

WISCONSIN LAND+WATER 2024 FRIEND OF CONSERVATION AWARD NOMINATION INFORMATION

1. Please provide the following information:

- Name and contact information of the nominee.

Center for Watershed Science and Education and Water and Environmental Analysis Laboratory
Daniel O. Trainer Natural Resources Building
800 Reserve St., Room 224
Stevens Point, WI 54481
715-346-4270

- The Center for Watershed Science and Education is an UW-Extension affiliated Center and the Water and Environmental Analysis Laboratory is a state-certified water testing Lab. Both have been in existence since 1972.

- Name and contact information of the nominator.

Portage County Land and Water Conservation Department

Jen McNelly, Portage County Water Resource Specialist
Dan O'Connell, Portage County Senior Conservation Technician
Tracy Arnold, Portage County Conservation Technician
Patty Benedict, Portage County Land and Water Conservation Administrative Assistant
1462 Strongs Ave.
Stevens Point, WI 54481
715-346-1334
mcnellyj@co.portage.wi.gov

2. In 500 words or less summarize the nominee's project/approach to land and resource management. Include the impact on conservation and/or management of natural resources, as well as any innovative techniques or outreach efforts where they have shared their knowledge or project with others.

The Center for Watershed Science and Education (CWSE) and the Water and Environmental Analysis Laboratory (WEAL) have a mission to support watershed stewardship, assist citizens with lake, river, and drinking water quality problems, promote strategies for water resource protections, provide water quality assessments, and support and prepare students for careers as water resource professionals.

The impact that CWSE and WEAL have had on conservation in the state of Wisconsin is immeasurable, extending back to its inception as the Environmental Task Force Lab in 1972 where it led the way in revealing extensive nitrate contamination in groundwater and identifying the leaching potential of Aldicarb into drinking water wells. Since this time, the Environmental Task Force has morphed,

becoming what we know today as the WEAL and is part of the now Center for Watershed Science and Education, continuing to meet its mission while serving the residents of Wisconsin.

The CWSE serves every corner of the State in a variety of ways, whether through their water testing services that are always developing to detect new contaminants, such as pharmaceuticals and personal care products, conducting lake studies that help us better understand our surface waters, assisting counties with developing lake management plans, providing outreach and information with their community well testing programs, hosting groundwater model workshops for educators or serving as a resource for professionals and residents.

The tools that the CWSE have and continue to create provide Wisconsin residents with access to valuable information. Over the last two decades, the CWSE has helped facilitate citizen driven water quality data collection and in 2012, created the WI Well Water Viewer to make well water information easily accessible through an online viewer. The Well Water Viewer includes data from over 200,000 wells that cover the state and provide homeowners, educators, health professionals, and local units of government with information about local groundwater resources.

Additionally CWSE has created the water conservation and cost savings calculator that allows residents to select their water utility provider and imports local water and sewer fees, helping users determine potential cost savings from conservation measures.

Most recently, in order to help better understand trends in nitrate contamination of drinking water, the CWSE created an online app to assess trends in nitrate concentrations in public drinking water systems.

3. Tell us in 500 words or less how the nominee meets the award criteria and guidelines. If applicable, entries can be supported by a maximum of eight photos that are no larger than 4" x 6" in color. Applications can also include supporting material such as news articles, letters of support or other resources (no DVDs or video clips please).

The CWSE and WEAL's dedication to land and water conservation is probably best exemplified by the sheer number of organizations, communities, counties and professionals that turn to them for their service and expertise, not only on water related issues, but also on matters that impact on water. In fact, you would be hard pressed to find an area of the State where CWSE and WEAL have not done some sort of work. In 2022, the CWSE worked with communities in Sheboygan, Pierce, Sawyer, Douglas, Portage, Marinette, Green, Kewaunee, Taylor, Sauk, and Calumet Counties, testing over 5,000 private wells.

