



# Thursday Note

An Update on Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Issues

Volume 14, Issue 3

Thursday, May 12, 2011

## **WLWCA's Website Has A New Look!**

Our website has been redesigned by a website development team at Madison Area Technical College as part of their class project. The site is up and fully functional. Please take time to check it out at [www.wlwca.org](http://www.wlwca.org) and let us know if you have any comments or suggestions. We are also developing new online materials for Wisconsin Envirothon, which are a work in progress now available at [www.envirothonwi.org](http://www.envirothonwi.org).

~Chris Schlutt, Program Coordinator

## **Middleton High School Wins 2011 Wisconsin Envirothon**

Seven high school teams from Adams-Friendship, Colby, Luxemburg-Casco and Middleton schools participated in the 2011 Wisconsin Envirothon on Thursday, April 21 at Wisconsin Lions Camp in Rosholt. Teams spent the day outdoors taking on field challenges in four natural resources categories: Aquatic Ecology, Forestry, Soils and Land Use and Wildlife. In addition, teams spent the year studying salt and fresh water estuaries and preparing team presentations regarding potential management plans and concerns for the Lake Superior National Estuarine Research Reserve at the mouth of the St. Louis River.

Wisconsin Envirothon is a member program of Canon Envirothon: North America's largest high school environmental education competition. Middleton High School will represent Wisconsin July 24-29 at Mount Allison University in Sackville, New Brunswick, Canada. The team will apply their field knowledge to another region's environmental circumstances and continue to broaden their understanding of salt and fresh water estuary issues. Scholarships and Canon products are awarded to the top 15 teams. Visit [www.envirothon.org](http://www.envirothon.org) to learn more.

Special thanks to our many volunteer and funding sources. Financial support was provided by Canon USA, Conserve School, Herbert H. Kohl Charities, Kikkoman Foods, Midwest Environmental Advocates and Plum Creek Marketing. Wisconsin Envirothon was coordinated by WLWCA in cooperation with Arrowhead Trophies, Central Wisconsin Resiliency Project, Christine Mechenich, Peter DeVault Photography, Econoprint, Trees for Tomorrow, University of Wisconsin-Madison Biocore, University of Wisconsin-Extension, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Wildwood Productions, Wisconsin Association of Land Conservation Employees, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Wisconsin Lakes, and Wisconsin Lions Camp.

The Wisconsin Envirothon curriculum is designed by natural resources professionals and educators. The Aquatic Ecology Station was designed by Matt Jacobsen, Wisconsin DNR. The Forestry Station was designed by Greg Cleereman, Marinette County LCD. The Soils and Land Use Station was designed by Phil Meyer, USDA-NRCS. The Wildlife Station was designed by Seth McGee, UW-Madison Biocore. The current issue scenario Salt and Freshwater Estuaries was created by a panel led by Patrick Robinson of UWEX with cooperation from Becky Sapper, UWEX; watershed educator Christine Mechenich; and Susan Tesarik, Wisconsin Lakes. Thank you for your support!

Find out about Middleton High School's trip to New Brunswick on [Wisconsin Envirothon's](#) Facebook page and on [Canon Envirothon's](#) Facebook page. Find details about Wisconsin Envirothon at [www.wlwca.org/envirothon.html](http://www.wlwca.org/envirothon.html) and at the new [www.envirothonwi.org](http://www.envirothonwi.org). Stay tuned for developments and details on the 2012 event focusing on nonpoint source pollution and low impact development. If you are interested in serving on a committee to plan the 2012 event, volunteer, or if you wish to be kept in the loop regarding new ideas for the program, contact [kirsten@wlwca.org](mailto:kirsten@wlwca.org).

Congratulations to Middleton High School, all the participating teams, supporters and volunteers for a great event.

~Kirsten Moore, Office Manager

**WLWCA-WALCE Ad-Hoc Committee to Begin Member Outreach, *Thursday Note* “Merger Edition” Coming Soon**

Led by co-chairs Charles Wagner of Kewaunee County LCC and Perry Lindquist of Waukesha County LRD, the WLWCA-WALCE Ad-Hoc Merger Committee has been meeting since January to consider developing a merged association. Details about the ad-hoc committee efforts are currently available at [www.wlwca.org/wlwca\\_walce.html](http://www.wlwca.org/wlwca_walce.html). A special edition *Thursday Note* dedicated entirely to the potential merger and ad hoc committee efforts will be published later this month, with outreach opportunities to follow.

If you have any questions about the potential merger, contact Charles Wagner at [wagnerc50@yahoo.com](mailto:wagnerc50@yahoo.com), Perry Lindquist at [plindquist@waukeshacounty.gov](mailto:plindquist@waukeshacounty.gov) or find the [ad-hoc committee contact list](#) at our Website.

~Charles Wagner, WLWCA President & Perry Lindquist, Waukesha County Land Resources Division

**Join Us at Conservation Observance Day on Monday, June 13, in Fall River, Columbia County**

John and Dorothy Priske, the 2010 Conservation Farmer of the Year winners, are hosting this year's Conservation Observance Day celebration where you will learn about sustainable farming. Join us at Fountain Prairie Inn and Farms to tour the farm and learn about their 300 head herd of grass fed Scottish Highland cattle. The Priskes will host conservationists and enthusiasts from around the state between 11:00 am to 3:00 pm for lunch, speaker presentations and tours of the farm and Victorian Inn. Scheduled speakers include agency partners from the USDA-NRCS office, DNR, DATCP and UW-Extension.

