

## 2019 Conference Breakout Sessions

*Many sessions will offer CEUs and/or PDHs and will be noted in the conference program.*

### Wednesday, March 13

#### 1:45-2:45pm

**Technical Roundtable Part A** will focus on designing/repairing riparian and upland structures to endure intense hydrological events. **Part B from 3:15-4:15pm** will be a Q&A session where experienced staff answer engineering questions. *Moderated by Drew Zelle, DATCP.*

**Administrative Staff Roundtable.** All staff are welcome to this moderated discussion on topics pertinent to running an efficient office, such as moving to a paperless environment, agency forms and reimbursements, and more.

**What does divided government and a new governor mean for conservation policy in Wisconsin?** WI Land+Water Executive Director Matt Krueger and lobbyist Shawn Pfaff will discuss how county conservation policies fit into the legislative session ahead, WI Land+Water legislative priorities, and the role committed conservationists can play in advocating for them.

**Suck The Muck: Removal of Instream Legacy Sediments From Dorn Creek.** Research has shown that instream *legacy sediments* often mask measurable changes in water quality as a result of conservation practice implementation. *Kyle Minks, Dane County LWRD, and Jim Amrhein, WDNR,* will talk about how both departments collaborated on, by collecting and analyzing watershed and instream data, the process used to evaluate both merit and feasibility of removing instream legacy sediments, planning and permitting aspects of project implementation, and results from the first 2.3 miles legacy sediment removal from Dorn Creek.

**Bale Grazing Basics** will cover how to determine if a farm is suitable for bale grazing (outwintering) and the planning that goes into setting up a successful system. This presentation will look at practices that have a proven track record to successfully allow producers to bale graze. The “why” of bale grazing (soil health, cattle health, economics, and labor) will also be discussed. *Adam Abel, NRCS, and Serge Koenig, Sauk Co. CPZ.*

#### 3:15-4:15pm

**Technical Roundtable Part B.** Q&A - continued from Part A above.

**Dark Sky Initiative.** Stargazers from Driftless Stargazing LLC and the Iowa County Astronomers will be sharing a talk on enjoying and preserving the special dark skies of Wisconsin. Less than 100 years ago, everyone could look up and see a spectacular starry night sky. Now, millions of children across the globe will never experience the Milky Way where they live. The increased and widespread use of artificial light at night is not only impairing our view of the universe, it is adversely affecting our wildlife, our environment, our safety, our energy consumption and our health.

**How to Advocate CREP to Landowners.** How the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is initially portrayed often makes all the difference in gaining landowner interest and eventual enrollment. Getting to know landowner goals and understanding their needs is essential when describing how CREP could work for them. The primary goal of enrollment may be to resolve a resource concern, but other program benefits such as reducing crop loss risk or providing a consistent source of annual funds for investing on the farm could be just as important to the landowner. The end result is an agreement that not only puts conservation practices on the ground but also establishes a partnership with landowners to help meet their needs. This presentation will review CREP along with its conservation and financial benefits. Then conservationists from across the state will share their experiences and stories promoting CREP and what works when trying to get landowners interest in the program. *Presenters: Brian Loeffelholz, DATCP, and others TBA.*

**Invasive Plants in Wisconsin.** *Kelly Kearns, WDNR,* will talk about identifying and control of common invasives, new species to watch for, slowing the spread, as well as working with regional Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas and other local partners.

**Targeted Funding Opportunities with NRCS.** Learn about NRCS' landscape initiatives and regional conservation partnership program (RCPP) opportunities and how county, state, and organizations can apply for uniquely targeted conservation funding. *Speaker, Tom Krapf, USDA-NRCS.*

## Thursday, March 14

### **8:00-9:15am**

**Like Han Solo and Chewbacca—Taking your Partnership to Light Speed.** 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. *Panel: Brad Matson, Iron Co. LCC; Monte Osterman, Racine Co. LCC; and more TBD.*

**Health & Conservation: County-level partnerships to protect drinking water.** Hear how local communities are working together to address health concerns in their drinking water. *Bruce Rheineck from DNR* will share an overview of Wisconsin's drinking water program, our dependence on groundwater, and data results highlighted in the 2018 Groundwater Coordinating Council's report. *Wood and Rock counties* from both Health and Conservation Departments will share how they are addressing community concerns of land use impacts on drinking water sources.