The CWSE and WEAL are simply known as the place to turn to when you have a question or need advice. Their level of service to those they work with is unmatched. They know and understand the challenges of communities who are working on tough issues with limited budgets. Above all, no matter the project, the CWSE and WEAL strive to make sure that information and data are easily accessible and understandable to the public. Their efforts to do this are highlighted by the cutting-edge tools and informational materials they have and continue to create. When and where data sets don't exist, the CWSE and WEAL are well known for their abilities to work with communities to design water testing programs to meet their needs and answer the questions that communities have. Recent examples of this include assistance with the development of Portage County's county-wide monitoring program and developing multi-year monitoring projects to assess trends in drinking water in Chippewa, Green, Sauk,

and Dodge County. Along with the monitoring, they have created customized county dashboards that easily allow the viewer to see data across a county and across time. Programs, tools, and data all help communities make informed decisions about the management of their water resources and allow residents to learn about their own drinking water.

CWSE and WEAL are also leading the way in cutting edge research that helps to better understand the water resources of Wisconsin. Recent research efforts include examining the prevalence of neonicotinoid insecticides in surface water, assessing nitrate leaching potential under cropping systems, looking at relationships between geology, land use and water quality impacts, utilizing pharmaceuticals, personal care products, and pesticide metabolites to trace impacts of land uses on water quality and much, much, more. The WEAL continues to try and expand its capabilities of analyte testing to stay at the forefront of water quality issues.

Both the CWSE and WEAL do all this and more, while providing meaningful, practical and positive educational and professional experiences for UW-Stevens Point students who are pursuing careers in natural resources. Students work side by side with faculty and staff on conducting research and performing laboratory analysis. They help provide these students with skills and knowledge to go out into the world and become the next generation of conservation professionals that will continue to serve Wisconsin.

For these reasons, there is no organization more deserving of the Friend of Conservation Award than the Center for Watershed Science and Education and Water and Environmental Analysis Laboratory.



Dunn County Environmental Services Department
Dunn County Land and Water Conservation Division
3001 US Hwy 12 East Suite 240A, Menomonie, WI 54751
Phone (715) 232-1496

December 14, 2023

Wisconsin Land & Water Conservation Association,

RE: 2024 Friend of Conservation Award Nomination

To Whom It May Concern,

The Dunn County Land and Water Conservation Division (LWCD) is in support of the Center of Watershed Science and Education (CWSE) and the Water and Environmental Analysis Laboratory (WEAL) for Wisconsin Land + Water's 2024 Friend of Conservation Award.

For many years the CWSE and WEAL have been an exceptional resource for our community. Whether it is surface water or groundwater related activities, they have provided the needed capacity, guidance and information to better understand our water resource conditions and challenges. Most recently, the LWCD has completed a private drinking water testing program where nearly 1,000 private wells were sampled and analyzed through WEAL in a few short months. Having a central location, such as CWSE and WEAL, where water samples could be analyzed, data processed, content developed for interpreting lab results and a point of contact for further citizen follow up, has been effective and efficient in conducting such a large program. We would not have been as successful without their support.

We feel both of these entities, together, deserve our gratitude and appreciation for what they provide to our County and the state of Wisconsin. We look forward to our continued partnership on water related issues long into the future. We also look forward to congratulating them in receiving the 2024 Friend of Conservation Award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chase Cummings".

Chase Cummings
County Conservationist

ADAMS COUNTY LAND & WATER CONSERVATION
PO BOX 287, FRIENDSHIP, WI 53934
(608) 339-4268 • www.co.adams.wi.us



December 13th, 2023

Subject: Letter of Support to nominate the *Center for Watershed Science and Education (CWSE) and Water and Environmental Analysis Laboratory (WEAL)* for the *Friend of Conservation Award 2024*

To whom it may concern,

Adams County Land and Water Conservation Department would like to recognize the Center for Watershed Science and Education (CWSE) and Water and Environmental Analysis Laboratory (WEAL) as being a key partner in facilitating our drinking water testing program that the County has hosted annually since 2022. This program is an excellent way for private well owners in the County to learn about the quality of their drinking water, and also provide a broader picture to groundwater quality in the region.

Beyond providing the well water test kits and processing the samples homeowners return, the CWSE and WEAL has also been an outstanding resource for groundwater education to both the County and the Public. They are a tremendous resource to have in our region where groundwater quality is a paramount issue.

On behalf of Adams County Land and Water Conservation Department, I would gladly support the nomination of the CWSE and WEAL for the "Friend of Conservation" award in 2024. They are a most valued partner and are deserving of recognition.

