

# YEAR - 2024



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## Wood County Land & Water Conservation Department (LWCD)

# Annual report

### 2024 Cover Crop Field Day

A Cover Crop Field Day Event was held at the Dustin Albert farm on September 17, 2024. Key topics included: an equipment show & tell; an interseeding demo with in-use aerial seeding rye onto standing soybeans before leaf drop; cover crop root growth (a demo pit was dug to look at the root growth below the ground compared to the growth above ground); and an early corn cover crop trial (cereal rye applied on shoulder-high corn on July 21<sup>st</sup> and applying cereal rye on tasseled corn with side-by-side trials). A huge thank you to Dustin Albert for hosting the tour and demonstrating his innovative operations. Watch the LWCD website for upcoming field events in summer/fall 2025.



Early Corn Cover Crop Trial



Demo pit to show crop root growth



Equipment show & tell

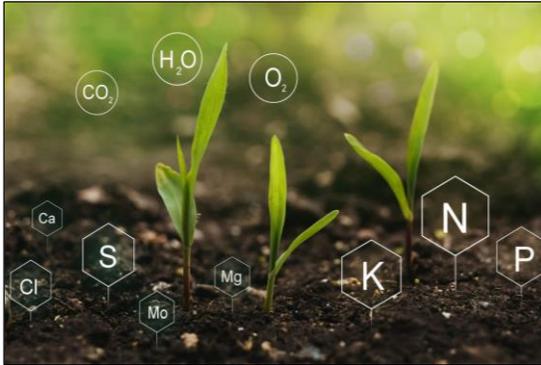
## 2024 Accomplishments:

- Secured funding of \$167,320.00 from the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) for staff salaries and support and training expenses.
- Received \$50,300 in Bond money and \$54,000 in SEG money from DATCP to implement the Wood County Land and Water Resource Management Plan. Funds were used to cost share conservation practices.
- Received \$38,336.66 from point sources for water quality improvements (MDV).
- Received \$3,301.00 from the County Board to pay area and state membership dues.
- Received \$73,536.26 from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Large Scale TRM Grant for the Mill Creek Watershed.
- The Conservation, Education and Economic Development (CEED) Committee held 12 regular meetings and 5 special meetings.
- Conducted annual transect survey to determine soil erosion rates in Wood County.
- The 10-foot Great Plains No-Till Drill is in its sixth season of use and had a decrease in use (from 2023) throughout the growing season due to a *very* wet spring and fall. The drill was used by 13 landowners covering 318 acres with 2024 revenue of \$3,192.00 (a flat fee of \$80.00 plus \$8.00 per acre is charged per use to offset maintenance costs).
- Hosted a Cover Crop Field Day at the Dustin Albert Farm – see information on left.
- Maintained the prairie/pollinator garden outside of the River Block building.
- Hired a summer intern through the University of Stevens Point (May-August 2024).

*Continued on Page 2.....*

## 2024 LWCD Accomplishments Continued from Page 1.....

- 23 farmers participated in no-till and/or cover cropping in Wood County or within the Mill Creek Watershed covering 3,457 acres, with funding coming from MDV, LWRM, ARPA or 9-Key funds. A total estimate of 3,687 lbs. of phosphorous and 2,346 lbs. of sediment were reduced.
- Issued five Animal Waste and Manure Management permits and processed permit fees.
- Conducted stream flow monitoring at six sites once per month for six months as part of a six county-wide monitoring project. Reported data to DNR's Surface Water Integrated Monitoring System (SWIMS) Database. SWIMS is the state's repository of monitoring data for Clean Water Act work and is the source of data sharing through the Water Quality Exchange Network.
- Provided no-cost well water nitrate testing to 8 Wood County residents through grant monies.
- Completed and cost-shared the following:
  - One livestock watering system
  - One manure transfer system
  - One streambank crossing
  - One grazing system fence repair
  - Four wells decommissioned
  - One streambank/shoreland protection project
  - Two waste facility closures
  - One roof runoff
- Held the 2024 Annual LWCD Tree and Shrub Sale in April, selling 13,725 trees and shrubs to approximately 141 landowners. Top sellers were white pine and white spruce trees.
- Nine landowners purchased prairie grass/wildflower seeds as part of the Tree and Shrub sale.
- Tree shelters and generic gel were made available for sale throughout the year.
- During the 2024 tree & shrub sale, 628 tree shelters and 8 pounds of generic gel were sold (sold in 4 ounce & 1 lb. bags).
- Coordinated and hosted the "Central Wisconsin Farm Profitability Expo" on April 24<sup>th</sup> at MidState Technical College – Wis. Rapids Campus (see page 7 for more information).
- Updated the "Invasive Species" page on the LWCD website to include informative fact sheets for *Aquatic Invasive Species*, *Terrestrial Invasive Species* and *Invasive vs Native Look Alikes*. The fact sheets include photos, identification information, ecological impact, and other information. Link to Invasive Species website: <https://www.woodcountymi.gov/Departments/LandConservation/InvasiveSpecies.aspx>.



