

DODGE COUNTY LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT 2024 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.

2024 LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

Andrew JohnsonChair
Lisa DerrVice-Chair
John Kraus Jr.....Secretary
Dale MacheelCommittee Member
Benjamin PriesgenCommittee Member
Bill FoleyLake District Representative
Ken WeningerMember Representing the Ag Community



L to R: Benjamin Priesgen, Lisa Derr, Ken Weninger, Andrew Johnson, Dale Macheel, John Kraus Jr., and Bill Foley.

2024 LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT STAFF

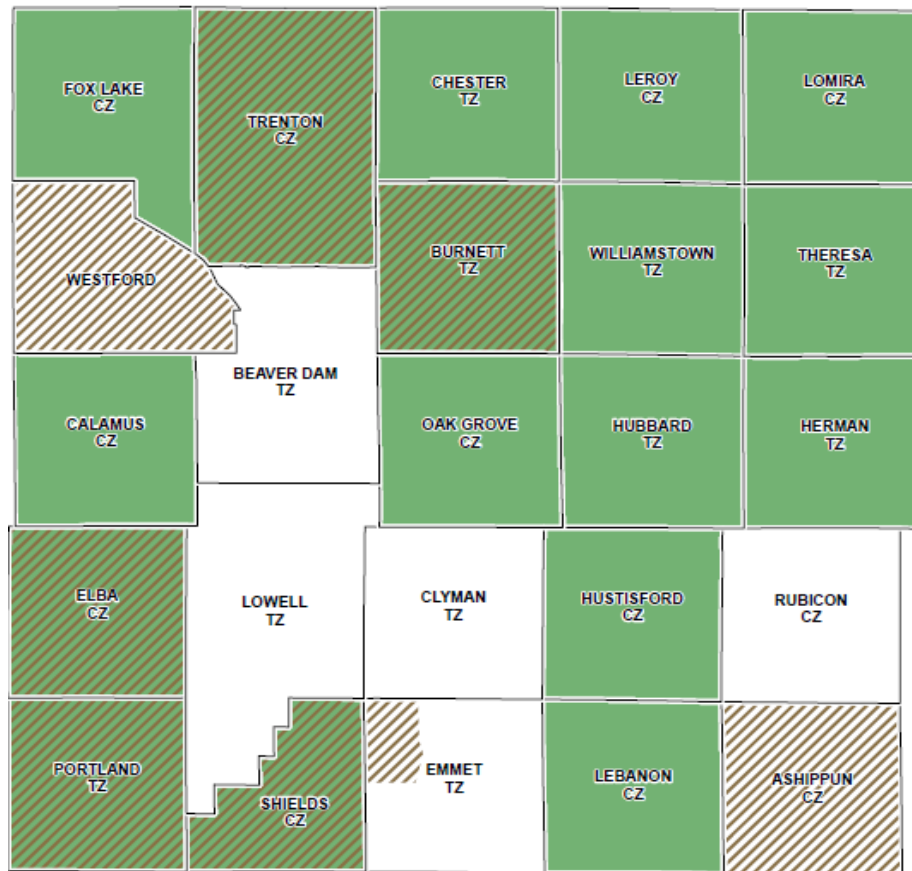
John Bohonek.....County Conservationist
Dave Braunschweig.....Conservation Technician
Jon Duckert.....Farmland Preservation Technician
Robert Bird.....Conservation Agronomist
Jared Winter.....Conservation Technician
Becky Justmann.....Administrative Secretary



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

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 \$10.00/acre, or \$12.50/acre. In 2024 we had a total of 115495 acres in the Farmland Preservation Program. This is an increase of 1,735 acres from 2023. We completed 146 status reviews monitoring compliance with NR151 performance standards.



 **Farmland Preservation Zoning**
- \$10.00/acre tax credit

 **Farmland Preservation Zoning
and Agricultural Enterprise Area**
- \$12.50/acre

CZ -- County Zoning | TZ -- Town Zoning

 **Agricultural Enterprise Area**
- \$10.00/acre tax credit

LAND AND WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

In 2024, \$48,970.91 of cost share money was spent on the following projects to Dodge County residents. \$3,880.00 was committed to projects that could not be completed due to the weather or contractor schedules and will be carried forward into 2025. The projects that were completed resulted in reducing 71 tons of sediment, and 86 pounds of phosphorus running off into our surface waters.

