



VOL. 42 NUMBER 2 • FALL 2026

SAUK COUNTY STEWARD

NEWSLETTER OF THE
LAND RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT



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SAUK COUNTY FARM EDUCATION HUB - FINAL MASTER PLAN
 GRAPHICS ARE FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

October

THINGS ARE “MOOVING” ALONG AT THE SAUK COUNTY FARM

The Sauk County Land Resources and Environment Department is being awarded a \$157,500 grant from the Wisconsin Department of Administration for improvements at the Sauk County Farm located at S4555 County Rd CH, Reedsburg. The Grants for Local Projects program is an initiative dedicated to supporting organizations in their pursuit of construction projects with a statewide public purpose. The funding will be used to implement components of the Sauk County Farm Property Master Plan that was approved in 2022 and the Sauk County Farm Education Hub Development Plan that was approved in 2023.

The development of both plans involved community engagement, ensuring the final product was something that would be a valuable asset to all of Sauk County. The goal of the grant and of the Sauk County Farm is to provide opportunities for economic development and job training for agricultural and natural resource practitioners such as farmers, foresters, and land managers. The planned improvements will help develop the site to offer more networking and training opportunities for Sauk County residents and beyond.

Continued on page 3



PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS INCLUDE:

- Restoring the carriage doors and upgrading the electrical components of the historic 1921 firehouse
- Moving the entrance of the driveway and constructing appropriate stormwater collection basins
- Burying the existing power line
- Installing a welcome kiosk
- Planting prairie and foraging tree species

Additional information about the Sauk County Farm can be found by visiting <https://bit.ly/SaukCountyFarm>.

A partnership between the Reedsburg Area High School is currently being developed for future infrastructure to be built by students. The welcome kiosk will also be completed as an Eagle Scout project by a local Boy Scout.

Follow the Sauk County Land Resources Environment on Facebook or [subscribe to emails](#) to get updated about future Sauk County Farm events including a grand opening.

SAUK COUNTY FARM **INFORMATION**

LAND RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

ADMINISTRATION

Tim Kabat, Director
Becky Meyer, Office Specialist

LAND CONSERVATION

Melissa Schlupp, Deputy Director
Sydney Kerman, Conservation Agronomist
Brian Sadler, Conservation Specialist
Patrick Bula, Conservation Specialist
Jenn Schneiderman, Conservation Technician
Mitch McCarthy, Watershed Program Coordinator
Vacant, Conservation Educator

PLANNING AND ZONING

Brian Simmert, Planning & Zoning Manager
Cassandra Fowler, Planner
Will Christensen, Land Use/Sanitary Specialist
Amber Ryan, Land Use/Sanitary Technician
Micaela Walters, Land Use/ Sanitary Technician

PARKS AND RECREATION

Jekka Alt, Parks & Rec Manager
Samantha Mittelsteadt, Administrative Services Coordinator
Craig Meyer, Jr., Parks Maintenance Supervisor
Lexi Leonard, Office Specialist
John Starling, Maintenance Technician I
Cory Ratham- Operator I

STAY CONNECTED



Email Updates



conservation@saukcountywi.gov



facebook.com/sauk.lre



608-355-3245

WELCOME TO THE LRE TEAM, AMBER!

Amber Ryan-Land Use/Sanitary Technician



My name is Amber, and I joined the Planning and Zoning team in May 2026 as a Land Use/Sanitation Technician. So far, my favorite part of the job so far has been getting out of the office to do site visits and hopping in soil pits to texture soil.

Prior to working with Sauk County, I worked in the Langlade County Land Conservation Department for two years where I helped educate the public on conservation efforts and worked with producers to implement conservation practices. I hold a Bachelor of Science from the University of Wisconsin – River Falls in Environmental Science. I was driven to pursue such a degree for two reasons: my love for the outdoors and my involvement in my high school FFA. My degree helped show me how agriculture, conservation, and development can co-exist to benefit everyone.

In the summer months, I enjoy hiking and fishing. I am very excited to be in an area with such a vast number of parks and natural areas to explore. During the winter, I like to go downhill skiing and ice-fishing. In my spare time, I enjoy reading and doing DIY projects. I am thrilled to join this great team and community. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out!

