

# **DODGE COUNTY LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT 2018 ANNUAL REPORT**

## **Mission Statement**

Working together to provide education, information and technical assistance to residents and units of government in Dodge County to protect, restore and sustain our soil and water resources.

**2018 LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMITTEE**

Larry Bischoff.....Chair  
Allen Behl.....Vice-Chair  
Lisa Derr.....Secretary  
Dale Macheel.....Committee Member  
William Muche.....Committee Member  
Bill Foley.....Lake District Representative  
James Qualmann.....FSA Representative



L to R: Bill Foley, Dale Macheel, Allen Behl, Lisa Derr, Larry Bischoff, William Muche, and James Qualmann.

**2018 LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT STAFF**

John Bohonek..... County Conservationist  
Dave Braunschweig.....Watershed Technician  
Jon Duckert.....Farmland Preservation Technician  
Robert Bird.....Conservation Agronomist  
Jared Winter..... Conservation Technician  
Becky Justmann.....Administrative Secretary



From L to R. John Bohonek, Becky Justmann, Jared Winter, Jon Duckert, Robert Bird, and Dave Braunschweig

## FARMLAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM

The Farmland Preservation Program offers property owners a tax credit who have land that is zoned A1 and meets state performance standards. Depending on the type of zoning in your township, they may be eligible for a tax credit of \$5.00/acre, \$7.50/acre or \$10.00/acre. In 2018 we managed 620 Certificates of Compliance covering 113,943 acres. This is an increase of 3,038 acres from 2017. We completed 150 status reviews monitoring compliance with NR151 performance standards.



CZ -- County Zoning | TZ -- Town Zoning

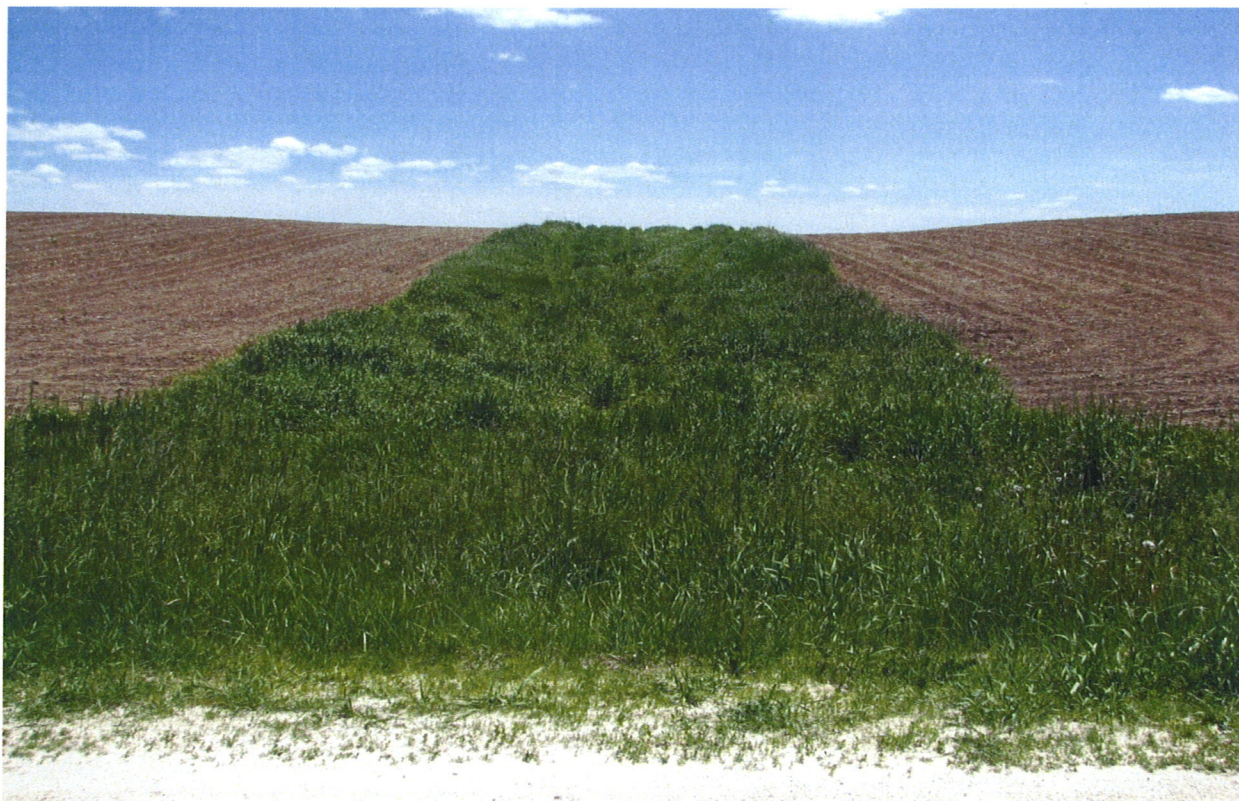
- Farmland Preservation Zoning**  
 - \$7.50/acre tax credit
  
