



VOL. 41 NUMBER 1 • SPRING 2025

CONSERVATION CHRONICLE

Newsletter of the
Land Resources and Environment Department

2025 CONSERVATION FARM FAMILY OF THE YEAR AWARD

Introducing the recipient of the Wisconsin Land+Water 2025 Conservation Farm Family of the Year Award—**Roger Bindl of RB Farms in Spring Green!** This award promotes farm conservation accomplishments by recognizing farmers performing outstanding work, including community involvement and conservation education. RB Farms will be featured in a professionally produced short film that showcases the farm, highlights their conservation practices, and shares their unique story. This documentary-style video will capture the outstanding work being accomplished on Wisconsin farms and will be shared widely across the state to inspire and educate others about conservation in action.

The Sauk County Land Resources and Environment Department was pleased to be able to nominate Roger for this award. His dedication to learning and sharing extends far beyond Sauk County, inspiring farmers, community members, and conservation leaders alike. Please join us in celebrating Roger Bindl for his outstanding contributions to conservation and regenerative agriculture! *Continued on page 2*



Roger Bindl, RB Farms
Spring Green

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2024- Roger at his farm with WI Senators Joan Ballweg and Howard Marklein; WI Land+Water Executive Director, Matt Krueger; Sauk County LRE Staff and Committee Members. The visit showcased the conservation practices Roger has implemented on his farm and the importance of the support offered from county and state programs.

ABOUT ROGER BINDL, RB FARMS:

For Roger, farming is both an art and a science. He thrives on experimenting with his fields and figuring out what’s going to work best to achieve his goal of maximum soil protection. Roger has been dedicated to maximizing soil health and protecting natural resources. He farms 289 acres, rotationally grazes 45 cow-calf pairs, and implements conservation practices like no-till and cover cropping to benefit the Honey Creek watershed that runs through his farm and build resilient, healthy soils.

Throughout the years, Roger has been a passionate conservation advocate and community leader. His efforts were instrumental in founding the area's producer led watershed group, the Sauk Soil and Water Improvement Group—SSWIG—where he serves as President and lead farmer. Dedicated producers like Roger have made SSWIG become one of Wisconsin’s more active producer-led watershed groups, helping farmers adopt conservation practices. Roger’s hands-on involvement in grant writing, cost-share programs, and peer-to-peer education has made a lasting impact both locally and across the state.

Roger is a driving force for conservation education and outreach. He regularly hosts pasture walks, field days, and workshops, sharing his experiences with no-till farming, rotational grazing, and cover crop trials. In 2024 alone, he organized multiple events, including a farm tour for elected officials to highlight the importance of conservation support.

Sauk County LRE and the Wisconsin Land+Water Conservation Association are excited to work with Roger to create a professional short film showcasing Roger’s conservation accomplishments. Follow Sauk County LRE’s Facebook page or sign up for email updates to stay informed on the film’s completion and premiere.



Roger shares his experiences at the SSWIG booth at the 2024 Sauk County Dairy Breakfast.



Roger with his custom mobile post system that helps increase grazing areas on his farm.



Roger accepting the 2025 Conservation Farm Family of the Year Award at the WI Land+Water Conference in March

LAND RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

ADMINISTRATION

Tim Kabat, Director
Becky Meyer, Office Specialist

LAND CONSERVATION

Melissa Schlupp, Conservation Manager
Serge Koenig, Conservation Analyst
Brian Sadler, Conservation Specialist
Patrick Bula, Conservation Specialist
Jenn Schneiderman, Conservation Technician
Mitch McCarthy, Watershed Program Coordinator
Jacqui Peyer, Conservation Educator

PLANNING AND ZONING

Brian Simmert, Planning & Zoning Manager
Cassandra Fowler, Planner
Will Christensen, Land Use/Sanitary Specialist
Tate Hillman, Land Use/Sanitary Technician
Megan Krautkramer, Land Use/ Sanitary Technician

PARKS AND RECREATION

Matt Stieve, Parks & Rec Manager
Jekka Alt, Administrative Services Coordinator
Craig Meyer, Jr., Parks Maintenance Supervisor
Samantha Mittlesteadt, Office Specialist
John Starling, Maintenance Technician I
Cory Ratham- Operator I

STAY CONNECTED



[Email Updates](#)



conservation@saukcountywi.gov



[facebook.com/sauk.lre](https://www.facebook.com/sauk.lre)



608-355-3245

WELCOME TO THE LRE TEAM, TIM!

Tim Kabat- LRE Director



I feel fortunate and grateful to be joining the Sauk County Land Resources & Environment team. I have more than 30 years of experience working at the local level, including county and municipal governments and non-profits, as well as an 8-year stint as a local elected official. My background is in

urban & regional planning and prior to joining Sauk County, I served as the director of the La Crosse Area Development Corporation.

My passion is public service. I am guided by the golden rule – to treat others as you would like to be treated – and the campsite rule – to leave the place better than how you found it. When I am not at the office, I enjoy spending time outdoors, and with my wife and family.