Phone: (608) 355-4833

Email: amber.ryan@saukcountywi.gov

UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

Sasquatch Search

9 - Sauk County Pasture Walk

16 - Agriculture Plastics Recycling

18 - Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin Field Trip-Sauk County Farm

23-Great Sauk Trail Open House

24 - Wisconsin River Basin Bash-Lodi

25 - River Valley School Ag Fair

26 - Sauk County Clean Sweep

OCTOBER

7 - Pasture Walk at the Hutter Farm La Valle

Spooky Scramble-White Mound County Park

10 - Wormfarm Decomposium Soil Health

20 - Narrows Valley Supply Cover Crop Demo

NOVEMBER

5 - Conserve Sauk Film Festival

18 - Ag Plastics Recycling

Tree Sale Goes Live

19 - SSWIG Meeting

DECEMBER

Parks + Rec Guess the Temp

SSWIG Annual Meeting

Nutrient Management Farmer Education Class

JANUARY

8 - Rural Landowner Workshop

21 - SSWIG Meeting

20 - Ag Plastics Recycling

FEBRUARY

2- SSWIG Annual Soil Health Workshop

MARCH

Native Plant Sale Goes Live

17 - Ag Plastics Recycling

SUBSCRIBE TO
STAY INFORMED



UPCOMING PASTURE WALKS

Thank you for
attending our
2026 events!

9
SEPTEMBER
5 - 7 PM

BULA'S PLEASANT VALLEY FARM (BULA FAMILY) S4473 SCENIC ROAD, BARABOO WI

Multi-Species Grazing Systems: Take a look at what approaches the Bula Farm has taken to manage multiple species and classes of livestock on the same operation. We'll discuss grass-finishing, infrastructure and the management required to stack multiple enterprises on the same pasture.

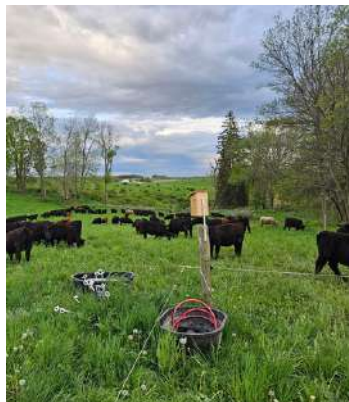
7
OCTOBER
5 - 7 PM

HUTTER FARM E3505 EAST HARRIS RD, LA VALLE

Custom Grazing Cattle: Want to explore how you can start grazing without owning any cattle? Join us at the Hutter farm to see how custom grazing and which management strategies have worked for their operation.



COST SHARE FUNDING AVAILABLE



RECEIVE UP TO 70% COST SHARING!

Technical and financial assistance is available to landowners to install conservation practices to reduce soil erosion, protect water quality, and conserve the natural resources of Sauk County.



Sauk County
Financial Assistance



Agronomy Practices

- Cover Crops
- No Till
- Nutrient Management



Livestock Facility Practices

- Manure Storage Abandonment
- Roof Runoff System (Gutters)



Rotational Grazing Infrastructure

- Fence
- Waterlines
- Seeding
- Trails & Walkways
- Winter Watering System



Lakeshore Practices

- Shoreline Protection
- Native Buffer & Rain Garden
- Fish Sticks, Diversion & Rock Infiltration

2026 SAUK COUNTY DRINKING WATER TESTING PROGRAM

RESULTS FROM 108 PARTICIPANTS

The Sauk County drinking water program provides a convenient opportunity to test your drinking water and learn about the issues facing well water in Sauk County. Residents living in the townships of La Valle, Woodland, and Ironton had an opportunity to participate in the annual Drinking Water Program in the summer of 2026. At the education program hosted in La Valle, Cayla Cavey, Groundwater Specialist for Center for Watershed Science and Education at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, shared trends of the township samples and actions participants can take to protect their drinking water.

