

# ANNUAL REPORT SEPTEMBER 2011 ~ 2012

## *Conservation In Jefferson County*

Since 1946, Jefferson County has been providing assistance to landowners to protect our soil and water quality. In 1982, the County officially established the Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department. The department has been charged with administering State Statutes and County ordinances all leading to the conservation and protection of our natural resources. We are pleased to provide you with our 2011~2012 annual report. Anyone wishing further information on any of our programs is welcome to stop in or call for more details.

Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department  
Courthouse  
320 South Main Street  
Room 113  
920-674-7110 Phone 920-674-7114 Fax  
Hours of Business  
Monday ~ Friday 7:30 a.m. ~ 4:30 p.m.

## *Working Lands Initiative*



In 2010, Working Lands Initiative was created to provide greater tax relief under Farmland Preservation for farm owners while offering more protection to diminishing agricultural land and enhancing protection of the soil and waters of our State.

The new Farmland Preservation Program conservation provisions include

having and following a conservation and nutrient management plan in addition to livestock/manure management rules. Land Conservation Staff have been actively working to transition landowners into the new program. A schedule of compliance has been established for all participants. Most notably, nutrient management plans must be completed by September 30, 2012.

Some landowners have chosen to voluntarily withdraw from the program rather than agree to the new program rules. Others, who never participated before came into full compliance with the rules and benefited from a sizable tax credit.

The LWCD, working with UW-Extension and DA-TCP has held numerous training sessions in since December 2010 to teach landowners and operators how to write their own nutrient management plans. More sessions are slated for the future.

State Statute now requires that Status Reviews of each participant's farm be done once every four years as opposed to every six. The old status review format was revamped in 2010 where we check a quarter of the county each year (NE, NW, SE, SW) resulting in time and fuel savings over the shotgun approach used in the past. Additionally all livestock producers scheduled for review are checked for compliance with the livestock/manure rules.

## *Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Committee*

Walt Christensen, Chairman  
Carlton Zentner, Vice Chair  
Sarah Bregant, Secretary  
Matthew Foelker, Member  
Scott Zimmerman, FSA Rep

## *Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department*



Pictured left to right:

Nancy Lannert, Resource Conservationist  
Mark Watkins Director  
Patricia Cicero, Water Resources Mgmt. Specialist  
Beth Klotz, Administrative Clerk  
Gerry Kokkonen, GIS/Land Use Specialist  
Joseph Strupp, Resource Conservationist



# Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department

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### *Farmland Preservation (FPP) and Working Lands Initiative (WLI)*

Farmland Preservation is a program where landowners in exclusive agricultural zoning can qualify for a tax credit. The credit is part of their filing of Wisconsin State Income Tax. Starting in 2010, the FPP program has been included as part of the State's new Working Lands Initiative. The Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department has been working with County landowners to transition into the new program. The following is a list of activities for 2011/2012:

- Managed 858 conservation plans covering 136,108 acres,
- Assisted 18 new participants become eligible for the tax credit under WLI,
- Processed 82 notices of non-compliance or non-participation,
- Completed 211 on-farm status reviews for compliance with the new WLI requirements,
- Completed 74 evaluations of livestock facilities on farms for compliance with the new WLI requirements

### *Soil Conservation*

Part of the mission of the Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department is to insure that farmland remains productive for generations to come. Through cooperative partnering with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Farm Service Agency, the LWCD works with Jefferson County producers to recommend and install Best Management Practices that will control soil loss and improve water quality. The Land and Water Conservation Department:

- Conducts an Annual Transect Survey to determine trends in cropping and soil loss. Out of the estimated total harvestable crop area of 172,700 acres, this year's survey, conducted June 4~7, 2012, shows that 88% of fields surveyed were at or below tolerable soil loss. The average soil loss in Jefferson County was 2.2 tons per acre per year. 40% of the cropland was planted to corn, 25% was planted to soybeans, 12% was planted to small grains (wheat, oats, etc), and 19% was hay. 15% of the land was farmed using no-till methods and 57% was minimum tilled. Less than .5% was conventional tilled (moldboard plowed). The remaining ground was not tilled as it was either no longer being farmed or in a conserving use cover such as Conservation Reserve Land or hay.
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- Develops contracts for Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, a State/Federal and County partnership. Contracts for seven stream buffer projects were developed.
  - Provide technical assistance to NRCS for Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Through a contribution agreement, LWCD staff determines eligibility of land for CRP. Additionally, staff designs and lays out practices such as contour and riparian buffers and develops contracts and maintenance plans.

### *Wildlife and Habitat*

The Land and Water Conservation Department engages in the following activities to enhance wildlife habitat:

- For the 2011/2012 program year, 7,425 trees/shrubs were sold through the Annual Sale. Nine species were offered through the sale which starts in the fall of each year. New this year was White Birch.
- Coordinate the rental of tree planters and sprayers with the DNR Foresters.
- Assists the DNR with the Wildlife Damage and Abatement Program that reimburses crop producers for damages caused by deer, geese and turkey.
- Continues to work with the DNR on the Gypsy Moth Suppression Program.

