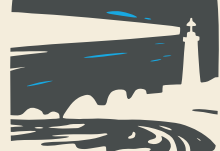
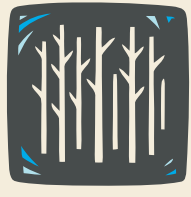
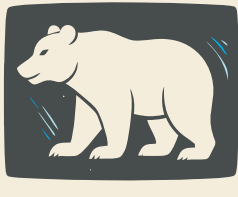
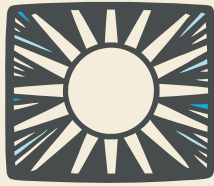


WI LAND+WATER



73RD ANNUAL CONFERENCE

March 4-6, 2026 | Wisconsin Dells

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SCHEDULE AT-A-GLANCE

Wednesday, March 4

8:30-11:00	WI Land+Water Board Meeting	1:30-7:00	Silent Auction, Exhibits, Poster Judging
9:00-11:00	Youth Speaking Contest	1:45-2:45	Breakout Sessions
9:00-11:00	Silent Auction Item Drop-off	2:45-3:15	Refreshment Break
9:30-4:30	Conference Registration	3:15-4:15	Breakout Sessions
11:00-12:00	Lunch Buffet	4:15-7:00	Social & Sponsors
11:30-1:30	Welcome, Youth Speeches, Keynote	6:00-8:00	Conservation Trivia
			<i>Dinner on your own!</i>
			<i>Bus Details pg. 13</i>

Thursday, March 5

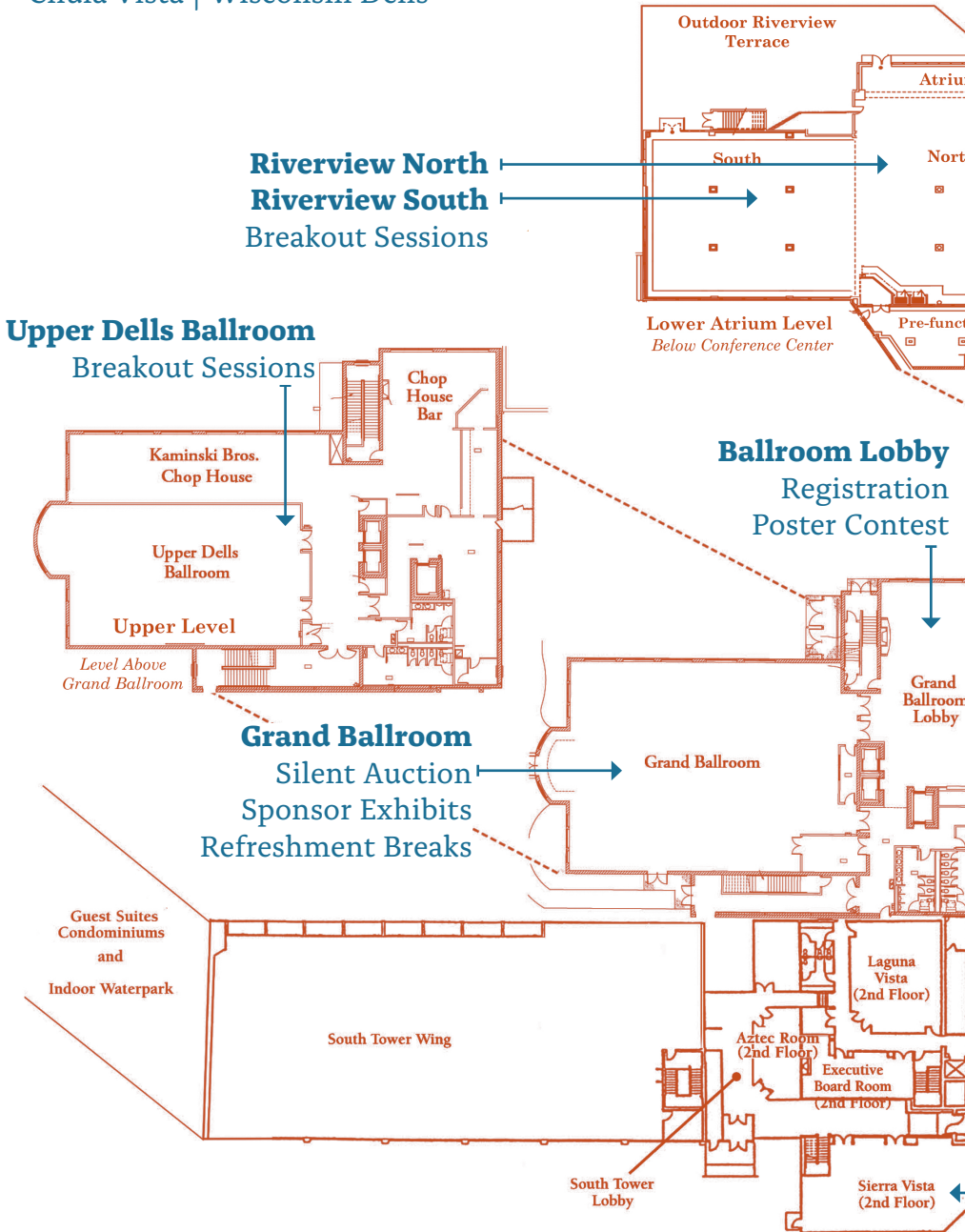
6:30-8:00	Breakfast Meet & Greets	1:15-2:30	Breakout Sessions
7:30-6:00	Registration, Exhibits, Silent Auction, Poster Judging ends at 3:00 pm	2:30-3:00	Refreshment Break, Poster Judging Closes
8:00-9:15	Breakout Sessions	3:00-4:15	Breakout Sessions
9:15-9:45	Refreshment Break	4:15-6:00	Social, Exhibits, 50/50 Raffle, Silent Auction ends at 5:45 pm
9:45-11:00	Breakout Sessions	6:00-8:15	Dinner & Awards Ceremony
11:00-1:00	Luncheon & Keynote		

