



CONSERVATION CONNECTION

Wood County Land & Water
Conservation Department

Volume 23 Issue 1

Technical & Cost-Share Assistance Available County-Wide for Proper Well Abandonment

The Wood County Land & Water Conservation Department (LWCD) receives an annual grant from the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) to help landowners properly fund conservation practices to protect our water and soils. These practices include proper abandonment of old wells, as well as manure storage facilities, barnyards, roof runoff systems, feedlot runoff systems, feed leachate treatment systems, and other soil and water best management practices.

Soil and water conservation is important because it affects **all of us** in the quality and availability of the food we eat and water we drink. Proper conservation practices today greatly reduce the costs of any problems that would otherwise show up in the future. Cost-share funding assistance is limited in Wood County and signup is on a first-come, first-serve basis. Contact Adam Groshek, Conservation Engineering Technician at agroshek@co.wood.wi.us or call the Wood County LWCD at (715)421-8475. Our office is typically open from 7-3:30 on weekdays.



Manure storage systems like the one shown above provide long term storage so that manure can be applied during times when crops need nutrients the most and when weather is more favorable.



Hiring a professional to properly close old wells ensures that direct conduits to groundwater - that could easily result in widespread groundwater contamination - are eliminated. If you know of wells that test bad or are no longer in use, have them properly closed.



Wild Parsnip, more than an Invasive Species

Which plant pictured on the left is a native to Wisconsin and is an excellent addition to a wildflower garden, and which contains chemicals in the juices of its green leaves, stems and fruits that can cause a severe skin irritation?

Pictured on the bottom is golden Alexander, a native to Wisconsin. Pictured on the top is Wild Parsnip, an invasive species. Not to confuse things, but there is another Wisconsin native that looks like the invasive called Prairie Parsley. Read on for the importance of knowing the difference.

Like all invasive species, wild parsnip poses an ecological threat. This species invades prairies, old fields, pastures, and roadsides. Besides out competing native plants, it can cause some serious skin inflammation on pets and people. And it's spreading.

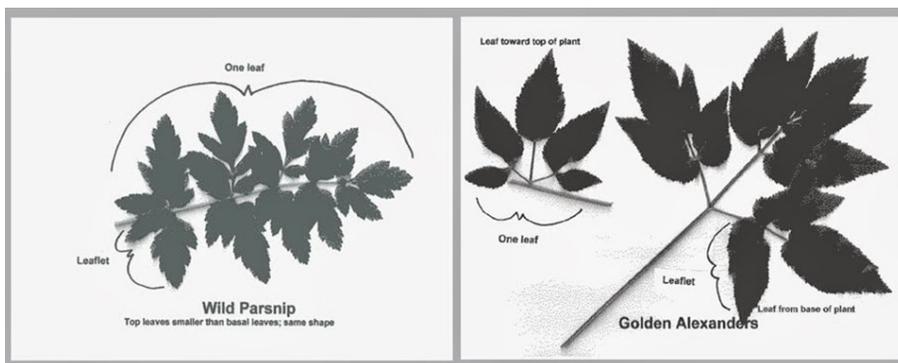
According to University of Madison, wild parsnip has chemicals called furocoumarins that cause phyto-photodermatitis: an interaction between plants and light that induce skin inflammation. Once the furocoumarins are absorbed by the skin, they are energized by UV light on both sunny and cloudy days. They bind to DNA and cell membranes, destroying cells and skin.

Cases can be mild and feel like sunburn, or can be as severe as having blisters and the feeling of being scalded. Arms, legs, torso, face and neck are the most vulnerable. Just search “wild parsnip burn” online and you will get the idea.

The Wisconsin DNR classifies this plant as restricted. Restricted is defined as: invasive species that are already established in the state and cause or have the potential to cause significant environmental or economic harm or harm to human health. Shane Wucherpennig, the County Conservationist at the Wood County Land and Water Department, wanted to take it one step further by designating wild parsnip as “noxious.” By receiving this designation, the County has the option to appoint a weed commissioner to go after the entire infestation beyond the right of way (with landowner permission).

On March 21, 2017, The Wood County Board passed a resolution designating wild parsnip as a “noxious weed” within Wood County. Before the resolution was passed, Shane presented on the topic at township meetings, highway meetings, and more. By the process of passing this resolution, knowledge is spreading.

Full protective gear is a must when trying to control. Control methods and more can be found on the DNR website, <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/invasives/fact/wildparsnip.html>. Currently there is growth of wild parsnip in the Town of Rudolph, Sigel, Sherry, and most likely others. The Land and Water Conservation Department is in the process of mapping these locations. If you think you know of a location where wild parsnip is present, feel free to call the department at (715)421-8475.



Now is the time to start using Nutrient Management Planning

Nutrient management is nothing new. It has been around for thousands of years in one form or another. It is believed that as long as 8,000 years ago farmers were using manure to fertilize their crops (see University of Oxford study by Amy Bogaard) and continued to do so for thousands of years. Ancient farmers knew that the first yields on a plot of land were much better than the following years. They saw the benefits of adding amendments such as blood, ash, and manure, but did not understand the mechanisms at work.

