

## **AGENDA**

Eau Claire County

- Sustainability Advisory Committee •

**Date:** November 15th

Time: 11AM

*Eau Claire County Ag center, 227 1st St. W, Altoona, WI Room 103*

*\*Event link below can be used to connect to meeting and interact (by the chair) from computer or through the WebEx Meeting smartphone app.*

### ***Join WebEx Meeting:***

*<https://eauclairecounty.webex.com/eauclairecounty/j.php?MTID=m8973de119ecc85694e2776f3f265ee7e>*

*Meeting number: 2530 643 6277 Meeting password: gPmkZhZF737*

*\*Meeting audio can be listened to using this Audio conference dial in information.*

**Audio conference:** 1-415-655-0001, Access Code: 2530 643 6277

***For those wishing to make public comment, you must e-mail Regan Watts at [Regan.watts@eauclairecounty.gov](mailto:Regan.watts@eauclairecounty.gov) at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the meeting. You will be called on during the public session to make your comments.***

## **AGENDA**

1. Call to order
2. Roll Call
3. Confirmation of Compliance with Open Meeting Law
4. Review/Approve Meeting Minutes from September 13th **pages 2-3**
5. Public Comment Period
6. Staff Presentation **pages 4-19**
7. Ag & Natural Resources Stakeholder Discussion
8. Members, Staff and Agency Updates-Discussion
9. Items for the Next Agenda
10. Next Meeting - TBD
11. Adjourn



**MINUTES**  
Eau Claire County  
Sustainability Advisory Committee  
Wednesday, September 13th, at 5:00  
p.m.

Present: Tami Schraufnagel, Jim Dunning, Amy Alpine, Cathy Lea, Lily Strehlow, Kathy Campbell, Tim Davis, Nathan Anderson

Absent: Jeff White, Jeni Thorpe

Others: Regan Watts – Committee Clerk, Matt Michels-P&D, Jeremy Gragert

**Call to Order and confirmation of meeting notice.**

Chair Schraufnagel called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m. and confirmed that the meeting was noticed.

**Roll Call**

The roll was called by the clerk, and it is noted above under present. A quorum was present.

**Public Comment**

Kathy Campbell notified members of a virtual MRF tour and Jeremy Gragert noted the Ag & Rural resilience Summit. Regan will send out information about the events after the meeting.

**Review/Approve meeting minutes from June 14th and August 9th**

June 14th minutes approved: Motion Dunning, Second Strehlow  
August 9th minutes approved: Motion Alpine, Second Davis

**CARP Transportation Strategies**

Committee discussed already existing sustainable transportation plans within the community and the state. Also, discussed EV charging infrastructure in the community. Eqwv{ "cpf "ucvgr r nleku'uj qwf "gpeqwtci g'GX"ej cti kpi "kptcutwewtg'lp'pgy " eqputwexqp. Need to expand public transportation, especially for rural and aging population.

**CARP Action Steps**

Committee members discussed proposed actions steps and proposed new ones. Regan will add for next meeting.

**Member & Staff Updates**

Regan provided updates on community events and staff will send out information about the events to the committee.

**Items for next agenda**

**Next meeting**

Next meeting is scheduled for November 15th at 11AM at Eau Claire County Ag Center Room 103.

**Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 7:00p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Regan Watts*

Regan Watts – Clerk, Recycling & Sustainability Coordinator

Attached are the documents that staff will reference during the staff presentation portion of the agenda. A link to the Land chapter of the 2021 Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts can be found at <https://uwmadison.app.box.com/s/6wzyrt7cut86fxyjw6y2cchkb427rrjx>

The 2022 Land Conservation Division Annual report is below.

# 2022 Annual Report



**EAU CLAIRE COUNTY**  
LAND CONSERVATION



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## WELCOME

Eau Claire County is a diverse landscape in West-central Wisconsin with river systems at its center. "Eau Claire" is the singular form of the original French name, "Eaux Claires", meaning "Clear Waters". With partially glaciated and partially Driftless Area terrain, the County holds a balance of urban and rural uses that lends itself well to a variety of cropping systems and development opportunities.