Sauk County is a special place. I am truly excited to serve our residents, elected officials, and visitors, by providing excellent local programs and services and by working with our tremendous LRE staff to protect, enhance, and support our natural, historic, and cultural resources through innovation, education, and collaboration.

Finally, I would like to thank the LRE staff and especially Melissa Schlupp, our Deputy Director, for her leadership, grace, and dedication during this transition to a new director.

Phone: 608-355-4830

Email: timothy.kabat@saukcountywi.gov

UPCOMING EVENTS

 **SUBSCRIBE TO STAY INFORMED**

MARCH

19 - Native Plant Sale opens

MAY

1 - Deadline to order from plant sale

2 - Tree sale pick up day

19 - Ag Plastics Recycling

20 - Pasture Walk, Reisdorph Farm

JUNE

7 - Sauk County Dairy Breakfast

16 - Well Water Testing for Greenfield, Sumpter, & Merrimac Townships

26 - Pasture Walk, Echo-Y Farm

JULY

7 - 13 - Sauk County Fair

15 - Pasture Walk, Pelton Farm

16 - Ag Plastics Recycling

29 - Well Water Testing Educational Program



AG PLASTICS RECYCLING

 SAUK COUNTY FARMS

Recycle your silage bags, bunker covers, and hoop film for FREE!

- Bring plastic to the Sauk County Highway Shop, 620 Linn Street, Baraboo, 10am - Noon on collection day.
- Plastic should be in Recapture Bags or tied into tight, manageable bundles. Recapture bags are available at the Sauk County Land Resources & Environment Department office. Farms may receive 5 bags free annually. Each bag can hold about 200 lbs. of plastic.
- All plastic is to be unloaded by hand and must be a manageable weight and size to unload.

- **NO LOOSE PLASTIC**
- **NO Bale netting / mesh. This material should be landfilled.**



Recapture Bag



Properly rolled & bundled plastic

2025 DATES

3RD WEDNESDAY EVERY OTHER MONTH

10:00 am - NOON

- JANUARY 15
- MARCH 19
- MAY 21
- JULY 16
- SEPTEMBER 17
- NOVEMBER 19



Revolution Plastics offers dumpsters to Sauk County farms for recycling silage bags, grain bags, bunker covers, and greenhouse film on-farm.

To schedule your dumpster:

844-490-7873

collections@revolutioncompany.com

There is no charge for the dumpster and standard collection service. For more information contact:

608-851-0048

www.revolutioncompany.com



Visit our website to be notified of upcoming dates: bit.ly/agplastics

608-355-3245

conservation@saukcountywi.gov

505 Broadway, Baraboo, WI 53913



SAUK COUNTY NATIVE PLANT SALE



The LRE Department is taking orders **NOW** for the 2025 Native Plant Sale. Five native plant kits are available for pre-order. These kits have been selected for various sun exposure, soil moisture and habitat goals. Once installed, plants will cover an area of 20-30 square feet.

Native plants provide many benefits to wildlife and humans alike. Native plants provide food and nectar for pollinators and provide nesting sites and shelter for other animals. Native plants have deep roots that hold soil in place and can withstand extreme weather such as drought and flooding. Native plants require less maintenance making them a manageable landscape option.

Order early as limited quantities are available. The order deadline is May 1, 2025. This is a preorder sale - order pick up will be May 30, 2025 from 9am - 4pm at the Sauk County Highway Department in Baraboo.

 **NATIVE PLANT SALE**
PURCHASE HERE!

COST SHARE FUNDING AVAILABLE



RECEIVE UP TO
70%
COST SHARING!


Technical and financial assistance is available to landowners to install conservation practices to reduce soil erosion, protect water quality, and conserve the natural resources of Sauk County.



[Sauk County](#)
[Financial Assistance](#)

 Agronomy Practices


- Cover Crops
- No Till
- Nutrient Management

 Livestock Facility Practices

- Manure Storage
- Abandonment
- Roof Runoff System (Gutters)

 Rotational Grazing Infrastructure

- Fence
- Waterlines
- Seeding
- Trails & Walkways
- Winter Watering System

 Lakeshore Practices

- Shoreline Protection
- Native Buffer & Rain Garden
- Fish Sticks, Diversion & Rock Infiltration



SAVE THE DATE

SAUK COUNTY CLEAN SWEEP EVENT SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27 8AM-12PM


This annual event will be hosted on **Saturday, September 27, 2025 from 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.** at the former Sauk County Landfill, **E8795 Evergreen Lane, Baraboo**. Clean Sweep is an opportunity for homeowners, agricultural enterprises, and businesses to dispose of hazardous products and items that pose an environmental risk, such as pesticides and toxic cleaning products. Household hazardous

waste will be collected at no charge, however, there are fees for tires, some electronic items, and appliances.

 [SAUK COUNTY
CLEAN SWEEP
INFORMATION](#)

CAN'T MAKE IT? HAVE ITEMS THAT AREN'T ACCEPTED AT CLEAN SWEEP?