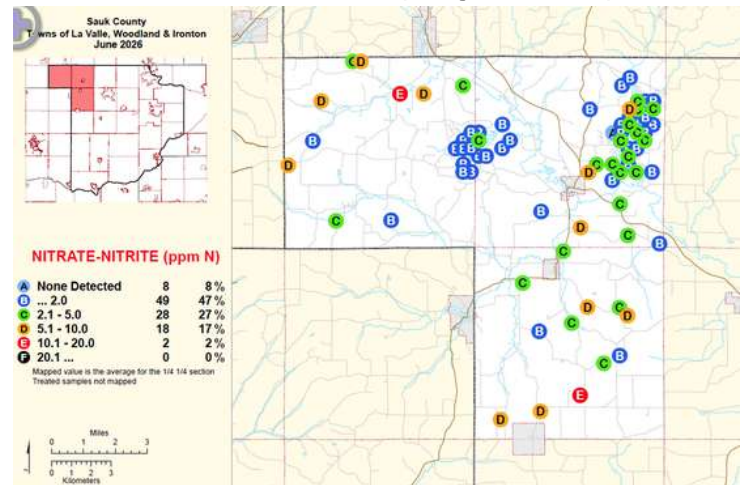
The luxury of quality drinking water is something that many of us often take for granted. Municipal and other public water supplies are subject to strict guidelines and water quality testing to ensure that the water meets the current drinking water standards and is safe to drink. However, there are over 800,000 private wells which serve as the primary water supply for a large number of people throughout the state. Drinking water can be contaminated from a variety of sources, and most water pollutants cannot be easily detected by taste or smell. Getting your water tested annually is the best way to determine if your drinking water has been contaminated by chemicals or bacteria.

In a recent survey conducted by UW-Stevens Point, 73% of survey respondents had not tested their drinking water in the last five years, 57% did not know the depth of their well, and 66% did not know the depth to water in their wells. The Sauk County drinking water program provides a convenient opportunity to test your drinking water and learn about the issues facing well water in Sauk County.

2026 WELL WATER FINDINGS HERE

Residents living in the townships of Bear Creek, Spring Green, Franklin, Washington will have an opportunity to participate in the Drinking Water Program in the summer of 2027. If you are a homeowner with a private well, it is important that you get your water tested once a year. Groundwater is constantly moving, so a water sample taken today may have different results than a sample taken a year ago. GET INVOLVED and find out what you and your family are drinking.

Nitrate levels of the 2026 program samples



Tests available:

- **Homeowner package**
- **Pesticides Package**
- **Metals Package**

Visit [UW-Stevens Point lab](#) website for more testing information.



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON



PER- AND POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES (PFAS)

CONTRIBUTED BY PEYTON MUELLER AND TAYLOR FISH



PUBLIC HEALTH
SAUK COUNTY

Together we thrive

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are human-made chemicals used in industrial, household, and personal care products for their resistance to heat, oil, and water. Because they don't break down easily, they persist in the environment and the human body. People are exposed through contaminated drinking water, fish from contaminated water, and residue from everyday products.

Sauk County hasn't seen major PFAS contamination, but other Wisconsin communities have. In response, Governor Evers signed two bills dedicating \$133 million to address PFAS statewide.

Examples of products containing PFAS include waterproof clothing, food packaging, cookware, and personal care products.



***It is estimated
that over***

99%

***of humans have
PFAS in their bodies.***



***PFAS exposure has
been linked to higher
cholesterol, thyroid
disease, reduced
vaccine response,
fertility and pregnancy
complications, and
lower birth weight.***

To reduce your exposure:

- Check [DNR fish consumption advisories](#) and [statewide safe-eating guidelines](#) before eating fish, deer, or other hunted game
- Public water is routinely tested, but private wells are the owner's responsibility — consider testing through a [DNR-certified lab](#)
- If PFAS are detected, see DHS's [options for reducing PFAS in drinking water](#)

***To learn more about PFAS and their health impacts, visit the
[Wisconsin DHS webpage](#).***

CALLING ALL SAUK COUNTY PHOTOGRAPHERS!

Help us choose the promotional photo for the 2026 Conserve Sauk Film Festival.

We're looking for a standout image (like the 2025 promotional photo captured by Ron Lutz II pictured right) that celebrates conservation, natural resources, agriculture, wildlife, water, land, or the beauty of Sauk County. Your photo could be featured in promotional materials for the 2026 festival!

**PHOTO SUBMISSION DEADLINE:
SEPTEMBER 4, 2026**

Whether you're a seasoned photographer or just captured a great shot on your phone, we'd love to see Sauk County through your lens.