The Eau Claire County Land Conservation Division (LCD) of the Department of Planning and Development (P&D) has a strong enforcement role throughout the County but is also looked to for technical assistance and expert guidance in matters related to natural resource conservation and preservation. The main program and service areas within LCD can be compiled into three categories:

- Land Preservation
- Land Conservation Planning
- Water Quality Protection

### Land Conservation Division Staff Members

Chad Berge	Land Conservation Manager
Holly Weigand	Administrative Specialist
Heidi Pederson	Administrative Specialist
Zachary Mohr	Conservation Technician
Christina Rauh	Environmental Engineer
Tim Wucherer	Conservation Technician-Agronomist

(Not pictured below is Greg Leonard, former Land Conservation Manager)

### Land Conservation Commission Members

Robin Leary	Chair
Tami Schraufnagel	Vice Chair
Heather DeLuka	County Board Member
Missy Christopherson	County Board Member
Jodi Lepsch	County Board Member
Glory Adams	Citizen Representative
Ricky Strauch	Farmer Representative
Dean Solie	FSA Representative



From left to right: Heidi Pederson, Tim Wucherer, Holly Weigand, Chad Berge, Zachary Mohr, Christina Rauh

## LAND PRESERVATION

The Land Preservation Program is designed to protect Eau Claire County's land and water resources, specifically for the purpose of reducing soil losses or preserving unique and valuable land resources. Habitat improvements for fish and wildlife as well as public recreational opportunities are also taken into consideration.

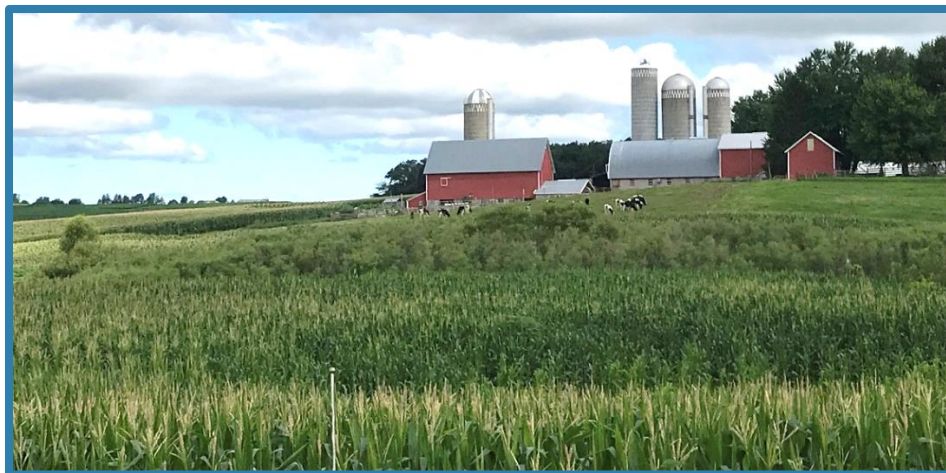
### Farmland Preservation Program (FPP)

Landowners who participate in the Farmland Preservation Program (FPP) are eligible to claim an income tax credit if they meet soil and water conservation standards. FPP participants with land zoned AP-Agricultural Preservation receive an income tax credit of \$7.50 per acre. Landowners within the Golden Triangle Ag Enterprise Area who sign a 15-year Farmland Preservation Agreement are eligible to receive additional income tax credits.

LCD staff meet with FPP participants once every four years to conduct a status review and determine compliance with the State Agricultural Performance Standards & Prohibitions within Wisconsin Administrative Code NR 151. Most landowners are in full compliance with the performance standards, and the remaining are cooperatively working with staff to meet these standards. There are now a total of 238 participants and 44,760 acres enrolled in FPP in Eau Claire County. Since the Farmland Preservation Tax Credit inception in 1977, the program has returned nearly \$10 million in income tax credits to landowners in Eau Claire County.