Friday, March 6

6:30-8:00	Breakfast	10:15-10:45	Refreshment Break, Business Meeting Registration
7:30-10:30	Conference Registration, Auction Item Pickup	10:45-11:45	Business Meeting & Raffle Drawing
8:00-9:00	Breakout Sessions	11:00	Hotel Checkout
9:15-10:15	Breakout Sessions		

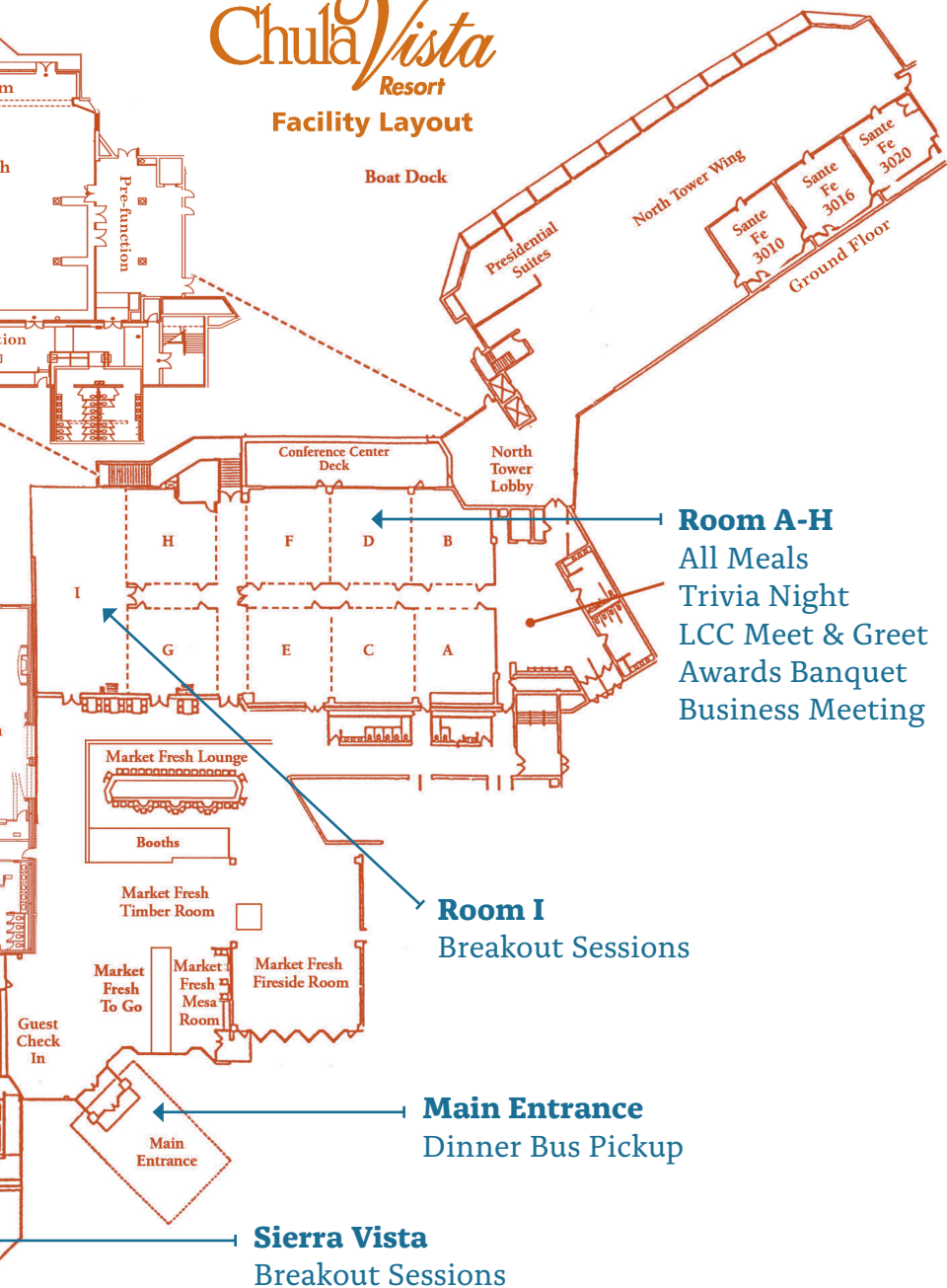
EVENT MAP

Chula Vista | Wisconsin Dells



Chula Vista Resort

Facility Layout



POSTER CONTEST JUDGING

As part of the National Association of Conservation Districts' annual poster contest, students across Wisconsin designed artwork around this year's theme: "**Soil. Where it all Begins.**"

Vote for your favorite—our state champions will move on to compete in their age group for national honors at the NACD Annual Meeting. The creative posters on display are county and area winners, competing for

Soil.
Where it all Begins



JUDGING INFORMATION

Voting begins **Wednesday at 1:30 PM** and closes **Thursday at 3:00 PM.**

Posters are on display in the Grand Ballroom Lobby and everyone can vote!

Ballots and judging guidelines are provided in your registration folder.

SILENT AUCTION

Bidding is open NOW and ends Thursday at 5:45 PM.

Pick up your items between 7:30-10:30 AM on Friday.

All proceeds benefit our Youth Education programs.



Stop by Grand Ballroom to see the amazing items up for grabs, and then use your phone to start bidding! Need help with bidding—just ask a staff member or find instructions in the Conference Hub!

Scan the QR Code on your badge or visit:
www.32auctions.com/wilandwater2026

If you will not be here on Friday morning to pick up your items from the Grand Ballroom Lobby, please make arrangements with someone to do so on your behalf.

DAN O'CONNELL RAFFLES

Annual Raffle

All cash prizes - \$500, \$300, \$200, and five \$100 prize - winners will be drawn!

BUY TICKETS: Grand Ballroom during open hours

DRAWING: End of the Business Meeting



50/50 Raffle

BUY TICKETS: During Thursday's Social Hour

DRAWING: During Thursday's Awards Banquet

All proceeds benefit our Dan O'Connell Member Training Scholarship Program.

CONSERVATION TRIVIA NIGHT

Wednesday | 6:00-8:00 PM | ROOM A-H



Test your knowledge of wildlife, natural resources, land management, and all things conservation! This pub-style trivia game features rounds of questions, a halftime challenge, and a nail-biting final question where you can wager up to 20 points. Grab your crew of up to 8 people, pick a clever team name, and get ready for a night of laughs, learning, and spirited debate! Top 3 teams win prizes!