 [ALTERNATIVE DISPOSAL GUIDE](#)

 [CLEAN SWEEP VOUCHER PROGRAM](#)

SAUK COUNTY CLEAN SWEEP VOUCHER PROGRAM

Sauk County residents can dispose of their household hazardous waste at the Dane County Clean Sweep facility through a voucher program. Sauk County residents need to complete a voucher form at the Sauk County Land Resources and Environment Department (LRE) (West Square Building at 505 Broadway Street, Ste 248, Baraboo). Please bring an

inventory of materials when applying for the voucher program; materials need to be approved by LRE staff. Participants with the Sauk County voucher pay a \$15.00 fee upon arrival at the Dane County Clean Sweep instead of the \$75.00 fee for out-of-county participants.



2025 JEROLD BERG GRAZING ADVOCATE

SERGE KOENIG, SAUK COUNTY LRE

Congratulations to Serge for being selected as the 2025 GrassWorks, Inc. Jerold Berg Grazing Advocate as he enters his 31st year with the Sauk County LRE!

Since 2015, Serge Koenig has been a leading advocate for grass-based agriculture at the local, regional, and statewide levels. As a Conservation Analyst with the Sauk County LRE, he has worked tirelessly to educate farmers, colleagues, elected officials, and the public on the human health, economic, and environmental benefits of grazing. Serge exudes positivity and uses his knowledge and passion for grassland agriculture to mentor and train graziers throughout the state. Serge is known for inspiring colleagues and new graziers with hands-on, individualized information. This approach allows him to find personal motivations and identify the heart of any issues, often resulting in a farmer committing to a transition into grass-based agriculture. He epitomizes the phrase, "nobody cares how much you know until they know how much you care."

“
Nobody cares how much you know until they know how much you care.

—Theodore Roosevelt

”

Through his commitment and technical skill set, Serge has almost single-handedly assisted with the conversion of nearly 5,000 acres of cropland and overgrazed pasture into rotationally grazed pasture in Sauk County. At the local level, Serge engages numerous community organizations including Sauk Soil & Water Improvement Group, Powered Up Baraboo, Baraboo Range Preservation Association, the Aldo Leopold Foundation, and through programs offered by the Carnegie-Schadde Memorial Public Library in Baraboo. These educational programs advocate for local consumers to purchase grass-fed meat, raise awareness on ecosystem services provided by grazing, and show how supporting local farmers promotes vibrant and thriving communities. Serge's integrity, unique knowledge, and dedication to the agricultural community continually results in positive impacts on both rural landscapes and the livelihoods of farmers, vastly contributing to a valuable paradigm shift towards grass-based agriculture throughout Wisconsin.

Continued on page 6



Serge & Sauk County LRE staff at the GrassWorks Conference



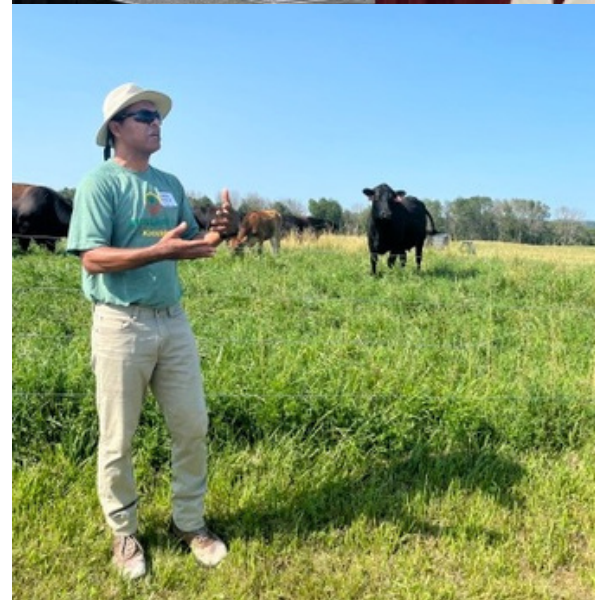
Over the years, Serge has organized educational programming for Sauk County & beyond.



ABOUT THE AWARD:

GrassWorks grew out of the farm crisis of the 1980's and was established to promote a farmer network that advocated for greater support from government policy, timely and relevant research, and technical assistance for implementation of conservation practices. The group stepped up to be leaders in promoting grazing in Wisconsin and established educational programs, with an annual conference being its signature event, to showcase techniques and share information in a grazing community. Over the next 35 years, GrassWorks has flourished with its farmer-led grassroots approach, advancing educational programming and creating networks for grass-based agriculture that support healthy soil, clean air and water, and healthy rural communities.

Beginning in 1989, the grazing community began honoring individuals and families for their outstanding contributions to inspire others and champion grazing. GrassWorks has celebrated several types of awards at its annual conference including CALS Honorary Recognition Award and Agri-View Agri-Communicator Award. In 2007 GrassWorks established the Grazing Advocate Award and then renamed it in 2017 in honor of former board member and 2014 awardee Jerold Berg, in his namesake. Since 2017 the award memorializes the persistence and dedication that Jerold embodied and is carried on in all who have received the Grazing Advocate Award as well as the grazing community as a whole. This award celebrates the outstanding achievements and contributions to advancing grass-based agriculture that are so meaningful and unique to the grazing community.



