



Land & Water Conservation 2020 Annual Report

2020 WORKPLAN ACCOMPLISHMENTS

By: Land & Water Conservation Department staff

- Secured funding of \$144,034 from Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) for staff salaries and support, and training expenses.
- Received \$48,370 in Bond money and \$54,000 in SEG money from DATCP to implement the Wood County Land and Water Resource Management Plan. Funds were used to cost share conservation practices.
- Received \$28,764.55 from point sources for water quality improvements.
- Received \$2,641 from the county board to pay area and state membership dues.
- Received \$87,870.78 from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Large-Scale TRM grant for the Mill Creek Watershed.
- The 2020 tree and shrub sale was canceled due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- 17 landowners purchased prairie grass/wildflower seeds.
- Received \$46,638 from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to administer the Wildlife Damage Abatement and Claims Program.
- Enrolled 25 landowners in the Wildlife Damage Abatement program.
- Inspected 22 deer fences for compliance with the Wildlife Damage Abatement Program.
- Completed construction on one cranberry wildlife fence 11,850' in length, completed construction of cranberry wildlife fence extension 1,960' in length and began construction on cranberry wildlife fence 2,500 feet in length to be completed in Spring of 2021.
- Completed 41 crop damage appraisals with claims totaling \$16,265.
- Administered the 2020 venison donation program - 338 pounds of ground venison was donated to three pantries throughout Wood County.
- Tree shelters and generic gel were made available for sale through the Land & Water Conservation Department (LWCD).
- The Conservation, Education and Economic Development Committee (CEED) held 11 regular meetings and 6 special meetings. All cooperating agency staff received meeting notices and minutes.
- Certified reclamation and closing of two non-metallic mine sites.
- Received \$46,645 in reclamation permit fees under the Nonmetallic Mining Reclamation Program.
- Held \$2,875,020 in financial assurance for nonmetallic mining reclamation.
- Inspected 56 nonmetallic mine sites for reclamation progress and active acres—created maps for each mine
- Conducted a transect survey to determine soil erosion rates in Wood County.
- Administered the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP); worked with three new landowners to enroll 144.8 new acres. The 1152.08 acres enrolled in CREP in Wood County provide the following benefits:
 - * At least 1896 lbs of phosphorus loss to waterways prevented per year.
 - * At least 990 lbs of nitrogen prevented from entering waterways per year.
 - * At least 1037 tons of sediment prevented from entering waterways per year.
- Updated conservation practices data on Arc Map.
- Coordinated the local, poster contest, with one contestant receiving second place in the grades 4-6 category at the North Central Area division.
- Conducted stream flow monitoring at six sites once per month for five months as part of a six county-wide monitoring project.
- Presented at two area schools about important future conservation and pollinators.
- Issued four Animal Waste and Manure Management permits.

Accomplishments continued on page 2

Accomplishments continued from page 1

- Worked to get maximum number of nutrient management plans turned in, which came to 80. These 80 plans covered 44,928 acres of farmland.
- Assisted with MSTC's nutrient management class for farmers.
- Kept wild parsnip map current by taking reports from the public and field mapping. Reported results to EDDMapS, an invasive tracker widely used. Treated wild parsnip at 27 mapped locations.
- Received \$2,125.78 in staff support for assisting with the Nutrient Management Farmer Education (NMFE) classes.
- Partnered with Marathon, Clark, Lincoln, and Taylor counties to hold multiple courses that qualify farms to write their own nutrient management plan called the NMFE class. Five Wood County farmers attended covering 1,312 acres. Provided assistance to past/present attendees to keep up their plan.
- Started implementing the 9-Key Element Plan. Worked with 7 farmers to put in 1,072.3 acres of no-till and 1,073 acres of cover crops.
- As a part of the 9-Key Element Plan, surface water samples were tested for phosphorus at 8 locations throughout the Mill Creek Watershed once per month from May to October.
- The 10' Great Plains no-till drill in its second season of use was used consistently throughout the growing season. The drill was used by 21 landowners covering 675 acres. The drill was also used for cover crop plot demonstrations by the Mill Creek farmer group.
- 12 farmers participated in no-till and/or cover cropping in Wood County or within the Mill Creek Watershed covering 1,914 acres, with funding coming from MDV or LWRM or 9-key funds. With the Farmers of Mill Creek work or those without cost-sharing, 37 farmers total participated in cover cropping and/or no-tilling in Wood County or within the Mill Creek Watershed covering 4,371 acres.
- Expanded the prairie/pollinator garden outside the River Block building by 32 plants and 3 new species.
- Provided no-cost well water nitrate testing to 10 Wood County residents.
- Helped coordinate the virtual "Central Wisconsin Farm Profitability Expo."
- Assisted with the completion of short educational videos called "An Ear Full" that highlight farmers work in conservation, which can be found on the LWCD's webpage.
- Removed cattle from stream corridor using 7,368 lin. ft. of livestock protection fencing.
- Installed a 150 ft. stream crossing.
- Installed 2,890 Lin. Ft. of access road.