### Golden Triangle Agricultural Enterprise Area (AEA)

In 2016, Eau Claire County farmers designated the Golden Triangle Agricultural Enterprise Area (AEA). Since then, staff have worked with landowners to sign voluntary 15-year Farmland Preservation Agreements in these areas. There are currently 7,618 acres in a Farmland Preservation Agreement, which represents over 30% of the total land located in the Golden Triangle AEA.





## Land Stewardship Program

The Eau Claire County Land Stewardship Program is a framework for the protection and preservation of land tracts within Eau Claire County that meet the following priorities: significant ecological value; recreation and public access; strong community support; good value for county residents; sustains resource base; and quality of life.

In 2017 the Land Stewardship Subcommittee completed its *Stewardship Vision 2150* visioning document. The purpose of this document is to provide a longer-range view of County landscape and population trends to influence current policies aimed at preserving important landscape features. It addresses the “what to protect” and “methods to protect it” questions. To strengthen its partnerships, in 2020 the Subcommittee completed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Landmark Conservancy to further the efforts of both organizations.



### **Land Stewardship Subcommittee Members:**

Rick Koziel	Chair, Citizen Member
Dave Carlson	Vice Chair, Citizen Member
Joe Knight	County Board Member/Parks & Forest Committee
Dave Dressel	Citizen Member
Tony Brooks	Citizen Member
Heather DeLuka	County Board Member/Land Conservation Commission
Larry Jolivette	Citizen Member

## Tree and Shrub Program

Since the LCD tree sale program began in 1982, a total of 1,107,145 trees have been sold. In 2019, native forbs were added to the sale and continue to be popular with landowners, with 2,712 native forbs sold since then. The program is low-cost to the county; all costs associated with the program are covered by revenue generated by sales. Thank you to all landowners who participate in this program. Planting trees helps to conserve our soil and water resources in Eau Claire County.

## Venison Donation Program

LCD coordinates a venison donation program during Wisconsin’s gun deer season in November. In 2022, Mike’s Star Market of Eau Claire processed 46 deer which resulted in 1,750 pounds of venison that was donated to local food pantries. Due to state Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) testing guidelines, 26 of the donated deer were also tested for CWD, with none of the deer testing positive for CWD.

## Wildlife Damage Abatement Claims Program (WDACP)

The Wildlife Damage Abatement and Claims Program (WDACP) is a state program that provides damage prevention assistance and partial compensation to farmers when wild deer, elk, bear, geese, and turkeys damage their agricultural crops. Shooting permits may be issued to farmers for removal of nuisance wildlife to protect their crops. In 2022, LCD staff administered this program in Eau Claire County by responding to 6 requests for crop damage resulting from wildlife.

## LAND CONSERVATION PLANNING

The Planning category is comprised of Land Conservation Division administration ensuring implementation of its comprehensive Land and Water Resource Management Plan. It includes other priority areas that address other soil and water conservation needs as identified by the Land Conservation Commission. This category also provides a framework for assessing and building on current mandated programs based on need.

### Land and Water Resource Management (LWRM) Plan

Eau Claire County's Land and Water Resource Management (LWRM) 10-year plan was up for renewal this year. The LCD staff worked to update the plan with current Land Conservation Division activities, as directed by the Land Conservation Commission, while also ensuring consistency with the Eau Claire County Comprehensive Plan and the Eau Claire County Board Strategic Plan. The plan sets the framework for the LCD's goals through 2032. The updated plan was reviewed and approved by the Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Board in December of 2022. Future reporting will be tied to the annual work plan. The full plan can be accessed through the LCD website at: [Eau Claire County Land & Water Resource Management Plan](#)

### Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is a joint effort between federal, state, and county governments to balance working agriculture and the protection of Wisconsin's soil and water resources. Participating landowners are paid to voluntarily install filter strips along waterways or to return portions of continually flooded fields to wetlands during a contracted period.

