

Land Resources and Environment Department: January 2024 Monthly Report

Land Conservation

- Ag Plastics Collection was held on 1/17 with 12 participants.
- Staff attended the Lake Redstone Protection District board meeting on 1/9.
- The January SSWIG meeting was held on 1/18 with 22 people in attendance.
- Conservation intern interviews were held on 1/24.
- Staff attended the Southern Area Association meeting on 1/25.
- Nutrient management reminder postcards were sent to 377 farms at the beginning of January. Recipients include farmland preservation participants and manure storage facility owners. The submission deadline is June 1st which provides adequate time to update a current plan with actual application from 2023 and planned applications for 2024. All farms in Sauk County are required to have and follow a nutrient management plan per Wis. Admin. Code ATCP 50 and Sauk County Chapter 26 Agricultural Performance Standards and Manure Management Ordinance.

Nutrient Management Refresher Class Offered



Staff coordinated the annual Nutrient Management Farmer Education (NMFE) refresher class on January 19th with 18 farmers in attendance. The class is held at the MATC campus in Reedsburg and is meant for farmers who have taken the full NMFE class and need assistance updating their plan. DATCP and Extension staff assist with the class and lunch is provided. Sauk County received a grant for 2024 that will help offset soil sampling costs and provide incentive payments for completing the plan and verifying fertilizer purchases.

2024 Sauk County NACD Poster Contest



The 2024 Sauk County NACD Poster Contest was held on 1/11. The theme was, "May the Forest be With You, Always" and a total of 127 posters were submitted across all age divisions. The first-place poster from each grade division moves on to regional, state, and national competitions. Sauk County awarded a special prize for the classroom with the most student participation at the local level. Division winners received Amazon gift cards, reusable water bottles, coloring books, and custard coupons this year. The first-place winners were also awarded a Sauk County Parks annual pass.

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Planning and Zoning

- Staff submitted the annual POWTS report/audit information to the Department of Safety and Professional Services.
- Staff completed the submittal of all 2023 permit data for new residential structures to the U.S. Department of Commerce / U.S. Census Bureau.
- Annual reports were submitted to DATCP for lands rezoned out of Exclusive Agriculture and for conversion rates under the PRD program: 12.50 acres converted out of agriculture (cropland/pasture uses) while 478.58 acres were placed under PRD (conservation) easements.
- Work continues on the development of the GSST master plan including meetings with various stakeholders and municipalities to begin to define a viable and preferred trail route.

Shoreland Inspections



Staff routinely meet onsite with property owners and contractors to discuss development plans and applicable ordinance requirements. Preconstruction shoreland inspections often involve documenting existing conditions including existing vegetation. Vegetation removal within the vegetative buffer (within 35' of the ordinary high water mark of a waterbody) requires a land use permit outside of routine maintenance or removal of dead and dying trees.

Baraboo Range Inspections



The Baraboo Range Protection Program (BRPP) was part of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) concerning the reconstruction of U.S. Highway 12 between Middleton and Lake Delton. Signed in 1999, the MOA provided \$5 million in transportation funds to protect forested land in the Baraboo Range National Natural Landmark in Sauk County. Sauk County utilized the funds to place conservation easements on land by willing landowners totaling approximately 3,000 acres. Today, LRE staff interns monitor lands subject to the provisions of land protection written into the easements on a 3-year rotation. This means that the LRE Department inspects approximately 1,000 acres for easement compliance annually.

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Parks and Recreation

- Reservations for camping and shelter rentals were opened for the 2024 season (as of 1/29/24, approximately 438 reservations have been made).
- Multiple Prairie Smoke Terrace reservations have also been created.
- Staff designed, ordered and received new daily parking permits. The new permits will be displayed in the lower left corner of the windshield, versus the rearview mirror.
- Staff attended the Wisconsin Park and Recreation Association conference.
- Staff completed minor improvements to the pier at the North End Boat Landing, including replacement of a bowed deck board for ADA compliancy and strengthening the railing.
- The Parks Seasonal Worker position was posted. There are 4 full-time, seasonal positions available.

Progress on the Hemlock Dam



The fiber is officially out of the Hemlock Dam, allowing Sauk County to move forward with dam construction. The Parks and Recreation Manager spoke with Janke General Contractors on January 29, 2024 and they anticipate mobilizing to the Hemlock Dam construction site during the first week of February 2024.

Sauk County snowmobile trails opened



The snowmobile trails in Sauk County were opened on Saturday, January 13, and were available for use by snowmobilers until January 23. All snowmobile trails are developed, maintained and groomed by volunteers in the Association of Sauk County Snowmobile Clubs.