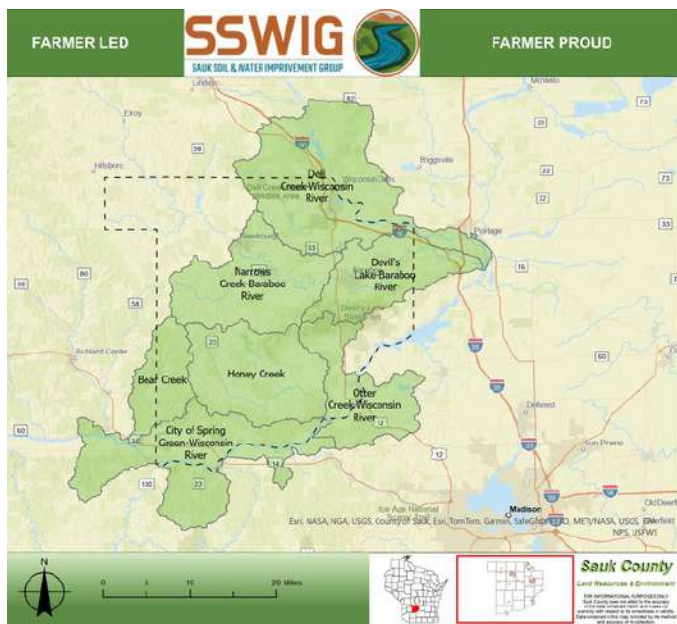
**SUBMIT YOUR
PHOTO HERE**



Photo by Ron Lutz II

FARMER LED CONSERVATION INCENTIVES

SSWIG
SAUK SOIL & WATER IMPROVEMENT GROUP



SSWIG focus watershed areas

Conservation Practices Available for Cost Sharing:



- Cover Crops
- No Till
- Planting Green
- Grazing Cover Crops
- Grazing Management and Planning



NEW for 2026! Sand County Foundation Farmer Led Funding Practices



- Get financial assistance for cover crop, field border, and native buffer installation.
- See application addendum (page 5) for eligibility requirements.

**APPLY FOR COST
SSWIG SHARE HERE**

Sauk Soil and Water Improvement Group (SSWIG) Conservation Practice Cost Share Programs encourage local farms to test and adopt new conservation practices on their operations. These funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis until all fund pools have been allocated.

Application deadline for 2026 SSWIG cost-share programs is October 1, 2026. **Sand County Foundation Cost Share applications are due September 1, 2026.

SSWIG practice cost share funds will only be disbursed after program participants provide proof of implementation (e.g. photos, receipts, field maps, and seed tags if applicable), and the SSWIG advisory committee has reviewed and approved payments.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Applicant must be a current registered SSWIG Member(s).
- Applicant must complete current annual farm practice survey (please see page 3 of application).
- Field(s) in application must be within the SSWIG focus watershed boundaries (please see map).
- Field(s) in application cannot be enrolled in additional cost share programs for the same practice(s).
- Field(s) in application must meet WI State Agriculture Performance Standards and Prohibitions.





**NARROWS VALLEY
SUPPLY**



COVER CROP DEMO FIELD DAY

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20
10AM-12PM**

**Sauk County Health Care Center
1051 Clark St. Reedsburg, WI**

Explore over 20 cover crop mixes planted at
staggered dates on a 12 acre plot

SOIL PIT

RAINFALL SIMULATOR

BYRON SEED REP

INTERSEEDING FIELD DAY

Join us!
Thursday
August 27th
2pm-4pm

Luther Farms
E12434 WI-33
Baraboo WI 53913

Topics include:

- Local cover crop opportunities
- Strip tillage discussion
- Interseeding cover crops demonstration with Montag implement and representative



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
SAUK COUNTY

SSWIG
SAUK SOIL & WATER IMPROVEMENT GROUP



MID-STATE
EQUIPMENT

MonTag





SAUK COUNTY CLEAN SWEEP EVENT

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26 8AM-12PM

**HAZARDOUS WASTE,
ELECTRONICS, TIRES**



This annual event will be hosted on **Saturday, September 26, 2026 from 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.** at the former Sauk County Landfill, **E8795 Evergreen Lane, Baraboo**. Clean Sweep is an opportunity for homeowners, agricultural enterprises, and businesses to dispose of hazardous products and items that pose an environmental risk, such as pesticides and toxic cleaning products. Household hazardous waste will be collected at no charge, however, there are fees for tires, some electronic items, and appliances.