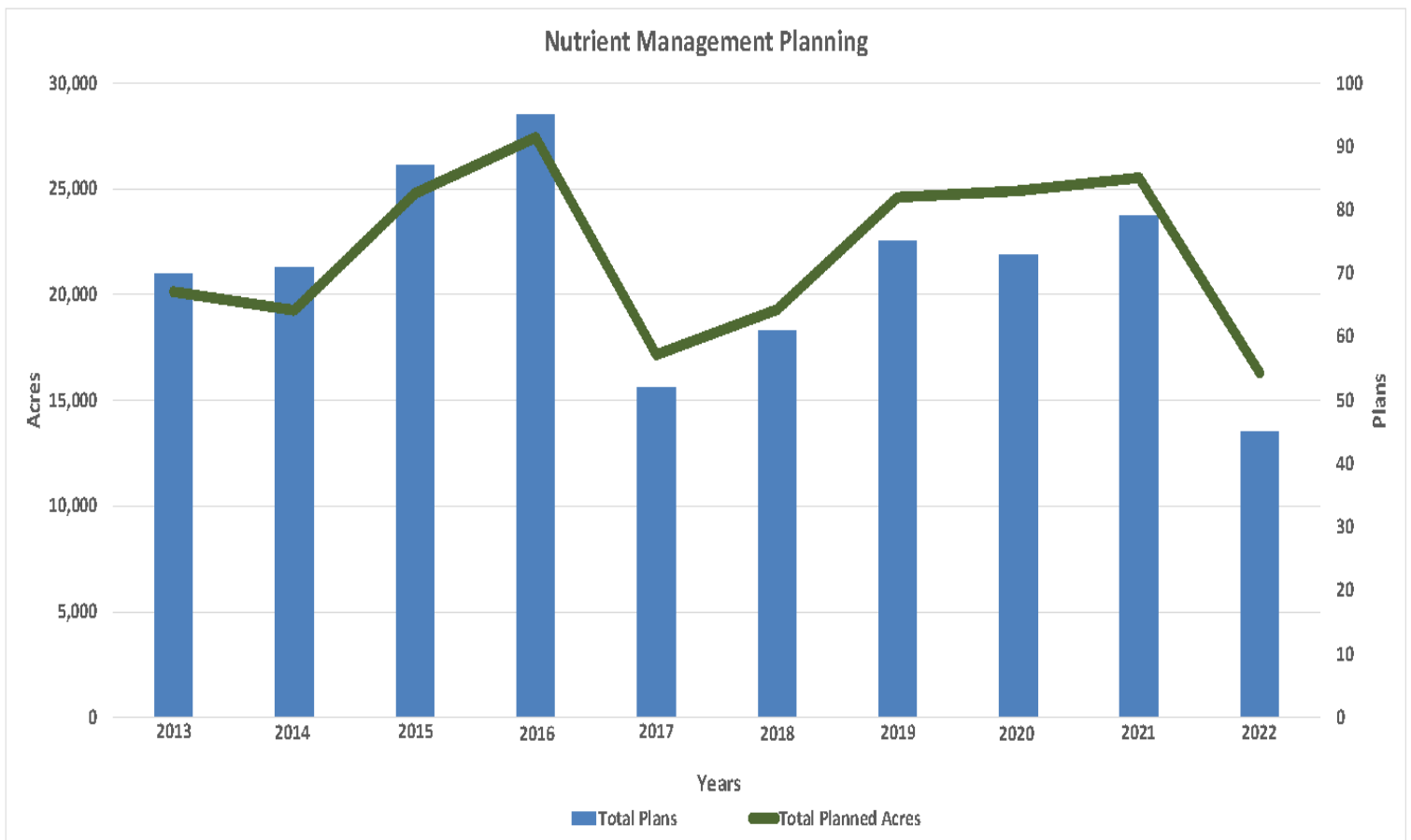
LCD has assisted with the implementation of CREP in Eau Claire County since February 19, 2002. In 2022, there was one CREP reenrollment within the County.



## Nutrient Management Planning and Annual Update Workshops

With the help of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension, LCD staff annually host eight workshops to teach farmers how to develop and update their own Nutrient Management Plans. These plans help producers to manage livestock manure, commercial fertilizer, and other nutrient sources to balance nutrient applications. This is critical to prevent soil and nutrients from running off into nearby streams and to prevent nutrient and bacteria leaching from manure into the groundwater.