This event is **hosted by the Young Conservation Professionals Network**, but is open to all conference attendees! Find more details on pg 17!

LCC BREAKFAST MEET & GREET

Thursday | 7:00-8:00 AM
Conference Center Deck



Calling all Land Conservation Committee members! Grab your breakfast and bring it to the Conference Center for a morning of networking with fellow LCCs and WI Land+Water Board members. Walk through Room A-H and make your way to the Conference Center Deck.

CONFERENCE SPONSORS

The generous support of our sponsors allows us to provide attendees with a rich and diverse program filled with engaging presentations, interactive sessions, and networking opportunities. We want to express our deepest thanks for their support and for being a part of this exciting event.

Many sponsors are exhibiting in the Grand Ballroom, and we invite you to connect during the conference and learn about their commitment to conservation.



Natural Resources Conservation Service



College of Natural Resources
University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point





NEED HELP DECIDING?

LCC MEMBER RECOMMENDATIONS

Whether you're a seasoned Land Conservation Committee member or just getting started, these sessions were chosen to help you build the skills and knowledge needed to make informed local decisions and champion conservation in your community.

- ▶ Wednesday 1:45–2:45 PM – Artificial Intelligence Policies and Elements of Governance (pg 15)
- ▶ Wednesday, 3:15–4:15 PM – Managing Water Demand: Tools and Considerations for Local Decision Makers (pg 16)
- ▶ Thursday, 7:00-8:00AM - LCC Meet & Greet (pg 7)
- ▶ Thursday, 8:00–9:15 AM – Advocating for Conservation (pg 20)
- ▶ Thursday, 1:15–2:30 PM – Taking Your Partnership to Light Speed Returns! (pg 23)
- ▶ Friday, 9:15–10:15 AM – From Fieldwork to Front Page: Turning Conservation Wins into Headlines (pg 29)

TECH COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended by Christina Hesselberg, a La Crosse County Conservation Technician with 9 years of experience helping landowners tackle soil erosion and water quality challenges, these sessions speak directly to the hands-on, in-the-field work that makes conservation happen on the ground.

- ▶ Thursday, 8:00-9:15 AM – Grazing in Action: Insights from Wisconsin Grazing Specialists (pg 20)
- ▶ Thursday, 9:45-11:00AM – Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS) Benefits: For New and Mid-Career Employees (pg 22)
- ▶ Thursday, 3:00-4:15PM Investigating Compliance with Ag Runoff Rules (NR 151) (pg 25)
- ▶ Friday, 8:00-9:00 PM – Solar Watering Systems, Design, and Implementation (pg 28)

FIRST TIME ATTENDEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Our Young Conservation Professionals Network thinks these sessions are perfect for early career professionals or those attending our conference for the first time.

- ▶ Wednesday, 3:15–4:15 PM – What I've Learned, Where I'm Going: Career Pathways in Conservation (pg 16)
- ▶ Thursday, 8:00-9:15 AM – Advocating for Conservation (pg 20)
- ▶ Thursday, 1:15-2:30 PM – Advancing NPS Land Conservation Goals through Effective State Partnerships (pg 23)
- ▶ Friday, 9:15 - 10:15 – Own the Room: Practical Public Speaking Skills for Conservation Professionals (pg 28)

MEET OUR TEAM



Matt Krueger
Executive Director



Christina Anderson
Associate Director



Ashley Becker Steele
Climate & Energy
Program Manager



Michael Hook
Statewide Training
Coordinator



Peyton Mueller
Outreach Assistant



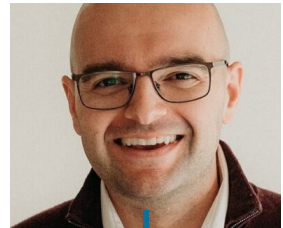
Kelli Myers
Training & Membership
Services Manager



Jenny Pethan
Climate Program
Manager



Chris Schlutt
Training & Events
Manager



Jonathan Taylor
Accountant/Office
Manager



Kristin Teston
Communications
Director



Kim Warkentin
Youth Education Director



Carl Wepking
Standards Oversight
Council Manager

WEDNESDAY OVERVIEW

8:30^{AM} - 11:00^{AM}

WI Land+Water Board Meeting
▶ *Laguna Vista*

9:00^{AM} - 11:00^{AM}

Conference Registration and
Silent Auction Item Drop-off
▶ *Grand Ballroom*

11:00^{AM} - 12:00^{PM}

Lunch Buffet
▶ *Room A-H*

11:30^{AM} - 1:30^{PM}

Opening Welcome and Keynote
▶ *Room A-H*

OPENING WELCOME

Welcome

Matt Krueger
Executive Director, WI Land+Water

Winning Youth Speeches

Emcee: Thelma Heidel-Baker, Soil Conservationist, NRCS

Keynote Address

Doug Duren, Lone Oak Interests, LLC

Achieving Conservation Through Cooperation and Community



Doug Duren is a passionate hunter, farmer, and conservationist who owns Lone Oak Interests, LLC, specializing in land management consulting and contracting services throughout Wisconsin's Driftless Area. He manages the Duren Family Farm near Cazenovia, Wisconsin, where he has worked and hunted for over 45 years. Current management includes acres enrolled in CRP and conservation programs, raising grass-fed beef, timber management for forest health, and pursuing

hunting and recreation. Duren has collaborated with American Forest Foundation, Aldo Leopold Foundation, Pheasants Forever, Wisconsin DNR, and NRCS. He contributes to the *Meateater* television show and podcast.