OTHER OPTIONS

Sauk County residents can dispose of their household hazardous waste at the Dane County Clean Sweep facility through a voucher program. Sauk County residents need to complete a voucher form at the Sauk County Land Resources and Environment Department (LRE) (West Square Building at 505 Broadway Street, Ste 248, Baraboo). Participants with the Sauk County voucher pay a \$15.00 fee upon arrival at the Dane County Clean Sweep instead of the \$75.00 fee for out-of-county participants.



SAUK COUNTY
CLEAN SWEEP
INFORMATION

CAN'T MAKE IT?

**HAVE ITEMS THAT AREN'T
ACCEPTED?**

  CLEAN SWEEP
VOUCHER PROGRAM

  ALTERNATIVE
DISPOSAL GUIDE

Other items that aren't considered hazardous waste can usually be brought to alternative businesses or services around Sauk County. Check out the Alternatives Guide above to find how to properly dispose of your items.

SAUK COUNTY CLEAN SWEEP

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 26, 2026

8:00am - 12:00pm

Old Sauk County Landfill

E8795 Evergreen Ln, Baraboo

Date, time, items accepted, & fees subject to change



⚠ SAUK COUNTY RESIDENTS

Dispose of household hazardous waste safely

NO CHARGE: Pesticides, cleaners, oil-based paint, batteries*, light bulbs, and many electronics

FOR DETAILED INFORMATION:

bit.ly/SCcleansweep

608-355-4842

conservation@saukcountywi.gov



Staff will unload items at each station.

Make sure items are loaded in the rear of vehicle.

*Car/Marine batteries are not accepted



NOT ACCEPTED:

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



ELECTRONICS: Cash, Credit, Check payable to
Resource Solutions

**Remove batteries from electronics*

NO CHARGE: Computer towers, cords/wire, power supplies, cell phones, routers/modems, Christmas lights, laptops, tablets, telephones, video gaming devices, cable/satellite boxes, most small electronics



RecycleThatStuff.com

Resource Solutions

- Hard Drive Removal and Destruction \$10
- Microwaves & Large Copy Machines \$15
- Small AC Units, mini fridges, dehumidifiers \$20
- Stoves, washers, dryers, dishwashers \$25
- Refrigerators & Large Freezers \$35
- All monitors, CRT & Flat Screen \$20
- TV 29" & under \$20
- TV 30" - 49" \$40
- TV 50" - 60", projection, wooden console \$60
- TVs Over 60 Inches - ADDITIONAL FEES APPLY



TIRE FEES:

Cash or Check payable to
Sauk County Treasurer



- | | |
|------------------------------|------|
| • 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 |
| • Oversized Industrial tires | \$50 |
| • <13" tires | \$3 |
| • <13" w/rims | \$5 |

Businesses & farms with **Paints & Chemicals**
>200 lbs **MUST** register with Veolia at least 1
week before the event. Call (262) 875-7014

QUESTIONS ON WHAT'S ACCEPTED?

ELECTRONICS: RESOURCE SOLUTIONS (608)
244-5451

HAZARDOUS WASTE: VEOLIA (262) 875-7014

GENERAL: SAUK COUNTY (608) 355-3245

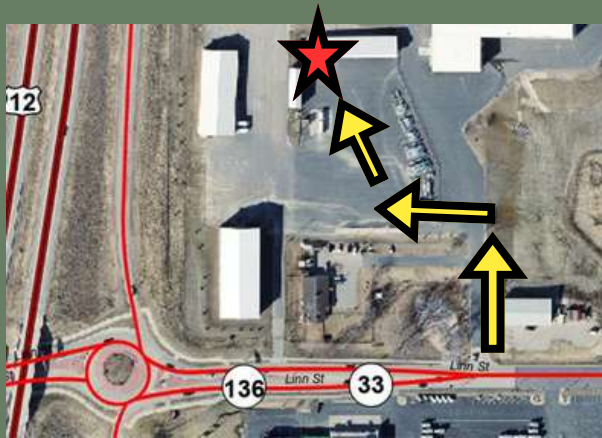


AG PLASTICS RECYCLING



SAUK COUNTY FARMS

Recycle your silage bags, bunker covers, and hoop film for FREE!