These training workshops provide LCD staff an opportunity to discuss other conservation related topics with farmers, such as the State’s Agricultural Performance Standards, or the need to properly close unused wells and manure storage structures. Farmers have the option to develop their Nutrient Management Plan with or without use of the SnapPlus computer program, and farmers without livestock are also invited to develop and update their Nutrient Management Plan. Thirty-seven farmers participated in the nutrient management workshops.



*\*Dip in numbers for year 2017 and year 2022 due to staffing turnaround/shortage*



## WATER QUALITY PROTECTION

The Water Quality Protection category is designed to protect the County's water resources by reducing the inputs of nutrients and sediments resulting from storm water runoff from construction sites and agricultural activities. Much of this category is mandated through the state agriculture and urban non-point pollution statutes and has been strongly supported by County residents in annual surveys completed as part of the Eau Claire County Budget process.



### Eau Claire River Watershed – 9 Key Element Plan

In 2017, the 9-Key Element plan for the Eau Claire River watershed, *Healthy Soils & Healthy Waters: A Community Strategy for the Eau Claire River Watershed*, was approved by both the Environmental Protection Agency and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The 9-Key Element plan guides conservation efforts and provides new opportunities for grant funding sources to pursue in the watershed. Many partners were involved in this effort and continue to meet monthly to collaborate on implementation activities and explore additional opportunities in the watershed.

### Large Scale Targeted Runoff Management (TRM) Grant

With the approval of the 9-Key Element plan, Eau Claire County is eligible for grant dollars through the Department of Natural Resources' Targeted Runoff Management program (TRM). Eau Claire and Clark County Land Conservation staff partnered together to secure a multi-year Large Scale TRM grant in 2018. The grant provided dollars in Eau Claire County to install conservation practices in the Fall Creek Watershed that reduces soil erosion and nutrient loss to the Fall Creek Pond.

The funding for the TRM grant and Demonstration Farm expired on December 31, 2022, and the decision was made to not continue with either project. Below is a summary of the outcomes from the grant:

- 3-year Demonstration Farm – 41.8 acres
- Manure Storage Closure – 1 closure
- Waterway System – 3.5 acres
- Cover Crops – 162 acres
- \$83,741 in additional County Funding throughout grant cycle



## Water Quality Trading

Eau Claire County signed a Water Quality Trading (WQT) agreement with the City of Augusta in 2019. The City's wastewater treatment plant cannot currently meet its permitted effluent limits for phosphorus, which is discharged into Bridge Creek. WQT allows the City to take credit for phosphorus reductions resulting from conservation practices installed elsewhere in the watershed.

LCD staff identified the Erdman and Hi Crush Augusta properties located on Diamond Valley Creek and determined that both properties were eligible for WQT. Soil tests showed that the proposed project would produce 211 pounds of phosphorus credits per year for the City of Augusta, creating enough credits to maintain compliance with their Wisconsin Pollution Discharge Elimination System (WPEDS) permit. In 2021 staff worked with the property owners to sign WQT Agreements, applied for permits, and finished engineering the Best Management Practices.

Due to the presence of endangered Wood Turtles within the project vicinity, a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Incidental Take Permit (IT) was issued. The IT permit restricted the timing of the project and the practices that could be installed in 2021. In the fall of 2021, the upland BMPs were installed, along with 466 feet of streambank stabilization and 12 in-stream boulders. The remaining streambank stabilization and in-stream fish habitat were installed in May of 2022.

In 2022 the remaining practices were installed, wrapping up the project. The project resulted in reducing phosphorus pollution by 477 pounds per year, generating a phosphorus credit of 211 pounds per year. The LCD will conduct a yearly site inspection through June 2043 to verify the landowners are meeting the conditions of the agreement and that the installed BMPs are functioning as designed. The following is a summary of the installed BMPs:

- 1,311' streambank protection
- In-stream habitat
- Random Boulder Placement
- Rock Deflectors
- Bank Placed Boulders
- 2,710' Fence
- 1,161' Grassed Waterway
- 1,865' Subsurface Drain
- 160 square feet Heavy Use Area Protection Concrete
- 2 Stream Crossings
- Cattle Watering Ramp
- 1,120' Trails & Walkways
- 1 Watering Facility
- 1,120' Trails & Walkways
- 1 Watering Facility
- 60' Livestock Pipeline
- Seeding & Mulching

