

Wisconsin



U.S. Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

2007 Report





Dear Friends of Wisconsin Conservation,

On behalf of the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Wisconsin, I am delighted to present this 2007 agency report to you, the shareholders in Wisconsin's soil and water resources. We have much to celebrate this year, and great challenges ahead as we pursue our mission of helping people help the land.

We have come to the end of an amazing journey called the 2002 Farm Bill. Over the life of the 2002 Farm Bill:



- ✦ Wisconsin farmers signed up for 7,623 contracts, and \$84.3 million, for conservation work in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- ✦ We launched the new Conservation Security Program, that now has 648 farms and 200,000 acres enrolled
- ✦ We contracted for 188 restorations through the Wetlands Reserve Program bringing the total to 498 for the life of the program
- ✦ We permanently protected 61 farms through the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program

Last year, Wisconsin was rated number one in the nation in efficiency in implementing conservation contracts. I am proud of our staff, partners, and technical service providers for this huge achievement.

We were reinvigorated by the Future of Farming and Rural Life in Wisconsin initiative led by the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters. This two year intensive collaboration has helped create a shared vision of Wisconsin's agricultural future, and point out the footsteps needed to get there.

We celebrated the Zeloski Marsh, nearly 1,500 acres of drained farmland that was restored through the Wetlands Reserve Program, and now forms the core of the state Lake Mills Wildlife Area.

Our new and pressing challenge is energy - both energy conservation and energy production on the farm. We will apply our technical expertise to our vision of productive lands and a healthy environment while exploring ways to reach energy independence.

I want to thank the thousands of Wisconsin farmers, landowners, and our many partners for their commitment to conservation. As we look forward to the coming Farm Bill and challenges it will certainly bring, we remain dedicated to a voluntary, incentive-based approach to land stewardship to achieve productive lands, and a healthy environment.

Sincerely,



Patricia L. Lavenworth

Helping People Help the Land

Conservation Technical Assistance

The Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) Program provides basic technical assistance, including conservation planning, design, and implementation assistance to help people plan and apply conservation on the land. The working relationships that landowners and communities have with their local NRCS staff are unique. One-on-one help through flexible, voluntary programs occurs every day in local NRCS offices throughout Wisconsin.

Conservation Technical Assistance helps landowners make good decisions for their land:

- ✧ Reduce soil loss from erosion.
- ✧ Solve soil, water quality, water conservation, air quality, and agricultural waste management problems.
- ✧ Reduce potential damage caused by excess water and sedimentation or drought.
- ✧ Enhance the quality of fish and wildlife habitat.
- ✧ Improve the long term sustainability of all lands, including cropland, forestland, grazing lands.
- ✧ Assist in land use planning decisions needed for natural resource protection and sustainability.

The CTA Program provides the proven and consistent conservation technology and a local delivery system needed to achieve the benefits of a healthy and productive landscape.

Wisconsin Conservation Highlights - 2007

- ✧ 552,515 acres of conservation plans written
- ✧ Watershed or area-wide conservation plans developed = 17
- ✧ Cropland with conservation applied to improve soil quality = 471,016 acres
- ✧ Land with conservation applied to improve water quality = 504,110 acres
- ✧ Comprehensive Nutrient Management plans written = 206, applied = 179
- ✧ Land with conservation applied to improve irrigation efficiency = 5,810 acres
- ✧ Grazing and forest land with conservation applied to improve the resource base = 37,981 acres
- ✧ Non-federal land with conservation applied to improve fish and wildlife habitat quality = 69,780 acres
- ✧ Wetlands created, restored or enhanced = 3,161 acres





Environmental Quality Incentives Program

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary program that provides assistance to farmers who face threats to soil, water, air, and related natural resources on agricultural land. Through EQIP, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides assistance to agricultural producers in a manner that will promote agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible goals, optimize environmental benefits, and help farmers and ranchers meet Federal, State, Tribal, and local environmental requirements.

EQIP is the major program available in Wisconsin to help livestock operators meet new state regulations on livestock and animal waste management. EQIP identifies conservation practices to address priority resource concerns and may provide financial assistance on certain conservation practices. Incentive payments may be offered for up to three years to encourage producers to carry out management practices. Farmers may elect to use a certified technical service provider for technical assistance.

