

## 2023 WI Land+Water Conference Sessions

**Engineering Professional Development Hours (PDHs) and Continuing Education Units (CEUs)  
will be noted once approved.**

### Wednesday, March 1, 1:45-2:45pm

**Urban Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Stormwater Management.** Managing urban stormwater might not be something counties do as routinely as incorporated communities; however, often the county is required to implement BMPs for their own capital projects or to review plans for development in the unincorporated parts of the county. Learn how to select BMPs for different project types, how green infrastructure can be a useful solution for counties, and how to model these practices to show required reductions of total suspended solids. *Presenters: Alan Barrows, Waukesha County; Brooke Robinson and Shannon Haydin, WDNR.*

**The Faces of County Conservation in Wisconsin: Session 1.** Meet and learn from experienced movers and shakers around the state. The past few years have not afforded staff the chance to meet and learn from others at in-person events. Tailored for new employees but open to all, this session is a great chance to meet others from around the state and hear about lessons learned from seasoned conservationists. Panelists will share a story from their conservation career that helped shape who they are today. *Session 1 will cover moments of personal and career growth, and Session 2 will focus on the partnerships that make conservation work possible.* Attendees will also have the chance to meet and ask questions of the panelists, as well as other partners and agency representatives from all areas of the state. Choose to attend one or both! *Presenters: Tony Reali, Calumet County; Paul Sebo, Washington County; and Travis Tulowitzky, Bayfield County.*

**WDNR's Water Grant Programs.** The WDNR offers cost-sharing grants to eligible applicants for surface water protection & restoration, recreational boating, and nonpoint source pollution reduction. Whether you're looking for help with outreach, data collection, planning, project design or implementation, there is probably a DNR water grant that can help. During this talk, program staff will provide a quick orientation to three water grant programs: Surface Water Grants, Targeted Runoff Management and Urban Nonpoint Source & Storm Water Management Grants, and Recreational Boating Facilities Grants. Staff will highlight available funding opportunities, outline the steps you can take to develop a project and apply for a grant, and provide helpful tips on grant management and administration. *Presenters TBD.*

**NACD: Connecting Federal Conservation Issues to the Local Level.** The National Assn. of Conservation Districts (NACD) is an umbrella organization that represents conservation districts (and county land and water conservation departments) at the federal level. NACD advocates for critical conservation issues such as Farm Bill funding, but also offers numerous programs, services, and benefits to local-level county LWCDs. Attend to learn about what NACD can do for you! *Presenters: Beth Mason, NACD North Central Region Representative, and Monte Osterman, WI Land+Water Board Chair and Executive Committee Vice President.*

**Observations of water quality and river conditions while voyaging river systems by canoe.** *John Sullivan* is a paddling/poling enthusiast who enjoys extended solo canoe trips on rivers. His excursions started in the late 1990s and were focused primarily in Wisconsin. John's initial interest was to follow the paths of early explorers and voyageurs in their journeys from the Great Lakes to the Mississippi and comparing their historical observations to present conditions. Over the past two decades, he has canoed many rivers of Wisconsin, the midwest, and great national rivers including the Ohio, Missouri, and Mississippi. Along the way he has documented his journeys with photos and journaling and supplemented these observations with general water quality measurements when possible. John's presentation will highlight some of the observations and will illustrate both unique and common problems that were apparent while traveling these waterways, but also show some of the beauty that can be found while descending or ascending rivers from the seat of a canoe. John grew up paddling the flat waters of the Rock River and marshes at Horicon, Wisconsin. He attended the University of Minnesota on the banks of the Mississippi and earned his master's degree studying the Big Eau Pleine River in north central Wisconsin at the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point. John spent his entire working career with the Wisconsin DNR in the fisheries, wastewater or water quality programs. A website of some of his canoe trips can be found at [Irishvoyageur.com](http://Irishvoyageur.com).

