

CONSERVATION CORNER



Newsletter of the Waushara County Land Conservation Department in cooperation with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Department of Natural Resources

Land Conservation Awarded Lake Protection Grant

The Waushara County Land Conservation Department has received a Lake Management Grant for 2010. The first phase of the grant will involve collecting and appraising any Lake Management Plans already in existence from Waushara County lakes. Once these plans are collected they will be analyzed for content, status of action items, what objectives have been completed and if the lake group is able to complete the rest of the objectives, and/or if additional planning is needed. Kevin Flyte, Specialist at the Waushara County Land Conservation Department, will be working with lake organizations to accomplish all phases of the newly acquired grant.

Waushara County is fortunate to have 109 named lakes of varying size. In order to provide protection where most needed, part two of phase one in the project will include shoreline appraisals on the 31 lakes with public access. The appraisals will consist of identifying and inventorying natural features and critical habitat, lake development, erosion and delivery sites, and prioritizing the sites that are delivering the greatest amount of sediment to the water body.

Grants of this kind are competitive throughout the state. The Department is pleased to have been awarded the grant in order to help protect and maintain water quality for residents and tourists alike. If you have questions or would like to know what you can do to help, contact Kevin Flyte at Waushara County Land Conservation Department, 920-787-0443.

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We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect. ~Aldo Leopold, A Sand County Almanac





Lake Happenings

SHORELAND BUFFERS

a great
benefit for
water quality

In the last three years, the Land Conservation Department (LCD) has made a considerable effort to educate lakeshore owners about the benefits of planting native shoreline buffers. Staff attended numerous lake association meetings and gave power point presentations, showing shoreland projects and describing the benefits of establishing them on our county's lakes. With many lakes and 5,000 surface acres of water in our county, the LCD recognized the importance of protecting the most valuable resource, water.

For decades human activity has had a negative impact on water quality, wildlife habitat and aesthetics of our lakes and streams, for example; over applying fertilizers and pesticides, increasing upland runoff from impervious surfaces, mowing green lawns on steep slopes and removing vegetation along the shoreline.

In order to reverse some of these trends and protect our valuable water resources, the LCD is promoting **native shoreland vegetative buffers.**

Program Participant's Testimonial

Here it is January and my husband said "It's almost time to open the cottage!" One of the reasons he is anxious (and so am I) is to watch the awakening of the many native plants in our upland and coir logs. The variety of species, the sequential flowering, and changing leaf and berry colors combine to provide ongoing interest to us and the wildlife all year. An added bonus is the low maintenance—no raking or mowing! It's an aesthetic win for the soul and the body! Glowing with anticipation,

June & Mike McCormick
Mt. Morris Lake Property Owners

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These buffers usually consist of native trees, shrubs, grasses and flowers. They are planted from the shoreline and extend 35 ft. or more landward. Native buffers provide dense vegetative cover which slows down and infiltrates runoff from impervious surfaces and prevents soil and associated pollutants from reaching the lake. They also provide habitat for a variety of aquatic and terrestrial flora and fauna and reduce the environmental and visual impacts of human activities in the near shore areas. The buffers are usually not planted in what is known as the view corridor, a riparian property owner's access to the lake. They can be uniquely designed with low growing species as to not significantly block their view to the lake.

Native plants are a perfect choice for buffers. With their deep root systems, 3 to 6 ft., they dominated the landscape prior to the sodbusting era and required no maintenance. After all, riparian owners want to have fun at the lake, not spend all their time mowing lawns and maintaining non-native landscaping.

The Waushara County LCD has designed and inspected dozens of native shoreland projects on several lakes in the county. We have a shoreland habitat web site on our Waushara County home page which can help you choose the right native species to match the site characteristics of your lakefront property. Go to www.co.waushara.wi.us - Departments - Zoning and LCD - More about Land Conservation. Click on Shoreline Restoration to design your own shoreline plan.

If you need technical assistance with any best management practice, including shoreland habitat or shoreline restoration, contact the LCD by phone or e-mail, or stop in the office located on the second floor of the Waushara County Courthouse. We have plenty of photos so you can view how native buffers can improve the quality of your lakefront property.

