar obligations. Workload varies with higher needs at times of repair and rehabilitation projects. Three Honey Creek Watershed Dams are under direction of the Conservation, Planning, and Zoning Department, and are County “N”, White Mound, and Shanahan’s. Three dams are operated by the Parks Department, and these are Mirror Lake, Lake Redstone, and Hemlock Slough. In 2013 Shanahan’s Dam was repaired and converted to a dry dam structure.
13. **Conservation Practices:** This is a combination of all conservation practices within the department. This includes educational, sustainability, monitoring, stormwater management, forestry, and invasive activities and efforts. These activities are necessary to complete many of the requirements and objectives which allow the department to gain or complete grant funding.
14. **Working Lands (formally known as - Farmland Preservation):** A critical component of the department efforts, the program requires conservation compliance and farmland development protection in exchange for tax credits. The program provides roughly \$640,000 per year in tax credits to landowners. These totals do not show up in the county budget but are an important part of the Sauk County Economy. The conversion to the Working Lands Initiative program will require considerable additional staff time but will also achieve considerably more conservation as well as provide considerably more in tax credits.
15. **Land and Water Resource Management (LWRM):** The County is mandated to operate under an LWRM Plan to be eligible for grants for staff and cost-sharing from the WI DATCP. These grants amounts have historically amounted to \$180,000 per year for staff and \$100,000 for cost-sharing with landowners for installation of conservation practices. The staffing dollars remained the same in 2015 at \$128,000 and \$87,000 for cost sharing. The annual commitment is the time spent developing contracts, designing

and inspecting the installation of cost-shared practices and issuing payments for projects implemented through these grants. The practices focus on achieving compliance with the non-point rules. Every five years considerable time is devoted to rewriting the plan for the next period. In 2013 the county received the first 5 year extension permitted in the state. The plan was originally created as a 10 year plan and with support of DATCP staff our plan was approved for the additional 5 years ending in 2017.

16. **Non-point Rules:** The department enforces non-point pollution requirements for agricultural operations in the county. The county staff replies to complaints and address cooperative resolution aspects of the program. This can involve providing design and installation assistance and management of efforts to obtain cost sharing. In cases where a landowner refuses to cooperate with the needed corrections the staff works with DNR staff to attain compliance.
17. **Waste Ordinance/Nutrient Management:** County permits are required for the construction, rehabilitation, expansion, and abandonment or transfer of ownership of any manure storage facility. The obligation to have an ordinance is required through previous grant agreements and enforcement of the ordinance. All farms are required to have a nutrient management plan in place and responsibility for monitoring is with the CPZ department. Efforts include educational programming that allows farmers to develop their own plans, and oversight of the plans provided for program compliance. The farmer education program is a \$13,500 grant provided to the department. Most of this total is given to the farmer who sign up and complete the program. In 2014 we received \$20,000 and requested additional \$33,000 from other counties for a total of \$53,000 in SEG funds for nutrient management plan cost share.
18. **Grazing Assistance:** Promotion of managed intensive grazing reduces erosion and runoff pollution from farm operations. Creation and implementation of grazing plans. Staff promotes and advises on this transition with funds distributed through grants to the department to offset cost. The 2014 grant total was \$1,000. This grant program has been eliminated for the foreseeable future.
19. **Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program:** Staff assists with the implementation of this cooperative federal/state program designed to protect water quality by buffering waters from runoff pollution. The payments made to owners are from state and federal funds and the county commitment consists of the staff time to qualify applicants and provide needed design and installation inspections of conservation practices. County landowners have received over \$1,000,000 from DATCP in payments for participation and \$3,200,000 from FSA in payments.
20. **Wildlife Management/Damage:** Service provision is contracted to the federal Wildlife Damage Services agency. Minimal staff time is spent dealing with the occasional call, referral, approving claims and payments through committee and developing and submitting reimbursement requests.
21. **Health Care Center Farm Management:** The department is charged with responsibility to ensure the rental land located at the Health Care Center is managed in an appropriate manner that will provide revenues to the county without harming productivity or other natural resources located on the property. Revenues from the rental of these lands amount to over \$35,000 per year.
22. **Farm Service Agency (FSA) Assistance:** Staff assists with federal program implementation to further the conservation benefits provided to the county and the cost

share assistance provided to landowners. The practices installed help achieve resource protection goals. Federal EQIP provides about \$150,000 in cost sharing each year. Maintaining eligibility for federal farm programs provides additional payments directly to farmers.

23. **Sauk County Development Corporation (SCDC):** Provide receptionist and minor clerical duties as needed to the Sauk County Development Corporation.
24. **Targeted Runoff Management (TRM):** Work began on the Otter Creek Targeted Runoff Management (TRM) grant program. In 2013 a \$341,950 grant was awarded to Sauk County to improve the farm runoff and stream conditions along Otter Creek. This project will continue through 2015.
25. **Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP):** promotes coordination between Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and its partners to deliver conservation assistance to producers and landowners. The project for Sauk County is \$1.6 million total with \$975,000 of installed practices. The Baraboo River Watershed will be receiving \$2.0 million. This is a five-year program to begin in 2015.