- 23 Wells were abandoned
- 1 Grazing plan implemented covering 15 acres
- 1.9 Acre Grassed Waterway
- 0.25 Acres Critical Area Seeding
- 35 Acres of Cover Crops
- 412 Feet of Animal Trails and Walkways
- 1 Waste Facility Closure
- 366 Feet Streambank and Shoreline Protection
- 600 Feet of Diversion

Critical Area Seeding



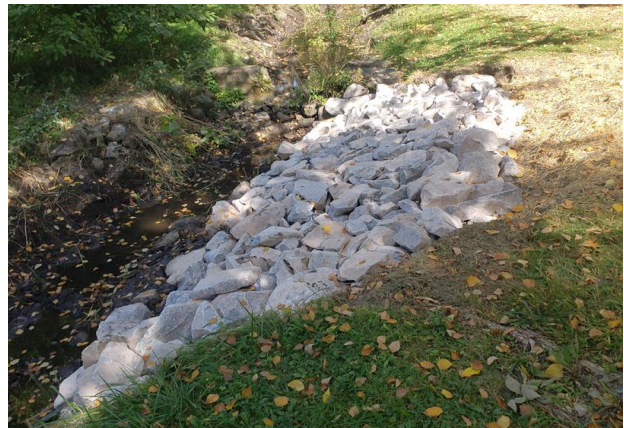
Grassed Waterway



Managed Grazing



Streambank Protection



ANIMAL WASTE ORDINANCE

Two permits were issued in 2024 under the Dodge County Manure Storage Ordinance. All projects were designed by private engineers. The construction plans were reviewed by our office and DATCP.

1 permit was issued for Waste Facility Closure.



WILDLIFE CROP DAMAGE ABATEMENT AND CLAIMS PROGRAM

Dodge County had 2 claims for Wildlife damage in 2024. The crop damage was assessed at a value of \$1,998.29. Wildlife crop damage payments were processed to 2 producers for a total of \$998.29. 79 deer were donated under the Venison Donation Program, resulting in 2,144 pounds of venison being donated to our local food pantries.

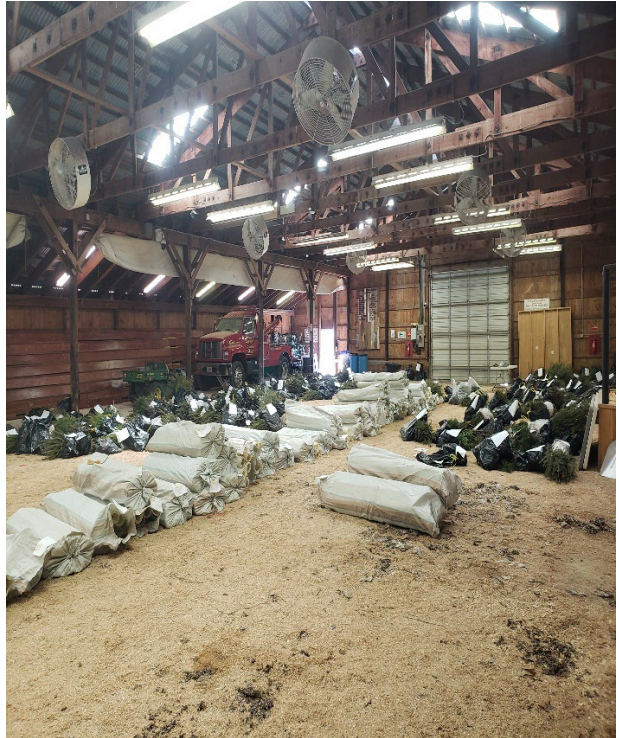
NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT

We hosted a “Chemical Properties Workshop”. 42 people attended learning about soil testing, interpreting soil tests, manure and legume crediting, and fertilizer recommendations.



TREE PROGRAM

We held our 21st annual tree sales program. Our trees come from Laura's Lane Nursery in Plainfield, WI, and Alpha Nurseries Inc. Michigan. We sold 21,625 trees and 2888 tree tubes in 2023-2024 season to 255 property owners. This is a decrease of 800 trees and an increase of 688 tree tubes from 2022-2023 season.



Our tree planter was rented out to three landowners planting 12,000 trees.