LCD is here to assist you!

Testimonial

“Replacing the invasive plants on our lake with native species enhanced the near shore areas and reduces annual maintenance time and costs to almost zero. Native buffers substantially reduce the runoff that contributes to undesirable weed growth and as a result could possibly eliminate the need to own and operate our weed harvester.”


**Greg Foster, Treasurer
Mt. Morris Lake Management District**

A lake is the landscape's most beautiful and expressive feature. It is earth's eye; looking into which the beholder measures the depth of his own nature. ~Henry David Thoreau


“Native Plants are a perfect choice”



Little Blue Stem – Grass



Yellow Cone-Flower - Flower



Choke Cherry - Tree

GYPSY MOTH POPULATIONS PLUMMET!!!!

GOOD NEWS FOR WAUSHARA COUNTY LANDOWNERS

Gypsy moths, recent arrivals in Waushara County, have been a real nuisance over the last number of years. High populations have resulted in defoliated trees, which can weaken and kill trees. Although their preferred food is oaks, they can also feed on up to 500 species of trees and shrubs. Besides an expense to landowners in the removal and replacement of dead trees, there can be a potential decline in property values, as well as allergic reactions to shed skins, droppings from caterpillars, and decomposing bodies of the adult moths.

Unintentionally introduced in the Northeast United States in the late 1800s, Gypsy Moths have been gradually spreading westward ever since. Caterpillars hatch when the weather warms in spring and begin feeding in mid May to early June. Peak defoliation occurs just before the caterpillars pupate, normally in early to mid July. Adult moths emerge in late July to early August. After mating, the female lays a cluster of up to 600 eggs and dies thus continuing the cycle.

The good news for 2010 is that the populations have plummeted, and no populations have been reported severe enough to warrant participation in the Gypsy Moth Suppression Spraying Program this spring. Don't be too complacent, however, because populations are naturally cyclic, and can increase again in a few years or less, depending upon climatic conditions and other factors.

There are also many other valuable sources of information, if you want to learn more about the gypsy moth. On the DNR web-site the gypsy moth page is

www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/forestry/fh/GM/index.htm.

The UW Extension site has good quality photographs by visiting <http://www1.uwex.edu/ces/gypsymoth/woodlot.cfm>. Finally, the U.S. Forest Service has several helpful links and good quality photos at

<http://fhpr8.srs.fs.fed.us/wv/gmdigest/gmdigest.html>.

If you are interested in receiving more written information, both the UWEX Office in the basement of the Waushara County Courthouse (787-0416) and the Land Conservation & Zoning Office on the second floor of the Waushara County Courthouse (787-0453) have brochures and additional information on both residential treatment techniques and participation in the suppression program.

IMPORTANT DATES IN 2010

NRCS Program Sign-ups	Continuous
Watershed Lakes Council Meeting	02-20
Conservation Field Days	05-6 & 7
Watershed Lakes Council Meeting	05-15
Lakes Council Golf Outing	06-19
Watershed Lakes Council Meeting	08-14
Watershed Lakes Council Meeting	11-13

2009 Letter from the WCWLC President

Dear Members:

This letter is something new for the Waushara County Watershed Lakes Council (WCWLC). It's a final report on the major topics and concerns of the WCWLC for 2009.

The number one topic on everyone's mind this year is groundwater law reform and the impact of high-capacity wells and irrigation systems. Finally some of our representatives in Madison are listening to our concerns. George Kraft's, UW-Stevens Point study on water levels in the central sands areas of the state has opened the eyes in Madison to a very real crisis in our area. This topic will only intensify in 2010. The WCWLC will continue to support changes in the regulation of the irrigation systems and high-capacity wells in our area in order to lessen the impact of high-capacity wells on our lakes, rivers, and streams.

The State passed new pier and shoreline regulations for waterfront properties. These new regulations go into effect in 2010. If you have concerns or questions about these regulations contact the Department of Natural Resources, (920) 787-4686 (Wautoma Office) or e-mail the WCWLC at wclw34@gmail.com. The Council will continue to get the information to you concerning these regulations.