Reclaimed nonmetallic mine site
Becker Trucking "N mine"



Hemlock Trails Cranberry
wildlife fence build



Reclaimed nonmetallic mine site
Dorshorst Wood Recycling,
LLC



Corn deer damage sample



Twin Lakes Cranberry fence

MEET THE LAND & WATER CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT STAFF AND CEED COMMITTEE



(L-R) Caleb, Armstrong, Conservation Specialist, Shane Wucherpfennig, County Conservationist, Rod Mayer, Conservation Program Coordinator, Lori Ruess, Administrative Services, Emily Salvinski, Conservation Specialist, Adam Groshek, Engineering Technician.

CONSERVATION, EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (CEED) COMMITTEE

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic a current photo of the CEED Committee is not available.

CEED Committee Members:

Kenneth Curry - Chair
Bill Leichtnam - Vice Chair
Robert Ashbeck
Jake Hahn
Dave LaFontaine
Carmen Good—Farm Service Agency Rep.



Farm Service Agency, Farm Loan Programs Annual Report for Wood County Land Conservation

Wisconsin continues to be a leader in direct and guaranteed loan making, processing 1,227 loans totaling \$317,322,042.

Farm Loan Program provides credit to farmers that are unable to obtain their credit needs through commercial credit sources.

Loan Activity for Fiscal Year 2020 (10-1-2019 to 9-30-2020)

5 direct loans were closed for \$376,750 for **Wood County** producers; this includes 2 microloans at \$44,000. 3 Guaranteed loans were closed for \$2,036,000 for **Wood County** farmers.

There were a total of 113 direct loan applications for our service area which includes Wood, Marathon, Portage, Clark, Taylor, Price, Lincoln and Langlade Counties, with 59 closed for \$5,028,314.

As of September 30, 2020 outstanding principal and interest for FSA direct loans in **Wood County** was \$4,790,621 from 29 borrows with 54 loans. As of the same date there was \$15,376,675 in Guarantee loans outstanding with 54 loans to **Wood County** producers.

We look forward to serving the farmers of **Wood County** in the years to come. Contact Farm Service Agency, 4 Boon Boulevard, Neillsville, WI 54456 or phone 715 743-3164 for more information

Covering Clark, Taylor, Price, Wood, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon and Portage Counties



Clark County Farm Loan Team:

Kaye Ewoldt, Credit Analyst
Jeff Speth, Farm Loan Officer
Brenda Dowiasch, Farm Loan Officer Trainee
Julie Rasmussen, Farm Loan Manager

Marathon County Farm Loan Team:

Beth Zimmerman, Farm Loan Officer
Yee Thao, Program Technician
Roxanne Rucinski, Farm Loan Officer Trainee- (Not Pictured)

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.

WATER QUALITY PROGRAM

The goal of the Land & Water Conservation Department (LWCD), the Land and Water Resource Management Plan implementation, the Mill Creek 9-Key Element plan and Multi-Discharger Variance is to improve and protect water quality by reducing pollutants from urban and rural nonpoint sources. Nonpoint source pollution comes from a diverse number of activities in our daily lives including, runoff from over fertilized lawns and crop fields, constructing buildings and roads, and plowing our fields for crops. Nonpoint pollution is the leading cause of water quality problems in Wisconsin. The LWCD staff would like to say “thank you” to all who have installed practices. We appreciate your efforts to protect the natural resources of Wood County and beyond.

Land and Water Resource Management Plan Implementation & Other Programs

Starting in 2000, the Land & Water Conservation Department began securing state funds from the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to fund local conservation practices on an annual basis. The selected conservation practices are outlined as priorities in the Land & Water Resource Management Plan that was written for Wood County.

DATCP has provided \$1,615,463 to cost share best management practices in the last twenty-one years. Landowners countywide are eligible for these funds. In 2020 the Wood County LWCD secured \$54,000 for nutrient management and \$48,370 to install selected practices. On an annual basis, the LWCD selects landowners and practices to be funded from those that express an interest and have resource concerns.

