

CONSERVATION CHRONICLE

Newsletter of the Land Resources and Environment Department



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

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2023 Conserve Sauk Film Festival

Join us for the 2023 Conserve Sauk Film Festival on Saturday, November 4th from 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. at UW-Platteville Baraboo Sauk County at 1006 Connie Rd, Baraboo, WI. Doors will open at 10:00 a.m. and the 2023 festival will kick off with a screening of the film *Rise Up Again: Exploring our Shared Humanity* at 10:30 a.m.

The 2023 Festival will include screenings of a wide array of conservation-focused films. Films including *Sacred Cow*, *Sym-BEE-o-sis*, *Breaking Trail*, and *Era of Megafires* will be featured among with many other incredible films at this year’s festival. The festival also has the honor of premiering an extended cut of the film *Where Cranes Dance*. The complete film lineup for this event can be found online at www.conservesaukfilmfest.org.



The event will also include facilitated discussions on the films and their themes. A lunch break will take place from 12:30 p.m. until 1:30 p.m. During the lunch break, attendees can stop in to grab lunch at the scenic Bluff View Café on campus and talk with a variety of local organizations about their conservation efforts and opportunities for involvement. Attendees may also head off campus and enjoy lunch at one of the many great restaurants in the area.

Conserve Sauk Film Festival is a collaborative event to educate attendees and participants about important resources, environmental challenges we face, best management practices that can be implemented on farms or in our own yards, and lessons we can draw from significant environmental history or historical figures. We hope to inspire creative thought, discussion, and potential solutions to these challenges.

The 2023 Conserve Sauk Film Festival is supported and made possible by the Sauk County Land Resources and Environment Department, the International Crane Foundation, Lake Wisconsin Alliance, Aldo Leopold Foundation, Farmer Angel Network, Devil’s Lake Climbing Guides, Friends of the Baraboo River, Baraboo Range Preservation Association, Savanna Institute, University of Wisconsin-Platteville Baraboo Sauk County, Powered Up Baraboo, and Sauk County Farmers Union.

Local partners organizing the 2023 Film Festival include the Sauk County Land Resources and Environment Department, the International Crane Foundation, Friends of the Baraboo River, Powered Up Baraboo, Lake Wisconsin Alliance, University of Wisconsin-Platteville Baraboo Sauk County; and the Carnegie-Schadde Memorial Public Library of Baraboo.

For more information about the film festival, visit www.conservesaukfilmfest.org.

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Sauk County Farm Education Hub Design

The Sauk County farm, formerly known as the Sauk County Health Care Center, is located three miles south of Reedsburg, Wisconsin, at the intersection of State Roads 23 and 154. The County Farm is a roughly 566-acre property, originally called the County Poor Farm and Asylum, the site was initially purchased in 1871 by Sauk County to provide care and housing for impoverished, mentally ill, and disabled people. Today, the County Farm is under the oversight of the [Sauk County Land Resources and Environment \(LRE\) Department](#) and Board of Supervisors, with the [Land Conservation Division](#) overseeing most of the property's management and the [Parks and Recreation Division](#) providing maintenance for the historic firehouse and the Sauk County Cemetery – the final remnants of the site's former public health institutions.

The Sauk County farm is diverse, consisting of flat bottom fields along the stream that bisects the property as well as gently rolling to steeper hills. Most of the property is comprised of commodity cropland and pasture, which has been rented out to local farmers since the 1980s. In fact, the land at the County Farm has produced food consistently throughout its history. The remainder of the property is comprised of the land where the former healthcare center stood, wooded forest, and Narrows Creek, which runs through a significant portion of the property. The area that contained the former healthcare center is being established as the Educational Hub to welcome visitors to the site and direct them to learn about the property, people, conservation, and agricultural practices highlighted on the property.

