

Land Resources and Environment Department: March 2024 Monthly Report

Land Conservation

- Staff assisted Lake Redstone Protection District with their annual sediment and gully inventory.
- Staff assisted with the March SSWIG Shop Talk Spring Planting Event on 3/5 with 9 people in attendance.
- Staff taught Wheat Week program at Tower Rock Elementary on 3/11 -3/15 with 33 4th grade students participating.
- Staff attended the SSWIG Strategic Planning Meeting on 3/15 with 11 attendees.
- Ag Plastics Collection was held on 3/20 with 17 people participating.
- The March SSWIG Meeting was held on 3/21 with 16 people in attendance.
- Staff assisted with the Sauk County Groundwater Trends Presentation at Rock Springs on 3/26 with 16 people in attendance.
- The Spring 2024 Conservation Chronicle was published on 3/28 reaching 243 email subscribers & over 1,000 followers on Facebook.

Wisconsin Land + Water Annual Conference



Staff attended the 71st Annual Wisconsin Land + Water Conference in Green Bay March 6-8. The event included several breakout sessions, keynote and plenary speakers, statewide youth education poster and speaking contests and conservation awards. Staff assisted with the planning of the event and also presented at breakout sessions. Melissa Schlupp was awarded the 2024 Outstanding Conservation Employee - County Conservationist. "It truly is an honor to be nominated by my colleagues and recognized by fellow conservationists throughout the state." - Melissa

American Kestrel Nest Box At Sauk County Farm



Staff installed an American Kestrel nest box at the Sauk County Farm on March 5th. American Kestrels are North America's smallest falcon, a welcome sight over the open fields and agricultural areas in Sauk County. These grassland birds are experiencing severe decline due to habitat loss in addition to competition for cavities to nest in. By providing kestrels with a safe place to nest, they are more likely to successfully raise chicks and give them the best start in life. Kestrels feed on small rodents, insects, even lizards and frogs, providing pest control in agricultural and grassland habitats.

Land Resources and Environment Department: Quarterly Report (Q1 2024)

Land Conservation

Output & Outcome Measures

Share information and engage with the public utilizing social media and email marketing.

Several emails have been sent out utilizing MailChimp on topics including SSWIG meetings and workshops, Ag Plastics Collection, Conservation Camp Scholarships, NACD Poster Contest, 2024 Pasture Walk Line Up, Native Plant Sale, and Tree Sale Updates.



35 MailChimp Emails
7,580 Contacts

Engagement with Facebook users continues to help inform followers about programs that are offered and topics of interest. Some popular posts included the following topics: GSST Maintenance Work Video, 2024 Ag Plastics Collection Schedule, Conservation Camp Flyer, Native Plant Sale Flyer, and the Conservation Chronicle.



72 Facebook Posts
10,291 Reached

Provide residents with opportunities to recycle agricultural plastics and properly dispose of household hazardous waste and electronics.



Ag Plastics Collection
2 Events, 29 Participants,
2.32 Tons

Ag Plastics Collection Events are held every other month and continue to be a valuable resource for farmers who are not able to dispose of their agricultural plastics through the Revolution Plastics dumpster program.



Clean Sweep Voucher Program
4 Participants

The Dane County Clean Sweep Voucher Program was established in 2021 after the spring Clean Sweep Event was eliminated. Participation continues to be steady as we encourage participation in this alternative program.

Provide outreach and education programs to school aged audiences and adults.

Staff have provided school aged programming including the following topics: NACD Poster contest, WI Land + Water State Speaking Contest, River Health, and Wheat Week at Tower Rock Elementary School.



4 School Aged Programs
265 Students Reached

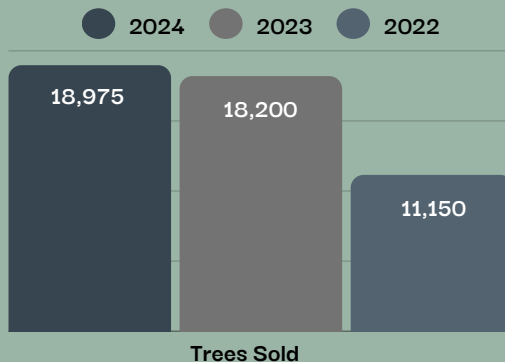
Adult outreach and education programs for Q1 2024 included NMFE training, SSWIG meetings, Annual Soil Health Workshop, SSWIG Shop Talk Event, and presenting at the annual WI Land + Water Conference.



