

Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department Annual Report July 2019 - July 2020

Land & Water Conservation Committee Members - Matt Foelker (Chair), Walt Christensen (Vice-Chair), Mike Kelly (Secretary), Dan Herbst (UWEX Member), John Kannard (UWEX Member), JoAnn Davis (FSA Rep), and Margaret Burlingham

Land & Water Conservation Department Staff - Patricia Cicero (Director), Gerry Kokkonen (GIS & Land Use Specialist), Nancy Lannert (Resource Conservationist), Kim Liakopoulos (Administrative Assistant), and Joe Strupp (Resource Conservationist)

The purpose of the Land and Water Conservation Department (LWCD) is to provide for the conservation of soil and water resources of Jefferson County. The LWCD is charged with administering State Statutes and County ordinances that conserve and protect our natural resources.

Department Funding

- Department of Agriculture staffing grant = \$179,819 in 2020
- County Farm rental = \$100,426.50 in 2020
- Department of Agriculture funding: \$30,285 in 2020 to assist landowners with conservation practice installation. \$20,000 in 2020 to assist landowners with nutrient management plan development.
- Farmland Preservation Program fees generates approximately \$17,000 per year.
- Tree Program generates approximately \$7,500 per year.
- Department of Natural Resources (DNR) grant to fund lake practices = \$3,300 total over 2019 and 2020 of which \$300 can be used for staffing costs.
- Non-metallic Mining Reclamation: \$13,760 in fees were collected with \$11,465 for Jefferson County and \$2,295 for the DNR. \$1,800 in new plan review fees and 2 new permits issued.
- Various permits and fees generate approximately \$2,200 per year.

Land and Water Resources Management Plan

This plan is required by the Department Agricultural, Trade, and Consumer Protection in order for the LWCD to be eligible to receive staffing grants and funds used for cost-sharing conservation practices. The plan lays out the mission, goals, and work plan for the LWCD. The following conservation practices have been accomplished with the state money during the last 3 years:

- 2018 projects: water diversion (540ft), streambank erosion protection (185ft)
- 2019 projects: 2 manure storage closures, 1 well closure
- 2020 projects so far: grassed waterway (563ft), 1 manure storage closure

Farmland Preservation Program

The Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Program (FPP) offers farm owners a tax credit for protecting our State's soil and water resources. Landowners receive the credit on their Wisconsin income taxes in exchange for compliance with the State conservation standards. LWCD works with landowners and producers to ensure they meet the requirements of the program. The tax credit is calculated as a flat,

per acre rate. In Jefferson County, most landowners receive \$7.50 per acre. Landowners located in an Ag Enterprise Area (AEA) can sign a 15 year agreement with the State and receive \$10.00 per acre. An AEA is created when landowners join together to petition the State to create an area dedicated to long term agricultural use. Jefferson County has one AEA located in parts of Palmyra and Sullivan Townships.

- 619 total FPP participants covering a total of 106,426 acres
- 6 AEA agreements covering 755.72 acres
- \$800,160 total tax relief
- Maintained and further developed FPP landowner database with nearly 3,600 parcels.
- Maintained and enhanced tools to generate required Certificates of Compliance.

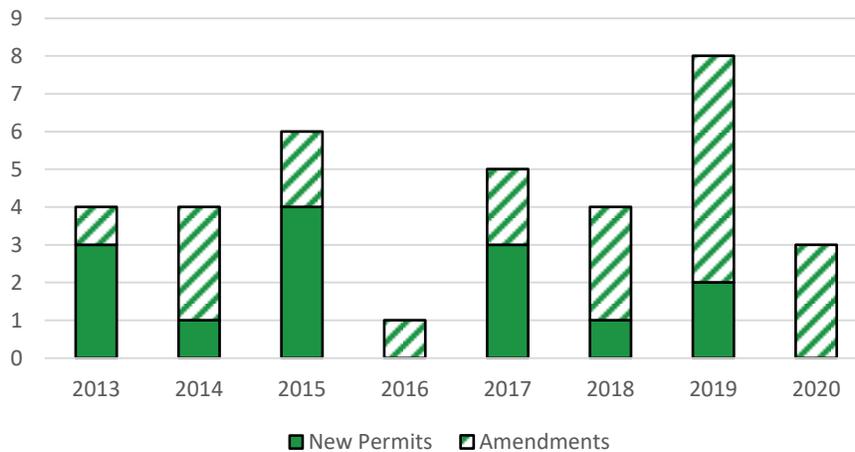
Agricultural Performance Standards

State law (NR 151) identifies minimum standards that agricultural producers must follow. These rules regulate manure management and require the use of soil conservation and nutrient management plans. LWCD works with producers to help them achieve compliance with the laws.