SAUK COUNTY FARM HAPPENINGS

Contributed by Jenn Schneiderman



This year has been a busy one at the Sauk County Farm! Our staff have been hard at work to create a space of community, education, and collaboration at the County Farm. We're installing new infrastructure, creating better habitat for wildlife, and training the newest generation of conservationists.

As an effort to create a welcoming space, the Sauk County Farm is now host to a brand-new Community Garden! Eight new ADA accessible raised garden beds are available for members of the public to rent with potential for costs to be waived. These beds measure 4'x8' and are 42" high, designed to be accessible to people of all ability levels. We will be hosting an orientation to the gardens on Thursday, May 1st in conjunction with Sauk County Master Gardeners. Come join us for an introduction to

gardening, planting, tools, and free seeds! These community gardens are designed to provide a space to connect, share, and create community around food and the outdoors.

We're also working to create habitat for wildlife on the County Farm! Native seedings are crucial environments for pollinators, birds, and mammals alike. Creating native corridors for wildlife to move through helps control erosion and capture nutrients that might have otherwise washed away. This year, the Sauk County Farm will install six acres of new prairie strips in the row-crop fields. These prairies will require some years of mowing, but will soon bloom in colorful arrays of yellow, purple, red, and green. Managing native plantings is a rewarding and important aspect of native plantings, which can be accomplished by mowing or prescribed fire every few years.

Prescribed fire is one of the most effective ways to manage prairies in Wisconsin and requires a significant amount of planning. As part of the effort to create increased wildlife habitat, Sauk County in association with Pheasants Forever, hosted a Prescribed Fire training at the Sauk County Farm. Staff implemented prescribed fire to stimulate growth and reduce weed populations on two sections of prairie on the property. Conservationists throughout Wisconsin came to gain experience in prescribed fire and take that knowledge back to their counties and beyond.

The Sauk County Land Resources and Environment Department is thrilled to see more programming and public works projects taking place on the Sauk County Farm. We hope to see you there!

WELL WATER TESTING PROGRAM

ATTENTION MERRIMAC, GREENFIELD, & SUMPTER TOWNSHIPS

What's in your water?

In a recent survey conducted by UW-Stevens Point, 73% of survey respondents had not tested their drinking water in the last five years. The Sauk County drinking water program provides a convenient opportunity to test your drinking water and learn about the issues facing well water in Sauk County. Residents living in the townships of Merrimac, Greenfield, and Sumpter will have an opportunity to participate in a Drinking Water Program in the summer of 2025. Participants will learn about their drinking water quality and quantity, and what actions they should take to protect Sauk County's groundwater.

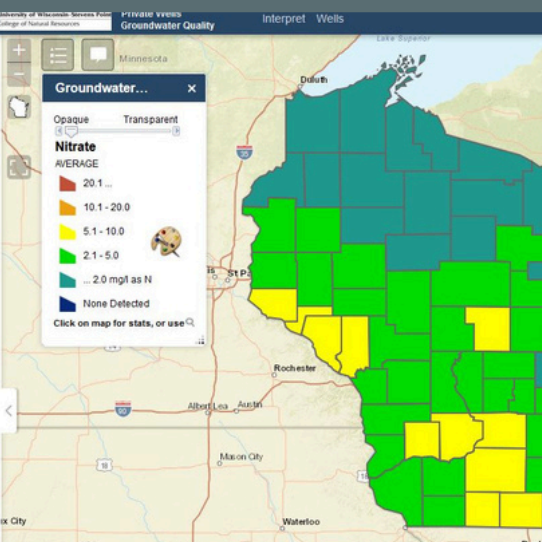
Watch for your township updates & mailed flyers. [Information on past programs](#)

If you are a homeowner with a private well, it is important that you get your water tested once a year. Groundwater is constantly moving, so a water sample taken today may have different results than a sample taken a year ago. **GET INVOLVED** and find out what you and your family are drinking.

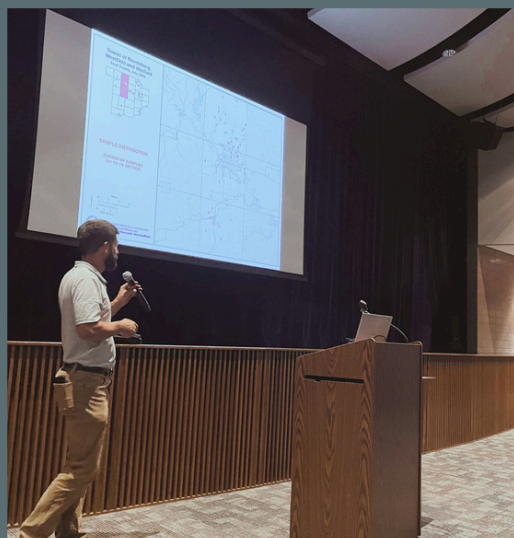
Tests available:

- Homeowner package
- Diaminochlorotriazine (DACT) Screen-pesticides
- Metals Package

Visit [UW-Stevens Point lab](#) website for more testing information.