Practices installed in Wood County and reimbursed by DATCP in 2020 include:

Cover crops	267.37 acres
Nutrient management	1,045.54 acres
Residue management	390.20 acres
Streambank & Shoreland Protection	1
Waste storage facility closure	2
Wells decommissioned	4



The following landowners installed Best Management Practices in 2020:

Kyle Altmann
 Mike & Karl Baltus
 Groppland Farms
 James & Tiffany Joling
 Luke Keuffer
 Don Mrozek
 Jeff Peaslee
 Glen Peplinski
 Ra-Con Farm
 Suzanne Reber
 Roth Golden Acres
 Gilbert Tomfohrde
 Philip Vruwink
 Alan Weiler



Pictured above: Water sample collection on Bear Creek in October. Sample collection for phosphorus and total suspended solids took place from May thru October.



Pictured on Top Left: a hay field being taken over by Wild Parsnip (invasive species).

Pictured on Bottom Left: a older hay given back new life with interseeded Sorghum.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

By: Roy A. Diver, District Conservationist

The USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service provides leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain, and improve our natural resources and environment. NRCS Mission: Helping People Help the Land.

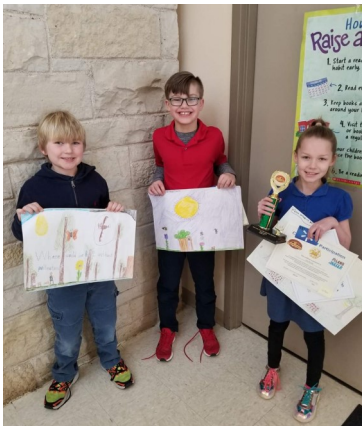
In 2020 workload and landowner interest in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) remained high. The CSP and EQIP obligated \$841,930 to 38 landowners in Wood County, to plan and apply new conservation practices on their land, in total 80 applications were received with over a million dollars in funds being requested. The CSP and EQIP in 2020, 94 active contracts were managed that covers over 15,000 acres of cropland and forestland, with funds available to continue to protect existing farm resources and implement additional conservation practices and enhancements, all CSP payments were processed, and additional funds were paid to landowners through the EQIP and for various conservation practices applied from previous year contracts. The following is a partial list of landowner accomplishments completed with NRCS assistance from October 2019 through September 2020:

Conservation plans applied	7652 acres
Prescribed grazing practice applied	46 acres
Nutrient management applied	39 acres
Cover crop planned	2,353 acres
Brush management applied	83 acres
Conservation crop rotation applied	1,521 acres
Fence (grazing) installed	10,480 feet
Irrigation water management planned	128 acres
Heavy use area protection planned	191 sq. ft.
Livestock pipeline (grazing) planned	8,970 feet
Irrigation pipeline planned	4,044 feet
Monarch Butterfly habitat applied	7 acres
Conservation cover applied	8 acres
Waste storage facility applied	2 applied
Roof Runoff applied	4 applied
Forestry/grazing plans written	4 written
Wildlife habitat practices applied	34 applied
Underground outlet planned	690 feet
Brief Technical Assistance	518 landowners
Estimated Soil Erosion Reduction	22,956 tons



L-R Roy A. Diver, District Conservationist; Russ Biebl, Soil Conservation Technician
Not Pictured: Carissa Freeh, Farm Bill Biologist; Tristyn Forget, RC&D Soil Conservationist, and Patrick Murphy, retired NRCS.

2020 Local Poster Contest Winners



Grades 2-3
1st Place - Julia Mrozek
2nd Place - Caleb Mohrbacher
3rd Place - Brennan Keyzer

Not Pictured Grades 10-12

1st Place
Madison Pecher

2nd Place
Elyse Hartman

3rd Place
Airara Sainz de Rozas



Grade 4-6
1st Place - Bryer Anderson
2nd Place - Felix Abts
3rd Place - Sawyer Stanczyk

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON DIVISION OF EXTENSION WOOD COUNTY

Extension Wood County assists the Wood County Land & Water Conservation Department by providing educational support for county conservation programs. Extension agents provide information relating to the development of soil, water, wildlife, livestock, crops and other related resources.

Matt Lippert, Agriculture Agent, provides information related to the development of soil, livestock, crops, and other related resources. In addition to conservation, Matt educates about marketing, livestock and crop budgets, integrated pest management, grazing, land rent, farm management, family farm transfers and farmstead design.

