

Jefferson County Land & Water Conservation Department Annual Report ~ September 2012 to 2013

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 2012~2013 annual report. Anyone wishing further information on any of our programs is welcome to stop in or call the Land & Water Conservation Department for more details.

Nutrient Management Goals Met by Farmland Preservation Participants



On January 1, 2010, the new Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Program under the Working Lands Initiative went into effect, offering many farm owners greater tax relief and more protection of our State's soil and water resources.

Under the new program, farm owners must comply with Wisconsin Statute NR 151 Non-point Runoff rules. There are essentially three requirements to the rules:

1. All farms must have and follow an approved conservation plan.
2. All farms must have and follow an approved nutrient management plan.
3. All livestock farms must meet manure management prohibitions and performance standards.

In Jefferson County, the Department set dates by which each requirement of the Non-point rules must be met. Anyone currently in Farmland Preservation already met requirement one, as having and following a conservation plan was a requirement under the old program. The deadline for having a nutrient management plan was set for September 30th, 2012. A majority of our farms met this goal. Those that did not were removed from the program.

In order to assist farmers in meeting the deadline for nutrient management, Joe Strupp and Nancy Lannert, Resource Conservationists for the Department worked with Heidi Johnson, former Jefferson County Extension Agent to teach farmers to write their own plans using the Snap Plus computer program. Since December 2010, seven classes have been held graduating 68 producers. Each class provided at least 13 hours of scheduled instruction. Several up-date classes have been held as well.

Staff is currently in the process of evaluating livestock farms to determine their compliance status. To meet the manure management and livestock rules, Resource Conservationists preview each livestock farm using the County's GIS to determine proximity to water resources and water quality management areas (WQMA). Farms that are in close proximity to water resources or are located in WQMA are scheduled for a site visit to determine compliance. Staff looks for direct discharge to a stream, river, lake or wetland, trampled stream banks, manure storage structures problems and unconfined manure stacks. When problems are identified, the producer is given direction on how to correct the situation and put on schedule of compliance. Staff also looks for possible cost-share resources when applicable to assist in project implementation. The deadline for such corrections is December 31st, 2014.

In Jefferson County, current enrollment in the Farmland Preservation Tax Credit is 703 participants covering approximately 117,485 acres, returning over \$881,000 to County landowners. (Based on \$7.50 per acre credit.) While numbers are down from 858 participants last year, about 49 new landowners have signed up. Additionally, several landowners who were removed from the program are now going through the process to regain their eligibility.

Jefferson County Land & Water Conservation Department - Courthouse - 320 S Main St, Room 113
Ph: (920) 674-7110 ~ Fax: (920) 674-7114
Hours of Business - Monday ~ Friday 7:30 am to 4:30 pm

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

2013 marks the start of the third year of the Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Program under the new Working Lands Initiative (WLI). The department continues to work with Jefferson County landowners and producers to transition into the new program. The following is a list of activities for September 2012/2013 time period:

- Managed 703 conservation plans covering 117,485 acres.
- Assisted 49 new participants become eligible for the tax credit.
- Processed 150 notices of non-compliance or non-participation.
- Completed 190 on-farm status reviews for compliance with the WLI requirements.
- Completed 59 evaluations of livestock facilities on farms for compliance with the WLI requirements.
- Held two training classes for farmers to learn to write their own nutrient management plans.
- Held two update classes to assist nutrient management class graduates.

Nutrient Management and Livestock

Under State Statute NR 151, 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 2012 ~2013 report year, the Department:

- Issued four permits for closure of manure storage facilities and four permits 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 49 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 3 landowners for nutrient management planning on approximately 700 acres, with an additional 300 acres pending at this time.
- Received checklists covering 1,102 farms with a nutrient management plan (NMP's) for compliance with State Statute and County Ordinance.

Purchase Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE)

- Attended a day-long seminar involving IRS complaint Baseline Property Report preparation.
- Under guidance of the County Farmland Conservation Easement Commission, prepared guidelines, best practices and templates for Baseline Property Reports and annual monitoring.
- Assembled and compiled necessary onsite documentation (photos, GPS data & maps) on over 400 acres of covered land to include four separate landowners and five conservation easements.
- Compiled all public records related to agriculture, natural resources and additional easements on the covered land.
- Prepared five IRS compliant documents utilizing the Easement Commission approved guidelines.
- Four donated easement property reports finalized with landowner signatures.
- One property report awaiting final easement closing and will be signed at that time.
- Inspected potential PACE applicants for Conservation Compliance.