**The Challenge in Conservation: Ensuring that our Natural Resources are Protected.** Soil is one of our critical natural resources and it is being degraded by our management practices and the climate. As we degrade our soils, we also affect our water and air quality and our ability to efficiently produce food and feed from our land. We can reverse this trend and build our soil; however, this will require some effort in utilizing diverse crop rotations, maintaining cover, and reducing tillage intensity. We have great opportunities to enhance our soils, improve our water quality, and increase climate resilience. The recipe for achieving this is relatively simple, we just have to focus on starting with the soil. *Speaker: Dr. Jerry L. Hatfield, National Laboratory for Agriculture and the Environment, Ames, IA.*

**The Cream of the Crop - NRCS Assistance for Producers.** The National Resources Conservation Service is responsible for providing technical and financial assistance to agricultural producers to treat resource concerns. In this session, *Josh Odekirk* will provide relevant updates and the implications of recent changes to land conservation partners.

**Addressing Wicked Water Problems through Systems Thinking.** We're all dealing with complex, challenging (wicked) water problems in our communities. Doing the same thing we've been doing for decades isn't going to solve these problems, we need new strategies and approaches. In this session, we'll provide an introduction to systems thinking and those who are using systems thinking to address their local wicked water issues will share their strategies and approaches. *Speaker: Jeremy Solin, ThinkWater.*

### **9:45-11:00am**

**Unleash their Inner Conservationist.** *Vernon County's Sarah McDowell and Ben Wojahn*, along with other members of the Youth Education Committee, will share fun ideas to engage students and teachers.

**How to Launch a Well Testing Program.** Incorporating lessons learned from work on groundwater & well water monitoring, we will provide examples of strategies/tools implemented by communities in Wisconsin. We will highlight important strategies to consider when designing and implementing a groundwater monitoring program as well as data management, study design and recruitment efforts. *Speakers: Kevin Masarik, UW-Extension and UW-Stevens Point, and Dan Masterpole, Chippewa Co. LCD.*

**Stream Restoration and Fish & Non-Game Habitat; Streambank Easements and Maintenance.** *Curt Diehl, Dane Co. LCD; Jeff Hastings, Trout Unlimited; and John Vosberg, NRCS* share latest techniques utilized for designing and installing habitat for trout and non-game species; location of different types of stream habitat; trout and non-game habitat practices; EQIP funding and required documentation; and streambank easements.

**Grazing a Path Forward: Using Goats to Control Invasive Plants and Brush.** *Cherrie Nolden* has 10 years of experience and a herd of 360 goats, and she'll share her knowledge on goats and the service they provide, available programs, and more applied information for land managers to better understand the opportunities and limitations of goats as a tool in the brush management toolbox.

**Communicating Conservation Across Wisconsin.** Developing an effective voice is essential for rallying support for conservation work. Communication tools, like press releases, news articles, social media, legislative advocacy, as well as communication resources available through the association will all be discussed to help you share your story. *Elliot Meyer, WI Land+Water and others TBA.*

### **1:15-2:30pm**

**Local Approaches to Protecting Drinking Water.** Increasingly, communities are wielding their authority to enact local policies that protect their drinking water supply. In this interactive session, presenters will provide an overview of the topic, highlight specific examples and approaches, and discuss points for communities to consider as they pursue enhanced groundwater protection. *Speakers: Tressie Kamp, Midwest Environmental Advocates, and Kara O'Connor, Wisconsin Farmers Union.*

**Calming the Storm: Communicating During Conflict.** Participants will learn how to remain effective communicators during difficult or conflicting situations. Participants will build their skills in active listening, the use of questions, and ability use dialogue to calm situations through better understanding diverse landowners' perspectives. Useful for both meetings or one-to-one interactions. *Speakers: Mindy Habecker and Jeff Hoffman, Dane County UW-Extension.*

**Rebuilding Natural Infrastructure to Adapt to Extreme Weather.** This interactive session will explore the landscape conditions, including loss of floodplain storage and degradation of wetlands, that greatly reduce watershed storage and contribute to downstream flood risks, erosion, and sedimentation. Participants will be engaged in a discussion on interdisciplinary strategies and potential practices that can be implemented by natural resources and emergency managers to improve watershed health and the resilience of communities to extreme weather. *Speakers: Kyle Magyera, WI Wetlands Assoc., and Danielle Shannon, Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science.*

**Adapting and Implementing Statewide Performance Standards for Resource Protection.** Performance standards are perhaps our best tool for getting conservation on the landscape, and for dealing with pressing resource concerns like contaminated drinking water. However, consistent implementation of existing standards remains a challenge. This interactive session seeks to explore shared solutions between counties and agencies on the topic. *Speaker: Mike Gilbertson, WDNR.*