Click on the picture to access the Well Water Quality Viewer: Private Well Data for Wisconsin



Participants will learn about the safety of their water supply, practices that can improve or protect groundwater quality, & more!



Cracked or poorly sealed well caps can provide insects and other organisms a pathway into your well.

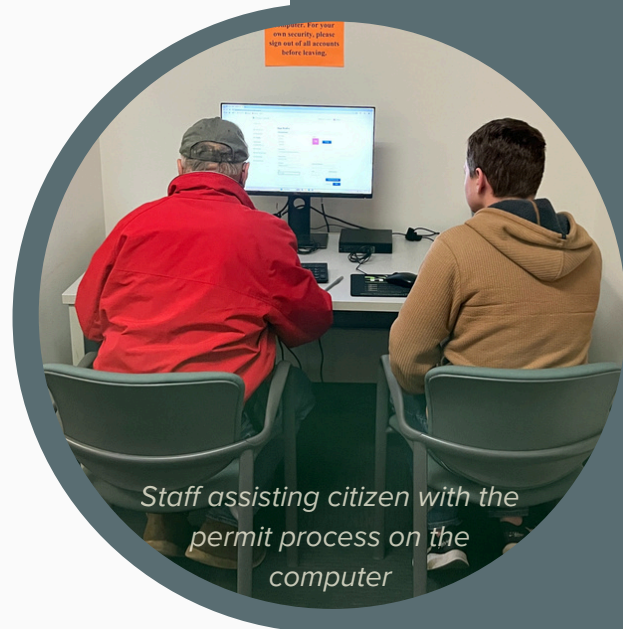
PLANNING & ZONING

Online Permitting

Land Use and Sanitary Permits have now gone fully on-line!

The link below can be used to set-up your account and start submitting permits through our new portal, OpenGov. The new system is designed to be intuitive and user-friendly, but we are here to help if you have any questions or concerns. Don't hesitate to call the LRE office if you have any questions: (608) 355-3245.

[OPEN GOV ONLINE PERMITS](#)



Staff assisting citizen with the permit process on the computer

USDA-FSA UPDATES

USDA Expediting \$10 Billion in Direct Economic Assistance to Agricultural Producers

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is issuing up to \$10 billion directly to agricultural producers through the Emergency Commodity Assistance Program (ECAP) for the 2024 crop year. Administered by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), ECAP will help agricultural producers mitigate the impacts of increased input costs and falling commodity prices.

Authorized by the American Relief Act, 2025, these economic relief payments are based on planted and prevented planted crop acres for eligible commodities for the 2024 crop year. To streamline and simplify

the delivery of ECAP, FSA will begin sending pre-filled applications to producers who submitted acreage reports to FSA for 2024 eligible ECAP commodities soon after the signup period opens on March 19, 2025. Producers do not have to wait for their pre-filled ECAP application to apply. They can visit fsa.usda.gov/ecap to apply using a login.gov account or contact their local FSA office to request an application once the signup period opens.

[More information](#)

USDA-Sauk County Farm Service Agency:
(608) 355-4420
505 Broadway, Baraboo, WI



FARMLAND PRESERVATION TAX CREDITS AND THE NEW WOODLAND AEA

Contributed by Brian Sadler

New in the 2025 tax year, most landowners within Woodland township have the opportunity to apply for farmland preservation agreements. These voluntary agreements are for landowners interested in continuing to utilize their land for agricultural purposes.



Frequently
Asked
Questions

Q: Can only my cropland can be enrolled in the program?

A: No. All land under common landownership that meets the state soil and water conservation standards can be included in the agreement. Example: You own 200 acres within the AEA. Of the 200 acres, 120 acres is in row crop production and 80 acres is forest land. The agricultural revenue produced from the row crop land allows the entire 200 acres to qualify.

Q: Am I required to enroll all my land in an agreement?

A: No. Landowners can choose how much of their land they would like to enroll in the program. All land must still meet the state conservation standards but does not have to stay in agricultural production.

Q: If I rent my cropland out, do I still receive the tax credit or does the operator?

A: The tax credit goes to the landowner. As the landowner, you'll want to make sure that your operator is taking good care of the land and meeting conservation standards.

Q: Are the conservation standards required for this program more stringent than non-participating farms?

A: No. The conservation standards are the same state standards that every farm should be meeting. These standards are verified by staff every four years.

A general reminder to all farmland preservation participants: **the tax credit has been increased to \$10/ac for all participants***.

Have more questions on the farmland preservation program or conservation standards? Give the Sauk County LRE department a call or send us an email and we'd love to help you achieve your conservation goals.

*Excluding pre-2009 income-based agreements that are not modified.

 conservation@saukcountywi.gov

 **608-355-3245**





SAUK COUNTY FARMLAND OWNER WORKSHOP

Contributed by Melissa Schlupp



On January 10th, the LRE department hosted a Farmland Owner Workshop for landowners who rent out their farmland. The goal of the workshop was to equip non-operating landowners with tools to better understand the value of their farmland and what they can do to protect it. Nearly 40 people attended the event.