The WCWLC held a golf outing to generate funds for the WCWLC Scholarship Program. Although Waushara County is the second poorest county in the state, we are the only watershed council in the State to have its own scholarship program. The golf outing generated more money than expected and was an overwhelming success.

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Waushara County Local Poster Contest Results



Pictured: (front) Andrea Boyd, Emily Betro and Alexic Rodriguez
(back) Tammi Kenton, LCD Admin.
Secretary and Makenzie Conley

Middle Division

- 1st Andrea Boyd - Tri County Elementary
- 2nd Alexis Rodriguez - Tri County Elementary
- 3rd Emily Betro - Tri County Elementary

Honorable Mention

Makenzie Conley - Tri County Elementary

This contest is a function of the Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association, created to promote environmental awareness in youth. Tri-County school fourth graders were the only participants in 2009. The Land Conservation Committee would like to congratulate the winners and encourage participation from K-12 throughout the county for 2010. Watch for materials sent in the Fall to the schools.

Aquatic Invasive Species Program Summary 2009

2009 was a very successful year in Waushara County. Due to the frequent AIS monitoring by Golden Sands RC&D staff, as well as the seven training workshops offered this year, we can be confident that the current distribution list of aquatic invasive species is very accurate. Future monitoring is critical to keep the distribution list accurate, and more importantly, to detect new populations of AIS as soon as possible. Early detection of new AIS populations is critical for low-cost, low-impact management.

Free trainings were provided in 2009. Clean Boats, Clean Waters was held at Long Lake with 25 attendees. Citizen AIS Monitoring was held at Hidden Springs, Little Silver, Pleasant, Huron and Pearl Lakes with a total of 44 participants. Aquatic Plant ID and AIS Monitoring was provided at Spring Lake.

Golden Sands RC&D hired two watercraft inspectors to staff boat landings in Portage, Wood and Waushara Counties from May to Sept. 2009. Funding was provided by the Tri-County AIS grant. Many new AIS populations in Waushara Co. were discovered by the inspectors, since they were instructed to do AIS monitoring around the boat landings when no boaters were present. This resulted in a very comprehensive, efficient assessment of AIS distribution.

Aquatic invasive species were found in five new locations in 2009; surveys and maps were completed for Lucerne and Fish Lake and Wautoma and Wild Rose Millponds.

Species found in these locations include: banded mystery snail, curly-leaf pondweed, and Eurasian watermilfoil.

For more information contact Paul Skawinski, Waushara Co. AIS Coordinator at 715-343-6278 or e-mail skawinsp@co.portage.wi.us

Change in Service Hours at Wautoma Dept. of Natural Resources

Budget cuts, due to the state fund deficit have led to the Wautoma DNR reducing its hours for the public. Starting Jan. 4, 2010, the Wautoma DNR front office will be open one day a week, Monday from 9:30 to 12:30, and 1:30 to 4:00 PM. The Oshkosh DNR office will be open twice a week- Wednesdays and Fridays for the same hours. The Green Bay headquarters will be open Tuesday, Thursday and Friday every week.

Foresters, wildlife technicians and the drinking water specialist, Fred Bailey #3032, will still be working out of the office. Staff can be reached by telephone for assistance and customers can schedule appointments for any help needed. **Again the staff will still be working there-** please feel free to call them if you would like assistance.

WE REGRET THESE CHANGES AND HOPE THE PUBLIC WILL BE ABLE TO WORK AROUND ANY INCONVENIENCE.

Land and Water Resource Management Plan Update Scheduled

The Land & Water Resource Management Plan (LWRM) is due for its 5 year revision February 2011. The plan will address the following areas of concern: WI Working Lands Initiative, soil & water resource conservation, Aquatic Invasive Species, wetland restoration, nutrient management, and construction site erosion control.

By developing a County LWRM Plan, Waushara County is assured the opportunity to establish a locally driven process. Local citizens, government officials, and local, state and federal agencies will work together to integrate natural resource management programs and funding sources. This in turn, will provide the flexibility to allocate staff and financial resources where they can have the greatest impact during plan implementation.

