

DODGE COUNTY LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT 2020 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.

2020 LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

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



L to R: Bill Foley, Dale Macheel, Lisa Derr, Larry Bischoff, Allen Behl, and James Qualmann.
Missing is Naomi Kriewald.

2020 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

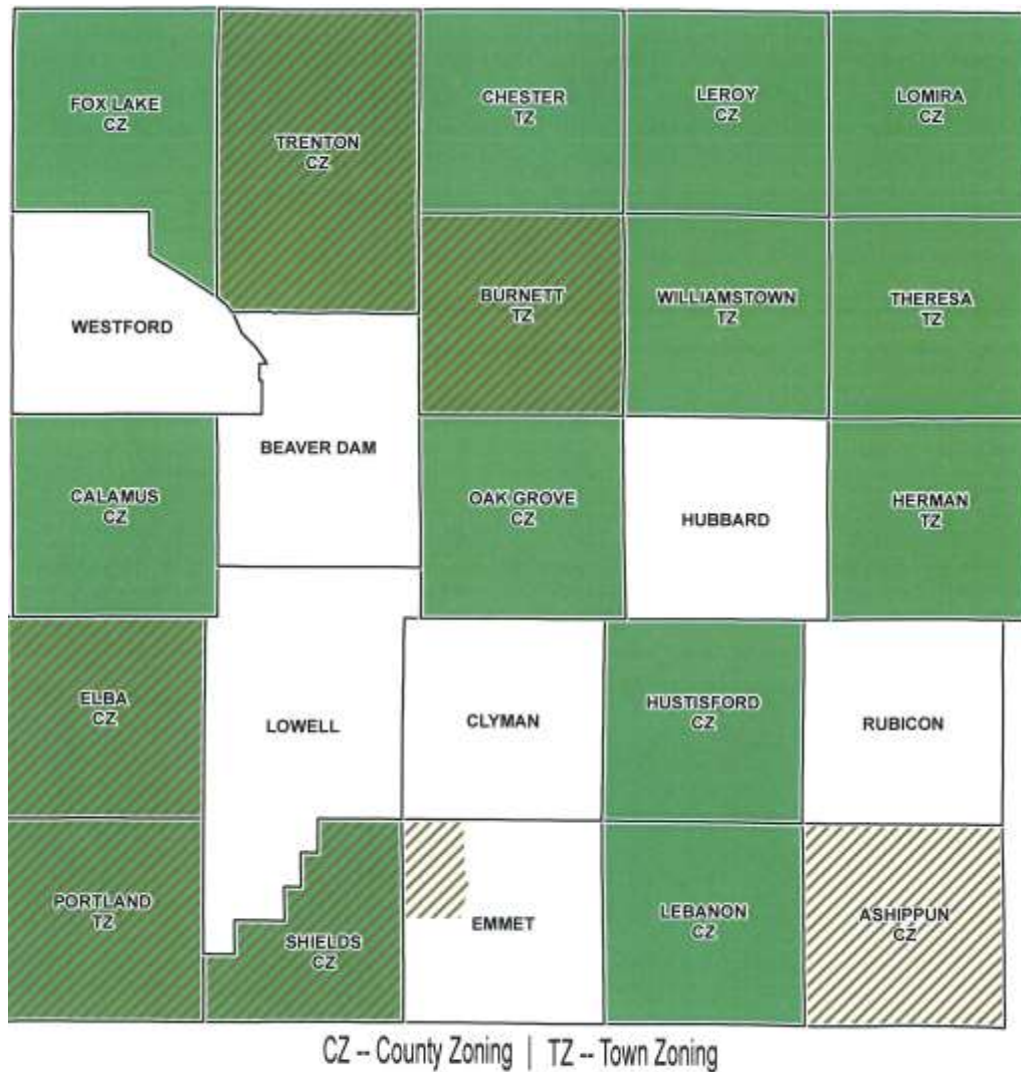


From L to R. John Bohonek, Becky Justmann, Jared Winter, Jon Duckert, Robert Bird, and Dave Braunschweig

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 their township, they may be eligible for a tax credit of \$5.00/acre, \$7.50/acre or \$10.00/acre. In 2020 we managed 598 Certificates of Compliance covering 110,182 acres. This is a decrease of 2,202 acres from 2019. We completed 154 status reviews monitoring compliance with NR151 performance standards.

We assisted the Town of Westford in filling out an application to the Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection to become an Agriculture Enterprise Area. The application was approved and landowners are now able to sign contracts in 2021.



Agricultural Enterprise Area
- \$5.00/acre tax credit

Farmland Preservation Zoning
- \$7.50/acre tax credit

Farmland Preservation Zoning and Agricultural Enterprise Area
- \$10.00/acre

LAND AND WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

In 2020, \$48,615.12 of cost share money was available to Dodge County residents. \$21,702.31 was committed to projects that could not be completed due to the weather or contractor schedules. This money will be carried into 2021. \$26,912.81 was used for the following practices.

- 39 Wells were abandoned, 2 with cost sharing
- 2 Acres Grassed Waterway
- 0.9 Acres Critical Area Seeding
- 2,500 Feet of Diversions

Critical Area Seeding



Grassed Waterway



Diversion



Contracts for the remainder of the cost share money was signed for one Grassed Waterway, one Critical Area Planting, three Animal Trails, and one Stream Crossing. These projects will be constructed in 2021.