- Bring plastic to the Sauk County Highway Shop, **620 Linn Street, Baraboo, 10am - Noon** on collection day.
- Plastic should be in Recapture Bags or tied into tight, manageable bundles. Recapture bags are available at the Sauk County Land Resources & Environment Department office. Farms may receive 5 bags free annually. Each bag can hold about 200 lbs. of plastic. SuperSacks are not recyclable-we are trying to phase out of these. Please either bundle your plastic or use the provided bags.
- All plastic is to be unloaded by hand and must be a manageable weight and size to unload.

- **NO LOOSE PLASTIC**
- **NO Bale netting / mesh. This material should be landfilled.**

2026 DATES

3RD WEDNESDAY EVERY OTHER MONTH

10:00 am - NOON

- **JANUARY 21**
- **MARCH 18**
- **MAY 20**
- **JULY 15**
- **SEPTEMBER 16**
- **NOVEMBER 18**



Recapture Bag



Properly rolled & bundled plastic



Visit our website to be notified of upcoming dates: bit.ly/agplastics

608-355-3245

conservation@saukcountywi.gov

505 Broadway, Baraboo, WI 53913

SAUK COUNTY PARKS + RECREATION

PARK EVENTS:

The Sauk County Parks and Recreation Department will be hosting multiple events this fall and winter, with a couple happening at Hemlock County Park for the first time ever!

Sasquatch is coming to Hemlock County Park for a lengthy visit this fall! He's going to be hiding in the woods somewhere in the park. If you find him, take a photo with him and email it to parks.rec@saukcountywi.gov. We will have three winners in total - one for the first person to submit their photo, one for the most creative photo, and one drawn randomly. This event begins on September 15, 2026, and ends on November 3, 2026. Good luck and have fun!

There will be a Spooky Scramble event during the entire month of October this year! This will take place on the Lake Trail at White Mound County Park, where there will be an event form to grab at the beginning, and letters to write down as you move along the trail. Once you've walked the entire trail, unscramble your letters to reveal a spooky message! Write this message on your event form with your name and contact info to be entered to win a prize.

The final event of the year will also take place at Hemlock County Park, but you can participate from home for this one! Simply guess what the temperature of the air near the Hemlock Dam will be on December 17, 2026, at 1:00 PM CST. Submissions for this event will be open from December 2, 2026, through December 15, 2026



These events are free of charge, but some parks require an entrance fee. For more information about park events, call (608) 355-4800 or visit the Parks and Recreation News & Events webpage for full rules and details. We hope to see you soon!
Continued on page 16





EXCITING UPDATES

The Wisconsin River Recreation Bridge will be opening before we know it! The Sauk County side of the bridge is near the end of its construction. Planning efforts for the nearby Gateway Park have continued with Zenith Tech, Inc., and construction for it began in August 2026. There will be shade structures, water fountains, benches, an art installation made of historical bridge pieces, and historical interpretive signs. We're very excited for the Great Sauk State Trail to connect to Dane County's Walking Iron Trail, and for the GSST to eventually expand towards Devil's Lake State Park. If you're looking for more information regarding the GSST, we will be having an open house on September 23, 2026, from 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM with a presentation at 6:30 PM. This is located at the Carnegie-Schadde Memorial Public Library and will be a great opportunity for the community to give us input about the trail!

We have other exciting projects going on as well - our new maintenance shop located at White Mound County Park is set to open sometime this fall, which is also when we'll be brushing trails at Hemlock County Park. However, as the fall moves on, the closer to the end of the camping season it is. The White Mound County Park campground will be closing for the season on November 30, 2026 (weather-dependending) and will open back up April 1. However, eager campers are allowed to submit early reservation requests during a two-week period in December. This is a great opportunity for anyone wanting specific dates and sites, or for large groups coming in who need many sites. Shortly after this we will be announcing our 2027 event calendar, so stayed tuned to learn about those!