Topics covered included Understanding the Connection Between Ag Land and Water, Protecting Land and Water Resources with Soil Health, An Introduction to Farmland Protection and Succession Planning, Incorporating Conservation into Lease Agreements, and a Women Landowner Learning Circle.

The event was hosted in collaboration with American Farmland Trust and featured speakers from Extension Sauk County and USDA. MATC Reedsburg graciously offered venue space for the event.

You can find additional resources for landowners who rent their land out here:

[Sauk County Farmland Rental Resources](#)



ANNUAL SOIL HEALTH WORKSHOP

with Lance Gunderson

The Sauk Soil & Water Improvement Group hosted their annual soil health workshop in February. This year the focus was on soil testing. Eighty attendees learned from Lance Gunderson of Regen Ag Lab, the keynote speaker, about how the Haney Test may be a good fit for their farm. Referring to soil as a giant puzzle, when making soil health recommendations, we are all trying to figure out this puzzle.

Lindsey Hartfiel, Discovery Farms, discussed the outcome of edge of field monitoring with the Producers of Lake Redstone watershed group. Chris Bandura of UW Extension gave insight on finding soil health in UW recommendations. Jamie Patton's (USDA-NRCS) passion for soil came through in her talk about the importance of timing and consistency when taking soil samples.

The day ended with a farmer panel discussion consisting of members of local producer led watershed groups focusing on farming with cover crops to help build soil health. The panel stressed the importance of producer led groups play in supplying momentum for conservation practice adoption. These groups offer peer to peer learning and many educational opportunities. Follow SSWIG for event updates or visit the [Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection](#) website to find a producer led watershed group near you.



www.sswig.org



sswig.wi@gmail.com

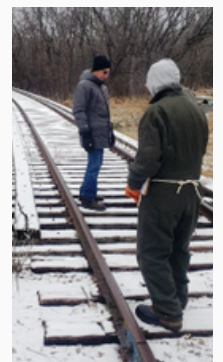


[@SaukSoilWaterImprovementGroup](https://www.facebook.com/SaukSoilWaterImprovementGroup)

PARKS + RECREATION

Wisconsin River Recreation Bridge

Contributed by Jekka Alt



Numerous planning meetings were held in 2024 for the Wisconsin River Recreation Bridge, which will connect Sauk County's Great Sauk State Trail to Dane County's Walking Iron Trail. The construction project was let for bids in the fall of 2024. In total, four bids were received and the project was awarded to Zenith Tech, Inc.

Construction has started on the bridge, including the installation of an access road to the job site from Water Street. This job site also provides access to the existing bridge as well, and includes the installation of a dock wall to help extend the platform base for the crane and other equipment.

Follow Sauk County Parks + Recreation on social media to follow along on construction.

ALL ABOUT AVIAN INFLUENZA

with Dr. Marla Wilson,
Mixed Animal Veterinarian in Sauk County

Contributed By [Public Health Sauk County](#)



What steps can people take to keep themselves & their animals safe?

Can you briefly explain what avian flu, or bird flu, is?

Bird flu is a contagious, viral disease that mainly affects birds and poultry. The current strain that's out there is called highly pathogenic avian influenza, which means that it causes severe disease and multiple organs can be affected. It's not a new virus. It's been around for a very long time and circulating in one form or another.

Avian influenza makes birds very, very sick and can kill up to 100% of your flock. The virus can be transmitted through direct contact with infected poultry/waterfowl. It can also be transmitted from contaminated surfaces or equipment, the environment that they live in, and through ingestion of infected meat, poultry, or milk products. Influenza is inactivated by pasteurization and cooking, so make sure you're fully cooking your eggs, poultry, and beef, and do not consume raw milk, cheese, yogurt, etc.



What other kinds of animals does avian flu impact, and what are their symptoms?

Other animals that can be affected would be waterfowl, cats, and dogs. We've also seen a new outbreak in dairy cattle in the last year, which had never been documented before. Influenza can affect different species in different ways. With poultry in general, they can have sudden death with no symptoms, respiratory signs like trouble breathing, as well as diarrhea, reduced appetite, stumbling, etc., so those would be signs to watch for in poultry. In dairy cattle, we found that it was causing fevers, abnormal-looking milk without signs of clinical mastitis or bacterial infection, a reduced appetite, and/or a decrease in milk production.

Get your flu shot every year. This doesn't necessarily protect you from getting infected with avian influenza, but it can help prevent having multiple infections at once. Wash your hands before and after handling poultry and dairy cattle.

Wear what's called PPE or personal protective equipment when you're around poultry. That means gloves and maybe a shield or goggles to protect your eyes. If you're in prolonged exposure periods, use an N95 mask to prevent breathing or inhaling aerosols. The Wisconsin Department of Health Services has some of these supplies available for producers and processors.