- Participated in the CEED Tour in September 2024 and coordinated tours of the Gorst Manure Pit & Transfer System and Bauer Transfer Site & Clean Water Diversion (both sites located in Marshfield) as part of the annual CEED Tour.
- Treated wild parsnip at 37 locations. Twenty-three new spots were found. Kept wild parsnip map current by taking reports from the public and field mapping.
- As part of the 9-Key Element Plan, surface water samples were tested for total phosphorous and total suspended solids at four locations throughout the Mill Creek Watershed once per month from May to October.
- Staff participated in the Young Conservationists Professionals Network Event in June sponsored by Wisconsin Land+Water and Marathon Conservation Planning & Zoning.

## Nutrient Management / Farmer Education (NMFE)

- Wood County LWCD partnered with Marathon, Clark, Lincoln and Taylor counties to hold multiple courses that qualify farms to write their own nutrient management plan (called the NMFE class). 7 area farmers covering 3,656 acres and multiple farmers from surrounding counties attended the Wisconsin Rapids class. LWCD staff provided assistance to past/present attendees to keep up their plans.
- Received \$546.07 in staff support for assisting with the Nutrient Management Farmer Education (NMFE) classes.
- Worked to get maximum number of nutrient management plans turned in which came to 97. These 97 plans covered 60,835 acres of farmland.
- 7 farmers participated in creating a nutrient management plan in Wood County or within the Mill Creek Watershed covering 3,613 acres, with funding coming from LWRM.



LWCD Staff administered the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) with no new enrollments in 2024. The 1,187.04 acres enrolled in CREP in Wood County provide the following benefits:

- At least 1,956 lbs. of phosphorus loss to waterways prevented per year.
- At least 1,022 lbs. of nitrogen prevented from entering waterways per year.
- At least 1,065 tons of sediment prevented from entering waterways per year.

## LAND & WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Wisconsin law requires each county to have a land and water resource management (LWRM) plan that has been approved by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). The Land and Water Conservation Board reviews plans and recommends action to DATCP. Plans are approved for a 10-year period. The Wood County LWRM plan was due for full review in 2024. As part of the review process, a LWRM Advisory meeting was held with DATCP staff in early June. A Citizens Advisory Council was formed and comprised of a wide range of partners (DNR, NRCS, UW Extension, Health Dept., DATCP, Parks & Forestry Dept., etc.) which met to review the current LWRM plan and provide input on goals and objectives as well as what LWCD should focus on over the next 10 years. The County Conservationist then completed a total revision of the LWRM plan. The plan was reviewed and approved by the CEED Committee on November 6, 2024 which was held in conjunction with a mandatory public hearing. The Wood County LWRM Plan 2025-2034 was approved by the Land and Water Conservation Board in Madison on December 4, 2024 and approved by the Wood County Board of Supervisors on Dec. 17, 2024. A copy of the Wood County LWRM Plan can be found on the LWCD website at:

<https://www.woodcountymi.gov/Departments/LandConservation/Doc/2025%20LWRM%20Plan%20e2%80%93%20FINAL%20DRAFT.pdf>

# Meet the Land & Water Conservation Department Staff and CEED Committee



**2024 LWCD Staff:**

(L-R) Rod Mayer, Conservation Program Coordinator; Kyle Andreae, Engineering Technician; Shane Wucherpfennig, County Conservationist; Kendra Wilhelm, Conservation Specialist; Barb Peeters, Conservation Administrative Specialist; Emily Salvinski, Conservation Specialist