### Lake Rehabilitation

LCD staff work with the local lake associations and lake districts to focus on lake rehabilitation projects. The Lake Eau Claire Association, in partnership with the Lake Eau Claire District and the Fall Creek Pond District are managing sediment through the mechanical dredging of sediment traps. Additionally, the Lake Altoona District is doing work to identify better sediment management strategies for the lake. Thank you to the Eau Claire County Board of Supervisors for their support of local lakes and for funding efforts through the County Lake Rehabilitation Program.



### No-Till Drill Rental Program

LCD gratefully accepted donations and grant funds which allowed for the purchase of the County's No-Till Drill in 2020. This piece of planting equipment is available for farmers to rent in the County. No-till planting provides countless benefits to our landscape by improving the health of the soil. This results in reduced levels of soil loss, reductions in nutrient runoff, and increased profitability to the farmer.



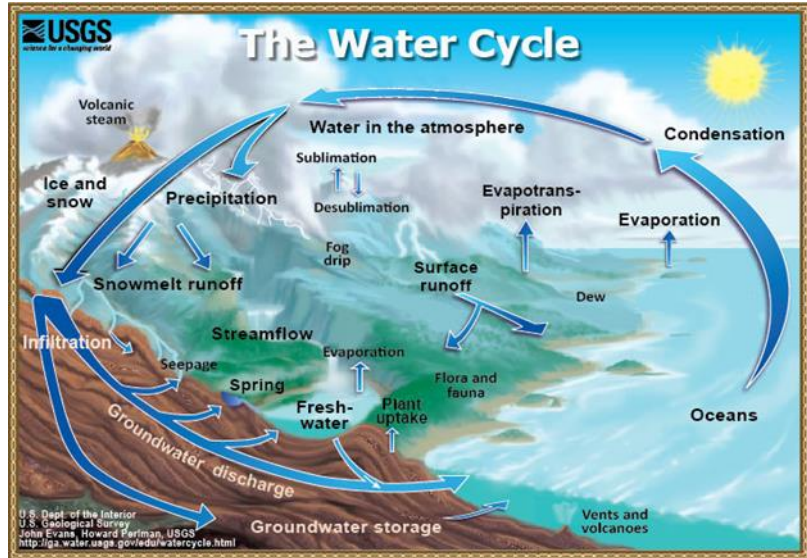
A total of 28 renters used the drill to plant over 605 acres of cover crops in Eau Claire County. Fees collected by farmers to rent the drill will be used to cover anticipated equipment maintenance and program expenses in the future.

In its first 3 years of existence, the No-Till Drill Rental program has helped Eau Claire County farmers prevent nearly 3.3 million pounds of sediment from being deposited into our streams, rivers, and lakes. The associated phosphorous reductions have prevented over 840,000 pounds of algae growth!

**Groundwater Advisory Committee**

LCD and Eau Claire City-County Health Department staff work closely with the Groundwater Advisory Committee to:

1. Monitor state and federal regulation of groundwater,
2. Oversee the development and implementation of a county-wide groundwater management plan, and
3. Perform other tasks as directed by the Planning & Development Committee.



The *State of the Groundwater in Eau Claire County Report* was completed in 2018 and contains priority recommendations related to groundwater quantity, groundwater quality, and education goals. The Groundwater Advisory Committee is working towards meeting the goals outlined in the report.

Additionally, Eau Claire County continues to offer cost-share funds to help landowners properly abandon unused wells. In 2022, this program provided \$2,489.43 to close five wells in Eau Claire County. Closing unused wells seals the connection between the land surface and the aquifer which water is pulled from, eliminating the possibility of contaminating the groundwater.



