

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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SSWIG Soil Health Winter Workshop

The Sauk Soil and Water Improvement Group (SSWIG) received a \$40,000 DATCP Producer Led Watershed Protection Grant for 2020 and is already working on projects to fulfill its mission. In September, SSWIG organized the “Farmers Helping Farmers with Conservation” event at Echo-Y Farms. The day included a farm tour complete with a soil pit, rainfall simulator demonstration, and grill-out for lunch.



SSWIG Soil Health Winter Workshop

This winter, SSWIG hosted a Soil Health Winter Workshop in Baraboo. The workshop’s theme was “Why Soil Health Matters” and featured North

Carolina farmer, Russell Hedrick, as guest speaker. Hedrick is a first generation farmer who began with 35 acres in 2012 and has expanded his operation to nearly 1,000 acres. In 2016 Hedrick was named the North Carolina Young Farmer of the Year for his use of cover crops and new technologies on his farm. He also won the 2016 North Carolina Dryland No-Till Corn Yield Contest with 318 bushels. During the event Hedrick shared his knowledge on soil health and making a farm profitable through direct marketing and lowering inputs.



Attendees at the September “Farmers Helping Farmers with Conservation” event discuss no-till planter set-up.

Along with Russell Hedrick, a farmer panel featuring Roman Miller, Roger Bindl, Darren Yanke, and Ron Schoepp shared their “aha moments” with soil health. They reflected on when and why they first made changes to their operations and why they haven’t looked back since. They discussed their experiences with rotational grazing, planting green, no-till, cover crops, and interseeding, while taking questions from attendees on how to be successful with these various practices. Overall, it was a great event to share and learn from fellow farmers!

Along with education events, SSWIG is working with on-farm research and cost share programs to help more fellow farmers adopt practices that will not only improve their soil health, but also help them to improve their bottom line. SSWIG has funds available for two cost share programs available to farmers and landowners within its three focus watersheds in central Sauk County.

Applications are currently being accepted for converting row crops to pasture (due by April 1, 2020) and for cover crops (due by June 15, 2020).

The Sauk Soil & Water Improvement Group is a community of farmers and partners who share a common goal of improving our soil and water quality through soil health and other conservation practices. If you are interested in becoming involved with this group or have questions regarding the cost share applications or events, contact Justine Bula at (608) 355-4842 or justine.bula@saukcountywi.gov.

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Setting Goals & Knowing Your “WHY”

It's been stated, “If you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there.” A common question that should arise is, “*Why* am I doing this?” This is a question we need to wrestle with on the farm and in life in general. During these tough economic times, where we are losing an average of three farms per day in Wisconsin, having a vision for what you want your life to look like in one, five, and 15 years down the road, can help us weather these tough times and give us some measure of hope.

Having mission and vision sessions has always been important to any operation. Unfortunately, most of us do not take the time to figure out exactly what that looks like for our particular operation. The first question we should all ask ourselves is, “*Why?*” Why do I row crop? Why do I raise livestock? Why do I do things the way we have always done it? So often we focus too much on the *how* and *what*, but fail to understand the *why*. The answers are different for everyone. There is no wrong or right answer—the important thing is that it comes from you.

Once you have your *why* answered, then you can focus on the *how* and *what*. This is where goals and objectives come into play. There are multiple approaches, but setting SMART goals is one effective method. SMART stands for Specific Measureable Attainable Related Timed. An example of a SMART goal statement might be, “I want to have a grass-based dairy farm and be milking 100 cows by spring of 2021 with a debt-to-asset ratio of less than 50%.”

The goals can be financial and answer the following questions: What income level is required to support your lifestyle? How will you achieve that level of income? There are also resource goals to consider such as, how do you want your living and working environment to look? What are the resources available to you and how do you plan to utilize them?