**Wednesday, March 1, 3:15-4:15pm**

**A Farm Bill Breakdown – the “Other” Federal Conservation Funding Opportunity.** The federal Farm Bill is perhaps the most consequential conservation federal funding opportunity, which occurs every four years, including 2023. What is the status on the Farm Bill? What conservation provisions will this year’s Farm Bill contain? How does Farm Bill funding relate to “other” federal conservation programs (Inflation Reduction Act, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act)? Get answers to these questions and more! *Presenter: Margaret Krome, Policy Director, Michael Fields Agricultural Institute.*

**The Faces of County Conservation in Wisconsin: Session 2.** Meet and learn from experienced movers and shakers around the state. The past few years have not afforded staff the chance to meet and learn from others at in-person events. Tailored for new employees but open to all, this session is a great chance to meet others from around the state and hear about lessons learned from seasoned conservationists. Panelists will share a story from their conservation career that helped shape who they are today. Session 1 will cover moments of personal and career growth, and *Session 2 will focus on the partnerships that make conservation work possible.* Attendees will also have the chance to meet and ask questions of the panelists, as well as other partners and agency representatives from all areas of the state. Choose to attend one or both! *Presenters: TBD*

**Steps to building an effective and supported conservation enforcement program.** This session will cover building support amongst stakeholders at the county level to develop and implement an effective program to achieve the desired outcomes. *Paul Daigle* spent his career in conservation along with the last 10 years as the Land and Water Program Director in Marathon County where he managed the zoning, POWTS, and non-metallic mining program, as well as managing the conservation programs. He will share his experiences and lessons learned in order for you to establish or improve enforcement at the county level. Topics to be discussed will include when cost sharing is needed and sorting out the roles of the DNR and county staff in enforcement.

**Assistance for the Assistant.** Are you in the position of rendering assistance to EVERYONE? Join this roundtable discussion session to learn some best practices for the things you do every day. Learn from others in similar positions throughout the state. Compare notes with colleagues and make the assistance you give the best it can be. What do you do for tracking cost share? Is there an easy way to file electronically? What is the best way to track expenses? Is there more to do? What about communication – how do you do it and how do you receive it? Join us for an hour of honest and helpful sharing! (Please note that a session dedicated to transitioning to online tree sales is scheduled for Friday morning.)

**Nitrogen Fixing Corn.** Understanding how symbiotic associations between plants and microbes develop is an important biological question, particularly relevant in modern agriculture and economy. Researchers in the Ané lab are working on the characterization of maize accessions that can acquire 30-70% of their nitrogen from the air by hosting nitrogen-fixing bacteria in a gel produced by their aerial roots. They’ve found a similar trait in sorghum accessions. These projects could transform how the nitrogen nutrition of food and biofuel crops are met and reduce the dependence of our agriculture on nitrogen fertilizers. *Presenter: Jean-Michel Ané, Professor, UW-Madison Departments of Agronomy and Bacteriology.*

**Thursday, March 2, 8:00-9:15am**

**Technical Roundtable #1: Animal Waste Storage 101 and Concrete 101.** This roundtable discussion has two parts. The first will focus on the basics of animal waste storage and transfer design. This discussion is for staff with limited knowledge of waste storage/transfer or those that need a refresher. The second is a discussion on concrete basics, which will focus on the requirements of Wisconsin Construction Specification 4 and associated components. The discussion will be geared to those staff with limited experience using concrete. *Presenter: Dennis Marquardt, P.E. DATCP*

**Communication Basics for Field Staff.** First *Serge Koenig, Sauk County*, will present on strategies one can employ to move people to action in selling conservation practices, as well as cover the interpersonal relationship building skills necessary to establish trust and encourage producers to action. *Rod Webb, Pierce County*, will share additional insights into communicating with landowners. Then *Jim Arch, Clark County*, will provide attendees with experienced guidance on working with Amish and Mennonite communities.

