2013 Budget
Success! The Governor signed the 2013-2015 budget into law on June 30, 2013. It included restoration of the Governor’s proposed county staffing cuts of $998,000 in 2014 and $815,000 in 2015. This will mean that 2014 and 2015 county staff allocations will be roughly $11,000 to $14,000 higher than they would have been. Few conservation issues prevailed in this budget so restoring funding for land conservation was a notable victory. It took a lot of hard work on the part of LCD staff, LCC supervisors, Wisconsin Counties Association, WLWCA’s legal team, WLWCA staff, and many conservation organizations. Also critical to the effort was strong local engagement of many counties with local Farm Bureau chapters as well as with Farm Bureau’s state staff.

“Jim Vandendoorn, Executive Director

Mergers and Acquisitions
Look for a survey soon to help get a better handle on the state of departmental mergers in counties and the impact on land conservation offices. On July 11th, WLWCA in conjunction with DATCP presented data to the Adams County “Transition Committee” that was set to take action on merging the Land Conservation office with the Planning and Zoning office, as well as eliminating the County Conservationist position. The committee asked questions and then moved to retain the County Conservationist position and did not take action on departmental merger. The WLWCA officers and staff subsequently met with DATCP to review the responses and how best to provide counties with accurate and useful information as they make these important decisions. A short survey directed to county conservationists and Land Conservation Committee chairs will help determine how best to support local land and water conservation.

“Jim Vandendoorn, Executive Director

DNR’s Nutrient Reduction Strategy
DNR has hosted a number of meetings to discuss how the agency should respond to EPA’s directive to develop a comprehensive strategy to manage nutrient runoff from all sources. As you might imagine, there are many stakeholders worried about the possible impacts of such a strategy. WLWCA and a number of county staff have been providing input. DNR hosted a June 27th meeting of phosphorus management stakeholders and had an open discussion about the impacts of the DNR Phosphorus rules, especially as it pertains to Adaptive Management/Trading and municipal discharge limits. The potential impact of the Phosphorus rules and how they are implemented could mean a brighter or dimmer future for LCDs.

“Jim Vandendoorn, Executive Director

Farewell to Kirsten Moore and Welcome to Kim Warkentin
Kirsten Moore, WLWCA’s Office Manager and Youth Education Coordinator is now the Director of Cooperative Services with a Madison-based food cooperative, the Willy Street Co-op. Kirsten began work with WLWCA in 2006 during a very tumultuous time for the organization. She was a steady presence and filled the role of Interim Executive Director during the merger of WLWCA and WALSE. WLWCA owes a tremendous amount to Kirsten and we wish her the best of luck in her new career. WLWCA has hired Kim Warkentin to take the position of WLWCA Office Manager/Executive Assistant. Kim has an extensive background working for, managing, and directing non-profit organizations. She has experience in grassroots organizational development, fund-raising, communications, board development, training, and event planning. She has a BA degree in Journalism and Communications from the University of Iowa. Please welcome Kim as she settles into the WLWCA shop in early September.

“Jim Vandendoorn, Executive Director
This spring, the Youth Education workgroup to discuss the organization’s education activities. The workgroup developed several recommendations to improve the Poster and Speaking Contest. The WLWCA Board already approved a couple of those recommendations, including:

1. Move the contest from Fall to Spring.
   - Gives teachers more time to work with their students and fit the contest into their curriculum.
   - Potential for students to create one speech for multiple speaking contests (i.e. FFA, Forensics)
   - Able to coordinate with the WLWCA Annual Conference.

2. State Competition will be done in conjunction with the WLWCA Annual Conference next spring.
   - Saves money by fully utilizing rooms already reserved for the conference.
   - Posters can be on display in the silent auction room (proceeds of the silent auction helps fund WLWCA youth education programming).
   - More volunteers are likely to be available for the contest.
   - Potential for an audience to be in attendance during the awards ceremony.

Please make any necessary scheduling adjustments to your Local Competitions to ensure judging is completed in time for the state competition. Final deadlines are still to be determined, but use following general timeline:

- August 2013 – Notify participants/schools about the contest and the associated changes.
- January 2014 – Local Speaking and poster contest
- February 2014 – Area Speaking and Poster Contest
- March 2014 – State Speaking and Poster Contest

A few other items that are still being considered (stay tuned for future updates):

3. Remove the “special needs” category option for the contest participants.
   - WLWCA received various complaints over the years regarding publicity of a child’s special need.
   - Special need has been self-determined by participant (no verification requirement or guidelines).

4. Create an additional category: Multimedia Presentation (i.e. Video, Powerpoint, etc.)
   - Opportunities for teachers to more easily work entries into existing curriculum requirements.
   - Increased ability for WLWCA to utilize the presentations/videos as outreach tools.
   - Note: Currently, there are no national competition opportunities for speaking contest participants.

5. Create an additional category: Photo Contest.
   - An alternative to the Poster Contest that allows for additional participation from individuals and counties that normally wouldn’t compete with a poster or other presentation.
   - NACD already has a framework set up for this in the national competition.
   - Could allow for WLWCA to utilize the photographs in outreach materials and program materials.

6. Develop a separate Youth Education Committee.
   - Oversight committee would provide direction and develop a strategic approach to all WLWCA youth education activities and would ensure that we reach out to the largest number of youth in WLWCA member counties.
   - Youth education programs provide opportunities to reach out to not only to youth, but also their families and school districts as well as provide newsworthy items to help highlight the importance of our conservation efforts.

NACD has announced the 2014 theme that will be used for our upcoming contest as: “Dig Deeper — Mysteries in the Soil”. We will be skipping the 2013 theme and NOT be using “Where does your watershed” during this transitional year. Please look for additional information & themed resources as they become available later this summer at www.nacdnetwork.org/education/resources.