1:30PM - 7:00PM

Silent Auction, Sponsor Exhibits
& Poster Contest Judging

1:45PM - 2:45PM

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

▶ *Details on next pages*

2:45PM - 3:15PM

Refreshment Break

▶ *Grand Ballroom*

3:15PM - 4:15PM

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

▶ *Details on next pages*

6:00PM - 8:00PM

Conservation Trivia

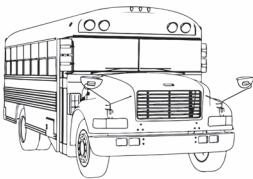
▶ *Room A-H | Details on pg. 17*

4:15PM - 7:00PM

Social & Sponsor Hour

▶ *Grand Ballroom*

Downtown Dinner in the Dells



Grab some colleagues and grab some grub! If you're new, you can meet plenty of friendly folks in the lobby! Ride the bus to downtown Wisconsin Dells to enjoy dinner on your own on Wednesday night.

The first bus loads at 5:30 pm, departing from the Main Entrance by Guest Check-in. It will drop you off and pick you up at 24 Broadway. Round trips will continue through the evening, with the last trip back to Chula Vista departing from downtown at 10:30 pm.

*If you miss the last bus, you will need to find your own way back to the resort!
Uber and Lyft offer ride share services in the Dells.*

WEDNESDAY BREAKOUT SESSIONS

1:45^{PM} - 2:45^{PM}

Shifting Ground: Navigating Updates to Nutrient Management Planning

Location: Riverview South

Presenter: Andrea Topper, DATCP

Nutrient management planning in Wisconsin is entering a new phase with updates and changes that will impact planning and compliance. This session will cover key updates regarding the P Index, NRCS SURGO data, RUSLE2 in SnapPlus and compliance considerations moving forward. We will additionally touch on differences in county-to-county implementation, working effectively with agronomists, NMP submission deadlines, the transition to SnapPlus Version 3 and updates to the 590 Checklist. Whether you're writing plans or reviewing them, you'll leave with a clearer understanding of what's changing – and how to stay ahead of it. **(1 Nutrient Management CEU)**

Watertown Waterways Improvement Program: A Local Water Quality Trading Program

Location: Upper Dells Ballroom

Presenters: Patricia Cicero and Dave Hoffman, Jefferson County LWCD; Maureen McBroom, City of Watertown

The City of Watertown and Jefferson County LWCD developed a local water quality trading program to adhere to the city's DNR stormwater permit. The Watertown Waterways Improvement Program relies on the county's expertise and established relationships with property owners to design, model, implement and inspect conservation practices to reduce pollutant discharge to the Rock River and tributaries. The program will be explained: intergovernmental agreement, outreach, conservation practices, payment structure, and inspection. Information on the first successful trades will be shared as well as how the program is beneficial to the city and county. **(1 Soil & Water Management CEU)**

Ho-Chunk Nation DNR Projects and Opportunities for Collaboration

Location: Sierra Vista

Presenter: Brandon Bleuer, Executive Director, Ho-Chunk Dept. of Natural Resources

An inside look at projects Ho-Chunk DNR is involved with that affect both tribal and non-tribal lands and resources. Topics to be discussed include elk reintroduction efforts, prairie management, wolf management/advocacy, oak savanna restoration and many more. Learn about ways that your organization can work collaboratively with the Ho-Chunk Nation and other tribal governments. **(1 Professional Development CEU)**

Where Do Conservation Dollars Flow in Wisconsin and Why?

Location: Riverview North

Panelists: Mia Keady, PhD, Research Associate, UW-Madison; Serge Koenig, Conservation Technician, Sauk County; Alex Steussy Williams, Former Grassland 2.0 Outreach Specialist

Conservation dollars support land managers and farmers in protecting or enhancing natural resources. Join us we as explore: Where do EQIP dollars flow in Wisconsin? Which practices receive the most conservation funding and why? And, how do conservation staff impact where EQIP dollars flow in the state? **(1 Sustainability CEU)**

Artificial Intelligence Policies and Elements of Governance

Location: Room I

Presenter: William L. Oemichen, J.D., Professor of Practice-Law/Local Government Law Educator, University of Wisconsin - Madison Division of Extension

As artificial intelligence tools become more common in public service, counties face new opportunities—and new challenges. This session will explore key considerations for developing clear, practical AI policies that support innovation while protecting data privacy, ensuring transparency, and maintaining public trust. Learn foundational elements of effective AI governance, examples of emerging county approaches, and steps to help your organization prepare for thoughtful and responsible AI adoption. **(1 Professional Development CEU)**

3:15PM - 4:15PM

Building Knowledge on Cover Cropping in Wisconsin through Farmer Led Citizen Science

Location: Riverview South

Presenters: Dan Marzu, Northcentral Region Outreach Specialist, UW-Madison Extension Nutrient & Pest Management and Mrill Ingram, Participatory Action Research Scientist, Michael Fields Agricultural Institute

Session Sponsor: Compeer Financial

In 2020, a collaborative effort was launched to gather fall cover crop biomass with the goal to provide better guidance on the effects cover crops have on soil erosion and nutrient loss. In 2022, farmers were asked to collect samples to analyze tissue nutrient uptake and forage value. A web-based dashboard was developed for users to review the data collected at each site. Join us as we summarize 5 years of data gathered from over 220 fields. We will demonstrate how to use the dashboard while engaging with farmers about the potential outcomes of incorporating cover crops. **(1 Sustainability CEU)**

Not Just for Pretty Pictures: Drone Uses in Ecological Restoration

Location: Upper Dells Ballroom

Presenter: Samantha Loutzenhiser, CERP, Project Manager, KCI TECHNOLOGIES INC.

