

Land Resources and Environment

Department: April 2025 Monthly Report

Land Conservation

- The department started accepting applications for community garden beds at the Sauk County Farm. A total of 8 beds are available with 2 additional beds being demonstration beds utilized by Master Gardeners.
- Staff testified at the State Capitol on April 3rd in support of the Transition to Grazing Bill (SB 113 & AB118) and was interviewed by TMJ4 Milwaukee.
- Staff presented on Agriculture to participants in the Sauk County Institute for Leadership (SCIL) on April 9th.
- Staff presented at the Woodland Town meeting on April 14th on modifying the Agriculture Enterprise Area (AEA) boundary.
- Staff presented to three towns regarding the annual drinking water program.
- Letters were sent out to participants in the Farmland Preservation Program who will receive status reviews this summer.
- Staff provided Wheat Week educational programming to Al Behrman and River Valley Elementary Schools reaching a total of 110 students.
- Staff presented at the Wisconsin Women in Conservation (WIWIC) in Stevens Point on April 25th with 100 people in attendance.

Earth Day Event at RB Farms



Photo Credit: Wisconsin Land + Water

In collaboration with Wisconsin Land + Water, an Earth Day event was held on April 24th at Roger Bindl's farm near Plain, WI. The event featured the Sauk County Rainfall Simulator and discussions around soil health, the Sauk Soil and Water Improvement Group (SSWIG), and support from Sauk County Land Conservation staff. Several dignitaries were in attendance including Randy Romanski - DATCP Secretary and Karen Hyun - DNR Secretary and legislators including Representative Karen DeSanto and Senator Sarah Keyeski.

Sauk County Grazing Sign Improvements



Since 2020, Sauk County LRE has placed conservation signs across the county to showcase cover crops, no till, and rotational grazing. The original design (left photo) was very much like a real estate sign that was placed in the grass along the roadside. Over the years we noticed the grass would cover up the signs and they would no longer be visible to the public. This spring we developed a new design (right photo) that will place the sign on the fence post making it more visible and require less maintenance. Be sure to keep an eye out for them next time you cruise around the countryside.

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Planning and Zoning

- Staff are drafting the Hemlock County Park Master Plan.
- Staff are assisting the Town of Woodland on a Comprehensive Plan amendment for altering boundaries with the Farmland Preservation Plan.
- Staff sent the Chapter 7 Zoning Code rewrite to Corporation Counsel and DATCP for initial review.
- Over ten percent of septic owners (1,200 people) have signed up to receive notification for septic maintenance via email or text message to replace the discontinued paper postcards.

Towns of Sumpter and Franklin using Opengov

Sauk County 2025 Applications Now Online

Sauk County Land Resources and Environment is moving to an online software, OpenGov, for all future permit applications starting on 1/2/25. Here is the link - <https://countyofsaukwi.portal.opengov.com/>. You will need to create an account to be able to use the site. The new program has many exciting capabilities and functions which will make many aspects of permitting more efficient.

◀ 2024 Town of Sumpter Newsletter Well Water Testing Program ▶



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Opengov offers several communication features that streamline interactions and enhance transparency. One of these features includes real-time collaboration between applicants, other government departments, and towns, ensuring seamless communication and documentation in one location. As we continue to build out our record types, reports, and documents in Opengov, we are now experimenting with adding town clerks as Opengov users. Recently, we added the Town of Franklin Clerk as a 'guest' to a PRD application, which provided the town access to the application and all related information. By making the town a guest on the application, they can communicate with the applicant and the county on the platform. Using the Franklin example, the clerk uploaded a copy of the town meeting minutes indicating approval of the PRD.

County Strategic & Comprehensive Planning



The County has launched a strategic planning process to create a focused, internally-driven roadmap that outlines our organizational direction over the next 5-years. The planning process was launched with a county-wide survey of staff and elected officials with over 360 responses thus far, a 54% response rate! Retreats were conducted with department heads and county board supervisors for small group discussions and scenario planning. Results from both the survey and retreats will be shared and utilized to draft strategic priorities for the County. The Strategic Plan will establish the internal framework of the County operations to meet the broader objectives of the County Comprehensive Plan. The comprehensive planning process will launch in the coming months and in comparison will be shaped through public input from citizens and other municipalities to ensure growth and change occur in a coordinated and intentional way throughout the County.

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Parks and Recreation

- The annual Egg Hunt came to an end, with over 300 participants!
- Staff worked with the Reedsburg Area High School Welding Class to create a sign for the stage. Huge thanks to Mr. Anliker and his class!
- Orientation was held for seasonal staff workers. A total of 5 workers will be joining us for the summer, with 3 returning from last year.
- Emergency Action Plans for all Sauk County Dams were updated and delivered to all organizations listed within.
- Multiple trees were removed after falling over White Mound Drive.
- A donation in the amount of \$75 was received from Lynda Witthuhn for ensuring the hunting blind remains accessible. Thank you Lynda!
- Mowing operations started up for the season.
- Staff attended a Wisconsin Park and Recreation Association meeting at Madison College.

Spring tasks completed, some with help from volunteers!



Many spring tasks were completed in April, including opening the campground, installing piers and checking trails for down trees. Shade sails were also installed at Bluffview County Park and White Mound County Park. Staff from Cardinal Glass and members from Project WisHope Sauk County volunteered their time to pickup trash at the Sauk County Forest and Bluffview County Park - thank you for your help!

Minor improvements along Great Sauk State Trail



Staff completed some minor improvements along the Great Sauk State Trail in April. This included painting STOP at many road crossings along the trail and removing woody vegetation. Approximately \$500 was awarded to Sauk County from the Wisconsin DNR for the purchase of two trees, in celebration of the 125th anniversary of the Wisconsin DNR. These trees will be planted in spring at the start of the trail near Highway 78.