Wildlife & Habitat

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

- For the 2012/2013 program year, 7,950 trees/shrubs were sold through the Annual Sale. Nine species were offered through the sale which starts in the fall of each year.
- 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.

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:

- Conducted a 2013 Crop & Tillage Systems Survey, June 3~6, 2013, to determine trends in cropping and soil loss. This survey shows data acquired at nearly 500 locations across the County. Out of the estimated total harvestable crop area of 172,700 acres, 86% of the cropped acreage at or below tolerable soil loss (T), down 2% points from the previous year. Average countywide soil loss is 2.2 tons/acre/year. The average maximum tolerable soil loss is 5 tons/acre/year, similar to previous year. 35% of crop land was planted to corn, compared to 40% previously. 25% of crop land was planted to soybeans, similar to previous year. 9% of cropland was in small grains (wheat, oats, etc.), compared to 4% in 2012. Hay made up 15% of the crop land, compared to 19% in 2012. 10% of crop land was found fallow, compared to 6 % in 2012. 57% of the crop land was tilled using reduced tillage methods. 43% of the crop land showed less than 30% crop residue, while nearly 20% had 30% residue or over. 9% of the land was no-tilled, down from 15% in 2012. Less than < 1% conventional tillage (moldboard plow) system used.
- Develops contracts for Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, a State/Federal and County partnership. Contracts for five stream buffer projects were developed covering 14.3 acres.

Data sources: WinTransect software application ver. 1.18.1.0 UW Soils Department and data input by LWCD staff

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.
- Input over 2000 parcels into a database management system for State Ag Run-off Rule (NR151) compliance.
- Beginning to develop a report generation system of both FPP and NR151 compliance from parcel data.
- Published and implemented internet map services utilized by web map viewers to provide end users with location and attribute information.
- Update plant species data for aquatic plants surveys, both historic and most current.
- Provided mapping and data compilation for PACE applications – also see Agricultural Conservation Easement.
- Researched and recommended both hardware & software to the Lake Ripley Management District for GIS upgrade.
- Attended or participated in over 40 hours of training directly to GIS and database administration.
- 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:

- Fees collected; \$13,095 - of which \$2,500 is reimbursed to DNR and the remainder, \$10,595, earmarked for LWCD administrative expenses.
- 33 sites inspected, to include active, inactive and exempt extraction sites.
- Inspected site characterizations: Active: 1-5 acres 6 permits; 6-10 acres 4 permits, 11-15 acres 4 permits, 16-25 acres 5 permits; 26-50 acres 2 permits; >50 acres 3 permits. Inactive: 3 sites 2 of which are nearing reclamation certification. Exemption; 5 sites. Completed reclamation; 1 site awaiting final wetland installation (WRP).
- New Permit Approvals: 1 new plan review and approval, 2 plan modifications with approvals.
- Under the direction and guidance of Corporate Counsel began working the BR Amon receivership proceedings.
- Prepared Annual Newsletter to provide information and updates to operators and landowners.
- Attended three DNR organized training events and meetings.

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

Water Resources

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 resources activities the Department has engaged in:

Clean Boats and Clean Waters Training

Trained citizen volunteers from Lake Ripley and Lower Spring Lake to educate lake users at boat launches on the laws associated with Aquatic Invasive Species.

Stream Monitoring

Assisted the Rock River Coalition at a stream monitoring training workshop for citizens. Worked with citizen volunteers to start monitoring streams in Jefferson County. Currently there are twelve sites on eight streams and rivers in the County being monitored for temperature, dissolved oxygen, clarity, flow, and biotic index (based on the type of insects in the water). This work performed by citizens gives us information on the resources that we don't have time/money to gather ourselves.