***Please welcome our new committee members, Sarah Bregant and Matthew Foelker, to the Land and Water Conservation Committee!***

# Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department

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### *Water Conservation*

Maintaining and enhancing ground and surface water quality is critical to the health, safety and recreation of residents and visitors of Jefferson County. The following are water quality and water conservation activities the Department has engaged in:

#### Lake Ripley Algae and Aquatic Plant Workshop

Gave a presentation and assisted in organizing the workshop with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Lake Ripley Management District

#### Lake Ripley Fish Survey

Assisted the Lake Ripley Management District with a near-shore fish survey to determine diversity and document factors that may be impacting diversity.

#### Lower Spring Lake Aquatic Plant Management

Wrote and obtained a DNR grant for the Lower Spring Lake Management District to implement their aquatic plant management plan. The grant includes expenses incurred by the LWCD for their work on the project.

Educate citizens about aquatic plants and water quality

Conducted a plant survey prior to chemical treatment of the lake in the Spring

Conducted a whole lake plant survey in June

All of these activities are done with the cooperation of the DNR and the Lower Spring Lake Management District

#### Rock Lake: Southwest subwatershed project

Assisted partners (Rock Lake Improvement Association, UW-Madison Water Resources Management graduate program, and Montgomery Associates) on a grant project to investigate the sources of sediment, nutrients, and bacteria in a tributary to Rock Lake.

Helped educate citizens at a public meeting associated with the project.

#### Rock Lake Bulrush Survey

Assisted the DNR with a survey of the bulrushes in Korth Bay of Rock Lake

#### Rock Lake Annual Clean-up and Garlic Mustard Pull

Assisted the Rock Lake Improvement Association with planning and implementation of event that accomplishes trash clean-up and control of garlic mustard in parks surrounding Rock Lake, including Korth Park.

#### Rock River Rescue

Provided information on fish habitat structures and permit requirements to this group that works on the Rock River in Wauertown.

#### Rock River Coalition

Became a Local Coordinator for volunteers who monitor streams in Jefferson County. This includes training, equipment management, and support for the volunteers.

Assisted in organizing a workshop for citizen stream, lake, and wetland monitors.

#### Jefferson County Parks Department

Assisted with planning for shoreland erosion control and habitat restoration projects.

#### Jefferson County Zoning Department

Assisted with communications to citizens regarding shoreland-related issues.

#### Wisconsin Lakes Convention

Gave a presentation on how Land and Water Conservation Departments in the State can assist landowners with water quality concerns and projects.

#### Assistance to various landowners, organizations, and local governments

Work included communications regarding manure spreading concerns, manure management, lake and stream quality, water levels, water recreation, aquatic invasive species, shoreline erosion control, and ground water quality.

# Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department

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### *Nutrient Management and Livestock*

Under State Statute NR151, agricultural producers are required to follow conservation performance standards. These rules regulate manure management and require the use of soil conservation and nutrient management plans by all producers. Additionally under State Statute and County Ordinance, livestock producers wishing to start or expand a herd of over 150 animal units (one animal unit equals 1,000 pounds of animal weight) must apply for a Livestock Siting Conditional Use Permit. The Department works cooperatively with the Zoning Department on these permits. If livestock producers are not expanding their animal numbers but are building, modifying or abandoning manure storage facilities, the Department requires a permit under the County Manure Storage Ordinance. For the 2011 ~2012 report year, the Department:



- Issued three permits for closure of manure storage facilities and 1 permit for a waste transfer system under the County Manure Storage Ordinance.
- Reviewed two Livestock Siting Permit applications and provided a completeness determination to the Zoning Department and Committee.
- Conducted 93 on farm inspections for Animal Waste related regulations in both NR 151 and the Farmland Preservation Program.
- Investigated 11 manure management related complaints with corrective action taken as needed.
- Cost shared with 3 landowners for proper closure of unused manure storage facilities.
- Cost shared with 1 landowner for roof gutters to divert clean water off an animal in a Water Quality Management Area.
- Cost shared with 4 landowner for nutrient management planning on 435 acres with an additional 600 acres in pending contracts
- Received 48 nutrient management plans (NMP) covering 44,413 acres of cropland for compliance with State Statute and County Ordinance. As well as an additional 98 checklists certifying that a NMP is being implemented.

### *Geographic Information and Cartography*

- Utilized current FPP tracking database system to maintain a countywide parcel dataset of participants
- Converted department datasets to an updated database system per Land Records Modernization Plan.
- Further configuration and enhancement of a GIS data viewer for hosting of a NR151 tracking database. This includes testing and de-bugging.
- Published and implemented internet map services utilized by web map viewers to provide end users with location and attribute information.
- Mapped and documented plant species in conjunction with aquatic plants surveys, both historic and most current.
- Provided mapping and data compilation for PACE applications.
- Researched and recommended both hardware & software to the Lake Ripley Management District for GIS upgrade.
- Continued to pursue database enhancements and consolidation for ease of use and access.