Drones are all over the news from annoying homeowners, invading countries, and invading our privacy. But how can drones actually be used for good? Join us to learn about how drones are doing good work restoring habitat via imagery, spraying, and seeding. We will discuss the laws that govern drone uses for both imagery and spraying and the technologies that pair with drones to provide thermal, LiDAR, multispectral, and automated analysis. We will also discuss our experiences using a spray drone to manage invasive species, lessons learned, and how to set up for a successful treatment. **(1 Precision Ag CEU)**

Managing Water Demand: Tools and Considerations for Local Decision Makers

Location: Room 1

Presenter: Adam Freihoefer, Water Use Section Manager, DNR

As counties and communities evolve and grow, they may encounter proposals for new industries – including the emerging trend of data centers – that require resources, including water. Can the local area support these increased demands, both now and into the future? This presentation explains how these questions can be evaluated through the regulatory framework, statewide water use information, and planning tools that support informed decision making. **(1 Soil & Water Management CEU)**

What I've Learned, Where I'm Going: Career Pathways in Conservation

Location: Sierra Vista

Presenters: Marissa Castello, Senior Conservation Specialist, Waukesha County; Jacob Buettner, Land Conservation Technician, Shawano County; Shawn O'Connell, Senior Conservation Technician, Portage County

This interactive session hosted by the Young Conservation Professionals Network explores the real stories, lessons, and turning points that shape careers in conservation. Experienced staff and mentors will share insights, career do's and don'ts, and the skillsets that helped them grow in an evolving field. Participants will engage with real-world "career scenario" challenges and reflect on their next steps. Whether you're new to conservation or looking to chart your future, you'll leave with inspiration, practical ideas, and a strengthened sense of community. **(1 Professional Development CEU)**

Permitting Hydrologic Restoration Projects

Location: Riverview North

Presenters: Tom Nedland and Crystal Von Holdt, DNR

With the new Hydrologic Restoration General Permit now available, DNR staff will share which types of projects qualify, what is required for a permit application, and examples of projects already underway. **(1 Engineering PDH / 1 Soil & Water Management CEU)**

6:00PM - 8:00PM

Conservation Trivia Night

Room A-H

Grab a drink and dinner and your team of up to 8 people for the ultimate game of 20 Questions! Registration begins at 6:00, and game starts at 6:15pm!

How It Works: Our Trivia Jockey will guide you through several rounds of trivia of covering everything from wetland ecology to farm bill programs to classic conservation heroes. There will be final question where teams can wager between 0 and 20 points to boost their score and take home the title!

Order Dinner & Drinks from the Bar: Grab your drinks and place your food order at the bar! They'll bring it over to you during the game.

Team Up: Form a team of up to 8 people. You don't need to know everything—that's what your teammates are for! Maybe you're a soils expert, your friend knows every bird species, and someone else remembers obscure Aldo Leopold quotes. Together, you're unstoppable.

Find Hints: We'll be giving away two hints! Check our Facebook page or find a member of the Young Conservation Professionals Network and ask for the hints!

Prizes & Bragging Rights: The top 3 teams win prizes, and everyone wins with good times, friendly competition, and maybe a few new conservation facts to share at the next meeting. Feel free to bring drinks or food from the bar into the trivia room—settle in, fuel up, and get comfortable.

THURSDAY: OVERVIEW

6:30^{AM} - 8:00^{AM}

Breakfast | LCC Meet & Greet
▶ *Room A-H & Conference Deck*

7:30^{AM} - 6:00^{PM}

Conference Registration,
Exhibits, Silent Auction

8:00^{AM} - 9:15^{AM}

BREAKOUT SESSIONS
▶ *Details on next pages*

9:15^{AM} - 9:45^{AM}

Refreshment Break
▶ *Grand Ballroom*

9:45^{AM} - 11:00^{AM}

BREAKOUT SESSIONS
▶ *Details on next pages*

11:00^{AM} - 1:00^{PM}

Luncheon | Keynote
▶ *Room A-H*

LUNCHEON

From Madagascar to the Midwest: A Journey into Conservation and Adaptation



Serge Koenig, a Sauk County natural resource professional for over thirty years with a Watershed Management degree from UW Stevens Point, tirelessly advocates for managed rotational grazing. Serge will be taking you on a voyage to Madagascar, sharing photos from his youth and the many adaptations he had to make along the way - food, language, weather, culture, school - as a metaphor for the flexibility the job requires and how those experiences led him to conservation.

1:15_{PM} - 2:30_{PM}

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

▶ *Details on next pages*

2:30_{PM} - 3:00_{PM}

Refreshment Break

▶ *Grand Ballroom*

3:00 PM: *Poster Judging Ends*

3:00_{PM} - 4:15_{PM}

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

▶ *Details on next pages*

4:15_{PM} - 6:00_{PM}

Social, Exhibits, 50/50 Raffle

5:45 PM: *Silent Auction Ends*

6:00_{PM} - 8:15_{PM}

Dinner & Awards Ceremony

▶ *Room A-H*

DINNER & AWARDS



2026 CONSERVATION AWARDS

Hosted by
Kirstie Heidenreich

Made possible thanks to
the generous support of
USDA-NRCS

AWARD CATEGORIES

Friend of Conservation

*Outstanding Conservation
Employee | Administrative Assistant*

*Outstanding Conservation
Employee | Technician/Planner*

*Outstanding Conservation
Employee | County Conservationist*

Conservation Legacy Award

*Conservation Farm Family
of the Year*

Poster Contest Award Winners

THURSDAY: BREAKOUT SESSIONS

8:00AM - 9:15AM

Advocating for Conservation

Location: *Riverview South*

Presenters: Debi Towns and Janis Ringhand, Rock County Land Conservation Committee
Moderator: Shawn Pfaff, Pfaff Public Affairs

At a time when partisanship dominates much of our political discourse, county conservation is a topic that has bipartisan support. Join former state legislators and current members of the Rock County Land Conservation Committee Debi Towns and Janis Ringhand for a discussion on how to be effective advocates for conservation at the county and state levels, how to work "across the aisle," and how we might arrive at a Wisconsin that features well-managed and productive farms, and clean water. WI Land+Water contract lobbyist Shawn Pfaff will moderate. **(1 Professional Development CEU)**

Follow the Leader: Untapping Core Leadership Competencies

Location: *Sierra Vista*

Presenter: Brad Gingras, Superior Strategies

This session highlights the essential skills great leaders use to drive performance, trust, and accountability. Participants will explore key leadership competencies, identify common mistakes—like unclear expectations and avoidance of tough conversations—and leave with practical strategies to lead with clarity, purpose, and confidence. **(1 Professional Development CEU)**

Grazing in Action: Insights from Wisconsin Grazing Specialists

Location: *Room I*

Presenters: Adam Abel, NRCS; Derrick Raspor, USDA; Brooke Bembeneck, Marathon County LCD; Patrick Bula, Sauk County LCD