ANIMAL WASTE ORDINANCE

Five permits were issued under the Dodge County Manure Storage Ordinance. One of the plans was designed in our office. Four plans were designed by private engineers and reviewed to ensure they met the Ordinance requirements



WILDLIFE CROP DAMAGE ABATEMENT AND CLAIMS PROGRAM

Dodge County had 3 claims for Wildlife damage in 2020. The crop damage was assessed at a value of \$6,029.37. Wildlife crop damage payments were processed to 3 producers for a total of \$4,529.37. 38 deer were donated under the Venison Donation Program, resulting in 986 pounds of venison being donated to our local food pantries.

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT

We assisted 38 landowners with revising their Nutrient Management Plans and teaching them how to use SnapPlus so they can prepare their own plans. We documented 130,999 acres of cropland covered by Nutrient Management Plans in Dodge County.

TREE PROGRAM

We held our 18th annual tree sales program. Our trees come from Laura's Lane Nursery in Plainfield, WI and from Chief River Nursery in Grafton, WI. We sold 21,950 trees in 2019-2020 season to 186 property owners. This is an increase of 850 trees from 2018-2019 season.



Our tree planter was rented out to one landowner planting 575 trees.



Dodge County Groundwater Quality Index

In 2020 Dodge County entered into an agreement with University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point to develop and conduct a 5 year county wide groundwater monitoring program. This program will test for Nitrate, Chloride, Alkalinity, Conductivity, Hardness, and pH. The goal was to select a minimum of 10 wells in each township that would be tested each year for 5 years. This will give the County a better understanding of groundwater quality trends. Covid-19 slowed down the process, but we were still able to start the program in late fall/early winter. 908 recruitment letters were sent out. 389 landowners (44%) indicated they would like to participate. Sample kits were sent out November 4th. We are anxiously waiting for the results.

Manure Solutions Workshop

We held a workshop in Brownsville on March 13th. 71 landowners attended to hear the following topics of discussion. **Shallow to Bedrock** – Jamie Patton from the Nutrient and Pest Management division of UW-Extension and Mike Gilberston of the WDNR discussed the Silurian Dolomite performance standard. **Manure Separation** – Aaron Kuhls from AI-Ins Enterprises LLC presented some of the manure separation equipment they have. **Manure Dewatering** – Don Heilman from Digested Organics, and John Sorenson from Aquainnovations, discussed how their systems are able to dewater manure. **Extreme Weather Farming** – Derek Van De Hey of New Horizons Dairy from Brown County discussed how their farm is using No-Till and Cover Crops to be more profitable while reducing sediment and nutrient runoff.



Poster Contest

The Theme this year was **“Where Would We Be Without Pollinators”**. Congratulations to the following students who placed in their divisions: **K-1**; 1st place-Lydia Feucht, 2nd place-Cora Cameron. **2-3**; 1st place-Anna Witek, 2nd place-Theodore Crego, 3rd place-Olivia Palmer. **4-6**; 1st place-Timmy Cameron, 2nd place-Promyse Meagher, 3rd place-Morgan Kaul. **7-9**; 1st place-Ella Herrmann, 2nd place-Clara Dykstra. **10-12**; 1st place-Elizabeth Her.







Junior
7-9



Senior
10-12

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. 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

This Soil Health Expo was held on February 5th in the Juneau Community Center with 162 people attending. Frank Lessiter, editor of “No-Till Farmer”, started off the day with the History of No-Till Farming. The No-Till Farming magazine is a nationally circulated magazine that is based in Wisconsin. They have published multiple articles highlighting Dodge County’s Healthy Soils-Healthy Waters farmer group.

Russell Hedrick, talked about Soil Health, Diversification, and Water Infiltration. Russell is a young innovative farmer from North Carolina. Russell raises corn, soybeans, wheat, barley, pastured beef and pork. His operation has grown to almost 1,000 acres utilizing no-till and cover crops.

Other speakers talking about their operations and experiences were Adam Lasch from Walworth County, and our own Chris Conley, Brendon Blank, Dale Macheel, and Tony Peirick.

Soil Health Field Day

On June 24th, a workshop was held on a farm in the town of Clyman to discuss Soil Health. Topics discussed were, What Soil Health looks like, Frost Seeding, and Water Infiltration. 44 people attended this event.

Cover Crop Field Day

On July 22nd a meeting was held on a farm in the town of Beaver Dam. Topics discussed were 60" corn, Interseeding in corn, Strip Cropping, and Regenerative Agriculture Acres. 49 people attended this event.

August Field Day

On August 11th, an event was held on a farm in the town of Hustisford to discuss "Cover Crop Tech". The landowner and his family were introduced and they discussed their current farming practices. During the event, it demonstrated how to calibrate your drill so you applying the amount of seed per acre you want. Vertical Tillage, Air Seeders, and No-Till Planters were on display for farmers to look at and ask questions of the dealers. Later this equipment was used to seed down 20 acres of the field to cover crops. This gave farmers an opportunity to see how the equipment functioned. 135 people attended this event.

Fall Cover Crop Showcase

This event was held on a field near Beaver Dam Lake on October 22th. This event was open to farmers and lake residents. The event demonstrated how cover cropping improves soil water infiltration and reduces sediment runoff. 42 people attended this event.

Cover Crop Incentives Programs

The farmer's group incentive program continued this year to promote the adoption of cover crops across the county. The number of participants stayed the same at 42. Acres planted increased from 2,761 to 3,114 acres. The program provided \$25.00 per acre for up to 30 acres. The operator had to match those acres 1:1 if this was their first time participating. If this was their second time participating, they had to match the acres 2:1.