## **2014 Goals Review**

OBJECTIVE	WAS THIS OBJECTIVE REACHED IN 2014?
	Yes or No (If no, please provide comment)
Complete a comprehensive rewrite of the County Land Divisions and Subdivision Regulations Ordinance (Chapter 22).	No - Shifted to Goal for 2015
Complete a comprehensive rewrite of the county zoning ordinance (Chapter 7)	Yes – Completed
Develop and adopt a Sexually Oriented Business Ordinance.	No - No movement on this issue.
Complete Shoreland Protection Ordinance (Chapter 8)	No – Waiting for DNR model ordinance
Complete the Floodplain Zoning Ordinance (Chapter 9)	Yes
Participate in the reuse process for lands within the Badger Army Ammunition Plant in accordance with the guiding principles of the Badger Reuse Plan.	Yes - Ongoing
Provide planning assistance to other county departments and committees.	Yes - Ongoing
Assist in the development of special purpose planning processes and studies that further the goals, implementation and five year update of local comprehensive plans.	Yes - Ongoing As Requested - Summer intern in 2015 will assist.
Work to implement Sauk County groundwater study by developing additional local rules, inclusive of the wellhead protection ordinance, to help sustain a high quality drinking water into the future.	No - Will reevaluate for 2015
Organize and administer Clean Sweep and Agricultural Plastics events to dispose of hazardous materials and plastics.	Yes – Program has increased in Volume
Work with schools and private facilities to incorporate infiltration measures in new and existing developments. (e.g.. Rain Gardens)	Yes- Ongoing and As Requested
Work with municipalities to improve implementation of stormwater runoff management, construction site erosion control standards and flood prevention	Yes - Ongoing and As Requested

OBJECTIVE	WAS THIS OBJECTIVE REACHED IN 2014?
	Yes or No (If no, please provide comment)
measures.	
Continue intergovernmental cooperative efforts with local municipalities in order to apply shoreline and flood plain regulations.	Yes - Flood Plain Ord. adopted in 2013. Also, Shoreline Ord. for 2015.
Provide at least four school programs to educate youth and promote awareness of natural resources.	Yes
Provide a minimum of two youth and adult environmental education activities in the county.	Yes
Promote and support initiatives to reduce and eliminate problematic populations of invasive species.	Yes
Work with the Mapping and MIS Departments to ensure that all pertinent Departmental information and resources are accessible via the County's web site and the GIS system.	Yes - Ongoing and As Requested
Complete conservation evaluations for program participants in the agricultural programs.	Yes – annual review needed.
Provide and distribute information about departmental resources and public educational activities through various media outlets, newsletters, and the internet.	Yes
Identify and provide electronically those departmental functions that lend themselves to efficient and effective internet services.	Yes
Monitor thermal conditions on Honey Creek for use in management of White Mound outflow to address impaired waters listing.	Yes
Monitor water quality in five streams to establish background information and identify resource needs.	Yes
Install CREP buffers along stream/wetlands/ponds/lakes.	No – Concentrated on WDOT Stream Easement Projects.
Install water quality improvement projects through Land and Water Resource Management, Otter Creek TRM and other Targeted Runoff Management Grants.	Yes

**Changes / Accomplishments:**

**Staffing:** The combination of Land Conservation and Planning and Zoning departments includes realignment of duties and strategic review of priorities. As part of this process, we evaluated four vacant positions. In 2012, 1.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) was filled and 3.0 FTE positions were held vacant for a total staff reduction of 20%, and a total reduction to the levy of \$221,009. An additional 0.25 FTE staff is being shared with the Sauk County Development Corporation and is being billed at the rate of \$15,513 per year. Changes within the department structure and staff have also served to impact expenses in a positive way; no programs were cut

and assistance in many programs has increased. The department increased its service levels through cross-training staff, increasing communications through smartphone technology, and using \$25,000 toward contracting with an engineering firm on an as-needed project basis, versus hiring a 1.0 FTE. With the RCPP funding is being approved, this will require an employee to manage the 5-year program at the approximate cost of \$80,000 salary with benefits per year.

**Revenue and Permits:** The projected revenues exceeded the budget totals by nearly \$9,000. The department permits were \$2,000 more than the predicted 2014 budget amount of \$136,500 with \$138,299 received.

**State Funding:**

The CPZ Committee recognizes the importance of the County Cost-Share Program and the need to keep this funding at the \$100,000 level. This program assists landowners with the abandonment of old manure pits of which the county must provide 70% cost share according to state and county codes. Many of these pits are built in or near the water table or on bedrock where proper abandonment is critical to the protection and improvement of public health and water quality. In some years there may be limited use of this funding during which years the entire amount may be returned to the general fund. In other years projects may utilize the entire levy total.