Dodge County Groundwater Quality Index

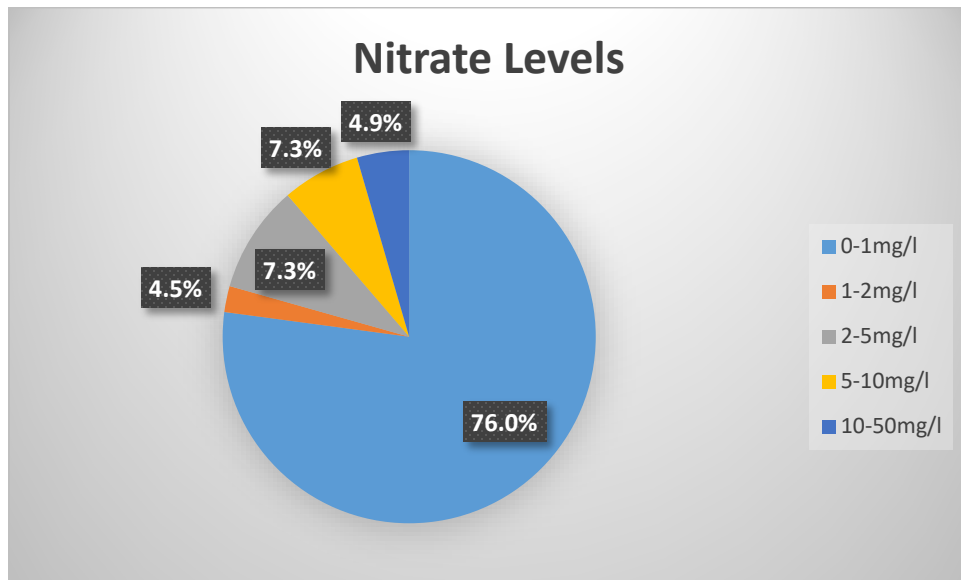
The results from our third year of well testing are shown in the graph below. We had a total of 287 wells tested. 37 property owners opted out of the program from last year.

- 4.9% of the samples exceeded the state and federal standards for nitrate in public drinking water of 10mg/l. No infant or any female who is or may become pregnant should consume any water that exceeds this standard.
- 7.3% tested in the range of 5-10mg/l. It is recommended that wells in this range be tested annually.