Sincerely,

Keifer Sroka
Water Resource Specialist
Adams County Land and Water Conservation Department



December 6, 2023

TO: Wisconsin Land & Water Conservation Awards Committee
RE: Letter of Support for The Center for Watershed Science and Education (CWSE) and the Water and Environmental Analysis Laboratory (WEAL)

This is a letter of support for the nomination of the Center for Watershed Science and Education (CWSE) and the Water and Environmental Analysis Laboratory (WEAL) for the Friend of Conservation Award. Chippewa County Land Conservation Forest Management (LCFM) has utilized the services of CWSE and WEAL for decades and wouldn't be as far along as we are in the study of nitrate contamination in groundwater without the expertise and dedication of their staff.

The CSWE and WEAL staff go above and beyond their normal work requirements. In addition to the water testing and study development, they eagerly do outreach and education without hesitation. When an individual homeowner has questions about their test results they willingly call them to address their concerns.

The CSWE and WEAL staff are passionate about their work and want to make the investment of a healthier and cleaner Wisconsin. They inspire their students and set them up for a future in water science that not only benefits them but the future of conservation in turn.

We are fortunate to have these organizations in Wisconsin, and I feel they are truly worthy of the Friends of Conservation Award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lynda Schweikert". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lynda" being more prominent than the last name "Schweikert".

Lynda Schweikert
Director of Land Conservation & Forest Management
Chippewa County



December 15, 2023

To Whom it May Concern:

The Marathon County Conservation, Planning, and Zoning Department highly recommends the Center for Watershed Science and Education and the Water and Environmental Analysis Lab (WEAL) for Wisconsin Land + Water's Friend of Conservation Award.

We began working with WEAL in 2022 when we started testing for Total Phosphorus in our priority watersheds. From the very beginning, WEAL was very supportive of our endeavors and provided us with all of the education and tools we needed to begin our stream testing.

In 2023, we contracted with WEAL to run 1,000 well tests in Marathon County and Kevin Masarik helped us from start to finish in getting our first-of-its-kind study set up. Kevin and his staff have served as tremendous resources for us as we've reached out to thousands of Marathon County citizens inquiring about well testing. They have provided us with information tools and supplies in order to best equip our staff on how to interact with citizens about groundwater.

Having the Center for Watershed Science and Education and the Water and Environmental Analysis Lab in Central Wisconsin is an invaluable gift, and their efforts have impacted the health and safety of thousands of families in a positive way. Their passion for safe drinking water and protected groundwater is contagious and we would love to see them honored for their many efforts.

Sincerely,

Kirstie Heidenreich
County Conservationist



206 Court Street
Chilton, WI 53014
Office: (920) 849-1442
Toll Free: (833) 620-2730
Fax: (920) 849-1481

Land and Water Conservation

December 11, 2023

To: Professional Improvement Committee

RE: Support for the Nomination of CWSE and WEAL for Friends of Conservation Award.

Dear PIC members,

The Calumet County Land and Water Conservation Department overwhelmingly supports the nomination of the Center for Watershed Science Education (CWSE) and Water Environmental Analysis Lab (WEAL) to this year's Friends of Conservation Award.

Calumet County has partnered with the CWSE and WEAL for over 20 years. We relied on the partnership to create our private well testing program and expand it through the years. Annually, Calumet County private well owners submit over 300 water samples to WEAL, most of which are collected as part of our annual private well testing day. The lab efficiently analyses over 250 bacteria samples in one day and provides support to well owners who have questions interpreting the results. Over 5000 private well samples from Calumet County well owners have been submitted and analysed by WEAL since 2005.

In addition, the CWSE is supporting the County's nitrate reduction efforts. The County has established a long-term trend private well monitoring program with help from CWSE. The CWSE is also aiding in the County's agricultural nitrate leaching study. Kevin Masarik helped with the installation of monitoring equipment this summer and the lab is providing laboratory support for water sample analysis and interpretation. In partnership with UW-Discovery Farms, similar studies are occurring in other counties to help develop conservation practices to reduce nitrogen loss from cropland.

Most importantly, I have come to rely on the CWSE as a sounding board and resource for unique but frequent challenges that tend to pop up in Calumet County aquifers and private wells. I would not be able to provide the local support without the resources and knowledge provided by the CWSE and WEAL.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dani Santry".

Danielle Santry

Water Resources Specialist

Danielle.santry@calumetcounty.org

920.849.1493 x4202