**BMP Implementation Tracking System (BITS): DNR and County Perspectives.** BITS is an online tool familiar to any county who has received MDV funding or a nonpoint source pollution grant. But what is it? Why was it developed? And how can you become a more efficient user? Join *Molly Richardson, DNR's BITS Data Systems Coordinator*, as she shares insider information about the history and use of BITS. *Tony Reali, Calumet County, and Sarah Kussow, Outagamie County*, will also present tips and tricks from their experiences using BITS for MDV and nonpoint grant programs. We'll end with a roundtable discussion in which all are welcome to ask questions and share their feedback.

**Agroforestry: A Climate Change Solution that is Taking Root.** To reduce the impacts of climate change while bolstering farm landscapes and livelihoods to withstand extreme weather events, the Monroe County Climate Change Task Force is partnering with farmers to demonstrate agroforestry, an innovative practice that integrates trees into working landscapes, with co-benefits that sequester carbon, increase animal comfort, build soil, and improve water infiltration. Hear how Tucker & Becky Gretebeck partnered with the Monroe County Land Conservation Department (LCD) and the Savanna Institute to enhance their pasture land to include trees, a practice known as silvopasture. *Presenters: Tucker Gretebeck (All Seasons Farm), Bob Micheel (Monroe County LCD), and Matt Wilson (Savanna Institute).*

**Getting the Most Bang for Your Buck from NRCS Local Working Groups.** Learn about NRCS Local Work Groups and engage in a discussion on how county Land & Water Resource Management Plans can leverage LCD and NRCS goals, priorities, and funding opportunities. *Presenters: Eric Allness (NRCS Assistant State Conservationist – Partnerships) and Melissa Bartz (Assistant State Conservationist – Financial Assistance Programs).*

**Thursday, March 2, 9:45-11:00am**

**Technical Roundtable #2: NRCS Engineering Spreadsheets and Grade Stabilization Structures.** This roundtable discussion has two parts. The first will provide an overview of the current NRCS Wisconsin Engineering Spreadsheets found in Section 1 of the Wisconsin Field Office Technical Guide. The discussion is designed to help staff know what spreadsheet is available for what purpose and provide general guidance on how to use that spreadsheet. The second part will provide a discussion on the use of Grade Stabilization Structures used for gully erosion. This roundtable will provide staff with a range of options when considering Grade Stabilization Structures in soil and water conservation. *Presenters: NRCS Engineering Staff TBD, DATCP Engineering Staff TBD.*

**Next Generation of Boots on the Ground: Emerging Conservationists.** Are you looking for a way to expand your youth education program? A youth conservation field day may just be the ticket. Get students in an outside learning environment while exploring various aspects of conservation, along with an introduction to careers in natural resources with local partners and having a ball doing it! This is a field day you will walk away feeling very rewarded. Come join Shawano, Outagamie, Adams and St. Croix Counties and learn how we do it. We will also briefly go over all of our core youth education programs to kick off this session.

**Farmland Preservation Program (FPP): Implementation beyond the Tax Credit.** Get to know the FPP and agricultural enterprise areas (AEAs) from planning to execution. What does implementation mean beyond establishing eligibility for the tax credit? *Presenters: Wednesday Coye, Tim Jackson, and Katy Smith, DATCP.*

**Talking to farmers about conservation finance.** You may have a general idea about the economics of conservation, but how do farmers think about conservation and their finances? In this presentation learn common farm finance principles; identify what information farmers need to take to their lenders when they consider adding conservation practices; and get a list of resources for farmers, such as tools to examine the profitability of conservation options and data on the economics of cover crops, reduced tillage, and grazing. *Presenter: Paul Dietmann, Senior Lending Officer of Mission Financing, Compeer Financial.*

**Wisconsin Groundwater: Why are some areas vulnerable to contamination?** Over two-thirds of Wisconsinites depend on groundwater as their primary drinking water source. Understanding groundwater and how to protect it is complex. Join the Wisconsin Geologic and Natural History Survey (WGNHS) to learn about groundwater basics and what makes some areas more

vulnerable to contamination. Get connected with the many available resources and meet the experts to help answer groundwater questions in your county. *Presenters: Maureen Muldoon and David Hart, WGNHS.*