The LWRM committee will be assembled later this summer to get the plan revision underway. If you are interested in serving on this committee, please give the land conservation office a call at: 920-787-0443.

2009 Wildlife Damage Claims

Statistics

Damage & Claims Program Participants:

19

Paid Claims for the WDC Program:

Approx. : \$46,000



Venison donated thru Deer Donation

Program to food pantries:

69 deer = 3217 # ground venison

2009 WCWLC Continued from Page 4

The WCWLC Board of Directors decided to sponsor a second and final outing in 2010. It will be held on Saturday June 19 at Two Oaks North Golf Course in Wautoma. All golf outing proceeds go directly towards the Scholarship Program. Through the scholarship program, we hope to encourage local youth to return to Waushara County upon graduation and continue our efforts in protecting the pristine waters of our area. The golf outing committee worked long and hard to make this event a success and needs to be commended for their time and effort.

Members of the WCWLC look forward to 2010 and the challenges that lie ahead. If you know of a lake organization that is not a member of the Council, please encourage them to join the WCWLC.

Happy New Year!!

Sincerely, Mike Geier, President

Waushara County Watershed Lakes Council, Inc.

New Working Lands Initiative replaces Farmland Preservation Program of Past



If you've been following agricultural events over the past several months, you'll know as part of the most recent budget bill, the Farmland Preservation Program has been eliminated. The Waushara County Land Conservation Department will continue to work with the approximate 55 farmers who have active contracts under the old Farmland Preservation Program to ensure the lands conform to state performance standards. However, once these contracts expire the Farmland Preservation Program will cease to exist in Waushara County and the State of Wisconsin. Replacing the program is a new state program called the Working Lands Initiative (WLI).

Under WLI, groups of farmers can request their lands be designated as an agricultural enterprise area (AEA). Once designated, these areas enable eligible farmers to enter into a farmland preservation agreement with the state to claim a farmland preservation tax credit.

The state may designate a maximum of 15 AEAs, or 200,000 acres by January 1, 2012, and one million acres statewide after January 1, 2012. Unfortunately, simple mathematics show that this will be a very competitive process to distribute limited funds and tax credits. It is doubtful that when the proverbial "dust has settled" much farmland preservation or funding will be available to the farmers of Waushara County.

To receive designation, a petition must be jointly filed by at least five eligible farmers in the proposed AEA, and by each County, town or municipality in which any part of the proposed AEA is located. If the petition is selected by the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection through a competitive evaluation process, the area must be officially designated through Wisconsin's rule process. After completing the expedited rule process, designation goes into effect January 1 of the following year.

Prior to submitting a petition, farmers are asked to contact Coreen Fallat at Coreen.Fallat@wisconsin.gov or call (608)224-4625 for additional guidance.

Interested parties must complete the petition form available on the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection web site at <http://workinglands.wi.gov>

There is no minimum acreage requirement for submitting a petition, although the state will give preference to areas that are at least 1,000 acres.



Updates to Wisconsin Administrative Code NR115 – Shoreland Zoning

After over forty years, the state's shoreland development standards are being updated to help improve lake and river protection, and provide more flexibility for riparian and near shore property owners. These minimum standards are just one of many tools Wisconsin uses to protect critical shoreland areas, but they are an important tool because they provide a base level of protection state wide for lakes and rivers.

These new development standards are contained in Wisconsin Administrative Code NR 115 – Wisconsin's Shoreland Management Program, and apply only to lands in unincorporated areas—those areas outside city and village boundaries. Under the changes to these standards, owners of existing homes would not be affected unless they remodel expand, or replace their home, or make a change in how they manage their property, including removing vegetation near the water or surfacing or paving new areas on their property within 300 feet of the ordinary high water mark of navigable lakes and streams.

The state Natural Resources Board approved these changes late in 2009, after state law makers returned the proposal to the DNR to make changes to an earlier draft. The new state administrative code is to take effect in February of 2010. Counties will be the ones who will have to administer these new laws, and they will have two years to amend their local shoreland zoning regulations to incorporate these new standards. The Waushara County Land Conservation and Zoning Office will be the Department responsible for incorporating these changes into the county shoreland zoning code.