Lower Spring Lake Aquatic Plant Management

Continued to work on 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 Water Quality Monitoring

In the summer, perform monthly water quality sampling with a citizen to monitor temperature, dissolved oxygen, clarity, chlorophyll and phosphorus. In the winter, monitor chloride levels in the lake.

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 and Mud Lake Fish Survey

Obtained a \$2,316 DNR grant to implement a near-shore fish survey on Mud and Rock Lakes to determine diversity and document factors that may be impacting diversity. Results will be compared with historic data. The survey for Rock Lake has been completed, the Mud Lake survey will be scheduled in August.

Rock Lake Annual Clean-up and Garlic Mustard Pull

Assisted the Rock Lake Improvement Association with planning and implementing a trash clean-up and garlic mustard pull 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 Watertown.

Zeloski Marsh BioBlitz

Worked with the Rock River Coalition on an event to have scientists (including citizen volunteers) monitor the life in Zeloski Marsh over a 24 hour period. The event included educational tours and presentations about the plants and critters in the marsh.

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.

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.

Information and Education Activities

- Published and distributed over 1,900 copies of the departmental newsletter, **Conservation Counts**.
- Promotional & programming information was distributed at the Jefferson County Fair.
- Participated in the Annual 4th Grade Farm Day giving presentations to 771 students and their teachers.

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 \$153,000.
- Total Service Provider Contracts with NRCS have not been available for 2013.
- Student Intern earmarks have been discontinued indefinitely.
- 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 of 2013. New bid packages will be released by October 15, 2013.

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 & Water Conservation Department

Pictured left to right:

Kim Liakopoulos, Administrative Clerk

Mark Watkins Director

Nancy Lannert, Resource Conservationist

Gerry Kokkonen, GIS/Land Use Specialist

Patricia Cicero, Water Resources Mgmt. Specialist

Joseph Strupp, Resource Conservationist

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 and update sessions for farmers to write their own nutrient management plans.
- Rectify archived Ariel photography for use with the county GIS.
- Maintain an electronic tracking system for Working Lands Initiative compliance.
- New lease window for the County Farm.
- Monitor developments in the spread of the Emerald Ash Borer, including potential development of an action plan.
- Monitor new developments in manure management.
- Serve on Rock River Recovery Agriculture Sector Team.
- Finish implementation of the NR151 tracking system.
- Supervise maintenance of the Jefferson County Potters Field.
- Department Director continued participation in County Advisory Committee with NRCS and FSA.

New County Staff

Kimberly Liakopoulos joined LWCD in March. Kim takes over duties as Administrative Clerk. She will be coordinating the Annual Tree Sale and assisting with the daily operations of the Department.



Partnering Agencies & Contacts

The Jefferson County Land & 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)

Executive Director
Debra Schut
134 W Rockwell St
Jefferson, WI 53549
(920) 674-2020 x 107

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

District Conservationist
Dennis Vollmer
134 W Rockwell St
Jefferson, WI 53549
(920) 674-2020 x 104

US Department of Agriculture

Animal Damage Abatement Program
David Terrell
(800) 433-0663

State

DNR Foresters

Randy Stampfl (Northern Jefferson County)
N7725 Hwy 28
Horicon, WI 53032
(920) 387-7884

Nick Koltz (Southern Jefferson County)
2514 Morse St
Janesville, WI 53545
(608) 743-4830

DATCP

WI Dept of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection
Bureau of Land & Water Resources
Kathy Pielsticker, Director
PO Box 8911
Madison, WI 53708-8911

DNR Lakes Monitoring Coordinator

Susan Graham
3911 Fish Hatchery Rd
Fitchburg, WI 53711
(608) 275-3329



DNR Conservation Warden

Ryan Ellifson (South Central Region)
(920) 728-0367

~ Working Lands Initiative Contacts ~

State Website: <http://workinglands.wi.gov>
State Email: DATCPWorkingLands@Wisconsin.gov

“Good farmers, who take seriously their duties as stewards of Creation and of their land’s inheritors, contribute to the welfare of society in more ways than society usually acknowledges, or even knows. These farmers produce valuable goods, of course; but they also conserve soil, they conserve water, they conserve wildlife, they conserve open space, they conserve scenery.”

Wendell Berry, Bringing it to the Table: Writings on Farming and Food