- Received nutrient management plan check lists for 1,169 landowners covering 116,398 acres
- Maintained and updated approximately 5,600 parcel records to track compliance and assist with reporting.

Livestock Siting

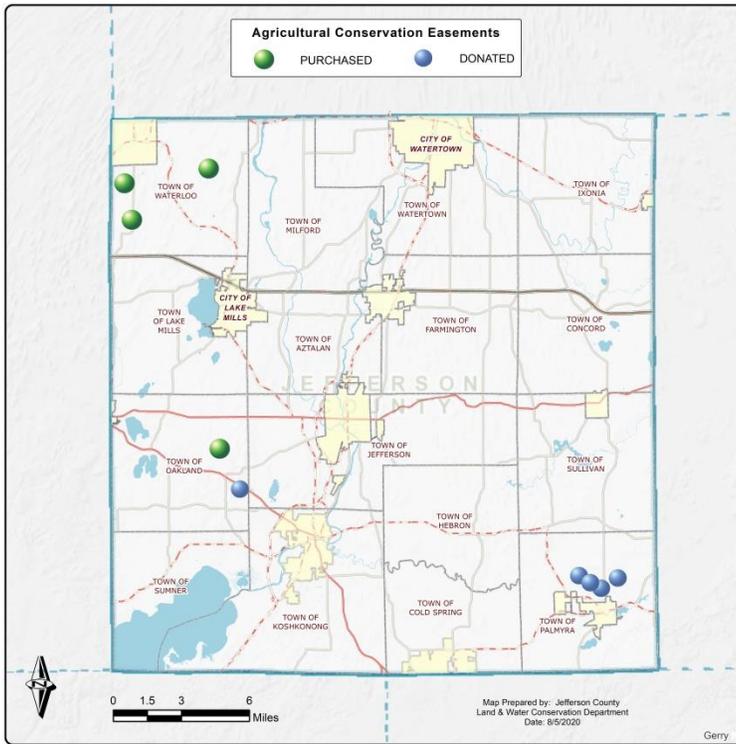
Under State law (ATCP 51) and the Jefferson County Zoning Ordinance, livestock producers who expand their animal numbers over 150 animal units must complete an application and worksheets. LWCD ensures these materials are complete and meet state standards before the farms can apply for a Conditional Use Permit through the Zoning Department. There is an amendment process when changes are made but livestock numbers stay under the permitted levels.



Nutrient Management and Farmer Education Classes

State law (NR151.07) and the Farmland Preservation Program require that all cropland where nutrients are applied be covered by a nutrient management plan. These plans must be updated each year to account for crop rotation and changes in fertilization. LWCD offers classes to teach farmers how to write and update their plans. Achieved in the last year:

- 4 classes, 27 pupils



Agricultural Conservation Easement Program

Assist landowners with the process and documentation of conservation easement applications to protect agricultural land from development. Work includes securing grant funding, completing land transactions, and annual monitoring and reporting.

- Since the beginning of the program: 5 donated easements and 4 purchased easements totaling over 1,000 acres on 34 tax parcels.
- Each easement property is inspected annually by LWCD staff.
- Provided mapping for applications and monitoring requirements.