**Thursday, March 2, 1:15-2:30pm**

**Technical Roundtable #3: Open Forum - topics to be discussed include Two Staged Ditches, Engineering Certification, Permits, and other subjects to be determined by the audience.** This roundtable is an open forum, so bring your questions and concerns and discuss them with your fellow conservationists. *Panel: Mike Dreischmeier, PE, NRCS, Matt Woodrow, PE, WDATCP, Stacy Dehne, PE, WDATCP, and Travis Buckley WDATCP.*

**Addressing Groundwater Issues at the County Level: The Kewaunee County and Southwest Wisconsin Groundwater and Geology Study (SWIGG) Experiences.** Groundwater quality continues to be a statewide issue and Land and Water Conservation Departments are at the forefront of addressing the issue. *Davina Bonness (Kewaunee County) and Katie Abbott (Iowa County)* will provide information on how they have addressed these various aspects to balance the agricultural, environmental, political and public concern, and what the results have been so far. This information can assist other county leaders with potential ways to address groundwater issues in their respective counties.

**Insights into Black Bear Management in Wisconsin.** Black bears are perhaps the single most emblematic wildlife species of Wisconsin's north woods, and they have distinct cultural, social, and economic values. Seeing a black bear in the wild is an exciting experience for many and an equal thrill for those who prize the black bear as a big game species. Along with this thriving population, some level of conflict with human interests, including agricultural damages, nuisance bears, and occasional human safety concerns, will inevitably occur. This presentation will provide an overview of black bears in Wisconsin, insights into how the DNR and its partners manage the species, and a peek into the future of bears in Wisconsin. *Presenter: Randy Johnson, Large Carnivore Specialist, WDNR.*

**Tools and Approaches for Integrating Climate Change Considerations into Forest Management Plans.** Not sure where to start in factoring climate change into forest management decisions? Join this session to hear two case studies of how managers have utilized free resources like the Adaptation Workbook, USFS Tree Atlas, and Climate Change Field Guides for WI to help identify and assess climate-related risks for two different project sites in Sauk County and Milwaukee County, and how those tools and approaches helped them establish practical forest management plans with climate change in mind. *Presenters: Ann Calhoun, The Nature Conservancy, and Brad Hutnik, WDNR Division of Forestry.*

**Moving from Concept to Contact: Utilizing The Tools for Effective DEIB Conversation and Conflict Resolution.** At some point the 'student' becomes the 'teacher'. We are all students when it comes to understanding the 'What' and 'Why' of concepts with respect to Diversity, Inclusion, Equity, Belonging, and Critical Thinking. The 'How' and 'When' is the point at which we actively apply our learning to situations and circumstances that challenge our understanding of concepts and their importance. This session will be intentional about active participation designed to enhance our confidence in engaging in conversations though complex, not always necessarily difficult. *Presenter: Alonzo Kelly, Strategic Leadership Partner & Executive Coach and 2022 Presidential Lifetime Achievement Award Recipient.*

**Thursday, March 2, 3:00-4:15pm**

**Technical Roundtable #4: When Good Projects Go Bad.** This roundtable discussion will review what to do when things just don't go right during construction, such as how to handle contractor disagreements, practice failures, unforeseen climatic conditions, and a host of other factors that make practice installation just a bit more challenging. *Presenters: Erik Heagle, Grant County LWCD, and others TBD.*

**Taking Your Partnership to Light Speed!** This popular breakout session is back and better than ever! Successfully navigating a conservation department through the asteroid field of today's funding shortfalls and resource concerns requires respect, collaboration, and communication (even when you speak different languages). Hear lessons learned from experienced and savvy "pilots" in this stellar session on strengthening the