### *Non-Metallic Mining*

To operate a non-metallic mine (sand, gravel, stone and topsoil) for commercial extraction, quarry owners must apply for a Non-Metallic Mining permit. Part of the permit process is the submission of a reclamation plan detailing how the land will be restored when the quarry is no longer in use. During the report year:

- Currently 27 sites being monitored for reclamation compliance. Of the 27, 2 have been granted inactive status as full reclamation is accomplished. Expansion at 2 more sites brings total of exposed acreage to 445 acres.
- Reviewed reclamation plan and permitted one new extraction location.
- Reviewed and permitted the revision of one plan to include new acreage
- Small three acre site fully reclaimed once USDA conservation easement is recorded.
- Attended one field training day, one all day roundtable and one ½ day DNR sponsored training.
- Currently 27 sites being monitored for reclamation compliance. Of the 27, 2 have been granted inactive status as full reclamation is accomplished. Expansion at 2 more sites brings total of exposed acreage to 445 acres.

Sources: WDNR NR135, Jefferson County Nonmetallic Mining Ordinance & onsite inspections.

# Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department

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### *Grants and Budgets*

Much of the funding for the Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department comes from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). The Department actively looks for outside sources of revenue to reduce the amount of County Levy dollars requested.

- Applied for and received operational grants from the DATCP totaling \$158,000,
- Entered into a contribution agreement to complete CRP contracts with NRCS for approximately \$2,000,
- WLWCA grant funding to hire a student intern was not reinstated,
- The Certification fee for FPP with an associated late fee helps to offset the cost of mailings and database maintenance. Approximately \$4,500 in revenue continues to be generated by this fee,
- Received \$20,000 in Land and Water Resource Management cost sharing dollars from DATCP,
- Received \$3,500 in State Grant funding from DATCP for nutrient management cost sharing,
- Generated \$7,425 in gross revenue from the Annual Tree and Shrub sale,
- County Farm Lease will expire in October 2013.

### *Information and Education Activities*

- Published and distributed over 2,100 issues of *Conservation Counts*,
- Exhibited a Departmental display for the Jefferson County Fair,
- Participated in the Annual 4th Grade Farm Day giving presentations to over 800 students and their teachers,
- Hosted the Southern Area Tour (For the 11 county members of the Southern Area Association of the Wisconsin Land & Water Conservation Association)

### *Looking Ahead to 2013*

As ever, the Department will strive to meet the concerns of the citizens of Jefferson County and protect our soil and water resources.

#### *Future Goals and Activities ~*

- Offer additional training sessions for farmers to write their own nutrient management plans,
- Hold additional workshops to educate landowners on Working Lands Initiative conservation requirements,
- Explore new sources of revenue,
- Maintain an electronic tracking system for Working Lands Initiative compliance,
- Add more features to the Department's web site,
- Monitor developments in the spread of the Emerald Ash Borer,
- Monitor new developments in manure management,
- Serve on State-wide panel for the Livestock Siting Law update,
- Serve on Rock River Recovery Agriculture Sector Team.
- Finish implementation of the NR151 tracking system,
- Assess 2012 drought impact on local producers.

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## *Other Activities*

- Supervise maintenance of the Jefferson County Potters Field,
- Replace departmental field vehicles,
- Department Director continued participation in County Advisory Committee with NRCS and FSA.

## *Partnering Agencies and Contacts*

The Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department works cooperatively with a number of State and Federal Agencies. The following is a list of agencies and contacts:

### ~Federal~

Farm Service Agency (FSA)	Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)	United States Department of Agriculture
Debra Schut, Executive Director 134 West Rockwell Street Jefferson WI 53549 920-674-2020 ext. 107	Dennis Vollmer, Dist. Conservationist 134 West Rockwell Street Jefferson WI 53549 920-674-2020, ext. 104	Animal Damage Abatement Program David Terrell 1-800-433-0663

### ~State~

<i>DNR Foresters</i> Nick Koltz (South half Jefferson Co.) 2514 Morse Street Janesville WI 53546 608-743-4830	<i>DNR Conservation Warden</i> Ryan Ellifson (South half Jefferson Co.) 920-674-5880	<i>DATCP</i> Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Bureau of Land and Water Resources Kathy Pielsticker, Director PO Box 8911 Madison WI 53708-8911	<i>DNR Lakes Monitoring Coordinator</i> Susan Graham 3911 Fish Hatchery Road Fitchburg, WI 53711 608-275-3329
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## *~Working Lands Initiative Contacts~*

State Web site: <http://workinglands.wi.gov>  
State Email: [DATCPWorkingLands@Wisconsin.gov](mailto:DATCPWorkingLands@Wisconsin.gov)

*Out of the long list of nature's gifts to man, none is perhaps so  
utterly essential to human life as soil.*

*Hugh Hammond Bennett, The Father of Soil Conservation  
From Soil Conservation, McGraw Hill Book Co. 1939*