Thank you for another great season at our Sauk County parks and properties, we hope you have a great fall and winter!



SAUK COUNTY
PARKS + RECREATION

January-May

DESIGN OUR 2027 PARK PASS STICKER!

Create and submit an original design to potentially be used for our 2027 park pass!

Sauk County Parks + Recreation

2026 EVENTS

February-September

ROCK PAINTING

BYOR (bring your own rock) or stop by the office at White Mound County Park to paint a rock to display on our walking path!

March

EGG HUNT

Try your luck at finding a giant egg at White Mound Co. Park, Hemlock Co. Park and Lake Redstone Co. Park. 6 eggs hidden total!

April

POETRY PATH

Walk the Willie Walsh Nature Trail at White Mound Co. Park to read nature-based poetry, then write a poem yourself!

May

SASQUATCH SEARCH

Sasquatch is back at White Mound County Park! He's hiding in the woods again. Can you find him?

June 9

MUSIC IN THE PARK

Come to White Mound County Park to jam with Too Sick Charlie, with a passion for old-time styles and his staple cigar box guitar!

July 14

MUSIC IN THE PARK

Come to White Mound County Park to rock out with Wonder Lust, who performs a wide variety of pop and rock music!

July

GUESS HOW MANY!

Guess how many pine cones are in our picnic basket for a chance to win a prize!

August

SANDCASTLE SKILLS

How are your sandcastle building skills? Show us at the beaches of White Mound County Park and Lake Redstone County Park!

August 11

MUSIC IN THE PARK

Come to White Mound County Park for a lively, fun night of entertaining variety music by Janna + the Junkyard Dawgs!

September

SASQUATCH SEARCH

Sasquatch is back - but now hiding at Hemlock County Park! Can you help us find him again?

October

SPOOKY SCRAMBLE

There's letters spread throughout the Lake Trail at White Mound County Park. What message do they spell out?

December

GUESS THE TEMP!

Try guessing what the air temperature will be near the Hemlock Dam on December 17, 2026 at 1 PM, CST.

More information can be found on our website: www.co.sauk.wi.us/parksandrecreation
Questions? Give us a call at: (608) 355-4800 or email parks.rec@saukcountywi.gov

CHAPTER 7 ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT

UPDATE AUGUST 2026



FINAL DRAFT ORDINANCE AVAILABLE

A public hearing will be held before the Land Resources & Extension Committee on September 10, 2026 at 9:00 am in the WSB County Board Room to approve a comprehensive rewrite to the zoning ordinance. The final draft of the Sauk County Chapter 7 Zoning Ordinance and additional resources including a summary memo of the changes, along with an educational video series are available using the QR code or the URL bit.ly/SaukCountyZoning.

CONTACT: CASSANDRA FOWLER
(608) 355-3245 or cassandra.fowler@saukcountywi.gov

VIEW
PROPOSED
ORDINANCE
HERE!



OR USE THE
URL BELOW!

bit.ly/SaukCountyZoning

ATTENTION NON-OPERATING LANDOWNERS!



Clare Dietz, a doctoral student at UW Madison is looking for Non-Operating Landowners to interview regarding landowner-renter relationships and adoption of conservation practices. There is a \$50 honorarium payment for those participating in the interview. Please consider reaching out to Clare at cdietz2@wisc.edu or 563-599-7631 to share your experiences.





