



2011 Annual Report of the Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association, Inc.

A Time of Change: A healthy organization is a dynamic organization. WLWCA has experienced a great deal of change over the past five years and possibly more dramatic change in the near future. WLWCA is going to have an historic vote at the annual meeting that would alter the structure of the association and redefine membership.



Board President Charles "Chuck" Wagner of Kewaunee County

The December 9 vote will determine whether or not WLWCA members wish to merge their organization with the Wisconsin Association of Land Conservation Employees. The resolution includes altering the structure of the association to allow for a new form of governance that represents all county conservation staff and supervisors.

This year we also saw the resignation of Executive Director Julian Zelazny, who moved on in November and took a position in western Canada. Looking forward, it is possible that WLWCA will have a brand new structure as well as a new executive director in 2012.

Conservation Programs: WLWCA continues to run successful conservation programs.

Envirothon

2011 was an exciting year for Wisconsin Envirothon: Middleton High School represented Wisconsin and took eighth place overall at the Canon Envirothon in Sackville, New Brunswick, Canada. They also took first place for the second year in a row in the wildlife category. Fifty-four states, provinces and territories participated in the 2011 Canon Envirothon.

At the state level, seven teams from all over Wisconsin participated in the day long environmental education competition, with teams from Middleton High School, and Luxemburg-Casco High School winning the top three rankings. Wisconsin Envirothon also had great financial and in-kind support from Conserve School, Canon USA, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, UW Extension, WALCE, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, UW-Madison Biocore, Plum Creek Marketing and more. A complete listing of 2011 sponsors will remain on our Web site until the end of the year.

WLWCA is looking forward to the 2012 Wisconsin Envirothon: Going Green-Using Low Impact Development Technology to Reduce Nonpoint Source Pollution, scheduled April 20 at the Central Wisconsin Environmental Station in Amherst Junction. In preparation for next year, WLWCA Youth Coordinator Kirsten Moore has been busy finding new ways to connect with students, teachers and supporters. In 2012, Wisconsin Envirothon will be joining Wisconsin Green Schools Network to co-host the competition alongside their inaugural Youth Summit scheduled April 19. Part of the agreement with Wisconsin Green Schools Network allows middle school students to be included in our state competition. In addition, Wisconsin Envirothon is enjoying an official endorsement from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and a new partnership with the Wisconsin Association of Environmental Educators.

At the 2012 summer meeting of Canon Envirothon state and provincial representatives, Kirsten was elected by her 54 North American peers to serve a three year term on the Canon Envirothon Board of Directors, overseeing the North American competition and its staff. We are excited that Kirsten's reputation and enthusiasm for the program is making Wisconsin Envirothon a household name at the North American event.

Conservation Camp

Trails End Camp near Bruce, Wisconsin, was once again the site of WLWCA Conservation Camp for high school students. Nineteen campers from as far away as Dane County attended the 33rd annual event which ran from June 21 through June 24, 2011.

The theme of this summer's camp was "Wisconsin Bat-itats." We had a special session on bats, built bat houses and got to track bats using a sonar device lent to us by Beaver Creek Reserve in Chippewa County.

"Louie," a voyageur reenactor paid us an entertaining visit, teaching us for two hours about the reality of life for the voyageurs of the 1800s.



Some of our happy campers at Trails End Camp.

Thanks to all the counties who sent staff to camp free of charge: Barron, Bayfield, Shawano, Dunn, Iron, Rusk, Taylor, Price and Vilas. Your volunteerism makes the camp affordable for all students.

The WLWCA Conservation Camp has been led by Rusk County Conservationist Paula Carow since its inception 33 years ago. We bid her a special thanks and best wishes in her retirement. Paula, your great enthusiasm and dedication to passing on the conservation ethic to our youth will be missed.

Planning is well underway for the 34th WLWCA Conservation Camp. See you there!

Poster and Speaking Contest

The 54th State Conservation Awareness Poster and Speaking Contest took place at the beginning of November. Posters from Green Lake, Sawyer, Washington, and Barron Counties will represent Wisconsin in the NACD "Forests for People-More Than You Can Imagine" poster contest this February. Speakers from Barron and Oneida Counties will present their winning speeches at the dinner banquet during this year's annual conference. Banquet attendees can look forward to hearing about a host of topics including the loss of farmland, purple loosertrife, and pharmaceutical disposal. The annual Conservation Awareness Poster and Speaking Contest is fully funded by the contributions and generosity of membership during the WLWCA Annual Youth Education Silent Auction and Raffle. Thank you for your support!

Standards Oversight Council

The Standards Oversight Council (SOC) is a multi-party program sponsored by USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service; the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection; the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources; Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services; UW Extension; WLWCA and the Wisconsin Association of Land Conservation Employees. Chris Schlutt has filled in as the interim SOC Coordinator for

most of 2011 fulfilling SOC's administrative work and helping the work teams as needed. Specifically, SOC and the SOC Coordinator accomplished the following:

- The NRCS standard 313, *Waste Storage Facility*, governs the design, construction and maintenance of storage structures to temporarily store manure, leachate, wastewater and contaminated runoff as part of an agricultural waste management system. This team has held monthly meetings throughout the year. Draft criteria for the standard were evaluated and agreed upon, and a draft of the standard was sent for broad review. The team agreed to extend the public comment period to allow more input from affected parties. A total of 35 pages of written comments were submitted by 39 individuals and organizations, and recently the team has begun responding to the comments. This standard is anticipated to be released in spring of 2012.
- The NRCS 629 *Waste Treatment* standard governs the design, construction and maintenance of conveyance systems, conduits and equipment to transfer animal manure, bedding, wastewater, leachate and contaminated runoff. This team continues to review and respond to initial comments. Some of the revised definitions may go out for comment in December, and the standard is anticipated to be released spring of 2012.
- The NRCS 634 *Waste Transfer* standard governs the design, construction and maintenance of conveyance systems, conduits and equipment to transfer animal manure, bedding, wastewater, leachate and contaminated runoff. This team is temporarily on hold until the 313 standard is closer to being finalized. It is the team's desire to release them together, since they overlap in some respects and must be consistent.
- A Technical Needs Assessment survey was created and distributed to conservation and agricultural professionals statewide. The survey is the primary tool used by the SOC to determine which standards are in need of revision and to help the SOC with prioritization. Results were compiled and assessed by the SOC Council, and the results were implemented into the SOC Work Plan
- A new SOC Work Plan was completed. This plan prioritizes SOC's technical standard projects. Many new teams are anticipated in 2012 with the hiring of the new coordinator.