**The Grand Solar Challenge: how communities are making Wisconsin solar ready.** Attendees will learn about the Midwest Renewable Energy Association's (MREA) Grand Solar Challenge, an opportunity to facilitate solar market readiness and develop workforce training opportunities in conjunction with community-facing solar programs. Communities participating in the Grand Solar Challenge will be considered for receipt of donated solar modules and labor for city and non-profit solar projects. *Speaker: Peter Murphy, MREA.*

### **3:00-4:15pm**

**Manure Into Magic: Manure Composting.** *John Rosenow is President of Cowsmo Inc.,* which produces compost under the brand name Cowsmo and sells into 17 states. Cowsmo sells compost and potting soil to a wide spectrum of growers from professionals to backyard gardeners. With 29 years of experience, John is considered an expert especially if he is more than 25 miles from home. He will cover rules that affect composters, types of compost, and organic rules about appropriate compost.

Next *Jason Fuller, shares details on his company, Carbon Cycle Consulting,* which serves the agriculture industry as a manure handling company, working with over 100 dairy farms in Wisconsin, Iowa and Minnesota. He's formed an alliance with a European engineering firm to build and operate well proven compost manufacturing plants on farms as an alternative to manure lagoons, allowing the farms to build a more value added product which can be used as a bedding

material or as a biologically active and valuable fertilizer product to protect our groundwater, decrease production costs, increase yield and rebuild our soil. Additionally, a dry composted fertilizer product is also sold to other farmers who understand the value of and are enjoying the benefits of building their soil by using composted manure based products.

**Tips and Tricks for stormwater plan review, permit issuance and enforcement.** Reviewing stormwater management plans and issuing permits can be complicated! Come listen to two perspectives on lessons learned from county staff located opposite sides of the state. Learn about strategies to make the process easier for staff to process applications, turn reviews around quicker, and improve compliance. *Speakers: Alan Barrows, Waukesha Co. LCD, and Jacob Schweitzer, LaCrosse Co. LCD*

**Learning How to Listen: Citizen and Farmer Groups Supporting LCDs and Vice Versa.** The Eau Pleine Partnership for Integrated Conservation (EPPIC), an up-and-coming community partnership based in western Marathon County, is composed of a variety of stakeholders with different perspectives on soil and water issues — including local conservation farmers, lake group members, and organization and agency representatives. The group was initiated through a meeting planned by Marathon County Conservation, Planning and Zoning Department, with the purpose of joining these different stakeholders around the same table to discuss our soil and water resource concerns. This meeting turned into monthly gatherings, which resulted in the formation of EPPIC. Over the past year, EPPIC has been working towards their main goal: to create a more environmentally resilient community that has a successful agricultural industry, as well as healthy natural resources. *Lauren Nichols, Marathon Co. CPZ*, shares how they provided the framework for EPPIC, and how EPPIC helps build community capacity towards conservation to create a more resilient future for soil and water resources.

Also, *Marty Weiss and Tony Peirick from Dodge County* will discuss how their successful farmer led group works with the local lake associations, UW-Extension, as well as the Land and Water Conservation Department to promote soil health practices such as cover crops and reduced tillage to help create more sustainable soils as well as improve water quality in their county.

**Who Wants to Be a Public Official?! An Introductory Encounter with Open Meetings and Public Records Laws.** This interactive session will introduce the basics of Wisconsin's open government laws using a game show format. *Speaker: Philip J. Freeburg, JD, UW Extension Local Government Center.*

**Biological Indicators of Soil Health in Wisconsin.** Biological indicators of soil health (POXC, PMC, and PMN) can serve as proxies of microbial activity, the nitrogen supply capacity of the soil, or how much carbon is available for microbes. This research will demonstrate how management practices (tillage, manure, and cover cropping) can influence these beneficial soil properties. *Speaker: Matt Ruark, PhD, UW-Madison.*

## Friday, March 15

### **8:00-9:00am**

**From Coal Mines to Jack Pines - The effort to reintroduce elk to Wisconsin. *SESSION REPEATED AT 9:15am.*** Wisconsin's elk reintroduction has evolved over more than 23 years. Thanks to the work of many great partners and agency staff, the population continues to grow and culminated into the first elk hunt in state history in 2018. *Speaker: Kevin Wallenfang, WDNR.*