Finally, we need to set goals for the production systems we will use to accomplish our lifestyle, financial, and resource goals. Many commit to a production system they inherited without knowing whether it will ever move them towards their more important goals. The production system should be the last thing determined during a planning session, not the first thing. Production systems goals on the farm could include: Will we focus on livestock only? Do I want a mix of crops and livestock? Do we want to tap into direct markets? Should we own or contract out services?

Setting these farm goals and knowing your “*why*” provides a roadmap towards your life goals. It gives direction during tumultuous times. There may be some detours along the way but it can keep you moving in the right direction for your farm. Please contact the Land Resources and Environment Department if you would like some assistance in creating a roadmap for your farm. We are happy to talk through the process with you.

Sign Up Now for Conservation Programs

Most conservation programs are open for sign-up anytime throughout the year and there is no time like the present. Staff can help you determine which program best meets your needs. Applications are scored as they are received and funding is applied to the highest-ranking projects until funding runs out. Here are some of the available programs to consider:

- **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. If approved, landowners can receive up to 70% cost-sharing to install conservation practices including stream crossings, streambank stabilization, and grassed waterways.
- **Nutrient Management Program** assists landowners with the development of plans that address the proper application of fertilizers and animal waste to crop fields and pasture land. Eligible costs include soil sampling tests and plan development by a qualified consultant.
- **Baraboo River Watershed Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)** is a special pool of funding for the Baraboo River Watershed in Sauk and Juneau Counties. Technical and financial assistance is available to install conservation practices that prevent soil erosion and reduce agricultural runoff to ground and surface waters. Eligible practices include rotational grazing infrastructure, cover crops, and streambank stabilization.

Please call the LRE Department at (608) 355-3245 to discuss the conservation needs for your property.

Sauk County 2020 NACD Poster Contest

The Sauk County Land Resources and Environment Department participated in the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Conservation Awareness Poster competition again this year, with some outstanding entries submitted! This contest was open to all Sauk County public, private, and home-schooled students in grades K-12. This contest began at the county level, with the first place poster from each grade division moving on to regional, state, and national competitions. Students receive prizes and awards at each level their posters compete and win.



Posters submitted by the students address the annual stewardship theme that is released by NACD each year. The theme for this year was “Where would we BEE without Pollinators?” Forty-eight posters were created by students in grades K-12. The judges for the Sauk County competition are comprised of local conservation, NRCS, FSA, and UW Extension staff. The judges were extremely impressed with the level of creativity and the thought that each student put into their poster, not to mention the artistic ability of these students!

The winning posters for the 2020 Sauk County NACD Conservation Poster Contest for grades K-1 went to Kallie Sadler, 1st Place; Andy Gruber, 2nd Place; and Cooper Schulz, 3rd Place. The first place winner, Kallie Sadler, went on to receive second place at the Southern Area Regional Competition.



A few of the Sauk County 2020 NACD Poster Contest judges reviewing entries for the contest.

Awards for Grades 2-3 went to Quinn Moses, 1st Place; Camile Flint, 2nd Place; and Garrett Beyer, 3rd Place. Quinn Moses's poster also moved on to a first place finish at the Southern Area Regional Competition and will now be competing at the State Competition on March 6th at the annual WI Land & Water Conference. Conservation employees from around the state will be voting on the top posters at this competition.

Award winners for Grades 4-6 went to Kailey Sporkowski, 1st Place; Kessie Breitbach, 2nd Place; and Lorelei Williams, 3rd Place. Kailey Sporkowski's poster received a third place award at the Southern Area Regional Competition.

For Grades 7-9, awards went to Madeline Corbin, 1st Place; and Austin Conant, 2nd Place. Madeline Corbin's poster went on to place second at the Southern Area Regional Competition.

Awards for Grades 10-12 went to Jaylyn Hynek, 1st Place; Kayleigh Johnson, 2nd Place; and Peyton Tourdot, 3rd Place. Jaylyn Hynek's poster placed first for the 10-12 grade competition at the regional competition and will also be moving onto the state competition on March 6.

Congratulations to all of the students for their hard work and creativity! To see the 2020 winning posters for Sauk County and for final results from the state competition, visit our [website](#).