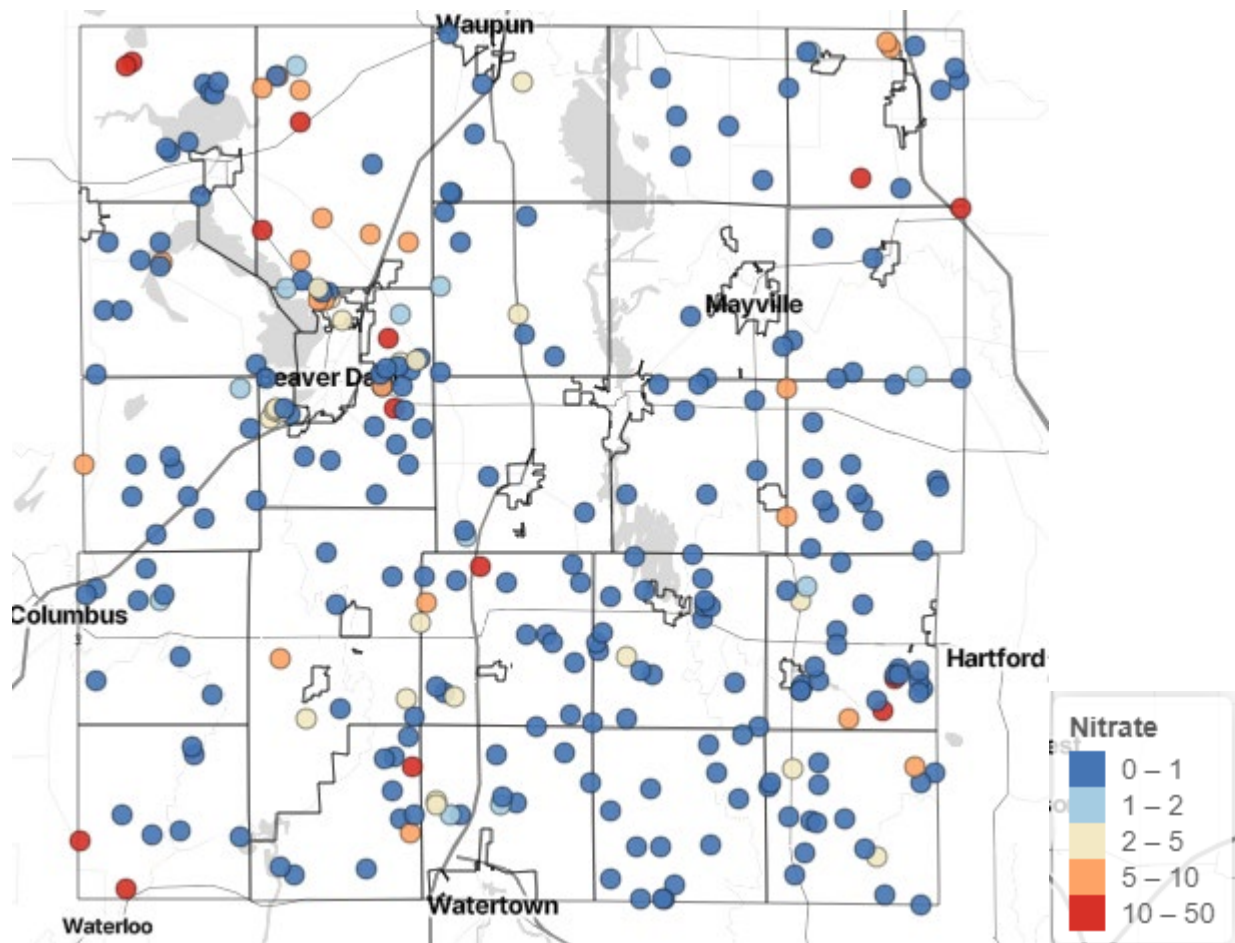
Of the 37 wells that dropped out of the program, their second-year test showed that 26 wells tested in the 0-1mg/l range, 4 wells tested in the 1-2mg/l range, 1 well tested in the 2-5mg/l range, 1 wells tested in the 5-10mg/l range, and 4 wells tested greater than 10mg/l.

Overall, the fourth year of testing showed nitrate levels stayed about the same.

When the results from our fifth year are back, UW-Stevens Point will put together a summary of the 5-year test cycle. The Land and Water Conservation Committee will discuss the summary and discuss what their options are for the future.



Percent of Wells testing in Each Range



Approximate Location and Nitrate Levels of Wells

Poster Contest

The Theme this year was **“May The Forest Be With You Always”**. We received 43 posters this year.

	K-1		2-3		4-6		7-9		10-12	
Place	Name	Grade	Name	Grade	Name	Grade	Name	Grade	Name	Grade
1 st	Willa Smart	1	Charlotte Maas	3	Kelli Mickow	6	Makenna Casper	7	Kayla Millikin	12
2 nd	Mason Sperla	1	Bevan Smart	3	Levi Maas	5	Aubery Droese	9		
3 rd	Skyler Peters	1	Kyla Wyse	3	Ben Bridges	5	Ruthie Shotton	9		

Our first-place winners moved on to the Southern Area Contest. Charlotte Maas in the 2-3 grade level placed 3rd. Makenna Casper in the 7-9 grade level placed 2nd. Kayla Millikin in the 10-12 grade level placed 3rd.