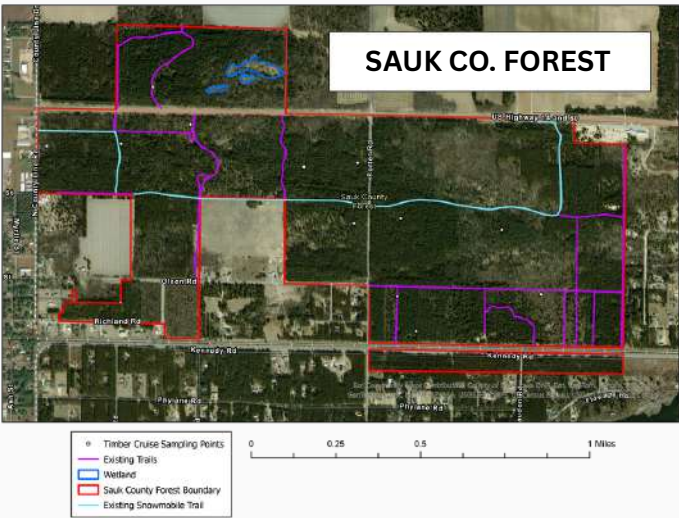
SPEAK FOR THE TREES

Sauk County Forest Updates

Planning continues with the master plan for the Sauk County Forest! A survey was released in July, which has been collecting helpful information. Some preliminary survey results indicate that usage is fairly consistent throughout the seasons and includes activities such as hiking, snowmobile, hunting, and wildlife viewing. Habitat preservation ranked the highest among users desired for the property, with hiking and snowshoe trails ranking second and snowmobile trails ranking third. Limited access for emergency services ranked the highest for safety concerns, and wildlife interactions ranked the lowest.

An open house was held in August, and approximately 40 people were in attendance. A lot of feedback, comments and concerns were shared with staff. The planning team will formalize draft development options and present to the

public for additional input. Another open house session will follow. Thank you to everyone who's taken the time to get involved in the planning process!



SAUK COUNTY FOREST INFORMATION



A LEGACY LOOKS AHEAD

Photo & Article by WI Land+Water

The Sauk County Land Resources and Environment Department honors Serge Koenig, Conservation Analyst, as he retired in June of 2026. Serge has a favorite Theodore Roosevelt quote: "Nobody cares how much you know until they know how much you care." It's a philosophy he lives out every day.

The recipient of this year's Wisconsin Land+Water Conservation Legacy Award, Koenig has spent more than 30 years working with landowners across Wisconsin. He builds trust one conversation at a time, and then puts that trust to work on the land. As a technician, Koenig has done it all—conservation planning, surveying, designing, and in recent years led the promotion and implementation of rotational grazing. He has single-handedly facilitated the conversion of nearly 6,000 acres into rotationally grazed pasture, which has reshaped both landscapes and the livelihoods of the farm families working them.

As someone who leads with empathy and genuine listening, Koenig has become one of the most effective voices in Wisconsin conservation, teaching the next generation of conservationists

that effective communication isn't just a soft skill, it's the whole job. His commitment to public service, Wisconsin's natural resources, and the well-being of others has left an immeasurable impact on our conservation community.

Thank you for your services and congratulations, Serge!



Photo by WI Land+Water

2027 CONSERVATION POSTER CONTEST

2027 Poster Contest Theme is Released!

The National Association of Conservation Districts is excited to unveil the official 2027 Stewardship Week theme, From Source to Sea: Every Drop Has a Journey.

Water is one of our most valuable natural resources, and every drop has a story to tell. Whether it begins as rain from the clouds, snow in the mountains, bubbles up from a spring, or flows through a neighborhood stream, water is constantly moving across our landscapes. Along its journey, it supports forests, farms, grasslands, wildlife, communities, and ultimately the oceans that connect us all.

The 2027 theme reminds us that water does not exist in isolation. What happens upstream affects everything downstream. The choices we make to protect soil, reduce erosion, plant trees, restore habitats, and use water wisely all influence the quality of the water that continues its journey.

Conservation districts see this connection every day. Working alongside farmers, ranchers, landowners, schools, and communities, districts help protect local watersheds through voluntary, locally led conservation. Their efforts improve water quality, reduce runoff, restore streambanks and wetlands, and keep our natural resources healthy.

For students, this theme offers an opportunity to discover the incredible path water takes through the water cycle and across the landscape. From mountain streams and rivers to wetlands, lakes, estuaries, and the sea, every lesson explores another step along the way while demonstrating

CONTEST DETAILS

2027 NACD Conservation Poster theme
"From Source to Sea. Every Drop has a Journey"



the important role each of us plays in protecting our water resources.

The 2027 Stewardship Week educational materials will explore watersheds, the water cycle, and the connections between healthy soils, forests, agriculture, wildlife habitat, urban conservation, and the many ways conservation districts help safeguard our nation's water resources. Stay tuned through the fall as our educational materials are released as downloads and printables.

No matter where you call home, water connects us all. From the smallest headwater stream to the open sea, every action we take helps shape its journey, because From Source to Sea, Every Drop Has a Journey.