EQIP Highlights

A total of 1,100 contracts for \$17,364,627 were signed:

- ✧ Animal waste systems:
 - ✧ 115 applications received for waste storage systems
 - ✧ 58 applications were funded in FY07
- ✧ \$9,337,706 total funds requested with \$5,557,888 in funds available



Conservation Practices Planned and Applied through EQIP

	Contracts			Contracts	
	Planned	Applied		Planned	Applied
Access Road	27	26	Pipeline	21	2
Animal Trails	13	11	Prescribed Burning	1	1
Brush Management	128	34	Prescribed Grazing	480	426
Closure of Waste Impoundment	4	3	Residue Mgmt/No-Till	507	460
Conservation Crop Rotation	24	22	Roof Runoff Structure	20	17
Contour Buffer Strips	1	1	Sediment Basin	10	9
CNMP	348	36	Sinkhole Treatment	4	4
Critical Area Planting	14	13	Spring Development	3	3
Diversion	15	15	Stream Habitat Improvement	1	1
Feed Management	69	60	Streambank/Shoreline Protection	22	22
Fence	34	32	Stripcropping	1	1
Filter Strip	1	1	Terrace	2	2
Firebreaks	1	1	Tree/Shrub Establishment	52	48
Forest Site Preparation	1	1	Tree/Shrub Pruning	1	1
Forest Stand Improvement	6	5	Underground Outlet	19	17
Forest Trails and Landings	3	3	Upland Wildlife Management	1	0
Grade Stabilization Structures	49	45	Use Exclusion	1	1
Grassed Waterway	259	129	Waste Storage Facility	71	22
Heavy Use Protection	145	29	Wastewater Treatment	74	13
Irrigation Water Management	48	4	Water and Sediment Control Basin	6	1
Lined Waterway	29	7	Water Well	17	5
Nutrient Management	1824	1236	Well Decommissioning	71	20
Obstruction Removal	12	8	Wetland Restoration	4	1
Pasture and Hay Planting	45	23	Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment	16	10
Pest Management	211	73			

EQIP Special Initiatives

- ✦ \$188,017 were dedicated to conservation projects on Tribal lands.
- ✦ \$179,049 for ground and surface water practices in the Central Sands area.

In 2007, Wisconsin was #1 in the nation in efficiency in implementing conservation, with 63% of contracts implemented and a 5% cancellation rate.





Wetlands Reserve Program

The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) is a voluntary program. It provides technical and financial assistance to eligible landowners to address wetland, wildlife habitat, soil, water, and related natural resource concerns on private lands in an environmentally beneficial and cost-effective manner. The program provides an opportunity for landowners to receive financial incentives to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands in exchange for retiring marginal land from agriculture.

Benefits of the WRP Program include restoration, protection and enhancement of wetland functions and values along with the opportunity to develop wildlife habitat including threatened and endangered species. Wetlands improve water quality by filtering sediments and chemicals; reducing flooding; recharging groundwater; protecting biological diversity; as well as providing opportunities for educational, scientific, and recreational activities.



This wetland restoration is rich in diversity,. It includes the development of a complex of wetlands, prairies, an oak opening, tamarack woods and a remnant bog. Specifically 286 acres were planted to prairie, 270 acres of sedge meadow were developed along with 112 acres of emergent wetland habitat and 64 acres of shorebird habitat. This wetland jewel is restored and open for public recreation and hunting. The Glacial Drumlin Bicycle Trail crosses through the marsh, offering cyclists unique wildlife viewing opportunities.



WRP total acreage in Wisconsin through 2007

- ✧ 47,082 acres enrolled in the program with 498 easements.
- ✧ 1,433 of those acres enrolled in 58 10-year contracts.

Zeloski Marsh Dedication

The dedication of the Zeloski Marsh Unit of the Lake Mills Wildlife Area was the WRP highlight this year. Over 1,320 acres of marginal farmland was restored to wetland forming the core of the Wildlife Area. This project was a collaborative effort of the NRCS, the Wisconsin DNR and the Madison Audubon Society. Grants from the DNR Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program helped Madison Audubon Society to purchase acquisition rights to the property and the money assisted in the restoration efforts.



WRP Highlights

- ✧ Fiscal year allocation of \$5,417,509
- ✧ 10 permanent easements
- ✧ 1 Ten-Year Restoration Contract
- ✧ Total acres enrolled = 755
- ✧ Total Obligation: \$1,646,732

*This amount includes repair, restoration cost overruns, and appraisals and is not exclusively new acreage obligation. \$3,770,776 funds were returned unobligated due to valuation system.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) is a voluntary environmental improvement program for people who want to develop or improve wildlife habitat on privately owned land. Through WHIP, NRCS provides both technical assistance and financial assistance to establish and improve fish and wildlife habitat. WHIP has proven to be a highly effective and popular program across the country. By targeting wildlife habitat projects on all lands and aquatic areas, WHIP provides assistance to conservation minded landowners.

Through WHIP, NRCS provides both technical assistance and up to 75 percent cost-share assistance to establish and improve fish and wildlife habitat. WHIP agreements between NRCS and the participant generally last from 5 to 10 years from the date the agreement is signed.

