



# Thursday Note

An Update on Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Issues

Volume 14, Issue 6

Thursday, August 4, 2011

## **Wisconsin Places 8<sup>th</sup> At Canon Envirothon in Sackville, New Brunswick, Canada; Students Earn \$1200 Scholarships**

Congratulations to Middleton High School for taking eighth place at the 2011 Canon Envirothon and first place in the Wildlife category. Each student earned \$1200 in higher education scholarships. The top 15 teams who earned scholarships included (in placement order): Manitoba, Ontario, South Carolina, New Brunswick, Connecticut, North Carolina, Virginia, Wisconsin, Florida, Rhode Island, Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and Nebraska.

Five Middleton students represented Wisconsin in Sackville, New Brunswick, Canada during North America's largest high school environmental competition, now in its 24<sup>th</sup> year. The week-long competition amongst 54 states, provinces and territories involved local natural resources training and challenges at five field stations: Aquatic Ecology; Forestry; Soils and Land Use; Wildlife; and the annual current issue, Salt and Fresh Water Estuaries, where the students visited and studied Fort Beauséjour on the Bay of Fundy. Following the field station challenges, students developed salt and freshwater estuary focused presentations where they were challenged to act as representatives from an oil company who were presenting plans for an environmentally sound oil refinery on the Bay of Fundy at a simulated public hearing.

Special congratulations to Debra Weitzel, advisor to the Middleton High School team. Deb has brought six teams to Canon Envirothon in her many years as the Middleton Envirothon advisor, all placing within the top 25 at the North American event, two taking first place in the Oral Presentation category, and two placing first in the Wildlife category. Deb has recently retired from teaching and though she will be missed at the state competition, Wisconsin Envirothon looks forward to her continued input and her new efforts as a member of the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board. Congratulations on your many years of great Envirothon work, Deb!

Wisconsin Envirothon was made possible this year by Conserve School, Canon USA, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, UW Extension, Wisconsin Association of Land Conservation Employees, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, UW-Madison Biocore, Plum Creek Marketing and more. A complete list of 2011 sponsors can be found at [www.wlwca.org/envirothon.html](http://www.wlwca.org/envirothon.html). Find out more about Wisconsin Envirothon at [www.envirothonwi.org](http://www.envirothonwi.org).

~Kirsten Moore, Office Manager

## **WLWCA's Kirsten Moore Elected to Canon Envirothon Board of Directors**

Congratulations to Kirsten Moore for being elected by her 54 international peers at Canon Envirothon to serve on the Canon Envirothon Board of Directors for a three-year term as secretary, overseeing the North American competition and its staff. In her past five years as the Wisconsin Envirothon coordinator and the Wisconsin representative for WLWCA's Canon Envirothon membership, Kirsten has been a steadfast volunteer at the North American Competition and has been recognized as a consensus builder by past board chairs, earning her appointments to chair the Canon Envirothon Bylaws Committee and the Grievances Committee, which oversees

the decision-making regarding rules violations during the Canon Envirothon competition. In turn for her service at the North American level, WLWCA will receive compensation from Canon for her travel to the annual winter and summer meetings, which includes the Canon Envirothon event itself.

We are excited that Kirsten is making Wisconsin Envirothon a household name at the North American level, and that Wisconsin has this opportunity to make a strong impact on the mechanics of the Canon event.

~Julian Zelazny, Executive Director

### **WLWCA Annual Conference Planning Underway, Volunteers Sought**

WLWCA has been meeting with Greg Cleereman (Marinette LCD), Kelly Jacobs (Eau Claire LCD), Steve Oberle (Taylor LCD), Penny Pohle (Sauk LCD) and Carolyn Scholl (Vilas LCD) to create your 2011 WLWCA Annual Conference, scheduled December 8-9 at Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells. We are firming up the agenda, and will be meeting one last time on Wednesday, August 10, 9:00 am-10:30 am via conference call before preparing registration materials. We are still seeking three more volunteers for the silent auction, one for registration, three AV assistants, and 10 session moderators. All conference volunteers are eligible for registration discounts. To volunteer, go to [www.wlwca.org/conference.html](http://www.wlwca.org/conference.html) and submit to [kirsten@wlwca.org](mailto:kirsten@wlwca.org). We appreciate your support and look forward to December 8-9 in Wisconsin Dells!

~Kirsten Moore, Office Manager

### **WLWCA Awards – It's Not Too Late for Nominations!**

The deadline for submitting a nominee for Conservation Farmer of the Year in your area is coming up quickly: August 26! Area winners then submit the winning entry to WLWCA by October 21. This award promotes total farm conservation accomplishments by recognizing farmers who perform outstanding conservation work. *The state winner hosts Conservation Observance Day the following June and has their 2012 WLWCA dues waived.* Please consider nominating a farmer in your county who goes above and beyond!

We also offer an award for Outstanding Supervisor. This award recognizes a land conservation committee supervisor who has provided strong and effective leadership in promoting resource conservation through their own actions and work in their community. All nominations for this award should be submitted to WLWCA by October 21.