Find out more about Fountain Prairie Inn and Farms by visiting [www.fountainprairie.com](http://www.fountainprairie.com) and more details regarding Conservation Observance Day will be available at [www.wlwca.org](http://www.wlwca.org) as well as on our listserv mid-May. We hope to see you there!

~Kelly Maginnis, Columbia County Land Conservation Department

**Would Your County Like Their 2012 Dues Waived?**

As part of WLWCA's Conservation Awards program, the WLWCA board is promoting the Conservation Farmer of the Year award by waiving 2012 WLWCA dues for the county that submits the state winner. You have plenty of time to think about a worthy nominee in your county, as nominations should be submitted at the area level by August 26, with the area winner submitted to WLWCA by October 21. The other award being offered is for Outstanding Supervisor. It only takes a few minutes to nominate a supervisor and show your appreciation for the outstanding work they do. Nominations must be submitted to WLWCA by October 21.

Information and applications for these awards can be found at [www.wlwca.org/consawards.html](http://www.wlwca.org/consawards.html). Please take the time to recognize a farmer or supervisor in your county who has gone above and beyond the call of duty to help preserve Wisconsin's natural resources. Contact Chris if you have any questions.

~Chris Schlutt, Program Coordinator

**Legislative Update**

The state budget remains the primary focus of our efforts in Madison. The governor's budget, if passed, would have negative impacts on three areas of concern to county conservation.

1. The statewide conservation staffing allocation grant would be permanently reduced by 5%.

While this reduction is not a large amount, the fact that it would be a permanent reduction is troubling. Currently, the amount of money that the state allocates to fund the grant is several million dollars short of the amount described by the formula in Chapter 92. The staffing grant has been underfunded for almost 20 years. A further permanent reduction in the grant only makes a bad situation worse for Wisconsin's front line in the battle against nonpoint pollution and surface water protection. WLWCA and WALCE are working with members of the state legislature to introduce an amendment to the budget bill that turns the cut to the

staffing grant into a "lapse". This makes the reduction in the grant temporary so that it can be brought back in the 2013 budget.

2. The Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement (PACE) program would be eliminated.

The PACE program is one of the important programs of the Working Lands Initiative. It would provide an avenue for agricultural land owners to keep their land in agriculture while providing compensation for selling off the development rights. This is one way that agricultural land can be protected from conversion, especially in those communities that experience the greatest development pressure. Furthermore, there are some land owners who were early adopters of the program and began work on an easement shortly after the law was passed. Since then they have incurred significant expenses, like appraisals and legal fees, based upon the promise that the state would reimburse them under the program.

It is a matter of fairness that those land owners receive the promised funds. WLWCA and WALCE are working with members of the legislature to get an amendment to the budget bill introduced that would keep PACE on the books, even if it is unfunded (except for those early adopters) in the current budget. If revenues improve we can fund it in the 2013 budget.

3. The conversion fee for taking land out of the Farmland Preservation Program would be eliminated.

The conversion fee is a critical component of the FPP. It provides a disincentive for leaving the program, it returns money to the public treasury that was given to the land owner via the program's tax reductions, and it was intended to fund the PACE program. WLWCA and WALCE are working with members of the legislature to get an amendment to the budget bill introduced that keep some sort of conversion fee on the books, even if it is not the current fee formula.

Please make your voice heard, and ask your legislator to support these three points. If your legislator is not on the joint finance committee, they have access to members who are, so please ask them to contact their finance committee contact and support these three amendments. If you have any questions, please contact WLWCA or WALCE.

~Julian Zelazny, Executive Director

### **Standards Oversight Council Update**

The SOC Team revising the NRCS Standard 313 Waste Storage Facility anticipates that a draft will be available for broad review this early summer.

The NRCS 634 Waste Transfer Team is meeting this week to go over the final edits to the standard. Shortly thereafter the standard, companion document and specification will go out for review.

The NRCS 629 Team is near Initial Review, expected yet this month. The team seeks data on nutrient content of runoff from feed storage facilities that have some first flush collection. The team also seeks farms (with first flush collection) to participate this summer in a field monitoring study lead by Dr. Becky Larson, from the Department of Biological Systems Engineering, UW Madison. The study will help determine how nutrient concentrations in runoff vary during a storm event, so the team is able to recommend appropriate management for peak flows. The team's main charge is to address feed runoff control for sites where a high level of resource protection is desired.

~Chris Schlutt, Program Coordinator



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## Calendar of Events

<b>NACD Executive Directors' Conference, Baltimore, MD</b>	<b>May 16-19</b>
<b>SAA Spring Meeting, Madison</b>	<b>May 24</b>
<b>SOC Meeting, Madison</b>	<b>May 25</b>
<b>LWCB Meeting, Madison</b>	<b>June 7</b>
<b>Conservation Observance Day, Fall River</b>	<b>June 13</b>
<b>WLWCA Board Meeting, Stevens Point</b>	<b>June 14</b>
<b>WALCE Board Meeting, Stevens Point</b>	<b>June 15</b>
<b>WLWCA-WALCE Ad Hoc Committee Meeting, Stevens Point</b>	<b>June 15</b>
<b>Agroforestry Workshops, LaFarge and Viola</b>	<b>June 16</b>
<b>WLWCA Conservation Camp, Bruce</b>	<b>June 21-24</b>
<b>Sand Lake Conservation Camp, Crivitz</b>	<b>June 23-25</b>

For more information, visit [www.wlwca.org/eventscalendar.html](http://www.wlwca.org/eventscalendar.html)

### WLWCA Board

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Conserve by Subscribing to *Thursday Note* on line! Email [kirsten@wlwca.org](mailto:kirsten@wlwca.org) for details.