Information and registration forms for the 2021 NACD Conservation Poster Contest will be made available on our website this fall. If you would like to participate or have any questions about this program, contact Justine Bula at 608-355-4842 or justine.bula@saukcountywi.gov.

Shifting Gears - Facing Changing Times



The Farmer Angel Network will be hosting the “Shifting Gears - Facing Changing Times” workshop on Wednesday, March 25, 2020 from 12:00 - 2:00 p.m., at the Spring Green Community Center located at 117 Washington St., Spring Green. This event is free and open to the public.

The group will be meeting the second Tuesday of every month at 5:00 p.m. If you are interested in getting involved with The Farmer Angel Network, please feel free to attend a meeting or contact Alana Voss for more information at alana.voss@ces.uwex.edu or (608) 355-3250.

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

- March 16, 2020 - 2020 ARCPLC election/enrollment
- June 30, 2020 - 2020 ARCPL enrollment
- July 15, 2020 - Acreage reporting deadline for 2020 crops
- Currently ongoing - Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) continuous signup (not general sign-up)

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



Protecting nature. Preserving life.

Earth Day Tree Planting with The Nature Conservancy

Join The Nature Conservancy at our tree planting honoring the 50th anniversary of Earth Day. We will be planting 1,500 white oak trees in the Baraboo Hills, one of our state's most beautiful and ecologically important natural areas.

The Nature Conservancy has protected almost 11,800 acres in the Baraboo Hills, which is home to more than 1,800 species of plants and animals. The natural communities of the Hills are incredibly diverse and include relic hemlock groves, quartzite outcroppings, rocky glades with stunted hickories and oaks, Important Bird Areas, and so much more.

Explore these amazing habitats and help the birds and other wildlife that live there by volunteering for this event. Hand tools and equipment for planting will be supplied and lunch will be provided. Please bring weather-appropriate gloves, footwear and outerwear.

When: Saturday, April 25, 2020 9:00 AM - 12:30 PM

To sign up for the event or for more information, please contact;
Selvio DeAngeles, Americorps Land Steward and Volunteer Coordinator
selvio.deangeles@tnc.org 608-819-0576

Roundtable Discussion hosted by SCCN



Mark your calendars for a roundtable discussion from 1-3 pm on Sunday, April 5, 2020 at Park Hall in Sauk City. It is the second of three events in the series *Forever Bound: Conservation & Agriculture in Sauk County*. The first was a discussion of the interconnected economic, social, and conservation issues facing farmers today. Panelists included dairy and beef producers, a soil conservationist, town chairman, and a farm financial advisor.

"It was a fantastic dialogue between different groups of citizens who share concerns about Sauk County's natural resources," noted panelist Paul Dietmann. "The conversation was deep and respectful, a spark to something very meaningful. We need to carry this forward, build deeper connections between the participants, and hopefully lead to actions that make life better for everyone who lives or visits here."

The upcoming roundtable workshop will explore three topics: 1) Best management practices for sustainable farming; 2) Agriculture and natural resource policy; 3) Individual and farm-to-table support and incentives. It will result in a list of actions that individual citizen-consumers can take to support wise agricultural land use. The third event will be a summer field trip to local farms.

The series is hosted by the Sauk County Conservation Network (SCCN). According to coordinator and Loganville Farmer, Gretchen Kruse, "We're about bringing people, organizations and public agencies together to understand issues better and support on-the-ground conservation. Community-building and communication are our thing."

For more information on this event, contact Gretchen Kruse at (208) 659-2038 or gretchenkruse@msn.com.

Sauk County Clean Sweep

Saturday, May 30, 2020 from 8:30 - Noon
Old Sauk County Landfill
E8795 Evergreen Lane, Baraboo

Dispose of household hazardous waste safely

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

For more information call 608-355-3245 or email conservation@saukcountywi.gov

Beginning September 26, 2020, latex paint will no longer be accepted at the Sauk County Clean Sweep events.