Winners will be honored at our awards banquet during our annual conference on December 8 in Wisconsin Dells. Additional information and nomination materials are located on our Web site at [www.wlwca.org/consawards.html](http://www.wlwca.org/consawards.html). Please contact Chris if you have any questions.

~Chris Schlutt, Program Coordinator

### **Hearing on NR 115 and NR151**

On July 26, the Legislative Rules Committee held a hearing in Minocqua to solicit input on NR 115, the shoreland zoning rules and NR 151, the nonpoint rules. This hearing notice was a red flag for WLWCA and our partners. You may recall that we had a similar issue come up during the budget process. At the time, the Joint Finance Committee passed an alternative in the budget that instructed the DNR to repeal NR 151 and re-create it. A wide coalition of conservation and farm groups aligned to convince the committee to reverse the decision. Our concern was that the people responsible for trying to kill NR 151 in the budget process might have been trying again via another process. Several of our colleagues from the northern and central parts of the state went to Minocqua to see what was going on and to speak favorably about NR 151. We understand from our colleagues

in attendance that the main topic of conversation at the hearing turned out to be NR 115. Even though they were ten years in the making, there are significant numbers of people who are dissatisfied with the shoreland zoning rules. Expect some change to occur to NR 115.

The only changes we are expecting to NR 151 are parts of the urban rules. Municipalities who will not meet the upcoming standards for phosphorus and Total Suspended Solids have concerns about some of the rule's language. While this news is not good, it's not nearly as bad as it would have been if they planned to repeal the ag components of NR 151. Many thanks to our colleagues who kept us informed on this hearing.

~Julian Zelazny, Executive Director

### **Wisconsin Bioenergy Council**

Last year, I was appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture to the Wisconsin Bioenergy Council. At their meeting on July 27 the Wisconsin Bioenergy Council approved a guidance document titled "Wisconsin Sustainable Planting and Harvest Guidelines for Nonforest Biomass." This document is nearly one year in the making and was shaped by input from a wide variety of stakeholders. The aim is to provide guidelines for the growing of bioenergy crops while avoiding issues like the "food versus fuel" debate and environmental degradation. Unfortunately, the final copy will not contain a discussion of the issues surrounding the planting and harvesting of crops on karst lands. I brought the issue forward to the group, and agency staff drafted language that described the concerns associated with farming in karst areas. The language appeared in the April draft of the document, but was missing from the July version. When I pointed the omission out I was told that it was left out because the final edit required some cutting and it was not deemed important enough to keep in, though a discussion of highly erodible lands remained in the document. I appealed to the council to include a small paragraph that discussed karst, but was rebuffed. A representative of a major farm organization stated to the group that he would vote "no" on final approval of the document if karst language was included, and that seemed to close the issue. I was assured that a mention of the karst issue would be included in the letter that the secretary puts in the document when it is sent to the governor and legislature.

In the end, the only mention of karst in the document is a short bullet point under the heading of "sensitive lands" that includes a link to the Karst Task Force Report. We will attempt to get the issue included in two years, when a statutorily required review occurs.

~Julian Zelazny, Executive Director

### **Standards Oversight Council Update**

The draft NRCS standard 313, Waste Storage Facility, is now available for broad review. The public comment period concerning proposed changes to the technical design criteria for manure storage structures has been extended until September 9. The draft standard, as well as information on how to provide comments, can be found on the SOC web site at [www.socwisconsin.org/review.html](http://www.socwisconsin.org/review.html). The next 313 team meeting will take place on September 22, where the team will review the comments.

The SOC will soon be distributing a Technical Needs Assessment survey which will help prioritize the conservation technical standard needs for Wisconsin. The SOC 2012 Work Plan and direction of future work teams will be based on the needs identified by this assessment. The survey will be distributed through the SOC, LCD and WALCE list serves, as well as through partner agencies. Additionally, the survey will be available on the SOC web site by mid-August.

~Chris Schlutt, Program Coordinator



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## Calendar of Events

<b>Ad-Hoc Merger Committee Mtg, Stevens Point</b>	<b>Aug 9</b>
<b>Conference Planning Committee Phone Meeting</b>	<b>Aug 10</b>
<b>NCLWCA Summer Tour, Stevens Point</b>	<b>Aug 12</b>
<b>Farm Pond Management Workshop, Merrill</b>	<b>Aug 13</b>
<b>CNMP/SNAP Plus/Phosphorus Training, Athens &amp; Juneau</b>	<b>Aug 16-17</b>
<b>Basic Wetland Plant ID Workshop, Port Washington</b>	<b>Aug 18-19</b>
<b>WCLWCA Meeting, Menomonie</b>	<b>Aug 25</b>
<b>Sustainable Forestry Course, Amherst Junction</b>	<b>Aug 26</b>
<b>Intro to Forestry Course, Amherst Junction</b>	<b>Aug 26</b>
<b>Beginning Aquaculture Workshop, Juneau</b>	<b>Aug 27</b>
<b>WLWCA-WALCE Joint Board Mtg, Stevens Point</b>	<b>Aug 30</b>

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

### WLWCA Board

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