- Farmland Preservation Zoning and Agricultural Enterprise Area**  
 - \$10.00/acre
  
- Agricultural Enterprise Area**  
 - \$5.00/acre tax credit

## LAND AND WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

In 2018, \$28,000 of cost share money was available to Dodge County residents. \$11,077.50 was used for the following practices:

- 1 Well Abandonment
- 252 Feet of Rock Lined Waterway
- 2,160 Feet Critical Area Seeding





Contracts for the remainder of the cost share money was signed for 2 grassed waterways and 1 diversion. These projects will be constructed tin 2019 due to wet conditions in 2018.

The following practices were constructed by landowners with assistance from staff but without cost sharing:

- 1875 Feet of Critical Area Planting
- 300 Feet Fence to remove livestock from a stream

## **ANIMAL WASTE ORDINANCE**

Construction plans were received for 3 landowners in Dodge County from Private Engineers. After reviewing the plans to see if all the requirements of the Dodge County Ordinance were met, permits were issued for new construction of manure storage and waste transfer systems for all 3.

## **WILDLIFE CROP DAMAGE ABATEMENT AND CLAIMS PROGRAM**

Dodge County had 3 claims for Wildlife damage in 2018. The crop damage was assessed at a value of \$4,020.77. Wildlife crop damage payments were processed to 3 producers for a total of \$2,520.78. 17 deer were donated under the Venison Donation Program, resulting in 529 pounds of venison being donated to our local food pantries.

## **NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT**

We assisted 51 landowners with revising their Nutrient Management Plans and teaching them how to use SnapPlus so they can prepare their own plans. We documented 180,075 acres of cropland covered by Nutrient Management Plans in Dodge County. This is an increase of 40,205 acres from 2017.

## **TREE PROGRAM**

We held our 14<sup>th</sup> annual tree sales program. We get our trees from Laura's Lane Nursery in Plainfield, WI. We sold 22,300 trees in 2018 to 230 property owners. This is an increase of 3,400 trees from 2017.



Our tree planter was rented out to 2 landowners planting 1500 trees.



### **VOLUNTARY PRIVATE WELL TESTING PROGRAM**

2018 was the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of our voluntary private well testing program. As we rotate around the county, we tested 111 wells in Calamus, Elba, and Westford townships. We partnered with UW-Extension and UW-Stevens Point for testing the water samples and to provide the homeowners information and education on what the test results mean for them.



## **DODGE COUNTY FARMERS FOR HEALTHY SOIL HEALTHY WATER**

The Dodge County Farmers for Healthy Soil – Healthy Water is a farmer led group. Their mission statement reads:

**“Improving Our Community’s Soil and Water through Conservation Practices & Education.”**

The farmer group’s major efforts have been in their educational events that focus on the benefits of reduced tillage and cover crops. In addition to the educational events, the group also has 10 different research plots focusing on the various benefits of cover crops. The group has also started getting involved with Nitrogen Use Efficiency studies through UW- Discovery Farms and have implemented their own incentives program with monetary assistance from three lake groups.

### **February Conference**

A 3-part event was held on February 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> in Juneau and Burnett respectively. The first day, held at the Juneau Community Center, comprised of a day session held primarily for farmers and an evening session primarily set up for lakefront property owners. The first day saw Ray Archuleta (former NRCS from Seymour, MO) and Justin Morris (USDA-NRCS) discuss soil health and were followed by a number of local farmers sharing their experiences on their operations. Approximately 175 people showed up to this day 1 session.

The evening session, held at the Dodge County Administration Building, saw Ray and Justin return to discuss how the lake property owners can assist in keeping their waters clean. Talks from local farmers, UW-Extension, and representatives from John Deere on how farmers are trying to lessen their impact on local lakes and streams was also had. About 60 people showed up for the session.