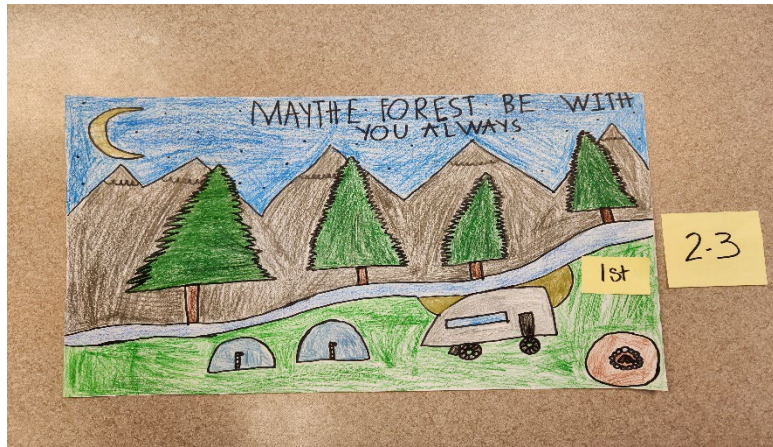
1st place grade K-1



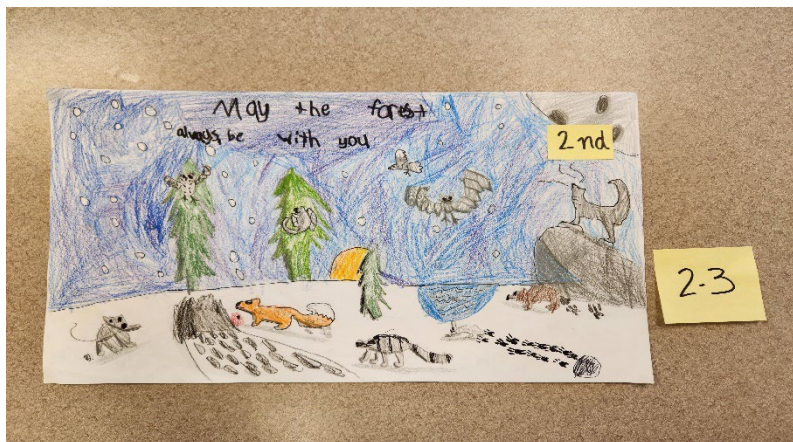
2nd place grade K-1



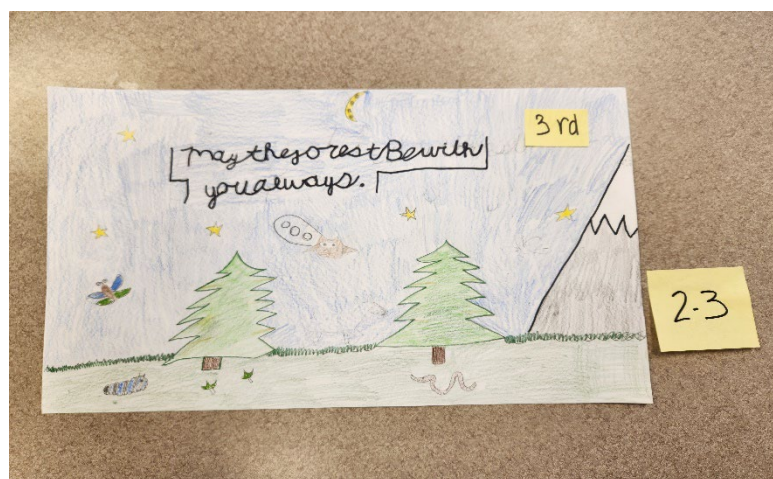
3rd place grade K-1



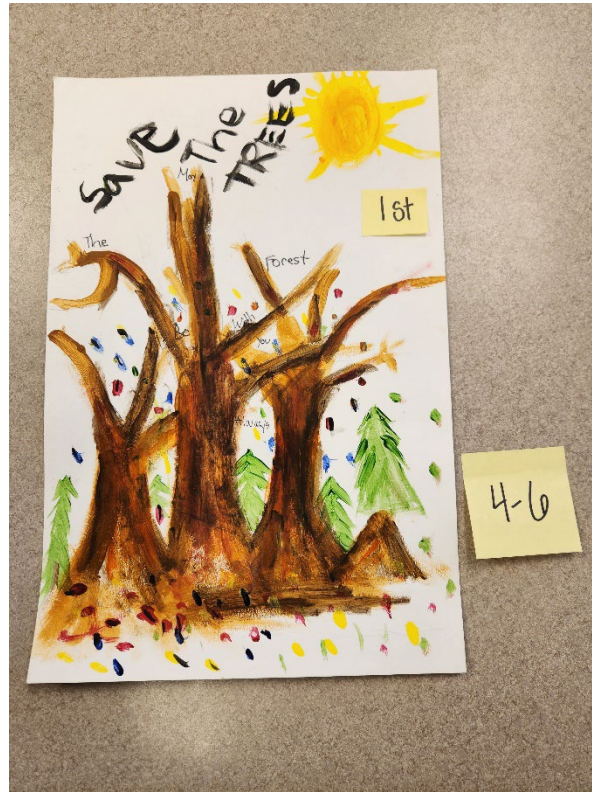
1st place grade 2-3



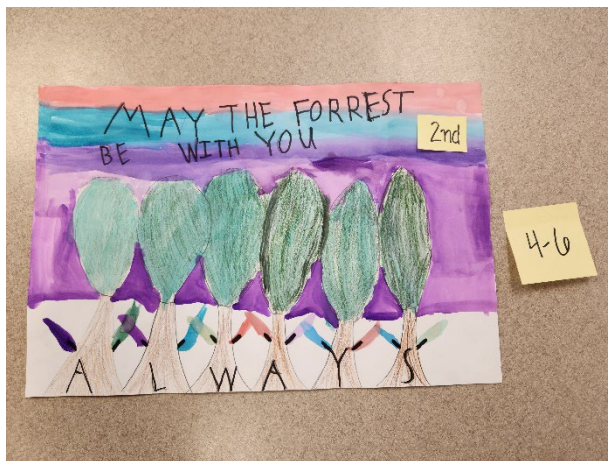
2nd place grade 2-3



3rd place grade 2-3



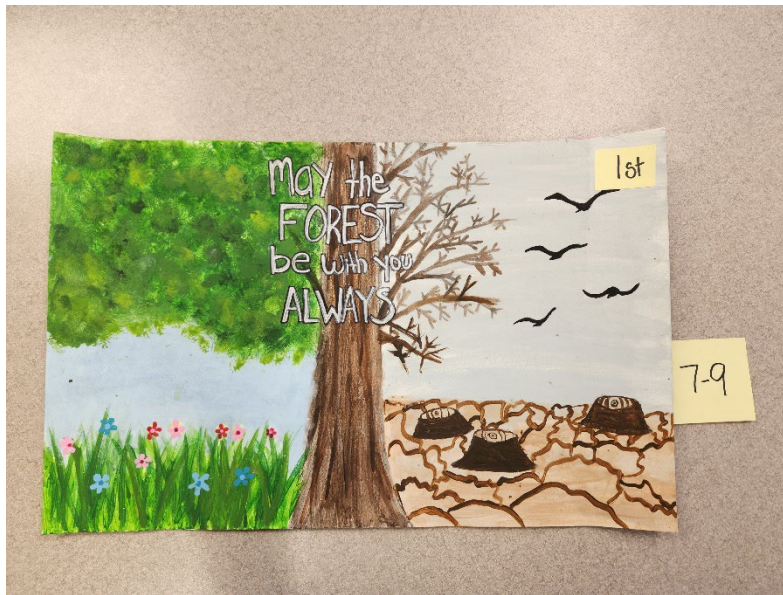
1st place grade 4-6



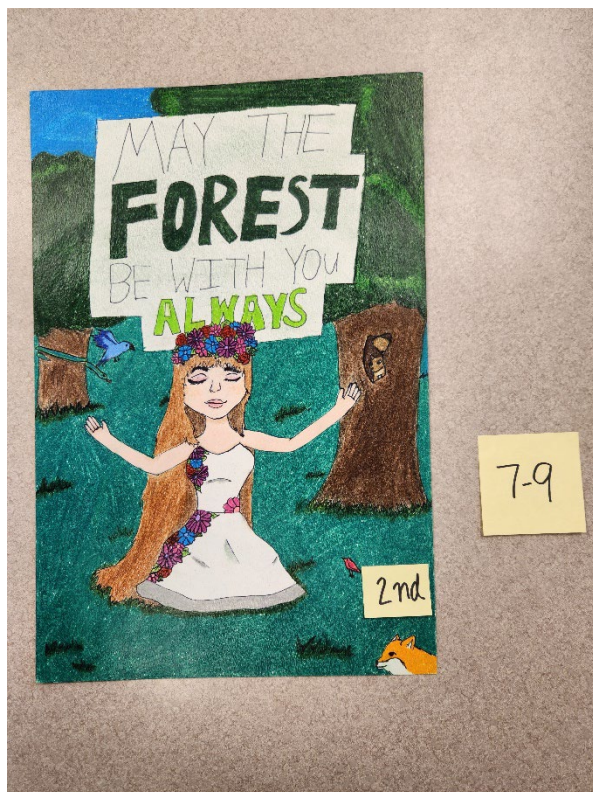
2nd place grade 4-6



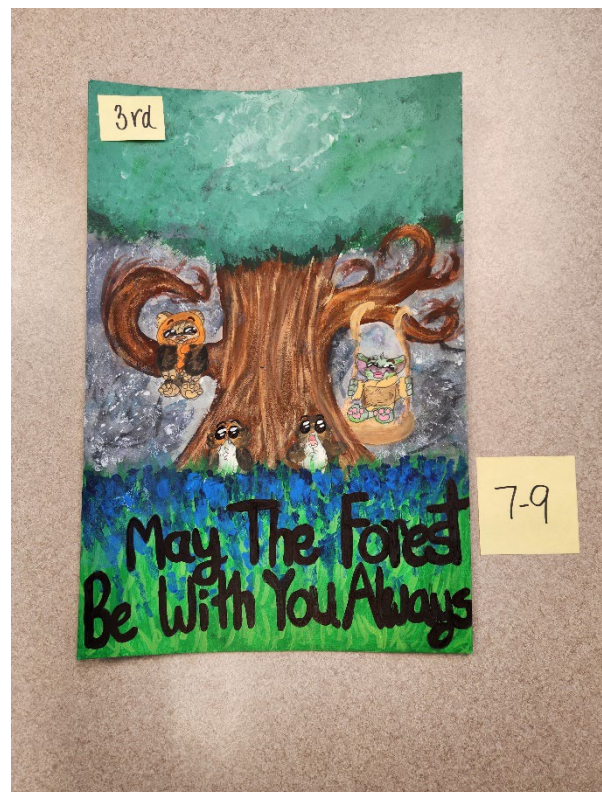
3rd place grade 4-6



1st place grade 7-9



2nd place grade 7-9



3rd place grade 7-9



1st place grade 10-12

Pasture Walk

In June, 41 people attended a pasture walk. Topics of discussion include:

1. Planning Grazing on your Farm
 - Decision Making
 - Management
2. Grazing Infrastructure
 - Fences
 - Livestock Waterlines
 - Forage Selection
 - Grazing Lanes
3. Alternative forage solutions
 - Interseeding Cover Crops
 - Grazing cover crops planted after wheat
4. Grazing economics
 - Profitability
 - Making grazing make sense for you



SOIL HEALTH CLINIC

In October we hosted a Soil Health Clinic in the Wildcat Creek Watershed. 12 landowners learned about the basics of soil health and what they can do to improve the soil health on their farms.