**2024-2025 Conservation, Education, and Economic Development Committee (CEED) Members**

(L-R) Tom Buttke-Vice Chair, Tim Hovendick, Bill Leichtnam-Chair; Russell Perlock & Wayne Schulz. Absent: Producer Representative George Gilbertson

## Land and Water Resources Management Plan Implementation & Other Programs

Starting in 2000, the Land & Water Conservation Department (LWCD) began securing state funds from the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to fund local conservation practices on an annual basis. The selected conservation practices are outlined as priorities in the Land & Water Resource Management Plan that was written for Wood County. On an annual basis, the LWCD selects landowners and practices to be funded from those that express an interest and have resource concerns.

- DATCP has provided Wood County LWCD \$2,000,013 to cost share best management practices over the last twenty-five years. Landowners county-wide are eligible for these funds. In 2024, Wood County LWCD secured \$54,000 for nutrient management/cover crops and \$50,300 to install selected practices.
- Wood County LWCD received a total of \$152,650.41 to cost-share best management practices from 2019 -2023 through the Multi-Discharger Variance (MDV) Program. In 2024, Wood County received \$38,336.66 to cost-share best management practices in the Castle Rock, Lake Dubay and Black River HUC 8 watersheds.
- The DNR provided funds to cost share best management practices through the Mill Creek TMDL grant (Phase II grant awarded for \$600,000.00). In 2024, Wood County issued \$78,450.26 in cost-share received through the Mill Creek TMDL grant.

Practices installed in Wood County and reimbursed by DATCP, DNR & MDV in 2024 include: cover crops (3,457 acres); residue management (202 acres); streambank & shoreland protection (2); waste storage facility closures (2); wells decommissioned (4); livestock watering (1); roof runoff (1); manure transfer system (1) and grazing system fence repair (1).

*The following landowners installed Best Management Practices in 2024 (listed by cost share program):*



**DATCP**

- Rick Armagost
- Steven & Rebecca Bauer
- Gunta Erickson
- Ray Fait
- Flying Dollar Cattle
- Matthew & Kristina Graf
- Leslie Jagodzinski
- Luke Keuffer
- Frank & Loraine Klevene
- McMillan Farms
- Roth Golden Acres
- Dennis & Lori Ruess
- Thomas & Cynthia Slattery
- Alan Weiler



**MDV**

- Dustin Albert
- Rick Armagost
- Jason Bernick
- Kurt Eastling
- Ray & Norma Fait
- George Gilbertson
- Allen Grassl
- Kevin Heeg
- Brad Leverance
- McMillan Farms
- Roth Golden Acres
- Thomas & Cynthia Slattery
- Ryan Wayerski



**Mill Creek TMDL**

- Carl Baltus
- Tyler Bulgrin
- Allen Grassl
- Ed & Mary Kollross
- Peter Mallek
- Glen Peplinski
- James Raikowski
- Barry Richardson
- Roth Golden Acres
- Craig Vitort



## 2024 LWCD Accomplishments Continued.....

# Non-Metallic Mining (NMM)

- Certified reclamation and closing of one large non-metallic mine site.
- Approved permit modification with new reclamation plans on two mine sites.
- Received \$45,345 in reclamation permit fees under the Nonmetallic Mining Reclamation Program.
- Held \$3,309,600 in financial assurance for nonmetallic mine reclamation.



**Billerud (Verso) site reclaimed.**



**Violation Site**

- Issued 15 new pond build exemptions to nonmetallic mining.
- Inspected 49 nonmetallic mine sites for reclamation progress and active acres; created maps and calculations for each mine.
- Violations found on 8 mining sites with orders for reclamation plan revisions or restoration of areas. Three sites shut down due to non-compliance issues.

## Wildlife Abatement Program

- LWCD received \$45,661.88 from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WiDNR) for expenses and administration of the Wildlife Damage Abatement and Claims Program.
- Enrolled 17 landowners in the Wildlife Damage Abatement program.
- Enrolled 3 crop owners in the claims program, opening 1,392 gross acres & approx. 509 huntable acres to public hunting.
- Completed 11 crop appraisals with crop damage claims paid out totaling \$1,667.02 (paid through WDACP as noted below). Claim of \$490.76 denied due to landowner not meeting program objectives.
- Administered the 2024 venison donation program. 343 pounds of ground venison was donated to the St. Vincent de Paul Pantry (Lindsey Locker & OMG Butchering) and Pittsville PANS (Pittsville Meats) in Wood County.