Tree Program

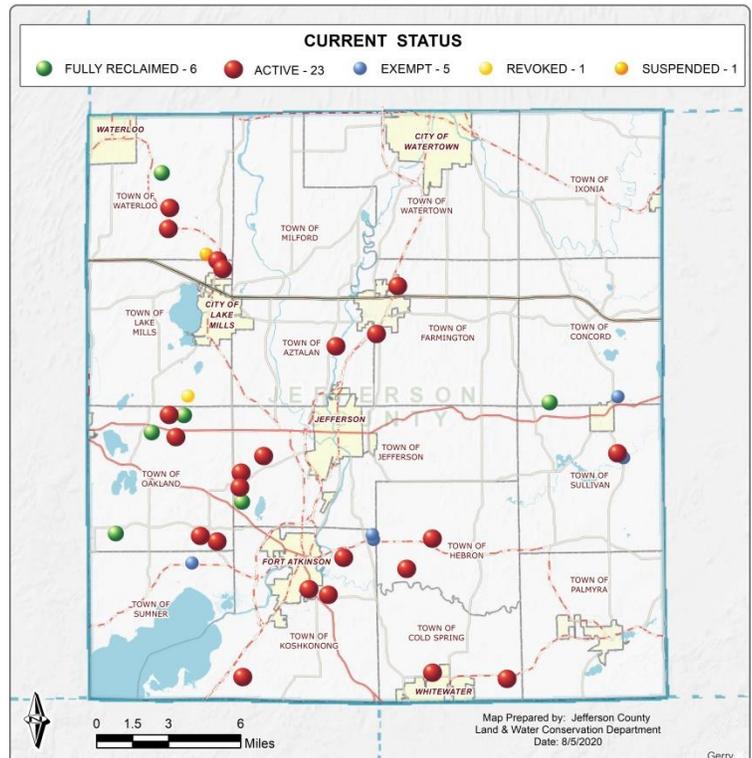
LWCD administers an annual tree and shrub sale for citizens and also offers tree planters and sprayers for rent.

- 2019/2020 sale 8 species offered and 4,180 trees/shrubs sold

Non-Metallic Mining Reclamation Permitting

According to State law (NR 135) and the Jefferson County Zoning Ordinance, non-metallic mines must have a permit to extract materials and ensure subsequent reclamation of mined land. LWCD ensures the mines and the reclamation plans meet standards.

- LWCD inspected 33 sites including 23 active, 3 reclaimed, 2 with revoked permits, and 5 exempt sites.
- Maintained and updated data related to non-metallic mining permits.



Water Resource Planning and Protection

Plan and implement projects in partnership with local resource organizations and municipalities to work on protecting and improving water resources including collecting data, educating the public, developing management plans, and implementing conservation practices.

- Projects on Rock Lake, Lake Ripley, Lower Spring Lake, and the Rock River Basin.
- Produced maps with various data for Rock Lake, Lower Spring Lake, and Lake Ripley.
- Implemented programs to educate the public on preventing aquatic invasive species, including assisting the Town and City of Lake Mills with the Clean Boats, Clean Waters Program grant.
- Wrote and secured a Healthy Lakes grant to install a shoreland garden on Lake Koshkonong.
- Reviewed shoreland restoration plans for the Zoning Department.

Surface Water Quality Monitoring

Staff train, equip, and support citizens who monitor lakes and streams. Results are tracked and shared with partners and citizens. In the last year, the following was accomplished:

- 6 lakes were monitored
- 15 stream sites were monitored

Geographic Information Systems

LWCD provides customized mapping and geo-analytical services for both internal and external customers and partners.

- Worked with the Land Information Office on modernizing land records and associated data sets
- Maintained and updated frozen parcel data for zoning purposes.
- Provided GIS services to the Parks Department including over 300 miles of snowmobile trail data.
- Assisted with updating Drainage District landowner listings and boundary mapping.
- Published, maintained and updated County internet map services.
- Introduced mapping tools for data collection in the field for the Parks and Zoning Departments.
- Utilized GPS equipment to assist with field mapping and location based data needs.

Other Programs and Projects

- Work on the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program to assist landowners with implementing stream buffers, waterways and wetland restorations.
- Implemented drone technology to assist with projects including field monitoring and mapping, preconstruction planning, and administration of regulations.
- Develop, customize, and maintain applications for data tracking of LWCD programs. This enables us to do required reporting to State departments.
- Serve as a pass-through for funds in both the Wildlife Damage Abatement Program (reimburses farmers for crop loss) and the Deer and Turkey Donation Program (meat supplied to food pantries).

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