Sauk County has been working with Snyder and Associates to design the 14-acre Education Hub at the Sauk County Farm. These plans will allow the County to develop the property over the next 20 years with a specific vision and placement for the development. Over the next 20 years, the LRE Department envisions the County Farm becoming a place for Sauk County residents to converge, learn, and experiment with regenerative and conservation-friendly farming best practices.



The design incorporates new infrastructure planned for the site such as improved vehicular and pedestrian access; an indoor educational/event center; community gardens; shelter and picnic areas; outdoor learning area; and, interpretive signage to highlight the property's history and current landscape. Vegetation will be transformed into a restored prairie with walking trails and areas of food forage shrubs and trees.

(continued on next page)

As we work towards our vision for this site, we encourage insight and partnership with our local educational, conservation, and agricultural organizations, as well as from citizens.

If you would like to learn more about this property, current projects, how to get involved, or more about the status of the development of the Educational Hub, please check out our project website at:

<https://arcg.is/oy85Hv>.

Make Plans to Check out the 2024 Tree Sale



The 2024 Sauk County Tree Sale will open for orders beginning November 1st. The online storefront continues to be a user friendly and effective way of running the sale. If you subscribe to our [email notifications](#), you will be notified when the online storefront goes live. Visit the [LRE tree sale website](#) to find out how to place your order.

Tree bundles of 25 seedlings and mixed packs of 10 seedlings are \$27.50 + tax each. We are offering more mixed packs this year – wildlife, wetland, and pollinator options are available.

If you have any other questions about the tree sale, please feel free to contact Melissa Schlupp at (608) 355-4838 or melissa.schlupp@saukcountywi.gov.

Sauk County Public Health Department: Preventing Tick Bites

In 2021, Sauk County had 2.75 times more Lyme disease cases than the rest of the state.¹

Lyme disease is the most common illness spread by ticks in Wisconsin. It is spread by the black-legged tick, commonly known as the deer tick.²

It is important to treat any tickborne illness early. If you are worried that you may have been bitten by a tick, watch for any fever, chills, sweats, rashes, muscle aches, joint pain, headaches, fatigue, nausea, and vomiting. If you experience any of those symptoms within 30 days of a possible tick bite, talk to your doctor.

Prevent tick bites to reduce your risk of tickborne illness. Here are some steps that you can take to protect yourself:

- Avoid tick-heavy areas, like tall bushes and long grass.
- Perform daily tick checks after being outside.
- Wear bug spray with 20% or more DEET.
- Wear a long-sleeve shirt and pants while outside.
- Treat clothing with products containing 0.5% permethrin.³
- Shower right away after being in high-risk areas.



Contents of the Tick Kits at Public Health Sauk County.

Public Health Sauk County has free tick kits

available, while supplies last. Visit us at 505 Broadway, Suite #372, Baraboo, WI 53913 for your free tick kit. For more information on ticks in Wisconsin, visit:

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/tick/wisconsin.htm>

¹ Sauk County Environmental Health Profile, WI Environmental Public Health Tracking Program. <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/po/p00719-sauk.pdf>

² Illnesses Spread by Ticks, Wisconsin Department of Health Services. <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/tick/wisconsin.htm>

³ Preventing Tick Bites, Center for Disease Control and Prevention. https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/avoid/on_people.html

Hemlock County Park

Sauk County is launching the master planning process for [Hemlock County Park](#) to develop a vision for the next twenty years. In 2018, during a flood event, the dam structure which had been in place since the Park's inception in the 60s was damaged. The dam is no longer able to maintain water levels in the lake, altering the recreational opportunities available. The County is working with the local community and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to replace the dam and raise the water levels. We will be developing natural resources and recreational management goals for further development and protection of this beloved property. To learn more about the master planning process and how to get involved, please [subscribe](#) to our email notifications for updates and public input opportunities.