15 Adult Outreach Events
352 Participants

Enhance natural communities by offering the annual tree sale and native plant sale

The annual Sauk County Tree Sale closed on February 28th. Orders numbers are similar to the 2023 sale.



The first annual native plant sale was held this year with four pre-planned kits being offered. The sale initially sold out in less than 48 hours so additional kits were ordered to try and meet demand. The sale closed on March 27th when the kits sold out for the 2nd time! This program is a collaboration with Carnegie-Schadde Memorial Public Library. Due to the overwhelming interest in the program, staff are already preparing to expand the type and number of kits offered in 2025.



Native Plant Sale
2,048 Plants Sold

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Planning and Zoning

- Staff working on Comprehensive Plans with the Towns of Woodland, Freedom, Winfield, Excelsior, La Valle and Reedsburg.
- Staff attended Land and Water Conference to present on the Sauk County Farm Master Plan.
- Staff met with the Ice Age Trail Alliance to identify synergies between the GSST planning and future planning for the Ice Age Trail through Sauk County.
- Work continues to identify a preferred route for the GSST. Staff and HKGi continue to collaborate with municipalities, stakeholders and private landowners to secure a preferred route.
- Staff are working with the WDNR in preparation for the adoption of the Kilbourn Dam Breach study as part of Chapter 9 Floodplain Zoning.

Soils Identification



One of our staff got down and dirty this month, shadowing a local soil scientist who is a certified soil tester with thirty years of experience to speak from. Soil tests are a key part of septic system design and code requirements. Our staff use knowledge of soil morphology and State Administrative Code pertaining to soil tests and private onsite wastewater treatment systems to review plans submitted for sanitary permits and do the on-site installation inspections.

Navigability Determinations



Sauk County Ordinance Chapter 8, Shoreland Protection, outlines the protection standards that apply to land disturbing activities within 300 feet of a navigable water way. There are some waterways that are well-known and established, and there are others that are present only on an intermittent basis and are not as clearly defined. When navigability is not clear, staff does a field check to make the determination. Indicators that are considered include vegetation type and location, size and width of bed and bank, the presence of an ordinary high mark, and stream history. The shoreland protection standards are required if the waterway is navigable which include erosion control plans and measures, limitations on impervious surface area, and setback requirements from the waterway.

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Planning and Zoning

Output & Outcome Measures

Land Use Permits Issued Quarter 1

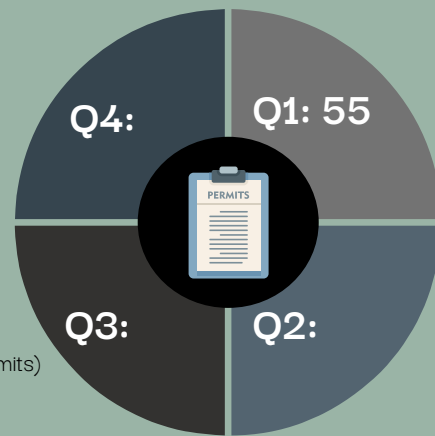
Compared to the previous year's Q1 outputs, there has been a slight increase in the number of land use permits issued. Collectively land use permits issued for building projects typically include single family homes, accessory buildings for farms and residences, and septic systems. Q2 and Q3 traditionally see a significant increase in land use permits issued, which corresponds with the summer building season.

Quarter 1 Land Use Permit Details

Single Family Residential: 22 permits

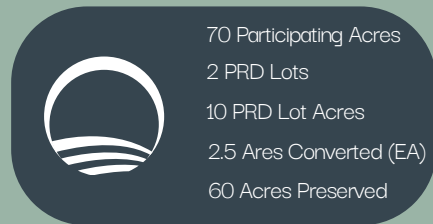
Accessory Buildings: 23 permits (Farm: 6 permits) (Residential: 17 permits)

Sanitary: 16 permits (Reconnect: 3) (Replacements: 2) (New: 11)



Planned Rural Developments

The Planned Rural Development program can be utilized in the Resource Conservancy and Exclusive Agriculture zoning districts. The metrics of the program in reflect both zoning districts, however acres converted out of an agriculture use, such as crop and pastureland, apply only to the Exclusive Agriculture zoning district, which is certified to meet the farmland preservation requirements expressed in Wis. Stat ch 91. The maximum conversation rate allowed annually in the Exclusive Agriculture Zoning District is 5%.



