



# Thursday Note

An Update on Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Issues

Volume 16, Issue 3

Thursday, April 25, 2013

## **Battle to Restore the LCD Staffing Grant Comes Down to the Wire**

Your call to your legislator may make the difference in our attempt to restore the budget to fund local land conservation staff. During the next two weeks, the 16 member Joint Committee on Finance (JFC) will take action regarding the 2013-15 budget for the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). The Governor's proposed budget calls for a permanent \$1.3 million annual cut to general purpose revenues for the staffing grants to county land conservation departments (LCDs). The funding base would fall from \$9.3 million to \$8.0 million annually. Over the last several months WLWCA has led a very heavy campaign including visits to legislative leaders to spread the word about the value county staff bring to implementing conservation programs that ultimately improve land and water resources. We are pressing to get the base restored to \$9.3 million annually. It is now in the hands of JFC.

All legislators we have talked to believe that the work done by their local staff is important; but finding available dollars in the budget has been the biggest stumbling block to developing a proposal to restore the \$1.3 million cut. Furthermore, a member of JFC will need to offer a proposal to restore funding during the debate on DATCP's budget. Fortunately, the Nonpoint Account of the Environmental Fund, which already provides about 60% of the staffing grant, has a projected balance of several million dollars according to the Legislative Fiscal Bureau. We are helping legislators develop a proposal which would increase the amount of the Nonpoint Account funds by \$1.3 million annually. Without contacts from local constituents that care about the future of conservation, the proposal could be shelved or fail in JFC deliberations even if offered. This is probably our best and last opportunity to get these funds restored.

We have heard from legislators that phone calls are much more effective than Email or other written communication. For us, the compelling case to make regards the impact to water quality and other environmental issues that threaten businesses, tourism, and our quality of life. This effort is one of the few conservation issues being considered by the JFC; one call can have an impact. Please take a moment to let your legislators know that conservation in Wisconsin should not go backward. To find your legislator, visit [legis.wisconsin.gov/pages/waml.aspx](http://legis.wisconsin.gov/pages/waml.aspx).

~Jim VandenBrook, Executive Director

## **Luxemburg-Casco High School and Island City Research Academy Win Wisconsin Envirothon**

Congratulations to Luxemburg-Casco High School's Team A and Island City Research Academy's Team B for taking first place in the high school and middle school levels of the 2013 Wisconsin Envirothon: Sustainable Management of Grazing Lands. In the midst of snow and ice, 19 teams from 12 schools and over 25 volunteers braved the weather to participate in the rain or shine event featuring hands-on field tests in aquatic ecology, forestry, soils and land use, and wildlife as well as team presentations featuring grazing land management plans. Teams from Cumberland High School, Hurley K-12 School, and Middleton High School also placed in the event. Score sheets and final exam keys are now available at [www.envirothonwi.org](http://www.envirothonwi.org).

Special thanks to Matthew Jacobson, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources; John DuPlissis, UW-Stevens Point; Shaunna Repking, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); Leah McSherry, Student Wildlife Society of UW-Stevens Point; and Brian Pillsbury, USDA-NRCS for creating our testing and presentation materials, and to Wisconsin Green Schools Network for promoting the event. Thanks, also, to all the wonderful volunteers and team advisors for making Wisconsin Envirothon possible.

Luxemburg-Casco High School will represent Wisconsin at the North American Envirothon: Sustainable Management of Rangelands at Montana State University-Bozeman August 4-9. Congratulations again to all the teams!

~Kirsten Moore, Office Manager

**Spring County Conservationist Meeting Scheduled May 9-10, Registration Ends April 30**

Join WLWCA for the Spring County Conservationist Meeting at Hotel Mead in Wisconsin Rapids on Thursday, May 9 and Friday, May 10 to learn about a wide range of issues regarding county land conservation statewide. Topics include conservation success stories, nutrient management, working with certified crop advisors, ATCP 49 and 50, working with the USDA-NRCS, and county funding. This meeting is preceded by an Administrative/Legislative Committee meeting on Thursday morning and followed by a board meeting on Friday afternoon.

Registration is open through April 30 and there is no late or onsite registration. View the agenda including times for the Administrative/Legislative Committee meeting and the board meeting and register online at [www.wlwca.org/MayCoConMtg.html](http://www.wlwca.org/MayCoConMtg.html). Contact the Hotel Mead to reserve your room at 715-423-1500. The room block dates have already passed, but it is possible that the hotel will still extend to you the \$70 room rate if you mention our event and space is available. Please contact the WLWCA office if you have any questions about the event.