WHIP Highlights

- ✦ Fiscal year allocation - \$398,052
- ✦ 76 applicants
- ✦ 47 accepted contracts

Project breakdown:

- ✦ Karner Blue Butterfly - 18 contracts \$69,812
- ✦ Declining Species - 9 contracts \$35,041
- ✦ Tribal Lands - 5 contracts - \$54,600
- ✦ Special Projects - 15 contracts \$101,396

Practice	Planned	Installed
Brush Management	66	42
Conservation Cover	11	4
Firebreak	10	4
Fish Passage	5	1
Forest Stand Improvement	2	1
Prescribed Burning	38	11
Restoration and Management of Rare and Declining Habitat	9	4
Stream Habitat Improvement and Management	8	1
Streambank and Shoreline Protection	6	1
Tree/Shrub Establishment	2	1
Upland Wildlife Habitat Management	25	5
Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management	7	0





Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative

The Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI) in Wisconsin is comprised of individuals and organizations working together to maintain and improve the management, productivity, and health of privately owned grazing land. Owners and managers of these grazing lands address natural resource concerns while contributing to the economic viability of their rural communities.

NRCS grazing land specialists have the expertise and experience to provide technical assistance to graziers regarding the long-term productivity and ecological health of their grazing land. Through GLCI efforts, NRCS provides training in grazing lands management and supports public awareness activities for private grazing lands.

Wisconsin Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative Grant Program Highlights

- ✦ On-going administration of 2004, 2005, and 2006 grant program, which includes 40 on-going projects in technical assistance, education, and research. The grant program is administered by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection and the Wisconsin GLCI Steering Committee.
- ✦ In 2007, two reports were published, one by the University of Wisconsin-Madison Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems and the other by GrassWorks, Inc. (membership organization of graziers) which are summaries of all the GLCI Grant Projects conducted from 2002-2003, and 2004-2005 respectively.
- ✦ The State of Wisconsin passed the Wisconsin Grazing Initiative which provides state funding for the GLCI Grant Program.

Technical Assistance Highlights

- ✦ 300 Prescribed Grazing Plans were developed on 25,000 acres of grazing land with conservation practices applied, including 19,542 acres of Prescribed Grazing.
- ✦ The certification program has grown to approximately 40 Prescribed Grazing Land Planners in Wisconsin. For a listing of planners see www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov/grazing
- ✦ A method to group soil types based on forage suitability and production has been developed in Wisconsin and is near completion.



Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program

The Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) is a voluntary program that helps farmers and ranchers keep their land in agriculture, and protects Prime Farmland soils and important historical and archaeological sites on farms. The FRPP creates partnerships with state, tribal, and local governmental and non-governmental organizations to protect entire farms through the purchase of agricultural conservation easements or development rights. FRPP easements facilitate agricultural use of the land while limiting non-agricultural uses.

The FRPP provides matching funds for the purchase of easements through an annual competitive application process. Funded entities hold easements jointly with the NRCS. Easements are permanent, and are purchased from willing landowners, at current market value based on a professional appraisal. Participating landowners agree to farm the land according to a conservation plan.

FRPP Easements Funded in 2007

- ✦ Baraboo Range Preservation Association, \$132,976, 138 acres, one easement, Sauk County
- ✦ Dane County Agricultural Easement Program, \$591,262, 196 acres, one easement, Dane County
- ✦ Driftless Area Land Conservancy, \$452,107, 548 acres, one easement, Iowa County
- ✦ Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, \$434,500, 284 acres, two easements, Ozaukee and Sheboygan Counties

FRPP Accomplishments in 2007

- ✦ Easements on 10 farms were finalized this year through the FRPP Program. These easements protect farmland in the following counties: Sauk (1), Ozaukee (2), Sheboygan (1), Dane (4), Green (1) and Iowa (1).



2007 was a banner year for farmland protection in Wisconsin: 10 FRPP easements were closed, protecting over 2,250 acres of farmland in six Wisconsin counties.





Wisconsin Soils Program



Since completing the initial soil survey on May 15, 2006, the Wisconsin soil survey program has redirected its efforts toward improving and updating the soils information in Wisconsin by restructuring the Soil Survey Program and functioning through a new business model. With collaboration from our partners we developed four strategic objectives. Work is currently being done to meet those objectives.

New Challenge, New Business Model

Our new challenge is to provide the knowledge that will ensure the effective and efficient use of this invaluable spatial and tabular database and to make improvements to meet the needs of Wisconsin. Our focus is to efficiently help people understand the land with new and improved map interpretations.

To meet this challenge, the Soil Survey Program in Wisconsin has been restructured and now functions through a new business model. The three principles of the model are Mission, Products, and Value.