The Wildlife Damage Abatement and Claims Program (WDACP) is a state program with the Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources (WDNR). The Wood County LWCD administers the program which provides local control and helps to reduce costs. This partnership helps to connect the local community to these valuable programs and resources. WDACP provides damage prevention assistance and partial compensation to farmers when deer, geese, turkeys and bear damage their agricultural crops. The program also has a network of venison donation partners, including county land & water conservation depts, food pantries, charitable organizations, etc. who all help implement and administer the venison donation program.

## Who regulates Nonmetallic Mining in Wisconsin?...

County and local zoning bodies are responsible for all mine siting requirements and regulations. Under ch.NR 135, Wis. Adm. Code, the DNR Nonmetallic Mining Program is responsible for ensuring uniform statewide implementation of nonmetallic mining reclamation requirements. It does this by overseeing county & local reclamation programs, known as regulatory authorities (RAs).

## NMM Overview.....

Nonmetallic Mining is the extraction of stone, sand, rock or similar materials from natural deposits. An estimated 2,500 mines in Wisconsin provide aggregate for construction, gravel & crushed stone (limestone & dolomite) for road construction, volcanic andesite for shingles, dimension stone for monuments, peat for horticulture and landscaping, industrial sand for export out of state for the the oil industry, and a considerable variety of materials for other uses.

# Lake Monitoring & Protection Network (LMPN) Funding

- LWCD received \$13,097.11 from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Surface Water Grant Program to administer activities eligible under the Lake Monitoring & Protection Network (LMPN).
- The LMPN focuses on outreach, education, and aquatic invasive species (AIS) prevention and lake monitoring activities.
- An early detection survey was completed following the Wisconsin State Water Ski Show Championships on Lake Wazeecha. Aquatic forget-me-not was the only new invasive species identified.
- Twenty-two AIS signage inspections were conducted at boat landings which resulted in fourteen signage replacements.
- Worked closely with the Nepco Lake District with technical assistance and supporting them in reaching the goals of the aquatic plant management plan.
- Hosted Snapshot Day at Nepco County Park:
  - Snapshot Day is a one-day statewide event where volunteers learn how to identify and monitor for aquatic invasive species.
  - Eleven total volunteers joined to learn and monitor for invasive species.
  - No new aquatic invasive species were found.



Snapshot Day 2024

## ARPA FUNDING

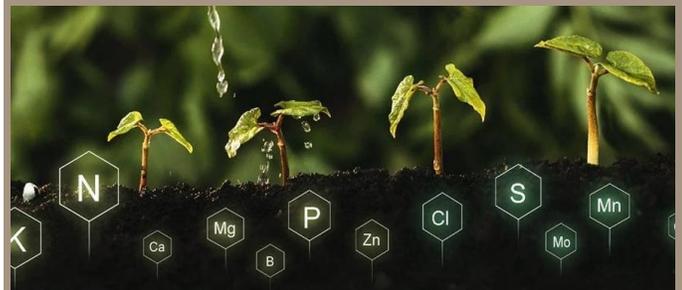
In November and December of 2024, the Land & Water Conservation Department was granted county ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds for the following projects. (The ARPA grant funds must be expended by December 31, 2026.)

- **Purchase of a drone - \$19,500**  
A drone was purchased for a total of \$13,894, leaving \$5,606 in the budget to cover training and software costs in 2025.
- **Water quality improvement practices - \$90,000**  
Residue management (\$25,000) ~ Cover crops (\$25,000) ~ Harvestable buffers (\$40,000)  
In 2024, a total of \$1,683.65 was used as cost-share dollars on 67.35 acres for establishing cover crops on agricultural fields. 74.25 lbs of phosphorus and 97.15 tons of sediment was reduced from running off these fields.
- **Field Test Plots/Training/Field Days - \$10,000**
- **Groundwater testing program - \$10,000**  
Funds to be used for a continued groundwater testing program across Wood County.
- **Incentivizing best management practices to address nitrate contamination - \$40,000**
- **Reverse osmosis cost-share program for private wells testing over 20 ppm nitrates - \$75,000**