Join grazing specialists for an engaging session on practical strategies for pasture and livestock management. Speakers will cover grazing principles, common challenges in Wisconsin systems, and tools to support producers through on-the-ground technical assistance. This session will also highlight the launch of the Grazing Academy and how it will strengthen statewide capacity for conservation-minded grazing. This session offers actionable insights you can bring directly to your work with landowners. **(1 Sustainability CEU)**

Accessing Extension Groundwater & Geologic Resources for County Staff and Local Officials

Location: Upper Dells Ballroom

Presenters: Sue Swanson, Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey and Cayla Cavey, Center for Watershed Science and Education

Session Sponsor: UW-Stevens Point College of Natural Resources

In this session, presenters will share how Extension is working with local communities to protect and improve groundwater. You'll learn how to access private well water quality data in your area and explore maps of the water table and local geology. Many people are surprised by just how much information is already available! For those who want to dig deeper, presenters will show ways to build stronger well water quality datasets or create county-specific maps that highlight areas more vulnerable to groundwater issues. The session features hands-on demonstrations of the WI Well Water Quality Viewer and WGNHS Mapping Status Portal, plus highlights of recent groundwater mapping efforts across Wisconsin counties. **(1 Soil & Water Management CEU)**

Streambank Protection – Design Documentation

Location: Riverview North

Presenters: Taylor Smagacz and Dennis Marquardt, Jr., DATCP; Mike Dreischmeier, NRCS; and Wes Kotila, Outagamie County LCD

Planning and design documentation for the NRCS Conservation Practice Standard 580 Streambank Protection can be extensive and confusing at times. This session will go through the main components and important aspects of the design spreadsheet, what qualifies as a "critical site," and the planning and design documentation. Attendees will have the opportunity to ask the panel of presenters questions and discuss scenarios at the end as time allows. **(1 Engineering PDH / 1 Soil & Water Management CEU)**

9:45AM - 11:00AM

Make an Impact with Classroom Presentations

Location: Sierra Vista

Presenters: Haillie Passow, Trempealeau County DLM; Kim Warkentin, WI Land+Water; Alexis Faul and Amber Cannon, Fond Du Lac County LWCD; Olivia Fischer, Green Lake County LCD; and Laura Grunwald-Rentmeester, Sheboygan County PC

Step into the classroom! This interactive session features four hands-on stations where you'll explore creative ways to teach students about conservation topics like groundwater, watersheds, soil health, and more. Get inspired, gather resources, and spark new ideas for your next presentation. **(1 Professional Development CEU)**

OPE! What To Do When Things Go Wrong

Location: Riverview North

Presenters: Ketty Clow, Chippewa County; Travis Buckley, Kelli Neitzel, Taylor Smagacz, and Peter Wuzer, DATCP

An interactive workshop providing participants with an opportunity to explore finding solutions when implementing conservation practices does not go according to plan. Presenters will share real-world situations – stream crossings, pipes and pipelines, grassed waterways and concrete work – and participants will have the chance to work with small groups to find solutions. **(1 Engineering PDH / 1 Soil & Water Management CEU)**

Understanding Shoreline Riprap

Location: Riverview South

Presenters: Scott Koehnke, retired DNR Water Regulations; Brenda Nordin, DNR Lakes Biologist; Scott Van Egeren DNR Lakes Biologist; and Wes Kotila, Outagamie County

Hear from DNR biologists and water regulations staff about the history and permitting of shoreline riprap. The session will explore its impacts on water quality, habitat, and aquatic life, and will discuss alternative approaches to shoreline protection. A panel will discuss how to achieve better environmental outcomes together and minimize cumulative impacts to water resources **(1 Soil & Water Management CEU)**

Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS) Benefits: For New and Mid-Career Employees

Location: Upper Dells Ballroom

Presenter: Steve Norris, WI Department of Employee Trust Funds

Are you a new employee or someone who still has at least 5 years to go before you can retire? It's never too early to start planning for a secure retirement. Learn how to maximize your WRS benefits. **(1 Professional Development CEU)**

Strategies for Silvopasture: Adding Shade, Timber, Nuts & More

Location: Room 1

Presenter: Julie Hager, Agroforestry Technical Assistance Provider & Grazing Specialist, Savanna Institute

Discover practical, proven ways to integrate trees into pasture systems for greater resilience and profitability. This session goes beyond practice standards to showcase three real-world silvopasture models that deliver shade, timber, and nut production—without sacrificing forage performance. Yes, tree protection methods will also be revealed! Learn how strategic tree integration can unlock new revenue streams, strengthen livestock comfort, and elevate the value of the farms you support. **(1 Sustainability CEU)**

Taking Your LCC-LCD Partnership to Light Speed Returns!

Location: Room I

Panelists: Tracy Arnold, Portage County LWCD; MaryJo Gingras, Ashland County LWCD; Scott Frank, Shawano County LCD; Meg Turville-Heitz, Jefferson County LCC; Mike Hofberger, Calumet County LWCC; Brian Holt, Walworth County LCC

This popular session is back and better than ever! Successfully navigating a conservation department through the asteroid field of today's funding shortfalls and resource concerns requires respect, collaboration, and communication (even when you speak different languages). Hear lessons learned from experienced and savvy "pilots" in this stellar session on strengthening the LCC/LCD partnership. **(1 Professional Development CEU)**

Advancing Nonpoint Source and Land Conservation Goals through Effective State Partnerships

Location: Riverview South

Panelists: Jenn Chakravorty, DATCP; Hailey Roessler, DATCP; Wrangler Jones, DATCP; Chase Cummings, Dunn County Conservationist; Liz Osborne, DNR; and Andrew Craig, DNR / Moderators: Alex Elias, DATCP and Jess Schoen, DNR

Session Sponsor: DACTP

Learn how state programs and partnerships can advance county land conservation goals in this interactive session. Attendees will be invited to ask questions, share feedback, and will leave with helpful reference materials in-hand. Following an overview of DATCP and DNR Nonpoint Source programs, a cross-organizational panel will answer common questions, address hot topics, and highlight real world examples. This session is well suited for recent hires and seasoned professionals alike – please join us for an engaging discussion about how we can work better together! **(1 Professional Development CEU)**