Rachael Whitehair, Natural Resource Educator, provides resource support to local farmer-led watershed groups and develops educational programming on conservation land management practices. This past year, she has taken up planning and facilitation for the “Central Wisconsin Farm Profitability Expo,” an annual event modeled after the “Healthy Soil, Healthy Water” program. As part of her regional responsibilities, she assists with curriculum development and facilitation at annual Conservation Partner Meetings.

Wood County is the top cranberry-producing county in North America so it is a natural fit to have Cranberry Outreach Specialist, Allison Jonjak, working out of the Extension Wood County Office. Her efforts are focused on improving education about cranberry production practices. Allison started with Extension in 2020, and has hosted virtual education events focusing on nutrient use efficiency, water use and quality, profitability, and integrated pest management. Cranberry growers appreciate the wetlands-specific management decision support.

Extension also provides educational programs in Horticulture, 4-H and Youth Development, Human Relationships and Development, Natural and Environmental Resources and Nutrition Education through the FoodWise program.

Stop by the Extension Office for plat book, farm record books, soil sample, water quality and radon test kits.



Extension Wood County Staff:

Wendy Young, Administrative Support
Rachael Whitehair, Natural Resource Educator
Hannah Wendels, FoodWise Educator
Laura Huber, 4-H Educator
Jackie Carattini, Human Development & Relationships Educator
Allison Jonjak, Cranberry Outreach Specialist
Jennifer Swensen, Wisconsin 4-H Assistant Program Manager
Janell Wehr, Horticulture Educator
Karli Tomsyck, Administrative Support
Jason Hausler, Area Extension Director
Matt Lippert, Agriculture Educator (not pictured)
Nancy Turyk, Community Development Educator (not pictured)

FARM SERVICE AGENCY

Jake Bourget, CED

What can I say about 2020? I guess the same as everybody else, COVID. It's thrown a monkey wrench into absolutely every program we've administered here at FSA. It's limited our staff numbers in our offices and I make no excuses, it's greatly hindered our quality of customer service we've been able to provide to our farmers in Wood and Portage Counties. We've done our best through the phone, the mail, and email, but there is no replacing the one on one contact we've had with you over the years getting your information first hand as accurate as we can. Now the real kicker; it appears this situation isn't going away for 2021. They are not going to let us staff our offices over 1 person in the office at a time and certainly not open it up to our farmers to visit. This makes our job here at FSA very difficult.

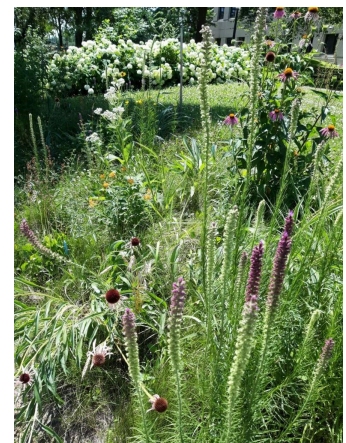
With that, we are here to help you with FSA programs in every way we can; please never hesitate to call us. There is no question that you have that is not important to us. We appreciate all the patience from our customers out there and again for 2021 I ask you to bare with us under all these COVID restrictions imposed upon us. I ask for even more patience and understanding as we wade through the year administering the FSA programs the best we can. In advance - Thank you!

For the year 2020, FSA distributed the following program dollars here in Wood County:

2020 CRP, CREP, SAFE & Continuous CRP Annual Payments	\$ 129,410
Grassland Reserve Program	\$ 425
Loan Deficiency Payment Program (LDP)	\$ 1,526
Agricultural Risk Coverage Program (ARC/PLC)	\$ 877,571
Dairy Market Coverage Program (DMC)	\$ 780,894
<u>Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 1(CFAP 1)</u>	\$ 7,001,487
Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2(CFAP 2)	\$ 8,787,927
Excess Moisture Disaster Program (WHIP+) – 2018 Crop	\$ 5,566
Excess Moisture Disaster Program (WHIP+) – 2019 Crop	\$ 239,403
Total Economic Boost from FSA to Wood County	\$ 17,824,209

Thank you to each and every one out there for your hard work and dedication to the great American farming industry, and your commitment to keep this country well fed. We are looking forward to another year of working with you.

The Portage/Wood County FSA Staff



The pictures above were taken by the Wood County Pollinator garden. The garden, located on the east side of the River Block building, was planted and is cared for by the Wood County Land & Water Conservation staff.