Cover Crops and Navigating Drought Conditions

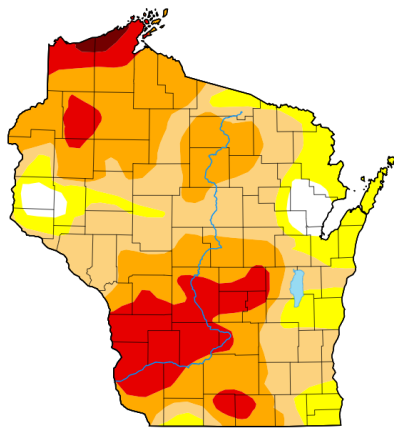
Map released: Thurs. August 31, 2023
Data valid: August 29, 2023 at 8 a.m. EDT

Intensity

- None
- D0 (Abnormally Dry)
- D1 (Moderate Drought)
- D2 (Severe Drought)
- D3 (Extreme Drought)
- D4 (Exceptional Drought)
- No Data

Authors

United States and Puerto Rico Author(s):
[David Simerali](#), Western Regional Climate Center
Pacific Islands and Virgin Islands Author(s):
[Rocky Bilotta](#), NOAA/NCEI



U.S. Drought Monitor Map for August 29, 2023

So you finally tried planting green into rye this year. Are you regretting it? Don't throw in the towel on cover crops just yet.

“Cover crops prior to a drought worked out for some growers this year while not others,” says Sam Bibby, [Regional Crops & Soils Educator](#) for UW-Madison Division of Extension. “What was the difference and how can we keep the negative impacts of cover crops minimized going forward? Rye is the most common cover crop in Wisconsin, with around 210,000 acres planted as a cover crop or forage crop. Many of those acres are followed by corn and soybeans after harvest or terminated in the spring.

Cover crops add residue to the soil surface preventing crusting and evaporation from the soil surface. They also create root channels that increase infiltration and the total water-holding capacity of the soil. While these benefits are great, cover crops like rye, can also dry out soil quickly when they accumulate substantial biomass. This can be good in wet years, but as we just recently found out, it can be detrimental in dry years. Most stunted or poor stands of corn this year were related to covers or weeds that dried out the soil. Fields with early cover crop termination were less affected and may have even benefitted from additional soil cover compared to no cover crops. Cover crops provide numerous benefits but require additional time and resources to be properly managed. If the weather forecast looks dry or the planting season will be shorter than usual, consider terminating cover crops early to save moisture or free up labor/equipment. Cover crops that winterkill are another low-risk option for growers who want some added soil protection. Farmers can't afford to risk their profit margin for a couple extra tons of biomass. Experiment on a small scale and implement the cover crop practices that work well in your specific operation.”

Jenny Rees, an Extension Educator from the University of Nebraska, in her recent article, “[Cover Crop Termination Tradeoffs](#)” had this to say about rye cover crops. “Each year we receive questions on the termination timing of cereal covers. This question occurs as farmers consider trade-offs between a positive return on investment from the cover crop, by allowing more biomass growth with the potential for yield loss if termination is delayed too long. Information being shared can be confusing, with one source saying to terminate pre-plant while another says to plant green into the cover. What's the “right” answer? We don't know that there is one. That's because farmers' goals and levels of risk vary. In general, there are fewer risks to plating green with soybean than corn. This article will share tradeoffs to help you better assess cover crop termination timing for your operation and risk level.”

Moreso than in years with average rainfall, this year's timing of termination was critical. The real question is, will one bad year be the end of your cover crop experience or will this year's challenges be the most valuable lesson in the coming years? On that note, the growing season isn't over yet! Some producers will be adapting, chopping corn crops early and using the remaining few weeks of warmth to grow a substantial amount of forage or give next year's cash crop a biological boost with diverse fall cover crops.

Sauk County Clean Sweep

Saturday, September 30, 2023 from 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Old Sauk County Landfill
E8795 Evergreen Lane, Baraboo



Dispose of household hazardous waste safely.

Items accepted for **no charge** include: pesticides, cleaners, oil-based paint, batteries, light bulbs, and a wide variety of electronics.