The second day was held at a farm in the town of Burnett. This was more of a Q&A with Ray and Justin with some farmer presentations and a rainfall simulator. 90 people returned to be a part of the final session.

### **Pre-Plant Spring Workshop**

This was a smaller event held on March 27<sup>th</sup> before planting and focused on soil health and soil microbiology. The event was held on a farm in Columbus on the Dodge-Columbia county border. Jamie Patton of UW-Extension/Madison discussed how farmers can increase the various soil health principles while Loretta Ortiz-Ribbing from UW-Extension talked about how farmers can lessen their negative impact on the soil microbial community. Approximately 60 people attended this event.

## **August Field Day**

On August 3<sup>rd</sup>, the farmers group held a field day at a farm in Beaver Dam and had about 170 people attend. The event was headlined by Jerry Hatfield (NRCS-ARS) and saw talks from Abby Augarten from UW-Discovery Farms and number of local producers during the afternoon portion of the event. A rainfall simulator and various equipment demonstrations were also present as the day progressed.

## **Fall Cover Crop Showcase**

This event was held entirely on a field adjacent to Lake Sinissippi on September 19<sup>th</sup>. This event was separated out into two sessions. The morning session was tailored to farmers while the evening session was set for lake people. Jamie Patton (UW-Extension/Madison) had a soil pit and discussed soil health properties and how it relates to that field and how the added cover crops were helping to alleviate some of the issues the field was having with compaction. Brendon Blank (Byron Seeds) gave a rundown on the various cover crop mixes and what each one does to promote better soil health. A total of 60 people showed up that day.

## **Nitrogen Use Efficiency**

Nine Nitrogen Use Efficiency (NUE) plots were established across the western half of the county to help farmers better understand how they can use N more responsibly. This was done with assistance from UW-Discovery Farms and crop consultant, Phillip Laatsch (Phillip's Crop Care). Research is still being done with plans to expand the program in Dodge County through the Healthy Soil – Healthy Water group.

## **On-Farm Research**

UW-Extension has been performing on-farm research on 10 different fields across the county studying a variety of cover crop benefits. All of these trials are set up as three-year studies. Research results are with UW-Extension at this time.

## **Incentives Programs**

The farmers group started up two incentive programs this year to promote the adoption of cover crops across the county.

The first program was the Cover Crop Incentives Program (CCIP), which acts as a cost-share mechanism, providing up to 20 acres of cover crop seeds to be paid for as long as that farmer matches that investment 1:1.

The second program was a cereal rye giveaway, which was funded by the lake groups. \$3,000 given by Fox Lake Inland Lake Protection And Rehabilitation District, \$5,000

given by Lake Sinissippi Improvement District, and \$6,000 given by Fox Lake Property Owners. The lake groups paid for cereal rye to be delivered to Dodge County and then between seed reps, farmers, and lake group members, the seed was distributed. In total, 1,873 acres of cover crops were delivered with the vast majority of it being planted with the remainder to be planted during the fall of 2019.

### **Summary and Future Plans**

The Dodge County Farmers for Healthy Soil – Healthy Water group plans to continue their schedule for educational events with a couple lake group events to be held in cooperation with the farmers programs. The On-Farm research will be continued primarily by agronomists who work with the group. Goals for expanding both the NUE program and the incentives programs have been set and is such outlined in the Farmers grant received from DATCP for the 2019 year and held by the LWCD.

## **ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF COOPERATING AGENCIES AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS**

- 26 wells were abandoned in Dodge County in 2018

### **USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service**

- 1 grazing Plan
- 3 High Tunnel System
- 1 Water and Sediment Control System
- 3 Underground Outlets
- 1 Subsurface Drain
- 1 Manure Transfer
- 1 Heavy Use Protection Area
- 1 Agricultural Energy Management Plan
- 2 Forest Management Plans
- 2 Critical Area Plantings
- 2 Waste Impoundment Closures
- 1 Diversion
- 2 Grassed Waterway
- 1 Lined Waterway
- 1 Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan
- 1 Lighting System Improvement
- 1 Pumping Plant
- 1 Prescribed Grazing

### **USDA-Farm Service Agency**

- |                                    |             |
|------------------------------------|-------------|
| • Shallow Water Areas for Wildlife | 1.81 acres  |
| • Grass Filter Strips              | 16.53 acres |
| • Wetland Restoration              | 20.53 acres |
| • Riparian Buffer                  | 15.71 acres |