- ✦ **Mission** is “what we do best” and have been doing for 100 years, understanding and documenting the land’s soil and its relationships to other natural resources.
- ✦ **Products** represent our new “passion” of communicating that understanding to customers. This includes new map products that better explain our message.
- ✦ **Value** is created by providing soil survey products for users that also add value back to soil survey. We will deliver this value through Major Land Resource Area (MLRA) Offices, building on our digital soil survey of the state.

Our Central Focus is where these three principles meet, guiding all Soil Survey Upgrade projects.

Strategic Objectives and the Wisconsin Users’ Group

A state level users group was formed to advise NRCS of important issues with the existing data and to help direct our planning. This state level users group defined several near term initiatives and began the evaluation process for longer term upgrade projects. Building from our business model and input from our state agency user group, we developed the following four objectives for the next few years:

1. **Seamless Databases:** The Wisconsin’s modern soil survey has taken place over the past 50 years. Those surveys completed in the early stages of the modern soil survey were mapped with different concepts and tools than those completed in the later stages. Soil concepts of the early soil surveys were centered on political boundaries, rather than the more natural geomorphic boundaries resulting in a patchwork of information. This resulted in conflicting joins along county boundaries. In order to remedy this inconsistency the soil survey staff adopted the MLRA concept of conducting soil surveys, and is converting to a statewide legend and correlating map unit concepts across similar geomorphic regions.
2. **Consistency in Data:** Because of the patchwork effect of Wisconsin’s soil survey products and the county centered soil concepts, similar soil map units across county boundaries may or may not have similar properties and interpretations. By adopting the MLRA approach to soil survey and creating seamless databases, there will be more consistent data from survey to survey.

3) **New and Improved Interpretations:** The current soil survey database provides powerful tools that provide soil information and interpretations to resolve complex natural resource issues. There are currently many interpretations written that use soil properties to aid landowners, managers and natural resource professionals in making wise land use decisions.

Some current projects include:

- ✦ Bedrock study in eastern WI to improve water quality interpretations.
- ✦ Steep and stony project to improve forestry management.
- ✦ Selected interpretation updates in partnership with soil survey users.
- ✦ Statewide trace element study to assist DNR with remediation efforts.

4) **Targeted increases in customers:** With the completion of the initial soil survey for Wisconsin along with the introduction of the Web Soil Survey, soil survey products and information has seen renewed interest. By continually adding value to the products we deliver, we foresee an increase and diversification of customers.



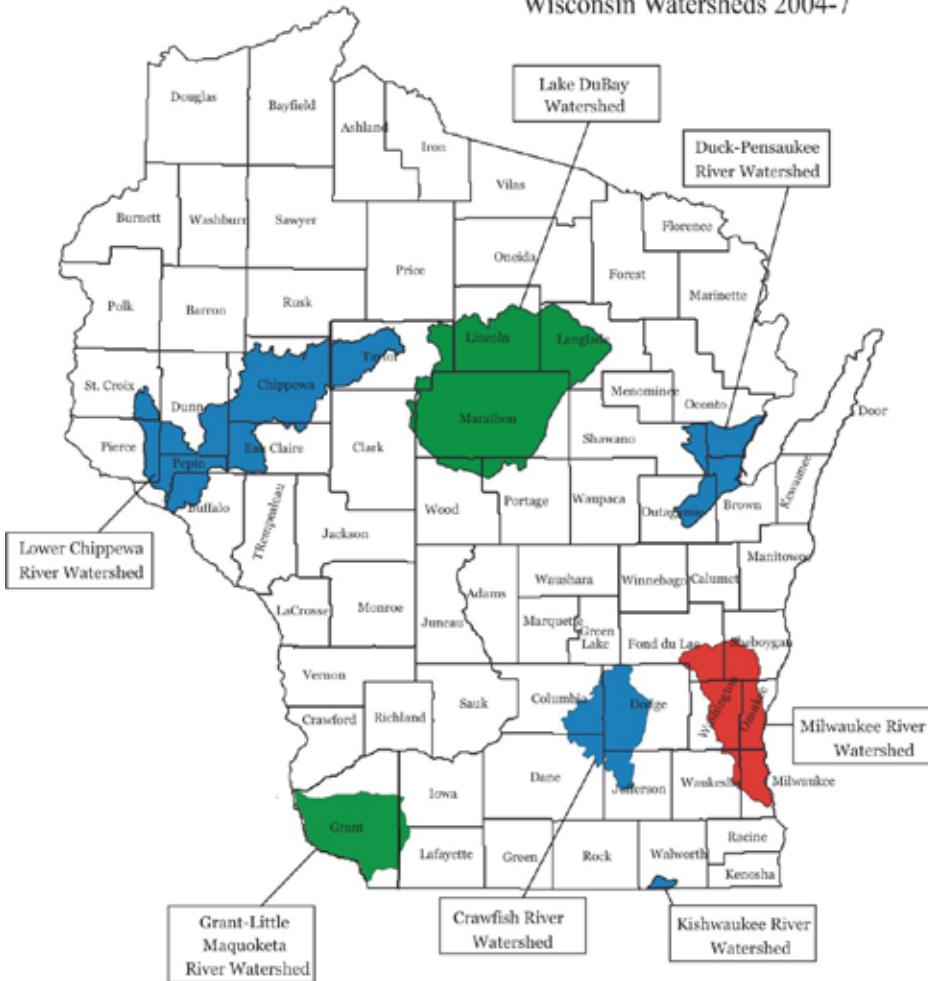
Web Soil Survey is just a click away at www.websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov





Conservation Security Program

Conservation Security Program
Wisconsin Watersheds 2004-7

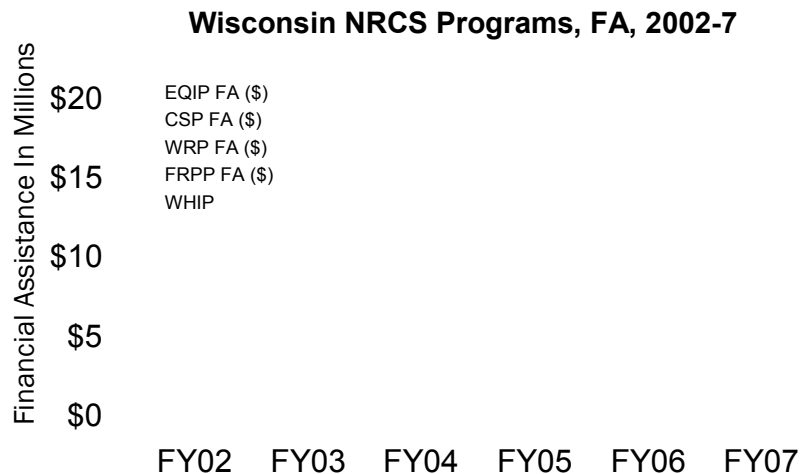


In FY2007, the Conservation Security Program in Wisconsin saw considerable improvements in existing contracts with a large number of farms performing new conservation and moving up in Tiers. Tier 3 reflects the highest level of conservation that can be achieved in CSP. The number of Tier 3 contracts, originally accepted into CSP in 2004 and 2005, increased from 77 to 233. Despite the fact that there was no sign-up in 2007, total payments on 646 contracts increased over 30% due to the additional, new conservation practices implemented on Wisconsin CSP farms.

The Milwaukee River was declared an eligible CSP watershed in 2007 but a program sign-up was not held. It is still an eligible watershed for 2008 if a sign-up period is announced.

Farm Bill Funding 2002-2007

The 2002 Farm Bill, which expired in 2007, was landmark legislation for conservation. Over the life of the bill, funding for conservation in Wisconsin increased significantly. The chart above shows financial assistance, the funds that go to farmers and landowners, for the primary Farm Bill conservation programs from 2002 through 2007.



Emergency Watershed Program

Record setting rains in August caused damage in many parts of southwestern Wisconsin, but the damages could have been worse if it were not for the NRCS dams that were built as part of the upland treatment of these watersheds. These dams were built as part of the Watershed Flood Protection and Prevention Act (PL-566) during the 1950's to the 1970's. These dams capture the rainfall and runoff and allows water to be released slowly, preventing downstream flooding.

Many of the 22 dams in Vernon County suffered some damage during these storms. Four of the structures were severely damaged requiring emergency repair, four had abutment seepage and 16 will require repairs to the stilling basins with an estimated cost of over \$1 million. The dams all held without failure.

To respond to this exigent situation, the Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program allowed NRCS to repair the dams that were critically damaged. The \$185,000 in federal funds, plus \$62,000 from the county have paid for emergency repairs to damaged auxiliary spillways and stilling basins. The long term maintenance and upkeep of the dams remains the responsibility of the county or city sponsors.

Both the PL-566 project and the EWP Program safeguards lives and properties from flooding. Wisconsin is fortunate to have a long history of maintaining dams and appreciating their value to the community.

For more information on the EWP Program: www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/watersheds.html



Pictured here is Duck Egg Dam in Vernon County. This structure held back thousands of acre-feet of water that would have otherwise caused widespread flooding downstream. These are the types of structures built through the PL-566 Act that have protected Wisconsin for decades.





Resource Conservation and Development

The purpose of Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) is to improve the capability of local leaders to plan and execute projects for resource conservation and community development in their geographically designated RC&D areas. Congress created this partnership between the federal government and local communities as a way of engaging local leaders in investing in their community. The program's goal is to promote conservation, improve land use, develop natural resources, and enhance social, economic, and environmental conditions in primarily rural areas. Through the RC&D program, local governments, Indian tribes, non-profit organizations, and councils come together to carry out community-oriented projects.