For more information visit: www.co.sauk.wi.us/landconservation/clean-sweep
or contact us at 608-355-3245 or email conservation@saukcountywi.gov



If you are or recently were ill, please stay home.

Stay in your vehicle at all times while at Clean Sweep. Event staff will unload items at each station. Please make sure ALL items are loaded in the rear of vehicle, trunk, truck bed, or trailer to be unloaded by the event staff.



Latex paint and waste oil are not accepted at Sauk County Clean Sweep events.

Fees for Tires

Car and light truck tires	\$7
Car and light truck w/rims	\$9
Ag and Semi tires	\$14
Ag and Semi tires w/ rims	\$26
<13" tires	\$3
<13" w/rims	\$5

Payment for tires can be made in CASH or CHECK payable to Sauk County Treasurer.

What is NOT ACCEPTED:

- Latex Paint
- Used motor oil
- Pharmaceuticals, IVs, needles
- Explosives, detonators, blasting caps
- Radioactive materials including smoke alarms
- Infectious and biological waste
- Compressed gas cylinders
- Trash and Recyclables
- Yard and household waste
- Asbestos
- Demolition Materials
- Mattresses

Small businesses and agricultural producers with quantities exceeding 200 lbs. **MUST pre-register for Paint & Chemicals with Veolia at least 1 week prior to the event.** Please contact Zach Davis at (262) 253-3504.

No Late registration will be accepted.

Resource Solutions will accept the following items at Clean Sweep:

Please remove all batteries from electronics

No Charge: CPUs, Computer Printers, Speakers, Scanners, Fax Machines, Vacuum Cleaners, Phones, Laptops, Record Players, Tape Players, CD Players, iPod, VCRs, DVD Players, Beta Tape Players, Electric Saws, Drills, Calculators, Paper Shredders, Coffee Machines, Heaters, Game Systems, Sewing Machines, Electronic Toys, Most Household electrical items.

\$10 - Hard Drive Removal and Destruction

\$15 - Microwaves & Large Copy Machines

\$20 - Small AC Units, mini fridges, dehumidifiers

\$25 - Stoves, washers, dryers, dishwashers, treadmills, lawn mowers (*oil/gas drained, tires removed*)

\$35 - Refrigerators & Large Freezers

\$20 - All monitors, CRT & Flat Screen

\$20 - CRT/Flat Screen TVs 29" and under

\$40 - CRT/Flat Screen TVs 30"-49"

\$60 - CRT/Flat Screen TVs 50" and up, projection, wooden console

Payment for electronics can be made in CASH, CREDIT, or CHECK payable to Resource Solutions at the event.

Contact Resource Solutions at (608) 244-5451 for electronic items not included on the list above.



Funding for this was made possible, in part, by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). The views expressed in written materials, publications, speakers, and moderators do not necessarily reflect the official policies of DATCP; nor does any mention of trade names, commercial practices, or organization imply endorsement by the State of Wisconsin.

The following deadlines or program sign-ups are approaching at the Sauk County FSA office in Baraboo:

- November 6, 2023: COC election ballots will be mailed to eligible voters in the Local Administrative Area (LAA) #2
- November 15, 2023: 2024 acreage reporting deadline for fall seeded crops, such as wheat and rye, etc.
- December 4, 2023: Deadline to return to COC election ballots, or postmarked
- January 30, 2024: 2023 Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) application deadline

For more information, please contact the Sauk County FSA Office at (608) 355-4420, ext. 2.