We've come a long way from Justus von Liebig's "Theory of mineral nutrition of plants and soil fertility", which determined nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium as essential to plant growth in 1840. With widespread use of the internet and information sharing everyone has access to tools to aid in reaching their personal farming goals. One very important tool is nutrient management planning.

Nutrient management is all about applying the right source of nutrients at the right time, rate and place to meet crop needs and to minimize nutrient losses from fields. And the software to make nutrient management planning a whole lot easier (SnapPlus) is available to everyone at no cost. The software incorporates a trove of information on nutrient application guidelines, crop research data from UW, soil yield potential data from USDA-NRCS, and more.

If the significance of having the latest knowledge and technology at your fingertips that Liebig could only have dreamed of for your own personal use doesn't get you excited, then consider the amount of money that can potentially be saved and the potential for increased profitability by not over-purchasing commercial fertilizer.

Most people understand that in order to get an idea on how much fertilizer to purchase, they must soil test. The usefulness of soil testing can be maximized when used as a piece of the puzzle. A nutrient management plan goes beyond soil test results and accounts for soil type, slope, crop rotation and residual nutrients, and includes both manure and commercial fertilizers. It is a great way to save money and maximize production by putting fertilizer where it will do the most good and least harm.

There are options when it comes to getting started with a plan. The Wood County Land and Water Department staff works with surrounding counties to offer a course on nutrient management planning every winter. You leave with knowledge, a 590 nutrient management plan, and the ability to certify your own plan for 4 years. **The cost-share incentive has never been more attractive for those wishing to get a plan started.** The cost-share money can go towards the costs of developing a plan which can include soil testing and the cost of a professional agronomist to put the plan together. If nothing else, we can help download the nutrient management planning software, SnapPlus (soil nutrient application planner), onto your personal laptop, flash drive, or computer so you too can take advantage of the current knowledge built on the past.

New for summer 2017! The Wood County Native Vegetation Initiative

Have you ever considered the importance of healthy, diverse, native plant communities? Do you want to increase the aesthetic and production value of your land? Or do you just want to know more about what you can do to be environmentally friendly? If yes, check out the new Native Vegetation Initiative in Wood County. This project seeks to promote the use of native plant communities to enhance environmental functions and services (i.e. erosion control, nutrient cycling, etc.) while encouraging people to think differently about land use practices and what we can all do to have a positive impact on our soils and waters. A new display board with more information about the initiative will be up outside the office shortly. You can also contact our summer intern, Joel Ebert (jebert@co.wood.wi.us), for more info.

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Meet our two newest staff members!

Hello everyone. My name is Joel Ebert and I am the Land and Water Conservation intern for summer 2017. I just finished my third year at UW-Stevens Point where



I am a soil and land management major and water resources minor. I am from Lincoln, Nebraska and before you ask, "What brought you to Wisconsin?" which seems to be a popular question, I'll give you the answer. My dad's side of the family is from Marquette County and I

still have relatives in Wisconsin and Minnesota so I'm familiar with the area. Also, UW-Stevens Point offers a top rate environmental education and this state is loaded with outdoor recreational activities. Why *wouldn't* I want to come to Wisconsin!?

I am excited to be working with Wood County this summer as I believe the local bottom-up approach is the best strategy for working with landowners and the public to manage our natural resources. My main focus will be starting the Wood County Native Vegetation Initiative which seeks to promote healthy, diverse, native plant communities in a variety of areas and challenges people to think about topics like soil health, biodiversity, and ecology and how these things interact to perform key functions within the environment that affect our lives and the world around us. If you have any questions about me or the Native Vegetation Initiative feel free to stop by the office any time. I'd be more than happy to chat. Have a great summer!

I am Emily Salvinski, the new Conservation Specialist for the Wood County Land and Water Conservation Department. I grew up in the Town of Linwood in Portage County with 4 siblings. I have one or two too many ways I like to spend my free time which partly include snowmobiling when there is snow, snowboarding, shooting bow, learning new ways to cook from scratch, going on travel adventures and try to be in or on the water as much as possible by kayak, fish boat, duck boat, jet ski, or a floaty.

I graduated from UW-Stevens Point in 2012. My internship helped guide me to a path in land conservation. My internship happened to be for the Wood County Land and



Water Conservation Department in 2011. After graduation I had a few odd and end jobs before I got a job with the Taylor County Land Conservation Department. Over the two plus years working there I learned a lot about nutrient management and got my CCA certification. I am

happy to be back and look forward to the future here. I hope to help landowners interested in nutrient management interpret and simplify the requirements and relate them to their situation.

**WE'VE
MOVED**

Please stop in and see our new office!

We moved to the River Block Building located at:

111 W Jackson St.

Wisconsin Rapids WI 54495

Office Hours: Monday thru Friday 7:00 am - 3:30 pm