RC&D Highlights

Town and Country RC&D

Farm Fresh Wisconsin: Strengthening the Farmer Chef Connection - The use of locally-produced food products is growing in popularity among chefs and restaurants in SW Wisconsin. A recent workshop in Waukesha gave farmers and chefs the opportunity to join forces to cultivate new business partnerships. Participants had the opportunity to network with other farmers and food buyers and hear from notable Wisconsin Chefs. This event provided information for alternative marketing opportunities that can help restore a diverse, stable regional food economy.



Golden Sands RC&D

The Golden Sands RC&D utilized a \$12,000 NRCS National Agro-forestry Center grant to establish an agro-forestry demonstration in Portage County. The site includes sustainable practices like a solar powered electric deer fence, barn roof runoff collection and a gravity flow drip irrigation system.

Pri Ru Ta RC&D

In 2007, the three Pri-Ru-Ta Council Grazing Specialists assisted Field Offices by providing planning assistance on over 5000 acres in 14 Northwestern Counties. The Council is also assisting the NRCS with the development, promotion and distribution of soils data products.

Southwest Badger RC&D

The Driftless Area Initiative focuses on strengthening productive partnerships in this multi-state region by implementing projects of regional significance in support of natural resource conservation, sustainable rural economic development, and strengthened community identity and vitality. 2007 projects include the following:

- ✦ Bird Friendly Forestry in the Driftless Area, a collaborative project with the Community Forestry Resource Center and Audubon Minnesota with funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.
- ✦ Woody Biomass Utilization Study, a project to determine the real cost of making under utilized woody biomass from timber stand improvement and sustainable forest management available to the biomass energy market in the Driftless Area.
- ✦ Biomass Inventory and Analysis, a project to inventory existing warm season grass acreages in the Driftless Area of Wisconsin. The objective of this project is to determine the feasibility of using grasses such as switchgrass as a renewable energy source.



For further information on all the activities of RC&Ds in Wisconsin see the NRCS website at www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov/partnerships

Lumberjack RC&D

Lumberjack RC&D played an instrumental part in developing Shoreline Restoration projects in Marinette and Oconto counties. Several unique restorations included planting native prairie plants along with native trees and shrubs, incorporating no-mow areas and rip-rap to help curb lakeshore erosion. These restorations were documented and published as a motor-tour guide. Interested parties could view the restorations and then contact LCD's and UW-Extension for technical assistance. This approach proved to generate landowner interest with more projects being cost-shared with minimal staff time to promote restoration practices. The project was a joint effort between the Lumberjack RC&D Council, Marinette & Oconto County LCDs, WI Department of Natural Resources, and WI Department of Administration.

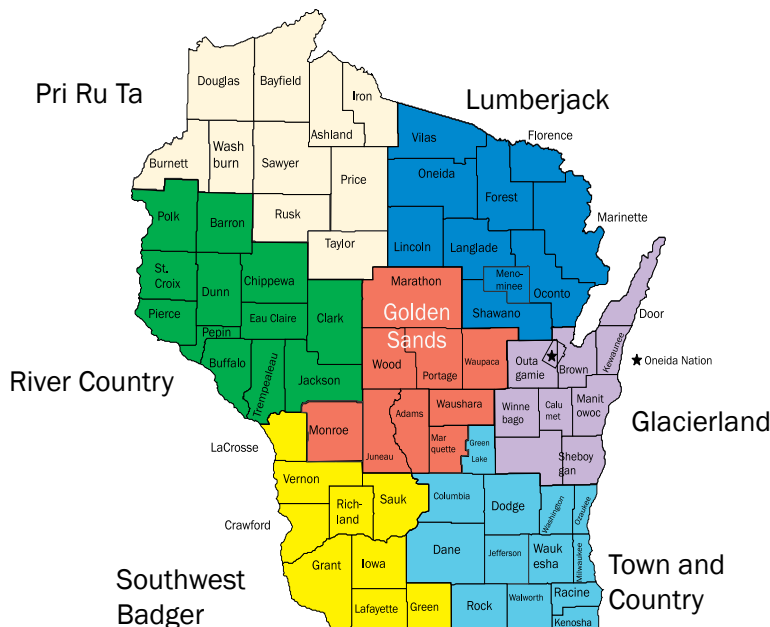


River Country RC&D

This year River Country branched out into new territory. The Council is assisting the City of Independence with a feasibility study to convert the Bugle Lake Dam to produce electricity using low-head hydro-power technology. River Country is also assisting Spring Valley and Elmwood to plan, design and build a non-motorized recreation trail that will connect the two villages.