Developing Joint Development Agreements

Location: Sierra Vista

Presenters: Lynn Markham, Matthew Hurley and Karen Blaha, Center for Land Use Education, UW-Madison Division of Extension

Why are we seeing fast growth in utility scale solar and wind projects in Wisconsin? What are counties' options for responding? In this session we'll discuss why renewables are growing and then do a deep dive with a panel of county staff who have developed and negotiated solar joint development agreements (JDAs) including who to involve, topics to include, what specific JDA content is proving helpful and problematic, and enforcement. We'll also introduce a newly created summary of solar JDAs around the state as a resource for you if a solar project comes your way. **(1 Professional Development CEU)**

Edge of Field Practices/Innovative Conservation

Location: Riverview North

Presenters: Wes Kotila and Jeremy Freund, Outagamie LCD; Matt Woodrow, DATCP; and Moderator Sam Welch, Outagamie LCD

This session will showcase phosphorus removal systems and agriculture storm water capture strategies that reduce peak flows to streams and improve water quality. The presentation will highlight design considerations including watershed modeling, nutrient-capturing media, drain tile treatment systems, and long-term maintenance. This session will discuss best practices for collaboration with farmers/landowners and permitting partners as well as funding opportunities. **(1 Engineering PDH / 1 Precision Ag CEU)**

REAL Talk: Refine, Engage, Adapt, and Land Your Message

Location: Upper Dells Ballroom

Panelists: Sen. Sarah Keyeski; Rep. Karen DeSanto, and Cale Schorer

Ready to put your conservation messaging to the test? This interactive workshop hosted by the WI Land+Water Outreach Committee will bring communicators face-to-face with their audience—farmers, landowners, and community members—to practice their pitches in a live setting. Using proven frameworks like values-based messaging, you'll craft your message, then deliver it to our panel for honest feedback. Whether you're seeking funding, building partnerships, or promoting a practice, this is your chance to refine your approach with the people who matter most. Leave with a stronger message and the confidence to deliver it. **(1 Professional Development CEU)**

3:00PM - 4:15PM

Protecting What We Can't See: Municipal–Farmer Partnerships Drive Conservation and Wellhead Protection

Location: Room I

Presenters: Kirstie Heidenreich, Marathon County County Conservationist; Andrew Aslesen, Source Water Specialist, Wisconsin Rural Water Association; Beth Finzer, DNR

Municipal wellhead protection excels when communities and producers work together. This session highlights how conservation practices—such as perennial grasses, prairie strips, cover crops, buffers, and soil-health driven systems—can be strategically implemented within wellhead protection areas to improve groundwater quality and strengthen local water security. Participants will hear examples of collaborations between municipalities and farmers, explore tools for identifying priority protection zones, and learn practical approaches for engaging agricultural partners in voluntary efforts. Attendees will leave with actionable strategies for building relationships, navigating local governance, and designing conservation programs that align municipal water goals with the realities of working farms. **(1 Soil & Water Management CEU)**

Beyond the Clipboard: Creative Approaches to Citizen Science

Location: Sierra Vista

Presenters: Mackenzie Glasford, Snapshot Wisconsin; Katy Bradford, Water Action Volunteers; Elise Theiler, Chippewa County WAV Coordinator

From selfie stations to stream monitoring, volunteers are powering conservation efforts across Wisconsin. Panelists will share what makes their citizen science programs thrive and how you can turn volunteer enthusiasm into actionable data. Learn creative strategies to engage your community, discover how to tap into existing datasets for management decisions, and share your own experiences. Whether you host a trail camera, coordinate volunteers, or want to learn more—bring your stories and questions. Come ready to swap strategies, successes, and lessons learned. **(1 Professional Development CEU)**

Investigating Compliance with Ag Runoff Rules (NR 151)

Location: Riverview South

Presenter: Ben Uvaas, DNR

The red, yellow, and green flags are making a comeback! Practice investigating NR 151 compliance in a no-pressure atmosphere. Participants will be divided into groups to navigate made-up scenarios. Experienced, new, and all staff in between are encouraged to join the conversation. Watch for a special emphasis this year on cropland performance standards and cost sharing eligibility. **(1 Soil & Water Management CEU)**

Partnering with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program

Location: Upper Dells Ballroom

Presenters: Lara Fondow and Emily Snelson, USFWS

For over 38 years, the USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program has provided technical and financial assistance to help restore habitat, collaborating with private landowners, local governments, and non-profit organizations to improve Wisconsin's lands and waters for wildlife. In this discussion, Partners Biologists will provide an overview of the Service's private lands program, current priorities, and partnership opportunities. They will share case studies and project highlights from across the state, including examples of collaborations with county LWCDs. **(1 Professional Development CEU)**

Why Culverts Matter: Designing for Fish, Floods, and the Future

Location: Riverview North

Presenter: Chris Ester, US Forest Service

Session Sponsor: Wisconsin Coastal Management Program

Poorly designed culverts threaten both Wisconsin's stream ecosystems and public safety, but practitioners from across the state are using proven techniques and publishing new resources for building flood resilient and fish friendly culverts. **(1 Engineering PDH / 1 Soil & Water Management CEU)**

FRIDAY: OVERVIEW

6:30^{AM} - 8:00^{AM}

Breakfast
▶ Room A-H

7:30^{AM} - 10:30^{AM}

Conference Registration &
Silent Auction Item Pickup
▶ Grand Ballroom Lobby

8:00^{AM} - 9:00^{AM}

BREAKOUT SESSIONS
▶ Details on next pages

9:15^{AM} - 10:15^{AM}

BREAKOUT SESSIONS
▶ Details on next pages

10:15^{AM} - 10:45^{AM}

Refreshments & Business
Meeting Registration
▶ Room A-H

10:45^{AM} - 11:45^{AM}

Business Meeting & Raffle Drawing
▶ Room A-H

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WOULD LIKE TO SAY

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to the participants, sponsors, and
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We hope to see you again next year!