**Total ARPA funds to be expended in 2024-2025 = \$244,500.00**



## Nutrient Management Plan.....Right Source, Right Rate, Right Time, Right Place



A Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) is an annual plan that helps farmers make the best use of their manure and fertilizer while also protecting the soil from erosion and improving water quality. A NMP first begins with soil samples that are sent to a lab and analyzed to determine the amount of available nutrients in the soil. The results help the farmer determine their fertilizer needs on a field-by-field basis. Snap Plus software is used to calculate potential soil and phosphorus losses. The farmer can change their tillage system or crop rotation for less soil loss. Starting a NMP is a proactive stance towards improving, protecting and conserving cropland. The NMP assists farmers in slowing erosion and conserving the soil while also fertilizing where needed to add the nutrients necessary for crop growth. A NMP is not only for the present but also for the future.

Wood County LWCD staff held many one-on-one education sessions to assist farmers in the process of developing and utilizing their NMP including the required steps to write a NMP, working with the soil test results, understanding the soil erosion factor of their soil, and learning how to improve the phosphorus index within their fields while maintaining yield.

See page 2 for 2024 NMFE data.

# Natural Resources Conservation Service

## 2024 Annual Report by: Andy Richardson, Acting District Conservationist

The USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service provides leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain, and improve our natural resources and environment. NRCS Mission: Helping People Help the Land.

In 2024 workload and landowner interest in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) remained high. We received 15 applications to participate in the CSP. We obligated \$239,395 to 8 landowners in Wood County through CSP to maintain existing levels of conservation and apply new conservation practices on 1,275 acres of land. We received 29 applications to participate in the EQIP. Through EQIP, we obligated \$842,675 to 20 landowners in Wood County to plan and apply new conservation practices on 1,957 acres of land. The CSP and EQIP in 2024 had 81 active contracts managed that cover over 25,000 acres of Cropland, Farmstead, Associated Ag Land, and Forestland to continue to protect existing farm resources and implement additional conservation enhancements. All CSP payments for 2024 were processed, and additional funds were paid to landowners through the EQIP and for various conservation practices applied from previous year's contracts.

Roy Diver retired as District Conservationist for Wood County at the end of 2024 and we are currently awaiting a permanent replacement for his position. Current Wisconsin Rapids NRCS staff include Andy Richardson (Resource Conservationist-Acting District Conservationist), Tristyn Forget (Soil Conservationist), Russ Biebl (Soil Conservation Technician), and Pat Murphy (Retired ACES).

The following is a partial list of landowner accomplishments completed with NRCS assistance from October 2023 through September 2024:

Conservation Plans Written .....	3,967 acres
Cover Crop Applied .....	1,628 acres
Brush Management Applied .....	26 acres
Pasture and Hayland Planting Applied .....	112 acres
Prescribed Grazing Applied .....	134 acres
Residue Management, No Till Applied .....	600 acres
Monarch Butterfly Habitat Applied .....	16 acres
High Tunnel System Applied .....	2 No
Waste Facility Closure Applied .....	1 No
Irrigation Water Management Applied .....	34 acres
Forest Stand Improvement Applied .....	119 acres
Native Tree/Shrub Planting Applied .....	17 acres



Photo: USDA-NRCS

### SWRM Grants

The Wisconsin Dept. of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection (DATCP) awards annual Soil & Water Resource Management (SWRM) grants to county conservation committees and other cooperators. These grants assist in funding county conservation staff and cost-share conservation practices installed by producers with assistance through their county. Grant recipients sign & follow a contract with their county. Grant funds must be spent in the year DATCP allocates them, although DATCP may extend cost-share funds an additional year for specific projects.



### WATER QUALITY PROGRAM

The goal of the Land & Water Conservation Department (LWCD), the Land and Water Resource Management Plan implementation, the Mill Creek 9-Key Element plan and Muli-Discharger Variance is to improve and protect water quality by reducing pollutants from urban and rural nonpoint sources. Nonpoint source pollution comes from a diverse number of activities in our daily lives including runoff from over-fertilized lawns and crop fields; constructing buildings and roads; and plowing our fields for crops. Nonpoint pollution is the leading cause of water quality problems in Wisconsin. LWCD staff would like to say **"thank you"** to all who have installed practices. We appreciate your efforts to protect the natural resources of Wood County and beyond.