	LCC/LCD partnership. <i>Panelists: MaryJo Gingras, Ashland Co. LWCD; Brian Haase, Waupaca Co. LWCD; Amy Piaget, Dane Co. LWRD; Ken Gerhardt, Clark Co. LCC; Mike Hofberger, Calumet Co. LCC; Tom Mandli, Marinette Co. LCC; and moderated by Carolyn Scholl, Vilas Co. LWCD.</i>
<p><b>Phosphorus Multi-discharger Variance (MDV) Discussion.</b> Join DNR staff for a discussion-heavy dive into the MDV program. Counties have been receiving phosphorus mitigation funds from point sources since 2018. The program has grown to roughly \$1 million per year, distributed amongst 30 counties on average. Now that many county staff have experience with the program, it's time to come together and discuss the finer points of MDV implementation. DNR staff will step through various program elements while county staff are encouraged to share their experiences, ask questions, and offer solutions. Topics will include program overview and purpose, geographic constraints, trouble spending the funds, prioritizing watersheds and projects, overall compliance (NR 151 and NR 102), and other topics TBD. The BMP Implementation Tracking System will be covered in a separate session. <i>Presenters: Matt Clacherty and Andrew Craig, WDNR.</i></p>	<p><b>Batch and Build: A New Model for Implementation.</b> A new program in Central Iowa sought a new model for implementing conservation on private lands, resulting in the birth of "The Batch and Build." This new model focuses on simplifying conservation and bringing opportunities to a landowner's front step. After years of trying traditional efforts unsuccessfully on edge of field practices, a team of conservationists developed a method to combine teamwork, fiscal agent funding structure, targeted outreach, and grouped construction. In two years the project constructed 150 saturated buffers and bioreactors, with hundreds more planned for 2023. The model is now being explored and developed for other conservation practices. <i>Presenter: John Swanson, Water Resources Supervisor, Polk County, Iowa.</i></p>
<p><b>The Discovery, Recovery, and Preservation of the Lake Mendota Canoes.</b> There is indirect evidence that Wisconsin's inland waterways have been used as transportation corridors and to collect resources since the region was first occupied. Up until recently, however, the earliest evidence of a dugout canoe dates to about AD 250. A recent discovery from Lake Mendota in Madison, Wisconsin, demonstrates that water transportation extends back to over three thousand years. In September 2022, a 1,000 BC canoe was recovered in 25 feet of water. This session will examine the recent documentation and recovery of the Lake Mendota Dugout Canoe #2 and discuss how these findings have led to a reinvestigation of the region's climate and lake levels 3,000 years ago. Data from this research and analysis is a preliminary step in understanding Wisconsin's prehistoric maritime landscapes and the people who lived in this region. <i>Presenter: James M. Skibo, Ph.D., State Archaeologist, Curator of Archaeology, Wisconsin Historical Society.</i></p>	

Friday, March 3, 8:00-9:00am	
<p><b>"Nontraditional" Partners Working for Clean Water and Resilient Farms.</b> Since 2019, the "clean water initiative," consisting of partners from agricultural and conservation groups, has been partnering to articulate a vision for agriculture and water quality in Wisconsin. While the job is not yet done, small victories have been achieved, and lots learned. Hear about what lessons have been learned, and what the group is prioritizing in 2023, and going forward. <i>Presenters: Scott Laeser, Clean Wisconsin; Chad Zuleger, Dairy Business Association; Alex Madorsky, The Nature Conservancy; Matt Krueger, WI Land+Water.</i></p>	<p><b>Using the Soil Conditioning Index (SCI) to demonstrate how cropping practices like cover crops and reduced tillage will lead to improved soil health.</b> This session begins with a review of the updated 328 Conservation Crop Rotation practice standard. The SCI soil conditioning index threshold of 0.5 is designed to help planners reduce soil erosion, reduce or eliminate tillage operations and create a stronger trend of building soil organic matter levels. Building soil organic matter is a goal of many farmers, but it takes many years, even decades to move the needle. Several examples of conservation plans using the current erosion and nutrient management tools to achieve the minimum 0.5 SCI value will be shown. Meeting Tolerable soil loss has always been a minimum requirement for this practice standard and that hasn't changed. <i>Presenter: Mike Stanek, USDA-NRCS.</i></p>