**Groundwater Advisory Committee Members:**

- |                  |                                   |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Nancy Coffey     | Chair/County Board member         |
| Jim Dunning      | Vice Chair/County Board member    |
| Jodi Lepsch      | County Board member               |
| Mary Kenosian    | Citizen member                    |
| Glory Adams      | Citizen member                    |
| Anna Mares       | DNR representative/citizen member |
| Mark Kaeding     | Board of Health member            |
| Dr. Sarah Vitale | Citizen member                    |
| Sham Anderson    | Town's Association member         |

**Tri-County Groundwater Level Monitoring Pilot Study**

Chippewa, Dunn, and Eau Claire Counties partnered in 2015 to form the Tri-County Groundwater Level Monitoring Pilot Study. The goal of the study is to install a network of groundwater elevation detection devices in the three-county area to gather new data on groundwater levels and fluctuations. Six WellIntel monitoring devices were deployed in Eau Claire County in 2016 and have been collecting groundwater data since. LCD staff continue to maintain the WellIntel devices deployed in the County.



## Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4)

The Eau Claire County population is greater than 10,000 individuals which requires the County to comply with NR 216 and implementing a DNR Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit. The MS4 permit requires municipalities to reduce polluted stormwater runoff by implementing stormwater management programs with best management practices. The programs are accomplished by LCD and Highway Department staff in various ways.

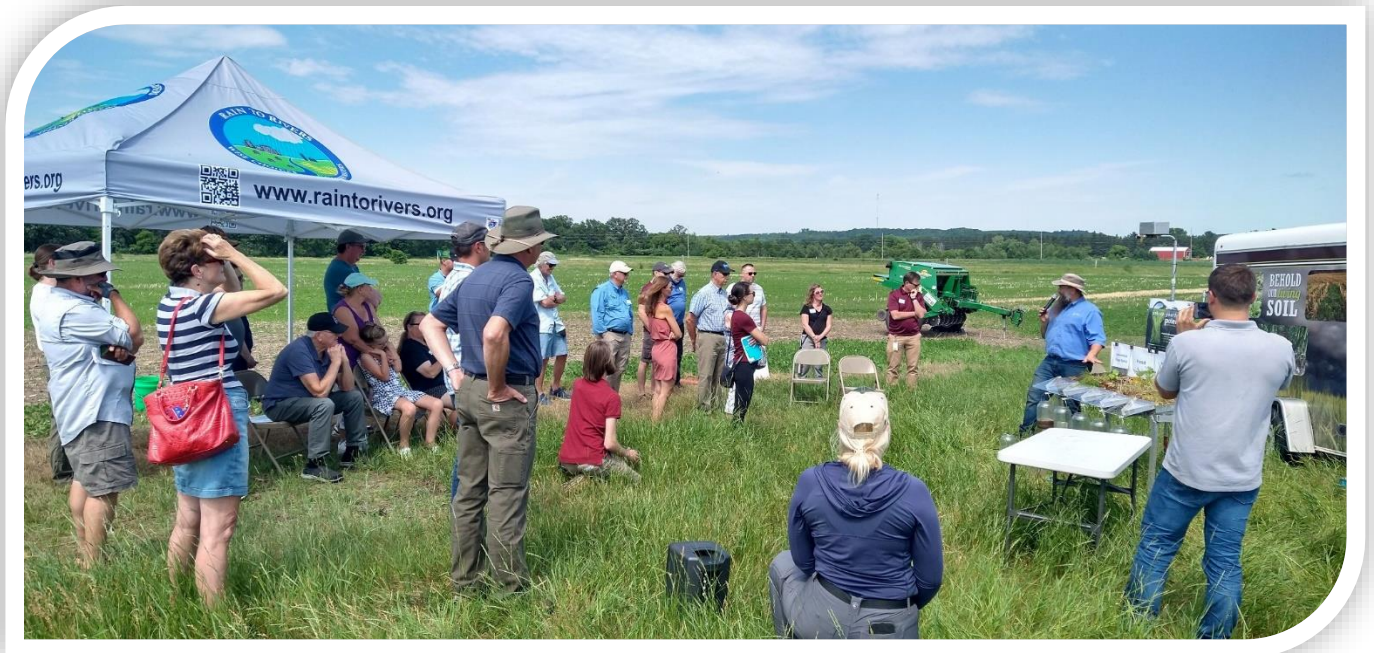
- Rain to Rivers of Western Wisconsin is a stormwater education non-profit that Eau Claire County partners with to provide public involvement, education, and outreach activities.
- LCD staff work with Highway Department staff to prevent illicit discharges to storm sewer systems and to implement pollution prevention practices at municipally owned transportation, maintenance areas and yards. In addition, Eau Claire County worked with local governments to finalize intergovernmental agreements that further detail the process for implementation of stormwater and erosion control management within their jurisdiction and for their municipal projects.
- LCD staff administer Erosion Control (17.05) & Stormwater Management (17.06) Ordinances to manage construction and post-construction site discharges. In 2022, the LCD reviewed and approved 30 erosion control permits and 9 stormwater permits.
- LCD staff provide erosion control technical assistance to Land Use and Building Inspection staff for construction of one- & two-family residences within the county.





## EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

- Nutrient Management Workshops provide farmer education on nutrient management and conservation topics to the rural community. LCD staff, in partnership with UW-Extension and Department of Agriculture, hosted 8 workshops in 2022.
- Staff performed monthly on-air conservation updates on WAXX Radio with Bob Bosold and Jill Welke to provide relevant press releases throughout the year.
- LCD staff, in partnership with the Eau Claire River Watershed Coalition, hosted a Bus Tour for locally elected officials. The tour highlighted conservation practices throughout the county, with visits to the Demonstration Farm to discuss cover crops and the no-till drill; a local farmer's no-till fields; and Lake Altoona to discuss the sedimentation problems in the County's waterways and impoundments.



## CONSERVATION AWARD WINNERS

Congratulations to the following 2022 Conservation Award Winners!

### 2022 Conservation Farmer: Gordon & Joyce Waller



Gordon & Joyce purchased an 80-acre farm back in 1995. They do not farm the land, but they do rent it to a local farmer who has been operating the land for the past 27 years. Gordon has also been working on conservation practices such as contour strips, maintaining grassed waterways, installing grass filter strips along Bear's Grass Creek, and protecting head lanes with field borders. He is also known in the community as a bee farmer, taking care of 200-300 hives a year. Over the years he has been teaching his grandson the art of raising and caring for bees as well.

### 2022 Water Quality Leadership: Michele Skinner

Michele began her role with the Lake District in July 2021. In her short time as chair she has reinvigorated the Lake Altoona community, took lead in directing the clean out of the sediment trap, solidified funding and permitting to clean the plugged south shore channel, collaborated with the Health Department and Parks & Forest to develop solutions to reduce algae issues, assisted with the application of a DNR grant for additional surveying equipment, collaborated with Lake Eau Claire for an ARPA grant, and collaborated with the LCD to host a "Think Tank" meeting that opened new partnerships with the WI DNR and USACOE.



### 2022 Special Recognition: Greg Leonard



Greg's conservation career began in 1979 when he graduated from UW Steven's Point in Wildlife Conservation & Wildlife Biology with a minor in Resource Management. Greg has worked for Fish and Wildlife Service, Minnesota DNR assisting with Pheasant Stamp funding, DNR in Vernon County, Trempealeau County, Dunn County Land Conservation, and Eau Claire County. Greg started at Eau Claire County back in 2011 and just recently retired this year, where he was the Land Conservation Manager for the past 5 years.

## 2022 Special Recognition: Wildlands School Founders

Wildlands School was prompted by experiences teaching students in a format where everyone worked together as a research team on actual issues affecting our local environment. For a decade, the Augusta School courses and summer science program focused on environmental science research, including research projects on streams, lakes, forests, and grasslands, and developed partnerships with the Wisconsin DNR, Eau Claire County Conservation Department, and many local and regional outdoor groups. The founding teachers were Paul Tweed, Jeff Hadorn, and Liz Seubert who took what they knew was possible and made it reality. Wildland School came from people who care about students and believe that in order to help young people be stewards of our natural world, they have to learn to love it firsthand, be treated like people, be out in the real natural world, experience it, get wet, get cold, get tired, and work together as a team.