Mississippi River Basin Initiative Enhancement

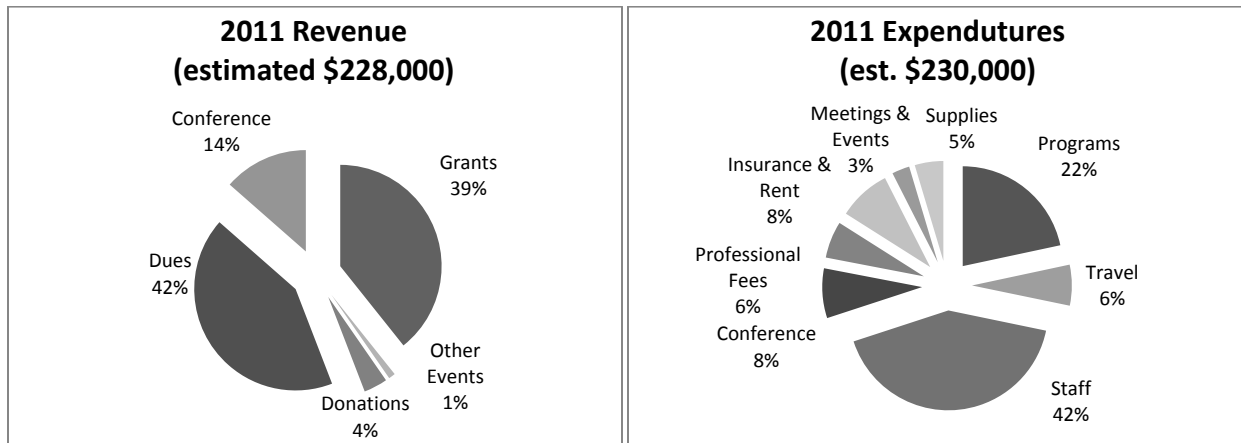
In cooperation with the National Association of Conservation Districts, WLWCA and Dane County won a grant from the Walton Family Fund to enhance the current USDA funded Mississippi River Basin Initiative project. Walton was interested in funding certain activities that help achieve real and replicable benefits. The award was for \$125,000 and Dane County has made very good use of those additional funds.

Advocacy

WLWCA had a relatively quiet spring on the legislative advocacy front. The budget repair bill and biennial budget kept the legislature very busy. No legislator wanted to talk about policy issues before the budget was sorted out. However, there were cuts to the staffing allocation grant in the biennial budget, so WLWCA was busy advocating on behalf of county conservation budgets. Strong support from our membership and the history of summoning support across Wisconsin convinced the legislature that they should not make dramatic cuts to the statewide staffing grant. The budget did contain a cut of approximately 10% to the grant, which was comparatively moderate. As of publication time we have not yet seen the statewide allocation plan, but WLWCA is still advocating for retention of staffing funds due to foreseen funding lapses.

Finance

WLWCA remains secure financially. In 2011 we were informed that the Conservation on the Land Internship Program would no longer be funded. The program was funded through USDA-NRCS by an earmark from Senator Herb Kohl. Congress decided that they would no longer be funding any earmarks as a cost cutting measure and COLIP was lost. In addition to the lost opportunity for dozens of college students to work at meaningful internships, WLWCA suffered a significant loss of revenue. Therefore 2011 will show a slight deficit for the calendar year, which was offset somewhat by the funds saved by not paying an executive director for November and December.



In recognition of those who support WLWCA financially or with goods or services: **Walton Family Foundation, USDA-NRCS, WI DNR, DATCP, WALCE, Conserve School, Canon USA, Plum Creek Marketing, Kikkoman Foods, Midwest Environmental Advocates, Herbert H. Kohl Charities, Arrowhead Trophies, Central Wisconsin Resiliency Project, Christine Mechenich, Peter DeVault Photography, Trees for Tomorrow, UW-Madison Biocore, UW-Extension, Wildwood Productions, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and Wisconsin Lakes.** Special thanks to those who donate to WLWCA via the Wisconsin Environmental Education Foundation's combined giving campaign, and for in-kind support from all the donors to our annual silent auction!

Staff –

Executive Director: Vacant
Interim Operations Director: Kirsten Moore
Program Coordinator: Chris Schlutt
SOC Coordinator: Vacant

Board Advisors –

Greg Baneck, staff advisor Area 2
Jim McCaulley, staff advisor Area 4

Bob Heise, staff advisor Area 6
Carolyn Scholl, staff advisor Area 8
Susan Butler, FSA
Patricia Leavenworth, NRCS
Beth Mason, NACD
John Reinemann, WI Counties Assn.
Richard Castelnuovo, DATCP
MaryAnne Lowndes, DNR
Kurt Calkins, WALCE
Ken Genskow, UWEX



*To Serve County Land and Water Conservation Committees and Departments to
Conserve and Enhance Wisconsin's Natural Resources*

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