Henslow's Sparrow - How We Found this Elusive Bird on the Leopold - Pines Conservation Area



Photograph of Henslow's Sparrow by Robert Rolley

Henslow's Sparrows are easily overlooked. They're the bird equivalent of the very tiny mustard plant Leopold exalted in his essay "Draba" ([see Leah Bieniak's recent article](#)) in his *A Sand County Almanac*. Just like *Draba*, Henslow's Sparrows do almost next to nothing to get noticed. Size—they're small; go figure, the size of a sparrow. Color—so nondescript that birding groups can deride them for a laugh as an LBJ (little brown jobber), and quickly move on before identification humility can sink in. Habit—Henslow's spend a lot of time hunkered down in the thick thatch of prairies, preferring to walk when spooked, rather than fly. Population—the world's population of Henslow's breed in only a few states in the upper Midwest, so most birders would have to travel to see one. (I'm reminded that Margaret Atwood and Paul Ehrlich, when traveling through the area, had Henslow's on their wish list.) Song—and, you'll love this...Henslow's have the simplest and shortest song of *any* bird in North America. It's a little *tze-*

lick, described as a weak, insect-like hiccup. Declines—steady losses of these secretive little birds haven't made headlines like their boisterous brethren of the grasslands, the Eastern Meadowlark and Bobolink, but their decline has been no less real. They are listed as threatened in Wisconsin. Partners in Flight places them on the "Yellow Watch List" for species with declining populations, and identifies the loss of breeding habitat as the biggest threat to Henslow's Sparrows.

Enjoy the full story online at: <https://www.aldoleopold.org/post/henslows-sparrow-how-we-found-this-elusive-bird-on-the-leopold-pines-conservation-area/>

Classes Scheduled to Assist Farmers with Nutrient Management Planning

Sauk County will be offering two classes for farmers to write their own nutrient management plans.

1. *Nutrient Management Farmer Education (NMFE)*: The NMFE class is available for farmers who want to become certified to write their own plans. This class will be held on December 20th and 21st.
2. *NMFE Refresher*: The annual NMFE refresher class is offered to farmers who have taken the NMFE class and want to update their nutrient management plan. This class will be held on January 19th.

Both classes will be held at the Reedsburg MATC campus from 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.. Lunch will be provided.

Sauk County received a grant to help offset the soil sampling costs (up to \$750) and provide incentive payments (up to \$550) to farmers writing their own plans. Space is limited.

Please call Mitch McCarthy or Brian Sadler at 608-355-3245 to reserve your seat.

Upcoming Events

Pasture Walks

- **Thursday, September 14th, 5:30 p.m.:** Learn the ins and outs of running a stocker enterprise from Daniel Jackson at his farm located at E6576 Skinner Rd., Reedsburg.
- **Thursday, October 19th, 5:00 p.m.:** Hosted by Roger Bindl, at S10620 Weidner Rd, Spring Green. This pasture walk will be focused on grazing cover crops and will showcase information collected as part of an ongoing research project with the [Sand County Foundation](#) and four graziers from [SSWIG](#).
- **Thursday, December 7th, 3:00 p.m.:** Join us out at Gabe Bauer's Farm, E435 Co. Rd EE, Wonewoc for a winter walk to learn more about winter waterers and unrolling hay for winter feeding.

Pasture walk events are free and open to the public unless otherwise posted. Please contact Serge Koenig at (608) 355-4837 or serge.koenig@saukcountywi.gov for more information on the pasture walk programs or if you are interested in learning more about rotational grazing for your farm. Subscribe to receive updates and reminders on the upcoming pasture walks at: <https://bit.ly/saukreupdates>



Attendees at the May, 31 Pasture Walk Event learning about multi-species grazing

Sauk Soil & Water Improvement Group (SSWIG):

The Sauk Soil & Water Improvement Group or SSWIG is a [Producer-Led Watershed Protection Group](#) that formed in 2019 and covers much of Sauk County. SSWIG works to improve soil health and water quality through regenerative agricultural practices and education to build resilient family farms and thriving rural communities.