**I Wanna Rock!** Join us in exploring how rock is used in conservation projects. This session provides information on working with quarry operators to properly gain access into sites and to stockpiles. We will also discuss differences in quarry materials, and properly selecting the stone through gradation procedures and how this is relevant to specific practices. *Speakers: Seth Ebel, Dane Co. LCD; Ryan Glassmaker, DATCP; and Jason Weiker, Milestone Materials.*

**Going with the Flow: Basics of ... 1) Stormwater** Discover how Dane County uses performance based requirements to regulate construction site erosion control. *Speaker: Jeremy Balousek, Dane Co. LCD. 2) Limnology* *Carolyn Scholl, Vilas Co. LCD*, presents the basics of limnology, which includes aspects of the biological, chemical, physical, and geological

characteristics and functions of inland waters. This includes the study of lakes, reservoirs, ponds, rivers, springs, streams, wetlands, and groundwater.

**County Presentations: Dane and Oneida.** *Susan Sandford, Dane Co. LWRD*, will highlight three unique outreach/volunteer projects in Dane County: Native Plants for Schools and Communities, Storm Drain Mural Project, and Leaf-free Streets for Clean Water. Next, *Michele Sadaukas from Oneida County* will present Promoting Native Pollinator Conservation Across North Central Wisconsin: A 9-county Initiative. A project that began with roadside pollinator plantings in the Town of Three Lakes, WI, has now morphed into a *Pollinator Movement* for North Central Wisconsin. Join us to see how far we've come, and where we're going! We'll touch on how those original roadside plots are doing, lessons we've learned along the way, pollinator outreach (the good, the bad, and the ugly), and talk about our brand new grant award from Lumberjack RC&D! Bring your questions!!

**Southwestern Wisconsin Groundwater & Geology Study: A multi county effort to better understand private drinking water.** *Grant, Iowa, and Lafayette Counties* are collaborating with researchers from Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey (WGNHS) and USGS to begin understanding drinking water concerns in their region. Hear how these counties have joined into a multi county project, the pros and cons to a regional approach, and what they hope to gain from a better understanding of their drinking water resources. *Ken Bradbury (WGNHS), Joel Stokdyk (USGS), and Scott Laeser (Clean Wisconsin)* will share details about the study design, initial results, and next steps.

### **9:15-10:15am**

**Field Properties for Completing Soil Borings.** This session will provide training for classifying basic engineering soil properties for the NRCS 313 Manure Storage standard, using Web Soil Survey to assist with data collection. *Speakers: Tim Weisbrod, Jeremy Zeigler, NRCS.*

**From Coal Mines to Jack Pines - The effort to reintroduce elk to Wisconsin. (REPEATED FROM 8:00am)** Wisconsin's elk reintroduction has evolved over more than 23 years. Thanks to the work of many great partners and agency staff, the population continues to grow and culminated into the first elk hunt in state history in 2018. *Speaker: Kevin Wallenfang, WDNR.*

**From Big to Small - It Affects Us All: Addressing Drainage as Rural Areas are Developed.** Drainage and peak flow changes on rural properties due to development can have negative impacts on downstream properties if they are not addressed properly. This session will present experiences addressing these concerns in ordinances, a case study, and discussion of obstacles to maintaining drainage on parcels not connected to receiving waters or drainage infrastructure. *Speakers: Brent Jalonen, Calumet Co. LWCD and Jeremy Freund, Outagamie Co. LCD.*

**A journey of organizational culture change and elegant leadership.** What three words would your residents, elected officials, and staff use to describe your workplace? Nothing captures the county board's attention more than a front page story in a local newspaper where your department is being called out by a Town chair as "Brown Shirts, Gestapo, and Nazis." Marathon County will share their journey of how they transformed their department's workplace culture into one that is now described as being honest, kind, and respectful to citizens, leaders, and staff. This was done by establishing clear core values, acceptable behaviors and being committed to a positive work culture. CPZ achieved success, even while enforcing ordinances and rules put in place to safeguard and protect the resources of the county. *Paul Daigle* will share the story of how elegant leadership paved the way for a culture change in their combined Conservation, Planning and Zoning Department, with a larger staff and segregated programs, where staff now work as a team and find a sense of purpose and joy in the work they do.

### **Wild Rice: Harvesting and Conservation Opportunities**

*Ben Wojahn, Vernon County LWCD*, will focus on the harvesting aspects, and *Jason Fleener, WDNR*, will discuss the importance and values that wild rice provides to people, wildlife, and water quality. Conservation challenges and opportunities that counties may be engaged in will also be discussed.