<p><b>From Fields to Features: Communication Conservation</b>          Achieving our conservation goals depends upon an interested public, engaged landowners, dedicated conservation professionals, and supportive elected officials. This panel explores how we can effectively communicate the value of conservation. WI Land+Water Communications Manager, Kristin Teston, will discuss our shared narratives and how to best frame your conservation stories. The Public Outreach Committee will preview a “Communicating Conservation” toolkit, which will include guidance for counties to tailor their own compelling and persuasive messaging for key audiences.</p>	<p><b>Estimating nitrate leaching losses using nitrogen application rates and yield data.</b> This interactive session will demonstrate a new online application for estimating leachable nitrogen from various management scenarios. We will briefly discuss research used to validate a nitrate leaching estimation model and demonstrate how to use the application and existing datasets to understand potential impacts on groundwater quality. If you’d like, bring your laptop and follow along as we go through real world examples to estimate leaching losses using data on nitrogen inputs (i.e. fertilizer, manure, irrigation water) and yields for a variety of different crops. If you have data on application rates and yield from local fields/cropping systems that you’d like demonstrated, please send inquiries to kmasarik@uwsp.edu in advance of the conference. <i>Presenter: Kevin Masarik, Groundwater Education Specialist, UW-Stevens Point.</i></p>
<p><b>A Deep Dive into Wisconsin’s Invasive Species Regulations, Decontamination, and Identification of AIS.</b> Wisconsin has a comprehensive and science-based law with criteria that makes it illegal to possess, transport, transfer or introduce certain invasive species. The intent of the invasive species rule, Wis. Admin. Code NR 40 is to prevent new invasive species from entering and becoming established in Wisconsin. NR 40 also requires certain preventative measures to be taken that are not species specific but complement existing statutes and rules. This presentation will describe these aspects of law, discuss preventative and decontamination measures, and introduce some aquatic and wetland invasive species you can be on the lookout for. <i>Presenter: Amy Kretlow, WDNR.</i></p>	

<b>Friday, March 3, 9:15-10:15am</b>	
<p><b>Basics of Soil Health and Climate Smart Agriculture.</b> This presentation will cover: (1) the basics of how soil health indicators relate to soil functions such as climate resilience, (2) how soil health practices including cover crops and no-till impact soil health, and (3) new opportunities for implementing conservation activities and monitoring alternative management strategies through the Inflation Reduction Act. <i>Presenter: Andrew Paolucci, NRCS Soil Scientist.</i></p>	<p><b>How to successfully host your tree sale online.</b> Counties have been hosting annual tree sales for many years; however, often times it can become difficult to track orders, collect sales tax, and effectively communicate with customers. In this session, three counties will share their experiences moving their tree sales to an online store front. <i>Presenters: Melissa Schlupp, Sauk County; Haillie Passow, Trempealeau County; and Leanna Bender, Pepin County.</i></p>
<p><b>Wetlands Permitting 101.</b> Hear from <i>Nate Walker, WDNR</i>, about wetland permits and the new Hydrologic Restoration General Permit (GP) and how to use it in the 2023 field season.</p>	<p><b>Pheasants Forever’s Precision Ag and Conservation Delivery Program.</b> Details TBA. <i>Presenter: Josh Bendorf, Pheasants Forever.</i></p>
<p><b>Protecting our Pollinators: The Importance of Plant and Program Diversity.</b> Bees, beetles, and butterflies! Flower-rich habitats are integral to cultivating the unique relationships between our native pollinators and their host plants. We’ll review some of the creative ways Xerces and counties are laying the groundwork for pollinator conservation by planting quality habitat and inspiring community action. The presentation will include a background on pollinator biology + habitat needs with on-the-ground habitat creation and plant propagation of the Plant Dane program and Xerces' budding habitat kit program. <i>Presenters: Micah Kloppenburg, WI Pollinator Habitat Specialist, Xerces Society, and Susan Sanford, Strategic Engagement Coordinator for Dane County Land &amp; Water Resources Dept.</i></p>	