~Kirsten Moore, Office Manager

**Join Us for Conservation Observance Day on June 7th**

Make plans to celebrate and recognize Brooks Farms in Waupaca on Friday, June 7. Brooks Farms is the 2013 Conservation Farm Steward of the Year. They are a fifth generation farm, currently owned and operated by Ron and Terri Brooks. Brooks Farms was homesteaded in 1855 and may be the oldest continuously run family farm in Waupaca County.

The Brooks and their staff care for more than 400 head of high producing Holstein cattle. The milking herd produces some of the highest quality milk in the state. The Brooks have worked closely with local, state, and federal agencies to design and implement conservation practices on their farm including no-till planting and conservation tillage, buffer strips, integrated pest management, oak savannah/tall grass prairie restoration, and wildlife corridors to reconnect fragmented habitat. In addition to their participation in the USDA-NRCS Conservation Security Program, Brooks Farms took a new step in the direction of preservation and conservation of land by applying to DATCP's Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement (PACE) Program in 2010. The farm was chosen as one of the first 16 PACE recipients in Wisconsin. Their community involvement centers on introducing youth to agriculture and hunting by hosting events such as the local Future Farmers of America "Farm Fest," providing many young children and their parents first-hand experience with what a well managed, modern Wisconsin dairy and grain farm is really like.

This event is free and open to the public. Please join us on June 7 at Brooks Farms for a day of celebrating their commitment to conservation! Additional details will be available soon.

~Chris Schlutt, Program Coordinator

**2013 WLWCA Training Scholarships Available for Members**

Interested in a seminar, conference, or training opportunity and just don't have the funds? Consider applying for a WLWCA Training Scholarship! The Professional Improvement Committee (PIC) administers the scholarship program, which is available to land conservation committee supervisors and LCD staff on a first-come, first-serve basis. The scholarship guidelines and application can be found on the WLWCA website. To access, go to [www.wlwca.org](http://www.wlwca.org), click on Member Resources, then Member Scholarships, which will take you to the PIC page. The second paragraph contains a link for a PDF and a Word document. Send a completed application and requested attachments to Patty Benedict, WLWCA Scholarship Coordinator, via US mail c/o Portage County Land Conservation Division, 1462 Strongs Avenue, Stevens Point, WI 54481; via fax at 715-346-1677; or by emailing [benedictpj@co.portage.wi.us](mailto:benedictpj@co.portage.wi.us).

Funding for the training scholarship program is provided by WLWCA and primarily supported by the raffle at the annual conference. Thank you for purchasing raffle tickets at this year's conference in Wisconsin Dells. Support was great, with 892 tickets sold! Congratulations to John Schlesselman of Buffalo County for winning the Mathews Drenalin Bow; Ed Hernandez of Waushara County for winning the Traditions Pursuit Muzzleloader; Judy Betker of Trempealeau County for winning the \$250 Kohl's Gift Card; Jennifer Schierman of Bayfield County for winning \$250 in cash; and Jim Hebbe of Green Lake County for winning the autographed Green Bay Packer football.

~Patty Benedict, Portage County LCD, Professional Improvement Committee Scholarship Coordinator

**Save the Dates! 2014 and 2015 WLWCA Annual Conferences Now Scheduled**

Now that the 2013 WLWCA Annual Conference has concluded as a merged conference of county supervisors and staff, the Professional Improvement Committee (PIC) was able to review bids from various conference locations. With attendance exceeding expectations to nearly 340 people including speakers at the 2013 event, it was important for the PIC to consider locations that can hold 400+ attendees, narrowing the conference locations available to meet our capacity. In the past, both WLWCA and the former Wisconsin Association of Land Conservation Employees were able to consider locations that held only 300 attendees. With less than a year to book the 2014 event, available dates were limited, and therefore, the PIC decided to secure both the 2014 and 2015 conferences. The PIC will select the 2016 date and location this summer, returning to a regular booking schedule.

Considering lodging available in the conference venue, menus available at the government per-diem rate for the event, space available for breakout sessions, pricing for refreshments and AV equipment, and dates best suited for the organization that were available and not conflicting with other known partner events, the PIC selected the Radisson Paper Valley Hotel in Appleton from five bids for hosting the upcoming conferences. Mark your calendars for March 10-12, 2014 and March 9-11, 2015 to save the dates for the next couple WLWCA Annual Conferences in Appleton. We hope to see you there!