Wear designated clothing and footwear for the places that you're going. If you're working on a farm, have a pair of boots that you only wear there and have a pair of boots or shoes that you wear at home. Scrubbing your boots in-between places is a really helpful tool as well. If your animal(s) show symptoms of avian influenza, contact your local veterinarian clinic.





NO ONE FARMS ALONE

Contributed By Farmer Angel Network

Photo Credit: FAN



In 2018, Sauk County faced a tragedy when a local farmer died by suicide, which highlighted the need for mental health support in rural areas. This event brought the community together, showing the importance of supporting one another in tough times and sparking a conversation about mental health in agriculture.

Farmers often deal with stress and mental health challenges but are hesitant to seek help due to the nature of their work. Historically, farmers had natural support systems like community gatherings and cooperative work during busy seasons. Nowadays, these gatherings are less common, leaving many isolated.

The crisis led to the formation of the non-profit **Farmer Angel Network (FAN)**, aiming to reconnect rural communities through social activities, farmer-farmer fellowship and provide essential mental health resources. FAN's mission is to help farmers lead resilient, healthy lives and reduce the stigma around mental health.

Events like movie nights, barn parties, and ice cream socials create opportunities for farmers and their families to connect and support one another. FAN also offers peer-to-peer training to help recognize and address mental health issues.

This initiative has gained national attention, appearing in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, PBS documentary, and referenced in the book *Land Rich, Cash Poor: My Family's Hope and the Untold Story of the Disappearing American Farmer*. New chapters are also being started, like the one in western Wisconsin. FAN's board members are trained in suicide prevention and are dedicated to guiding farmers through all challenges faced such as relationships, farm transitions, finances, mental illness and more. Volunteers of FAN are there to help connect people to resources.

For assistance or to refer someone in need, visit www.farmerangelnetwork.com and explore the resources available.

To learn more, find us on Facebook and Instagram or visit our website. Join us in supporting farmer mental health and community resilience.



Farmer Angel Network

The Farmer Angel Network builds strong rural communities that support agriculture by providing **education, resources, and fellowship** with a focus on mental health.

Farmer to Farmer Suicide Prevention
988
24/7 Call, Text, Chat

YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

CAMP

The Sauk County LRE Department provides scholarships to county youth each year to attend conservation camps hosted by Wisconsin Land + Water. The Middle School Conservation Camp is at Upham Woods Learning Center in Wisconsin Dells and the High School Conservation Camp is in Manitowish Waters.

Campers will explore conservation careers and the beautiful natural resources of Wisconsin.

Sauk County scholarships will cover 50% of the camp registration fee. The scholarship amount is dependent on the amount of funding available and number of eligible applicants. Recipients will receive 50% or more in funding to attend the camp.



Learn more about each camp by clicking on the photos below

LAND+WATER
MIDDLE SCHOOL
CONSERVATION
SUMMER Camp

FOR STUDENTS ENTERING GRADES 6-8

JUNE 15-18, 2025
Upham Woods | Wisconsin Dells, WI | \$300

ADVENTURES **HIKING** **ARTS & CRAFTS**

For more info: wisconsinlandwater.org/camps

**MIDDLE SCHOOL
CAMP SCHOLARSHIP**

LAND+WATER
HIGH SCHOOL
CONSERVATION
CAMP

\$450 **JUNE 23 - 26, 2025** **GRADES 9-12**

Experience nature like never before with our natural resource educators in Wisconsin's beautiful north woods!

HAVE FUN

MORE INFORMATION: WISCONSINLANDWATER.ORG/CAMPS

**HIGH SCHOOL
CAMP SCHOLARSHIP**

SAUK COUNTY STUDENTS MOVE ON TO NATIONALS

2025 CONSERVATION POSTER CONTEST

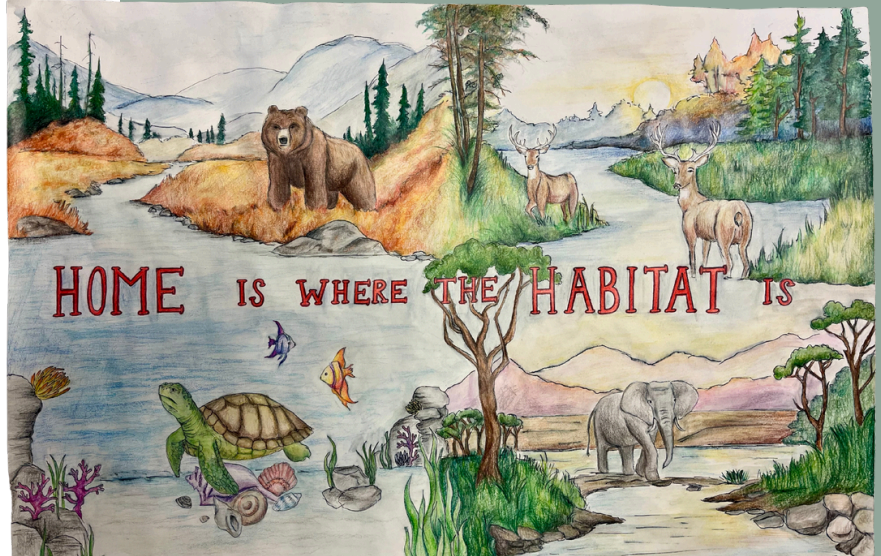
A total of 192 Sauk County students in grades K-12 created posters for the 2025 National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Conservation Awareness Poster competition. The Sauk County Land Resources & Environment Department sponsored the program locally, encouraging students to submit unique artwork to address this year's theme, "Home is Where the Habitat is."