**NRCS STAFF** (left to right):  
**Russ Biebl**, Soil Conservation Technician; **Andy Richardson**, Resource Conservationist-Acting District Conservationist; **Pat Murphy**, Retired ACES; and **Tristyn Forget**, Soil Conservationist



## 2024 LWCD Accomplishments Continued.....

- Removed garlic mustard via hand-pulling at two different locations in Wood County (mailed letters to adjoining landowners as an educational opportunity about garlic mustard identification, management methods, and the NR 40 rules).
- Responded to a report about invasive giant hogweed located on a private property in the City of Marshfield.
  - The population was verified to be giant hogweed.
  - There are only a handful of giant hogweed populations in Wisconsin, with this being the first within Wood County.
  - Giant hogweed poses a threat to human health by potentially causing burns and blisters when skin comes in contact with sap from the stem or leaves in the presence of sunlight.
  - LWCD staff and DNR staff conducted a survey to look for more populations of giant hogweed in public parks within close proximity to the private residence. No additional populations were found.
  - Educational mailings were mailed to surrounding landowners to keep an eye out for giant hogweed and to contact our department if they suspect there are giant hogweed plants on their property.
- Verified five populations of yellow iris, four populations of aquatic-forget-me-not, eight populations of Japanese knotweed, two populations of narrow-leaf cattail, two populations of Japanese barberry, and one population of cut-leaf teasel, all of which are invasive species.
- Worked with Pittsville High School students on their annual rusty-crayfish trapping project. All rusty crayfish caught were provided to Fierce Hearts Wildlife Rehabilitation as a food source for animals in their care.
- Removed Japanese Barberry at two different locations in Wood County (Nepco County Park and Village of Biron).
- Removed seed heads from cut leaf teasel at one location in Vesper.
- Hosted a shoreline stabilization educational event with a focus on Healthy Lakes & Rivers practices.

## Central WI Farm Profitability Expo

The Central WI Farm Profitability Expo (CWFPE) was held at the MSTC-Wisconsin Rapids Campus on April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The CWFPE encourages profitable farming by building resiliency, diversifying farming operations, reducing inputs and increasing farmer return on investment. Attendees at the expo learned about conservation practices that farmers can use to increase profitability and self sufficiency while being stewards of the land, such as regenerative management, cover and companion crops, and no-till farming. Central Wisconsin farmers discussed specific barriers experienced when adopting best management practices through panel discussions with fellow farmers who have implemented these practices. Attendees also explored the unique partnerships that can be created when merging agriculture and conservation. The expo was fully funded by a 2024 Innovations Grant through the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP).



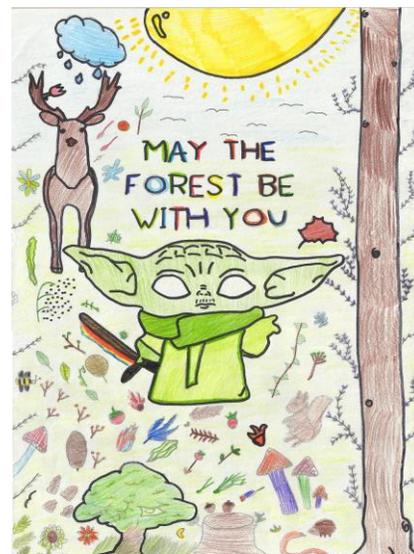
### Wood County Conservation Poster Contest

In April 2024 the annual Wood County Conservation Poster Contest for Wood County students in grades K-12 was held. The 2024 theme was “*May the Forest Be With You*” and the top three Wood County winners who advanced to the Area contest were students from Nasonville Elementary School:

1<sup>st</sup> Place-Taylor Curtin (poster on right →);

2<sup>nd</sup> place-Samuel Stichert;

3<sup>rd</sup> place-Jaylynn Salzwedel.