Some of the more important features of this new state administrative code include:

- Building setback and minimum lot sizes will stay the same.
- Eliminate dollar limits on the maintenance and repair of legal nonconforming structures for shoreland zoning.
- Allow unlimited maintenance and repair of buildings that are less than 35 feet from the water, but only within the existing building envelope.
- Allow only vertical expansions of buildings that are at least 35 feet from the water, but do not meet required water setbacks, providing the owner takes offsetting steps such as reducing water runoff, upgrading the septic system, or restoring native vegetation through the preparation of a mitigation plan.
- Landowners proposing to increase hard surfaces, known as “impervious surfaces”, to more than 15 percent of the total property area within 300 feet of the water must get a permit and take offsetting steps like reducing water runoff or restoring native plants through the preparation of a mitigation plan.

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Shoreland Zoning Continued from Page 8

- A county may not permit a property owner's proposal to increase total impervious surfaces within 300 feet of the water to more than 30 percent coverage of the lot.
- The new code requires that these mitigation plans shall include enforceable obligations of the property owner to establish and maintain measures that the county determines adequate to offset the impacts of the project on water quality, near-shore aquatic habitat, upland wildlife habitat and natural scenic beauty. These plans are to be prepared by the property owner, approved by the County, and recorded with the County Register of Deeds Office. The measures in the plan are to be proportional to the amount and impacts of the project being proposed.

The Waushara County Land Conservation and Zoning Office will begin to rewrite our county shoreland zoning code sometime later in 2010 and will be recommending that an advisory committee be formed to help in the drafting of these important changes.

To learn more about the proposed rule, you can visit the DNR web site at:
<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/water/wm/dsfm/shore/news.htm>

Natural Resource Conservation Service 2009 Update

This year will bring some more changes to our office. We are expecting a new Soil Conservationist, Tonya Pautzke, to be joining the staff in March of this year. In September of 2009 we said goodbye to Jenny Roetter whom we lost to the Altoona Field Office.

April 27th will mark the 75th Anniversary of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Please visit www.nrcs.usda.gov for more information about the beginning of the NRCS, formerly known as the Soil Conservation Service (SCS).

Program wise, the NRCS is holding an Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) sign-up early in the calendar year. The ranking cutoff is scheduled for February 19, 2010, but the office accepts sign-ups year round if you missed that date. Feel free to contact us about eligible practices and other program information. The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) will be having a sign-up deadline that should be announced early in the year. Watch the newspapers for dates.

The NRCS posts information about all of our programs on our website at www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov, click on Programs. While at that website, click on the Quick Access link to Conservation Solutions to check out some ideas for improving your farm and the environment.

Feel free to contact our office if you have any questions about what we do. Our office is located in Westfield, at 438 Industrial Drive, Westfield, WI 53964 and the office number is 608-296-2815, extension 3.

Have a great 2010!

NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION
SERVICE STAFF: left to right -
Carlton Peterson, Soil Conservationist
Cindy Peterson, Office Clerk
Scott Doherty, Soil Conservation Technician
Michelle Komiskey, District Conservationist



WAUSHARA COUNTY LAND/WATER/
EDUCATION COMMITTEE
Joe Piechowski - Chair
Bernadette Krentz - Vice Chair
Everett Eckstein - Secretary
Larry Crawford - Member
Darrel Fenske - FSA Representative

Promoting sound conservation
throughout Waushara County

We're on the Web - Visit us at:

www.co.waushara.wi.us

Departments

Zoning & Land Conservation



LAND CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT STAFF:

Left to right -

Kevin Flyte - Specialist

Tammi Kenton - Administrative Secretary

Ed Hernandez - County Conservationist

Thomas Littwin - Specialist

John Olsen - Specialist

Mark Schumacher - Director

Waushara County Land
Conservation & Zoning
P.O. Box 1109
Wautoma, WI 54982



Customer Name
Street Address
City, ST ZIP Code