~Kirsten Moore, Office Manager

**Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship Seeks Current and Aspiring Dairy Graziers**

Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship (DGA), an initiative of Grass Works, helps graziers improve and grow business; find skilled laborers, managers and partners; explore options for alternative investment; plan for retirement and farm transfer; and shape the future of the dairy industry. Over the past three years, DGA has drawn on existing infrastructure and expertise to develop a full-fledged statewide employment and training program. Developed by and for graziers, the program incorporates the most innovative and successful management and investment strategies for grass-based dairy. DGA is now searching for experienced dairy graziers to hire and employ an apprentice from DGA's list of qualified candidates for their farming operations.

The new DGA website includes an online application system and an easily searchable database for employers to find a qualified apprentice. DGA is also seeking both current and aspiring dairy graziers. For more information, to apply online, or to search the database, visit [www.dairygrazingapprenticeship.org](http://www.dairygrazingapprenticeship.org). For specific questions about DGA, contact 715-560-0389 or [info@dairygrazingapprenticeship.org](mailto:info@dairygrazingapprenticeship.org).

~Lanice Szomi, Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship

**SOC Update**

The Standards Oversight Council's (SOC) permeable pavement team has been working for nearly nine months on drafting the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' (WDNR) first permeable pavement standard, one that will focus on the water quality benefits of these pavement systems. Permeable pavements allow stormwater runoff to be filtered into underlying storage reservoirs and/or infiltrated into native soils. When properly designed and maintained, permeable pavements can reduce runoff quantity, reduce total suspended solids (TSS) and total phosphorus (TP) loads into receiving surface waters, and potentially reduce runoff temperatures. SOC's team is currently reviewing literature and debating the amount of stormwater credit that can be used for volume and pollutant loading reductions to meet performance goals. Currently, the team aims to send out a draft standard to initial reviewers in the fall of this year.

SOC's Nutrient Management 590 Standard Revision team is beginning to determine where changes may be needed in the Wisconsin 590 standard to comply with the national NRCS 590 standard. The team has received and will consider input from various stakeholders throughout the process of the revision. We will continue to meet monthly and plan to send a draft of the revised standard to initial reviewers in the first quarter of 2014.

At the end of this year, the Council will be developing the 2014 – 2016 Work Plan for SOC. We welcome input from all technical standard users for which standards need updates through the Technical Standards Needs Survey which will be available online this summer.

~Gini Knight, Standards Oversight Council Coordinator



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### Calendar of Events

<b>DEADLINE: Spring County Conservationists' Meeting Registration</b>	<b>Apr 30</b>
<b>Central WI River Graziers' No Till Demo, Mosinee</b>	<b>Apr 30</b>
<b>SOC Meeting, Madison</b>	<b>May 7</b>
<b>Legislative/Administrative Committee Meeting, WI Rapids</b>	<b>May 9</b>
<b>Central WI River Graziers' Pasture Inventory Part 1, Ringle</b>	<b>May 9</b>
<b>Spring County Conservationists' Meeting, WI Rapids</b>	<b>May 9-10</b>
<b>WLWCA BOD Meeting, WI Rapids</b>	<b>May 10</b>
<b>WSTC Meeting, Madison</b>	<b>May 16</b>
<b>LM Area Spring Conference/Reorganization Meeting, Green Bay</b>	<b>May 17</b>
<b>NW Area Meeting, Hayward</b>	<b>May 17</b>
<b>Cent WI River Graziers' Fencing/Water Line Installation, Stratford</b>	<b>May 23</b>
<b>WLWCA Office Closed, Memorial Day</b>	<b>May 27</b>
<b>S Area Meeting, Mount Horeb</b>	<b>May 29</b>
<b>Cent WI River Graziers' Resilient Grazing Systems, Wausau</b>	<b>May 30</b>
<b>LWCB Meeting, Madison</b>	<b>Jun 4</b>
<b>Conservation Observance Day, Waupaca</b>	<b>Jun 7</b>
<b>Sand Lake Conservation Camp, Crivitz</b>	<b>Jun 20-22</b>
<b>Youth Conservation Camp, Eagle River</b>	<b>Jun 25-28</b>

*For more information about our events and partner organization events, visit [www.wlwca.org/eventscalendar.html](http://www.wlwca.org/eventscalendar.html)*

### WLWCA Board of Directors

<b>Chuck Wagner, Chair</b> Kewaunee County LWCC	<b>Greg Baneck, Vice Chair</b> Outagamie County LCD
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<b>Tom Fratt</b> Ashland County LCD	

### WLWCA Staff

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<b>Kirsten Moore</b> Office Manager, Youth Education Coordinator
<b>Chris Schlutt</b> Program Coordinator
<b>Gini Knight</b> Standards Oversight Council Coordinator

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