Glacierland RC&D

Two new RC&D projects were launched to improve production on organic managed rotational grazing operations. The first project, "Benefits of Compost Tea on Grazed Pastures" measures the improvement in pasture grass growth and soil structure that result from the application of an aerated compost tea and the resulting benefits in increased milk production. The second project, "Benefits of Fish Hydrolysates-based Foliar Spray for Managed Intensive Grazing" tests the effect of applying a foliar spray composed of fish hydrolysates, soil microbial extracts, natural nitrogen sources and microscopic amounts of minerals. These beneficial microbes build soil, resulting in healthier pasture growth. The results of both of these research projects will be shared with other grass-based beef and dairy operations throughout the state.



Wisconsin RC&D Areas

Pri-Ru-Ta RC&D - Medford, Wisconsin
Serving Ashland, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Iron, Price, Rusk, Taylor and Washburn Counties
Contact: Chris Borden 715.748.2008

River Country RC&D - Altoona, Wisconsin
Serving Barron, Buffalo, Chippewa, Clark, Dunn, Eau Claire, Jackson, Pepin, Pierce, Polk, St. Croix and Trempealeau Counties
Contact: Pam Herdrich 715.834.9672

Lumberjack RC&D - Rhinelander, Wisconsin
Serving Forest, Florence, Langlade, Lincoln, Marinette, Menominee, Oconto, Oneida, Shawano and Vilas Counties
Contact: Kim Goerg 715.362.3690

Glacierland RC&D - Green Bay, Wisconsin
Serving Brown, Calumet, Door, Fond du Lac, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Outagamie, Sheboygan and Winnebago Counties and the Oneida Nation
Contact: Greg Hines 920.465.3006

Golden Sands RC&D - Stevens Point, Wisconsin
Serving Adams, Juneau, Marathon, Marquette, Monroe, Portage, Waupaca, Waushara and Wood Counties
Contact: Bill Ebert 715.343.6215

Southwest Badger RC&D - Lancaster Wisconsin
Serving Crawford, Grant, Iowa, Green, LaCrosse, Lafayette, Richland, Sauk and Vernon Counties
Contact: Steve Bertjens 608.723.6377

Town and Country RC&D - West Bend, Wisconsin
Serving Dane, Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Green Lake, Jefferson, Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Rock, Walworth, Washington and Waukesha Counties
Contact: 262.335.4855





Rapid Watershed Assessments

The Wisconsin NRCS Rapid Watershed Assessments (RWA) provide initial estimates of where conservation investments could best address the concerns within a watershed. These assessments help landowners and local leaders set priorities and determine the best action for their resource concerns. It is used as a foundation for watershed area-wide planning. They provide a preliminary source of information for standard environmental evaluations.

The watershed resource profile contains:

- ✧ A general description of the location, size of the watershed
- ✧ Common Resource Areas that are determined by landscape conditions, soil, climate and human considerations
- ✧ Physical description including land use/land cover, precipitation/climate,
- ✧ 303(d) Listed Waters Map
- ✧ Soils information
- ✧ Land capability classes, drainage and farmland classification River maps
- ✧ Known resource concerns and ecological landscapes
- ✧ NRCS Performance Results Systems (PRS) that reflects progress on several key areas of conservation
- ✧ Census and social data
- ✧ Status and history of resources conservation in the watershed
- ✧ References and data sources

Wisconsin recently completed the following Rapid Watershed Assessments and are now available on the web at www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov/technical

- ✧ Grant/Little Maquoketa River
- ✧ Upper Rock River
- ✧ Lake du Bay
- ✧ Lower Rock River
- ✧ Pensaukee River
- ✧ Lower Wisconsin River
- ✧ Lower Fox River
- ✧ Milwaukee River
- ✧ Lake Winnebago



Wisconsin will continue to add Rapid Watershed Assessments to our website. Ten new assessments are scheduled to be completed in 2008.

Outreach

NRCS is dedicated to reaching out to all producers and potential customers to offer our programs and services equitably to those who need them. For over a decade, Wisconsin NRCS has been working closely and productively with the Indian nations in our state to help them restore and manage their resources. Other groups with special needs for outreach include the Hmong, Hispanic farmers and farm workers, religious groups, and also new and beginning farmers.

Some highlights in 2007:

Outreach to Hmong Producers – NRCS focused outreach efforts to the growing Hmong population in Wisconsin in 2007. Hmong were US allies during the Vietnam War, and since then, thousands have come to call Wisconsin home. The Hmong have an agricultural heritage and have begun to flourish as producers of fresh market vegetables. Wisconsin now ranks third in the nation for Hmong population. Outreach efforts included participation in the Wisconsin Hmong Association Annual Conference, demonstrations of web soil survey for making land-purchase decisions, distributing information on pest management, poultry biosecurity to prevent Avian Influenza, and working with the USDA National Ag Statistics Service to help identify Hmong growers for the upcoming ag census.