The county cost-share dollars have also been used as an additional 10% match with Land and Water Resource Management (LWRM) grant dollars. This provides cost-sharing dollars for farmers and other landowners for erosion control practices such as grassed waterways, gutter systems, dry dams, stream bank protection, stream crossings, wetland restorations, shallow scrapes and ponds, managed grazing systems, etc. In 2014 the \$67,000 LWRM grant (70% of total project) will be matched with \$9,600 county dollars (10% of total project) to bring in \$96,000 in projects to the county; this is an approximate cost to benefit ratio of 1:10.

These funds have also been used for 4.5 miles of stream restorations on Bear Creek (\$60,000) and Otter Creek (\$15,000). The Bear Creek project has been matched with a combined total of \$570,000 including the 2014 project year; this is an approximate cost to benefit ratio of 1:10. With Otter Creek a total match of \$211,000 was received; with an approximate cost to benefit ratio of 1:14.

This money is also used to match 10% of the \$348,000 Targeted Runoff Management (TRM) grant received for Otter Creek; by its completion in 2015, the total installed practices will be \$497,000. This is an approximate cost to benefit ratio of 1:14.

**Comprehensive Plan Implementation:** In the ongoing efforts to implement the County Comprehensive Plan, the department intends to use some of the \$163,000 of carryforward money for implementation related expenses. The 2014 budget anticipates using \$26,858 towards the creation of a zoning ordinance, shoreline protection ordinance, and tower ordinance to assist in implementing the plan.

**Clean Sweep:** The average costs of completing Clean Sweep ranged from \$56,000 to \$85,000 per year. In 2014 the Clean Sweep event was subsidized by a grant of \$15,500, the expenditures

for Clean Sweep fluctuate each year depending on the participation. In 2013 the county did not receive a clean sweep grant, however, the County Board chose to supplement the entire program from general fund dollars. This program has been supported by the Conservation, Planning, and Zoning Committee and the County Board and is recognized as an important event to clean our communities. The committee has decided to maintain two Clean Sweep events per year and the county levy will need to provide funding for the majority of the event as DATCP funding is minimal at only 18%. The County Board began a new program by placing \$9,000 in the 2014 budget for a pilot program on agricultural plastics.

**Wisconsin Department of Transportation Grant:** The department evaluated the \$199,732 Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) monies for the 2012 budget and identified a need for this money in 2012-2015. In December 2011, this money was chosen to be matched with \$250,000 from the WDOT which is to be used for property and easement purchases in areas affected by the Highway 12 corridor. Through 2014 we have purchased a total of 7 easements/properties for a total cost \$198,000 with nearly \$250,000 in funding remaining. The department expects to complete this project in 2015.

**Statistical Summary:**

Output Measures					
Description	2012 Actual	2013 Actual		2014 Actual	
Subdivision Plats and CSM's approved	1 plats, 56 CSM's	2 plats, 66 CSM's		1 plats, 64 CSM's	
Implementation of Sauk County's Planned Unit Development (PUD) program	8 Lots	15 Lots		6 Lots	
Land Use / Sanitary Permits Issued	319 / 139	286 / 156		321 / 141	
Code Enforcement Citations	48	26		42	
Wisconsin Fund Grant Awards / Grant Amount	17 / \$51,944	19 / \$61,791		11 / \$49,544	
Septic System Maintenance Verifications	4,961	4,476		5,044	
Soil Test / Septic Closing On-site Inspections	115 / 126	151 / 149		120 / 130	
Board of Adjustment (BOA) Inspections	65	54		35	
Shoreland Zoning Inspections	165	126		105	
Quarry Blast Inspections	21	22		27	
Code Enforcement Complaint/Follow up Inspections	145	155		203	
Non Metallic Mining Reclamation Program - Total Sites/Total Acres	32 / 2385.55 ac	32 / 2385.55 ac		32 / 2385.55 ac	
Survey, design and installation of water pollution control practices through various programs (Ex. Streambank restoration, manure storage, barnyard runoff, waterway systems, contour and buffer strips.)	62 practices installed	44 Completed practices 1606 tons of soil saved	23 Practices in process	50 Completed practices 2106.4 tons of soil saved	40 Practices in process
CREP Buffer strip program - Landowners / Linear Feet in program	10 / 8,000	13 / 50,310 lf		0 / 0 lf	

Inspect farms and determine compliance with state soil and water conservation standards for FPP and LWRM participants.	Develop a schedule of compliance for 65 farms	129 on-site farm inspections	179 on-site farm inspections.
Assist farm operators with nutrient management plans.	Not tracked	17 plans	75 plans
Assistance with preparation and revision to conservation plans to address soil erosion concerns	10 plans	10 plans	21 plans
Creation and implementation of grazing plans. Plans/year	5 plans	4 plans	5 plans
Educational programs/presentations and attendance at educational events and programs.	3,906 contacts	33 programs/ pres. 2,959 contacts	49 programs/ pres. 4,197 contacts
Ag Plastics Program	NA	2 programs 28 participants	7 programs 135 participants
Clean Sweep Participants – Agricultural, business, and household hazardous waste collection	2 programs 953 participants	2 programs 952 participants	2 programs 968 participants