

Land Resources and Environment

Department: November 2024 Monthly Report

Land Conservation

- Staff continue to work with American Farmland Trust on planning the Sauk County Farmland Owner Workshop scheduled for January 10th. This workshop will be targeted towards landowners who rent their farmland out.
- Staff attended an Ag 101 training at Arlington Research Station on November 7th.
- Staff collected macroinvertebrates on November 12th from the streams that were monitored this summer. These critters will be analyzed to help determine the overall health of the waterbodies.
- Staff assisted the Lake Redstone Protection District with their annual fall transect survey.
- The last Ag Plastics collection event was held on November 20th with 13 people participating.
- Staff attended a SSWIG meeting on November 21st with 18 people in attendance.
- Staff attended the Illinois Farmland Owner Conference in Central Illinois on November 25th.
- An additional prairie strip was planted at the Sauk County Farm near the cemetery.
- Staff have started planning for a grand opening event at the Sauk County Farm in June 2025.

Manure Storage Facility Status Reviews



Staff began conducting manure storage facility status reviews in November. These reviews are visual inspections of manure storage facilities to ensure there are no signs of leakage or failure. This is also an opportunity to engage with landowners we have not worked with in the past. A follow up letter is provided to the landowner if there are any issues that need to be addressed. Most facilities appear to be in good working condition.

Schulte Farm Grazing Project



The 135 acre Schulte Farm grazing project in the Town of Washington was installed in November. This project included over five miles of fencing and nearly 2.5 miles of livestock waterlines. Funding for this project was provided by the Multi Discharger Variance (MDV) Program that distributes penalties from wastewater treatment facilities to counties for installing projects that will reduce phosphorus runoff. We estimate this project will provide a reduction of 1,215 lbs of phosphorus, 1,458 tons of soil loss, and will increase water infiltration by 9,450,000 gallons per year.

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Planning & Zoning

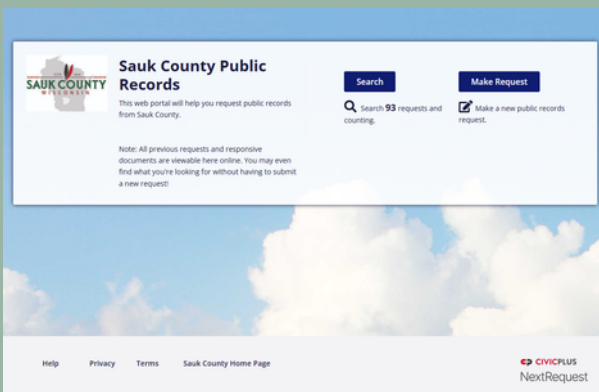
- Staff continue to work with OpenGov, the new online permitting platform, completing data migration and setting up the master address table (to search records by address) and preliminary testing. The goal is to go live by the end of the year making the full transition from paper permitting to all electronic.
- Staff collaborated with Parks staff to host the Hemlock County Park Open House to gain public input for the master property plan. The event was held at the La Valle Town Hall with approximately 45 people in attendance.
- Staff are finalizing Comprehensive Plan updates with the Towns of Franklin, Woodland, Winfield and Reedsburg.
- Only three property owners were sent citations for failing to maintain their septic system (3 year septic maintenance as required by Wisconsin Administrative Code).

Partnership in Shoreland and Wetland Regulation



Staff joined the DNR onsite to assist a property owner in permitting the maintenance and further development of a spring-fed pond. The DNR enforces federal and state regulations that involve waterways and wetlands. The County regulates ground disturbing activities and vegetation removal in the shoreland, defined as areas within 300 feet of a navigable waterway. Meeting onsite takes the guesswork out of the proposal as staff can determine first hand which standards to apply. The cooperation between agencies serves to simplify what can be a complex network of requirements for landowners to navigate in order to get the necessary permits.

There's an Open Records App For That...



In 2024, Corporation Counsel introduced a new online open record request platform called Next Request. This platform enables the public to submit a request online. Once submitted, corporation counsel assigns the request to the respective department, utilizing an efficient and intuitive workflow to locate and release records as soon as practicable. Before the platform, the LRE Department accepted open records requests by paper. Using the new platform, the LRE Department received 19 open records requests in 2024. Once the Department transitions to Opengov many of the Department's permit records will be publicly available, which will reduce the number of open records requests received.

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Parks and Recreation

- Work continued on the Wisconsin River Recreation Bridge. Bids for the Wisconsin River Recreation Bridge were received, and a stakeholder update meeting was held.
- Staff attended intake court for unpaid parking ordinance violations.
- Planning for the maintenance building continued.
- "No trespassing, railroad property" signs were installed on the chain link fence along the new portion of the Great Sauk State Trail.
- Speed bumps were installed in the campground.
- The 2025 annual stickers are now available for purchase, and were delivered to all vendors.
- Piers were pulled for winter at the White Mound boat landing and beach, Summer Oaks Boat Landing and North End Boat Landing.
- A significant washout was repaired and downed trees were removed from the horse/snowmobile trail in White Mound County Park.

Open house held for Hemlock County Park Master Plan



Planning has continued on the master plan for Hemlock County Park. An open house was held in November, with a great turnout. Approximately 45 attendees joined LRE staff, suggesting many great thoughts, comments and concerns. Staff later met internally to continue moving forward with the plan. An additional public input session of the master plan draft will be held in early 2025, with LRE committee review shortly thereafter.

Delton Dam Updates



Work continues on the Delton Dam! The repairs have been bid out, with a non-mandatory pre-bid conference held in November. Approximately 10 interested contractors attended. We have received an approved plan review from the Wisconsin DNR, allowing us to move forward with the project. It's very likely that we are approved for grant funding for a portion of the project and construction will likely start in 2025.