74th Annual Conference

March 3-5, 2027

Wilderness Resort/Glacier Canyon Lodge
Wisconsin Dells, WI



FRIDAY: BREAKOUT SESSIONS

8:00AM - 9:00AM

Caring for the Land and for Yourself

Location: Room I

Presenter: Dr. Emily Walz and Dr. Tony Braus

We know that this is a challenging time to be a conservation professional. We're excited to welcome back Dr. Emily Walz, who will be joined by Dr. Tony Braus lead another breakout session covering mental health, climate grief, and conservation. **(1 Professional Development CEU)**

Enhanced wakes: Understanding Ecosystem Impacts, and Local Management Approaches

Location: Riverview South

Presenter: Tim Asplund, DNR; David Ortiz, DNR (and recent UW PhD); Michele Sadauskas, Oneida County

Enhanced wakes from watercraft are an issue of growing concern for many waterfront communities, and local governments. In this session, Dept. of Natural Resources staff will present the scientific background on some of the ecosystem impacts from enhanced wakes and counties will share real-world approaches that have been utilized to balance wake-enhancing watercraft operation with natural resources protection. **(1 Soil & Water Management CEU)**

What is Soil Health Anyway? How Do We Use It, and How Do We Measure Change?

Location: Upper Dells Ballroom

Presenter: Randy Zogbaum, Soil Health Program Manager, DATCP

Our soil is a vital, living ecosystem. As the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) states, soil health is defined by "the continued capacity of soil to function as a vital living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals, and humans." Healthy soil gives us clean air and water, bountiful crops and forests, productive grazing lands, diverse wildlife, and beautiful landscapes. But what exactly is soil health? How do we apply soil health concepts in our work as conservationists, and how do we know if we are making a difference? Join Randy Zogbaum, DATCP Soil Health Program Manager, for an engaging exploration of these questions and more. **(1 Sustainability CEU)**

Solar Watering Systems, Design, and Implementation

Location: Riverview North

Presenter: Kyle Andreae, Wood County LWCD / Moderated by Ketty Clow, Chippewa County LCFMD

Providing power to remote areas can be challenging and cost prohibitive. This presentation will go into designing reliable solar systems where connection to the power grid is unfeasible. Topics will include pump sizing, water system sizing, solar panel sizing, electrical storage, and pump house design. **(1 Engineering PDH / 1 Sustainability CEU)**

Supporting the Ecological and Economic Opportunities of Dairy Heifer Grazing

Location: Sierra Vista

Presenters: Sarah Lloyd, UW-Madison, former Grassland 2.0; Sara Walling, Clean Wisconsin

Dairy heifer grazing presents a real opportunity to get more continuous living cover on the land, reducing nutrient run off and erosion and building soil health. Well managed grazing systems can produce quality animals for milking herds and importantly support solid farm enterprise economics. This session will detail the watershed benefits and lay out the technical assistance, both forage and animal production, as well as business enterprise development available to support dairy heifer grazing. **(1 Sustainability CEU)**

9:15AM - 10:15AM

Soils Investigations for Engineering Conservation Practices

Location: Riverview North

Presenters: Jeremy Zeigler, Jae Sutherland, Krista Bryan, and Natalie Irizarry, NRCS

Soil borings? More like soil excitings! Let's dig into soil investigations. When are they needed? Who is qualified to review them? What forms do I need? Representatives from DATCP and NRCS will provide an overview of various soil sampling efforts while covering the ins and outs of each. **(1 Engineering PDH / 1 Soil & Water Management CEU)**

Own the Room: Practical Public Speaking Skills for Conservation Professionals

Location: Upper Dells Ballroom

Speakers: Joe Krumrie, Buffalo County; Tina Barone, Dunn County; MaryJo Gingras, Ashland County

Public speaking doesn't have to mean standing behind a podium. In this interactive session, you'll explore how to connect with your audience, manage nerves, and communicate with confidence and authenticity. Through real-world examples and practical strategies, you'll learn to read the room, tailor your message on the fly, and own your presence as a speaker, whether you're leading a meeting, giving a presentation, or talking to a community group. **(1 Professional Development CEU)**

From Fieldwork to Front Page: Turning Conservation Wins into Headlines

Location: Room I

Presenter: Caitlin Looby, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

This session helps conservation partners sell newsworthy conservation stories, craft simple pitches and build lasting media relationships—even when outreach is one of many hats people wear. We'll explore what makes a strong conservation story and practice a quick exercise to identify compelling angles. Then we'll learn a quick pitch method and try a five-minute partner pitch activity. The workshop closes with practical guidance on becoming a trusted local source through small, consistent actions. Participants leave with clearer story ideas, ready-to-use pitch language and confidence to connect more effectively with the media. **(1 Professional Development CEU)**

Tree-Ring Perspectives on Wisconsin Water Resources: Oaks, Red Cedars, and 1200 years of Climate History

Location: Riverview South

Presenter: Evan Larson, Ph.D., UW-Platteville

Come learn about the emerging network of tree-ring data that spans the past millennium and is now providing annually-resolved insights on a suite of hydrologic variables, from drought and groundwater elevations in southwest Wisconsin, to rainfall over the Corn Belt, to a nascent gridded drought reconstruction that will span the Great Plains. Within the information about past climates carried by these trees are woven the influences of shifting culture and landuse, with implications for how we approach land and water conservation in the Midwest. **(1 Professional Development CEU)**

Securing Cranes, and So Much More: a 10-year Vision for Cranes, Wetlands, and Communities

Location: Sierra Vista

Presenter: Dr. Richard Beilfuss, International Crane Foundation

For 50 years, crane conservation has united people across borders, using cranes as indicators for wetland health and flagships for protecting diverse ecosystems. The International Crane Foundation's 10-Year Strategic Vision (2025–2035) secures all 15 crane species through integrated approaches blending biodiversity conservation with community development and climate resiliency. This session explores lessons from five decades and emerging challenges ahead. Discover conservation projects from community-based wetland restoration in Africa, organic rice buffers protecting Vietnamese cranes, and innovative solutions for crop damage by Sandhill Cranes in Wisconsin that reduce human-wildlife conflict with farmers globally. Learn how protecting cranes means revitalizing landscapes in partnership with dependent communities. **(1 Professional Development CEU)**

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