Fees for Tires

Car and light truck tires	\$5
Car and light truck tires w/rims	\$7
Ag and semi tires	\$13
Ag and semi tires w/rims	\$25
<13" tires	\$1
<13" w/ rims	\$3

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

What is *Not Accepted*:

- Pharmaceuticals, IVs, needles
- Explosives, detonators, blasting caps
- Radioactive materials including smoke alarms
- Infectious and biological waste
- Compressed gas cylinders
- Recyclables, yard and household waste
- Asbestos
- Demolition materials
- Mattresses

Small businesses **MUST pre-register for Paint & Chemicals with Veolia at least 1 week prior** please contact Chris Bahlow at (715) 298-2623.

Agricultural producers should contact Sauk County directly at (608) 355-4842.

No late registration will be accepted.

Resource Solutions will accept the following items at Clean Sweep:

No charge: CPUs, Computer Printers, Speakers, Scanners, Fax Machines, Vacuum Cleaners, Phones, Laptops, Record Players, Tape Players, CD Players iPods, VCRs, DVD Players, Beta Tape Players, Electrical Saws, Drills, Calculators, Paper Shredders, Coffee Machines, Heaters, Game Systems, Sewing Machines, Electronic Toys, Most Household Electronics

\$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), hot water heaters

\$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 by CHECK payable to Resource Solutions at event.

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

What is the next step in your leadership journey? The Sauk County Institute of Leadership (SCIL) is a leadership development program that empowers, engages, and equips participants to make a positive difference in Sauk County. The nine-month program kicks off with an overnight retreat in September followed by eight day-long workshops that are held throughout the county on the second Thursday of each month from October to May. Each interactive SCIL session blends leadership skill development with an examination of emerging community issues.

SCIL has a rich history of success. Alumni routinely note a more comprehensive understanding of community issues and leadership practices. They also demonstrate a new confidence to take on leadership roles in their homes, communities, and workplaces. SCIL graduates cite improvements in their effectiveness as decision makers and leaders in their current roles. They also value the opportunity to grow and develop a diverse network of local resources and contacts.

Applications are due June 1, 2020. (\$75 discount if the application is received by May 1). Additional information including the application is available at <http://www.saukcountyinstituteofleadership.org/>.

Please contact Ellen Klima at the UW-Platteville Continuing Education Institute located on the Baraboo/Sauk

Assistance is Only a Phone Call Away!

Contact the LRE office at (608) 355-3245 if you are interested in any of the services listed:

- **Soil Health Assessment:** LRE staff are available to complete free soil health assessments on farms. Staff will determine how well your soil can absorb water, using compaction and infiltration tests. A slake test will also be completed to determine your soil's vulnerability to runoff and erosion.
- **Soil Sampling:** Soil samples will help you identify where lime applications should occur and is the basis for your nutrient management plan. Soil augers and soil sample bags are available at the LRE office.
- **Nutrient Management Plan Writing Assistance:** Our staff can help you write or update your nutrient management plan. If you have taken the NMFE class in the past, LRE staff can assist you with updating your nutrient management plan.
- **Manure Spreader Calibration:** If you spread manure and don't know your rate, staff from the LRE office can calibrate your spreader so you know what you're spreading.

Read Your Newsletter Online!

Would you prefer to read the Conservation Chronicle online? Please e-mail conservation@saukcountywi.gov if you would like to receive an email notifying you when the newsletter is available for viewing at <https://www.co.sauk.wi.us/landconservation> This will help us reduce postage costs as well as paper. If you know of someone who would enjoy receiving this newsletter, please let us know!

We're on Facebook



Follow us on Facebook and stay up-to-date on events, deadlines, articles, videos, and more!



Search @sauk.lre then "like"

2020 Rain Barrel & Compost Bin Sale

Place order by April 15 for pick-up May 6-8.