Posters at the county level were voted on by Sauk County employees with the following for criteria:

- Conservation Message: 50%
- Visual Effectiveness: 30%
- Originality: 10%
- Universal Appeal: 10%

The first-place poster from each grade division moves on to regional, state, and national competitions. Students receive prizes and awards at each level where their posters compete and win. Sauk County awarded Amazon gift cards, stickers, colored pencils, and custard coupons this year. The first-place winners were also awarded a Sauk County Parks annual pass and a DIY bee pollinator house.

2025 NACD
Conservation
Poster theme
"Home is Where
the Habitat Is"



Vivian Spencer, Weston School District Grade 12, received 1st place at state & is moving on to the national poster competition



Lynette Herrild, Baraboo School District Grade 1, received 1st place at state & is moving on to the national poster competition

POSTER CONTEST
INFORMATION



Harper Wilkinson, Weston School District, Grade 6, 1st Place at the county level, 2nd Place at the Regional level



Maisie Posthuma, Merrimac Community School, Grade 2, 1st Place at the county level

Posters by Lynnette Herrild, Baraboo School District, grades K-1 division, and Vivian Spencer, Weston School District, grades 10-12 division, competed at the state competition. Conservation professionals from around the state cast their votes for the winning posters during the conference.

We are excited to share that both posters placed first at the state contest and are moving on to the national competition that will be announced at the national annual meeting in San Antonio, Texas in February 2026.

Congratulations to all the talented students from Sauk County for taking the time to create thoughtful and detailed pieces of art to raise awareness of important conservation issues.

To see the 2025 winning posters for Sauk County, visit our website: co.sauk.wi.us/landconservation/sauk-county-nacd-poster-competition.

For the 2025 state competition results, visit the WI Land & Water website: wisconsinlandwater.org/our-work/youth-education

Information for the 2026 NACD Youth Conservation Poster Contest will be made available on our website this fall.



Penny Schmidt, Baraboo School District, Grade 7, 1st Place at the county level

2025 SAUK COUNTY YOUTH CONSERVATION

POSTER RESULTS



GRADES K - 1	NAME	SCHOOL	DISTRICT
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1ST	Lynette Herrild	Gordon L. Willson Elementary	Baraboo
2ND	Anastasia Harjung	Al Behrman Elementary	Baraboo
3RD	Xavier Schlage	Gordon L. Willson Elementary	Baraboo
4TH	Lilly Bartnick	North Freedom Elementary	Baraboo

GRADES 2 - 3	NAME	SCHOOL	DISTRICT
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1ST	Maisie Posthuma	Merrimac Community School	Sauk
2ND	Josie Wendt	Community Christian School	Private
3RD	Willa Brunner	Academy of Excellence	Online
4TH	Brigum Riha	Merrimac Community School	Sauk

GRADES 4 - 6	NAME	SCHOOL	DISTRICT
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1ST	Harper Wilkinson	Weston Junior High	Weston
2ND	Kallie Sadler	Webb Middle School	Reedsburg
3RD	Amelia Seidl	Weston Junior High	Weston
4TH	Kamden Pyfferoen	Weston Elementary	Weston

GRADES 7 - 9	NAME	SCHOOL	DISTRICT
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1ST	Penny Schmidt	Jack Young Middle School	Baraboo
2ND	Carlee Burchfield	River Valley High School	River Valley
3RD	Aliah Hatfield	River Valley High School	River Valley
4TH	Tyson Luther	River Valley High School	River Valley

GRADES 10 - 12	NAME	SCHOOL	DISTRICT
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1ST	Vivian Spencer	Weston High School	Weston
2ND	Carlin Ilkka	River Valley High School	River Valley
3RD	Makenzie Weaver	River Valley High School	River Valley
4TH	Wendy Wittmann	River Valley High School	River Valley



OTHER GREAT SUBMISSIONS

K. Sadler, 2nd place



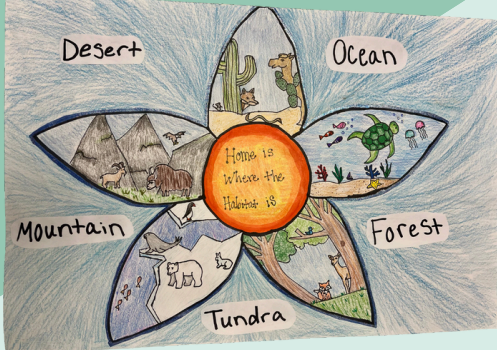
A. Harjung, 2nd place



C. Ilkka, 2nd place



A. Hatfield, 3rd place



T. Luther, 4th place



A. Harjung, 2nd place