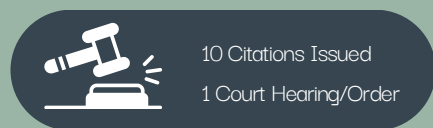
Land Division / Certified Survey Maps

Staff have completed or are currently reviewing CSMs that have been submitted since January. Of the 29 newly created/reconfigured lots, roughly 1/3rd may be utilized as building lots that can support the construction of new rural single-family homes.



Violations/Citations

The majority of citations issued this far this year are for failure to pump/maintain septic systems. The one court hearing pertained to an ongoing junk violation which resulted in a court order specifying the removal of certain identified materials and inoperable /unlicensed vehicles.



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Parks and Recreation

- Interviews were held for the Parks Seasonal Worker position. There are four vacancies total, with 5 people being hired for full-time and part-time employment. These positions will officially start employment in May.
- Requests for Proposals were created and released for the maintenance building at White Mound County Park and a golf utility vehicle. Proposals are due in April.
- Staff assisted the Highway Department with brushing along the Great Sauk State Trail.
- All of the bluebird houses at White Mound County Park were cleaned out and repaired (if necessary).
- A weight limit (Class B) for White Mound Drive was created and is now in effect.
- The piers were installed at the North End Boat Landing and Summer Oaks Boat Landing.
- Work continued on the Hemlock Dam.

Egg Hunt at White Mound County Park



The annual Egg Hunt event was back at White Mound County Park! Staff hid 4 large eggs throughout the park for park users to find. Hints were given throughout the month of March to assist park users. All in all, every egg was found and we were able to give away 4 different prizes. Park users of all ages participated, with approximately 100 people participating total.

All of Great Sauk State Trail opened



With all of the work completed on the new portion of the Great Sauk State Trail, including the fencing, we were able to open up the last 1.5 miles of trail. This includes the portion of trail from the Sauk Prairie State Recreation Area perimeter/gate to Goette Road. Trail users are also able to use the Town of Merrimac's parking lot off of Goette Road to access the trail.

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Parks and Recreation

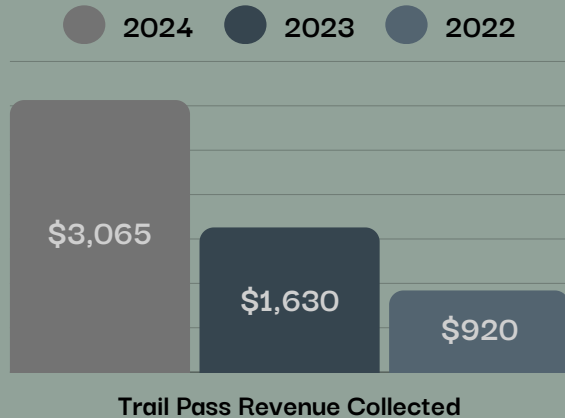
Output & Outcome Measures

Great Sauk State Trail

In comparison to Q1 of previous years (2022 and 2023), we're significantly ahead in regards to Great Sauk State Trail annual passes sold and revenue collected. An additional self-registration kiosk will be installed near the Goette Road parking lot. Please note, the revenue collected is before remitting 30% to the Wisconsin DNR.

80
annual passes sold

8
self-registrations sold



Social Media

Engagement with social media (Facebook and Instagram) users continues to help inform followers about events that are offered and topics of interest. Some popular posts included our 2024 events, campground improvement notice and photographs of Sauk County.

34
social media posts
Jan. 1 - Mar. 30

98,611
social media reach
Jan. 1 - Mar. 30

Programs and Activities Offered

There was one event held in Q1, which was the annual Egg Hunt at White Mound County Park. Staff hid 4 large eggs throughout the park for park users to find. Hints were given throughout the month of March to assist park users. All in all, every egg was found and we were able to give away 4 different prizes.

1
event

4
prizes

100
participants

Camping Reservations



Over **679** total camping reservations have been made from January 1, 2024 to March 31, 2024.

Prairie Smoke Terrace & Shelter Rentals

From January 1 through March 31, 2024, our office was especially busy with processing reservations made for shelter rentals, campsites and the Prairie Smoke Terrace. We expect many more reservations throughout 2024.

17
Shelter #1
reservations

27
Prairie Smoke Terrace
reservations