Outreach to Hispanic Farmers – Through a special direct mailing, NRCS sent letters in Spanish and English the Hispanic farm owner/operators identified through the National Agricultural Statistics Service. The letter and NRCS program brochure provided an introduction to NRCS programs and technical assistance, with contact information for Spanish and English speakers.

Assistance to Tribal Nations in Wisconsin

The Wisconsin Tribal Conservation Advisory Council continues to grow and to evolve. In 2007, NRCS assisted WTCAC in crafting a long-range strategic plan to build stronger infrastructure for WTCAC and focus its work for better results. NRCS allocates funds from both the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program for tribal projects, with WTCAC providing review and approval of projects.

- ✦ Ten new major EQIP contracts were approved in 2007 for Wisconsin tribes. Projects include well decommissioning, sediment basin, many forestry practices, stream crossing, fencing and erosion control measures. In addition, work continued or was completed on 28 EQIP contracts from previous years.
- ✦ Five new major WHIP projects were approved in 2007, including a dam removal, prairie and oak savannah restoration, wild rice seeding, waterfowl habitat development and invasive species control.

New and Beginning Farmers

Wisconsin NRCS participated in the national USDA Risk Management Agency conference in Milwaukee, co-sponsored by Growing Power. The conference brought together over 600 new and beginning farmers, as well as the agency and business professionals who serve them. The focus was on communications to help better nurture and support our beginning farmers as the future of agriculture.





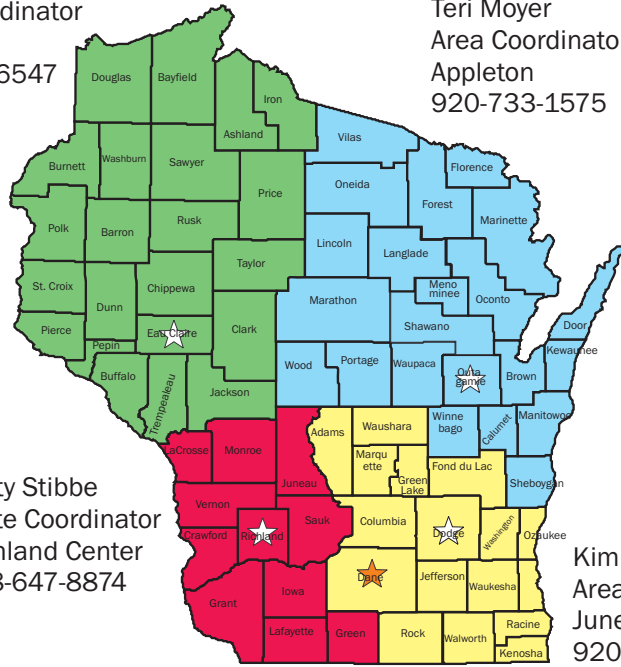
Earth Team Volunteer Program

Volunteer support is an ideal way to help NRCS achieve it's organizational goals. The collective talents and energies of private individuals helps NRCS in conserving our natural resources. Volunteering has always been a cornerstone of soil and water conservation efforts. In recognition of the interest and skills of people interested in conservation, legislation was passed in 1981, to allow NRCS to use volunteers in it's programs. This is how the Earth Team, the volunteer arm of NRCS was initiated.

In 2007, 75 Volunteers contributed 12,487 hours in offices across the state. This is the equivalent of over 6 full time employees. The contribution of these volunteers carry more value than a dollar amount; the Earth Team volunteers are dedicated to their cause -- caring for the Earth.

Laura Carlson Humphrey
Area Coordinator
Altoona
715-832-6547

Teri Moyer
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For information about the Earth Team <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/feature/volunteers/>

Cooperative Conservation

We believe that enduring conservation is achieved only by the cooperative efforts of individuals, agencies, and organizations in Wisconsin. For over 70 years, NRCS has worked cooperatively with its partners to help people get conservation on the land. NRCS, County Land Conservation Districts and Departments, State conservation agencies, and RC&D councils represent a unique Federal, State, and local partnership dedicated to natural resource conservation. Known and trusted by landowners, managers, and officials at the local level, we are able to facilitate locally led conservation efforts that meet local goals. Today, there is growing appreciation for the effectiveness of cooperative approaches that conserve and protect natural resources.

Thank you to all the partners that made 2007 a great year for conservation in Wisconsin:

- ✧ Tribal Nations
- ✧ State and County governments
- ✧ County Land Conservation Committees and Departments
- ✧ State Technical Committee
- ✧ Wisconsin Intertribal Conservation Advisory Council
- ✧ Wisconsin Cooperative Conservation Initiative



U.S. Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service



Helping People Help The Land





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