2024 Poster Contest Winner – 1<sup>st</sup> Place Wood County

### Land Conservation Committee (LCC)

Chapter 92 of the Wisconsin State Statutes requires counties to have an LCC that oversees the administration and implementation of conservation programs that meet local priorities and the needs of land users. These programs might be local programs or state programs that are implemented at the local level. This requirement is met in Wood County by the *Conservation, Education and Economic Development (CEED) Committee*. See page 3 for a photo and names of the 2024 CEED committee members.

# Extension-Wood County

## 2024 Report...

Extension Wood County assists the Wood County Land & Water Conservation Department by providing educational support for county conservation programs.

Extension agriculture educators provide information on the management of soil, nutrients, water, livestock, crops and other related resources. Matt Lippert, Regional Dairy Educator in Wood County, provides information related to the dairy industry, the largest segment of Wood County's agricultural economy. He emphasizes the production of forages, dairy herd nutrition, dairy cattle genetics and dairy farm management. Lippert is a Certified Crop Advisor and a Professional Animal Scientist. Lippert and the Agriculture Institute utilizes webinars, farm magazine articles, e newsletters and print newsletters to broaden the reach beyond the face to face, workshops and other outreach methods. Extension also offers a statewide helpline for assistance with any question agriculture related.

Extension also utilizes its regional and statewide network of UW-Madison specialists and area educators to assist with nutrient and pest management and assisting producers to develop their own nutrient management plans. Dan Marzu, North Central Wisconsin Nutrient & Pest Management Outreach Specialist, works closely with the Wood County Land and Water Conservation Department.

Anna James, Natural Resource Educator, utilizes outreach and education programs to increase local knowledge and skill regarding strategies to reduce nonpoint source pollution and improve water quality. She supports multiple producer-led watershed groups and lake protection groups in Central Wisconsin and provides spaces for these groups to connect and collaborate in order to achieve shared water quality goals. One of Anna's main goals is to ensure that nonpoint source pollution activities are shaped by the needs of community members and local stakeholders. In order to achieve this goal, Anna strives to create intentional relationships with community members, and she utilizes social science research techniques, like social indicator surveys, to better understand the needs of the audiences she serves.

Jen McNelly, Natural Resources Groundwater Educator, joined Extension Wood County in February 2024. Jen provides Wood County and Central Wisconsin Communities with information, tools and resources to better understand groundwater and drinking water concerns and challenges. This includes the development of the Wood County Nitrate Risk Map that can be found in the Wood County Land and Water Management Plan. Jen also helps to facilitate County and citizen groups working on groundwater related issues.

Wood County is the top cranberry-producing county in North America so it is a natural fit to have Cranberry Outreach Specialist, Allison Jonjak, home based with Extension Wood County. Her efforts are focused on improving grower education in cranberry production practices and aligning researcher focus with grower needs. Allison hosts virtual and in-person events focusing on nutrient use efficiency, water use and quality, profitability and integrated pest management. Annual Nutrient Management Plan trainings continue to have excellent participation and support growers in sustainable ecosystem management. The Wisconsin State Cranberry Growers' Association has awarded Allison the Education Advocate award, and cranberry growers appreciate wetlands-specific management decision support and guidance.

Extension also provides educational programs in Horticulture, 4-H and Youth Development, Human Relationships and Development, Community Development, Natural and Environmental Resources and Nutrition education through the FoodWise program.

Stop by the Extension Office for plat books, farm record books, soil sample information, water quality and radon test kits.

### **Extension Wood County Staff:** (pictured on left)

Back (left to right): Wendy Young (Administrative Support), Anna Mitchell (Natural Resources Educator), Jeremy Solin (Area Extension Director), Matt Lippert (Agriculture Educator)

Front (left to right): Laura Huber (4-H Program Educator), Karli Tomsyck (Administrative Support), Kayla Rombalski (Community Development Educator)

Staff not pictured: Allison Jonjak (Cranberry Outreach Specialist); Mallory McGivern (Area 7 FoodWise Administrator); Jen McNelly (Natural Resources Groundwater Educator); Olga Meza (4-H Bilingual Associate Educator); Hannah Scott (FoodWise Nutrition Educator); Jennifer Swensen (Wisconsin 4-H Regional Program Manager); Ka Zoua Thao (Bilingual Community Health Worker); Michelle Van Krey (Healthy Communities Coordinator); Janell Wehr (Horticulture Educator)