**“System”
Rain Barrel
\$55.00**



- 55 gallon capacity
- Mosquito net keeps bugs & leaves out
- Easily accommodates existing downspouts
- Can be linked to another rain barrel
- Spigot & overflow hose included

Nourish your gardens by investing in a rain barrel and/or compost bin for your home! Help to build healthy soils, dispose of yard waste, prevent erosion and runoff, and utilize the water coming off your roof. Composting can help to save money in the long run by providing a source of valuable nutrients, improving the soil structure, and increasing the water holding capacity of the soil, helping you grow healthier plants overall.

The Sauk County LRE Department and the City of Baraboo are holding the 2020 rain barrel and compost bin sale. The order deadline is April 15, 2020. Pick-up will be May 6-8, 2020 at the Baraboo City Service Center (450 Roundhouse Court, Baraboo). Order forms are available in the LRE office, or online at <https://www.co.sauk.wi.us/landconservation>

For more information, contact Melissa Schlupp at 608-355-4838 or melissa.schlupp@saukcountywi.gov

**“Earth Machine”
Compost Bin
\$45.00**



- 80 gallon capacity
- Made from 50% recyclable material
- Splits in two for ease of transport
- Rodent resistant
- 10 year warranty

Upcoming Land Resource & Environment Events

Resilient Fields & Farms with Jerry Hatfield

Coming to Sauk County for a special workshop about resiliency on farms are Jerry Hatfield, former director of the USDA-ARS National Laboratory for Agriculture and the Environment, and Abby Augarten, UW Discovery Farms Nitrogen Use Efficiency project coordinator. In addition, a panel of farmers from across Sauk County will talk about what practices they are using with their operations and why.

When: Thursday, March 19, 2020 from 9:30 - 3:00

Where: White Mound County Park (S7995 White Mound Drive, Hillpoint)

Cost: \$10.00/person

RSVP Deadline: Wednesday, March 11, 2020



Summer Grazing Workshop with Greg Judy

Save the date for the Summer Grazing Workshop! The Sauk County LRE Department will be hosting the nationally recognized grazing expert, Greg Judy, for an all day grazing workshop on May 28. A portion of the day will be spent indoors for a presentation and catered lunch followed by pasture walk and farm tour at Echo-Y Farms. Make the most out of your pastures and join us for a day of learning from local and national experts. More information on this event will be available in the future.

When: Thursday, May 28, 2020

Cost: \$25.00/Farmer \$50.00/Agency Staff

RSVP Deadline: Monday, May 18, 2020

Please contact Justine Bula, 608-355-4842 or justine.bula@saukcountywi.gov for registration information.

Sauk County LRE
505 Broadway, Ste. 248
Baraboo, WI 53913
www.co.sauk.wi.us
conservation@saukcountywi.gov

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

LRE..... (608) 355-3245
NRCS..... (608) 355-4420, ext. 3
FSA..... (608) 355-4420, ext. 2
DNR Foresters (608) 235-5685
APHIS (WDS) (608) 837-2727
1-866-487-3297

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Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

CREP pays landowners to install filter strips along waterways or to return continually flooded fields to wetlands while leaving the remainder of the adjacent land in agricultural production. Thousands of Wisconsin landowners have enrolled land in one of two enrollment options: 15-Year Agreement or Perpetual Easement. Currently, there are about 32 easements and 117 agreements enrolling 2,500+ acres into CREP in Sauk County.

What land is eligible for CREP?

Eligible land must be located in one of about 50 designated CREP counties, have a history of crop or pasture land, and be located within 150 feet of a ditch, stream, lake, or wetland. The typical CREP site consists of buffers ranging from 30 to 150 feet wide along a stream.

What are the eligible conservation practices?

There are many different conservation practice options through the CREP program. The practice installed on a property depends on both site factors and desires of the landowner. Conservation practices include filter strips, riparian buffers, grassed waterways, wetland restorations, marginal pastureland habitat buffers, permanent introduced grasses, permanent native grasses, grass prairie ecosystem restorations, and established legumes and grass.



For more information, please contact Serge Koenig at 608-355-4837 or serge.koenig@saukcountywi.gov.