SSWIG works towards its vision by providing [cost-share](#) for conservation practices to any acres that are within the focus watersheds, conducting [on-farm research and demonstration](#), and organizing and hosting meetings, field days, pasture walks, and workshops to learn from area farmers as well as nationally renowned experts on different topics including cover crops, no-till, rotational grazing, perennial cropping systems, and so much more. Some upcoming events hosted by SSWIG, in collaboration with other area Producer-Led Watershed Groups are:

- **September SSWIG Meeting:** Join SSWIG on Thursday, September 21st from 5:00 - 7:30 p.m. at Bula's Pleasant Valley Farm Store (S4473 Scenic Rd., Baraboo) for a group meeting. All who are interested in the group and the projects are welcome to join. Please RSVP online.
- **Annual Soil Health Workshop with Blake Vince:** Save the Date for Tuesday, February 6th for the annual Soil Health Workshop featuring keynote speaker Blake Vince.
- **Grazing School with Jim Gerrish:** Save the Date for Tuesday, June 11th and join us for a grazing school with nationally renowned grazing expert, consultant, and speaker Jim Gerrish.

Learn how to get involved and stay up to date on events, programs, cost-share assistance, and more by subscribing to SSWIG email updates or by visiting www.sswig.org.



We're on Facebook - Search [@sauk.lre](#) then "like"



Stay Informed with LRE Dept. Email Notifications

Stay informed and up to date on LRE Department programs and projects by subscribing for email notifications! Since fall 2022, the LRE Department has been using MailChimp to share information on programs, projects, and events. You can manage your own subscription for the topics that matter most to you. You can unsubscribe or change your preferences at any time. Current topics include:



- Ag. Plastics
- Clean Sweep & Hazardous Waste Disposal
- Comprehensive Planning
- Conservation Chronicle Newsletter
- Crops & Soils
- Farmland Preservation Program
- Great Sauk State Trail
- Ordinance Updates
- Parks & Recreation
- Pollinators
- Sauk County Farm
- Tree Sale
- Grazing
- Sauk Soil & Water Improvement Group (SSWIG)
- Shoreline Protection & Management
- Youth Education Programs

Sign up by scanning the QR code or visiting: <https://bit.ly/saukltreupdates>

Sauk County LRE Youth Education Programs & 2024 NACD Poster Contest



Enviroscape Model lesson at local farm field trip. Photo by: Krisann McElvain

As summer winds down and another school year begins, our staff at the Sauk County Land Resources and Environment Department are gearing up for another year of providing education programs for K-12 students across Sauk County. From the [Sauk County Youth Conservation Day](#) program at [Upham Woods Outdoor Learning Center](#) for 6th and 7th grade students, the Wheat Week program for 4th and 5th grade students, to [scholarships for conservation summer camps](#) for middle and high students, Sauk County LRE is here to support students with engaging learning opportunities on all things conservation.

One exciting program available to any student in Sauk County is the [National Association of Conservation Districts](#) (NACD) Conservation Awareness Poster competition. This contest is open to all Sauk County public, private, and home-schooled students in grades K-12. Five age divisions are divided by grade level: K-1, 2-3, 4-6, 7-9, and 10-12. This contest begins at the county level, with first-place posters from each grade division moving on to regional, state, and national competitions. Students will receive prizes and awards at each level of the competition that their posters compete and win. Sauk County also awards a special prize for the classroom with the most student participation.

We will be hosting our countywide competition on Wednesday, January 10, 2024. All posters are due to the Sauk County Land Resources and Environment Department by 4:30 p.m. **Friday, January 5, 2024.** Posters submitted by the students address the annual stewardship theme that is released by NACD each year. The theme for this year is “May the Forest Be With You Always”. Each poster must include the 2024 theme and must have a completed entry form that includes a signature from a parent or guardian, which can be found on our website. Forms that are not filled out or do not have a parent or guardian’s signature will not be accepted.



To see the 2023 winning posters for Sauk County, visit our website at www.co.sauk.wi.us/landconservation/sauk-county-nacd-poster-competition.

If you would like to participate or have any questions about programs and lessons available to Sauk County students, please contact Justine Bula at 608-355-4842 or justine.bula@saukcountywi.gov.