A free soil health kit (paid for through a DNR grant) was provided to each landowner. They also got to look at a soil profile and see the rainfall simulator.



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 is working with UW- Discovery Farms conducting Nitrogen Use Efficiency studies. They received a \$26,400 grant from the Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection that they use to provide the following educational events and offer incentive payments for installing conservation practices including cover crops.

February Conference

This Soil Health Expo was held on February 7th in the Juneau Community Center. The theme for this year’s expo was “Benefitting from Soil Health”. The main speaker was Blake Vince. 148 people attended the Expo.

Blake Vince is a farmer from Ontario, Canada farming 1,200 acres of corn, soybean, wheat and cover crop seed. He began no-till in the early 1980’s. He discussed the benefits of planting cover crops and the importance of having biodiversity within an ecosystem.

Other speakers were Jeff Hadachek-UW-Extension, Bill Stangel-Crop Consultant, Jum Stute-Independent Research Agronomist, and Greg Olsen-Sand County Foundation. Their topics included: “Running the Numbers for Adding Wheat in Your Rotation”, “DATCP NOPP Trial Data”, “Timing/Weed Suppression”, and “Comparing Soil Sensor Data”, respectively.

Pre-Plant Workshop

On April 3rd a pre-plant workshop was held on a farm in the town of Rubicon to discuss “Spring planter Tune-up”. The landowner had his planter and grain drill on display. An equipment representative discussed how to adjust your planters correctly. 62 people attended this event.

August Field Day

On August 7th an event was held in the Town of Leroy. The topics for this event was, “Covers after Wheat”. A drone demonstration was given on how they can become part of your practices used. Low disturbance manure injection was also demonstrated showing how you can apply manure with less tillage. 83 people attended this event.

Fall Cover Crop Showcase

This event was held on a field near Hustisford on September 26th. This event was open to farmers and lake residents. A field that was planted with several different cover crop mixes. Some mixes were flown on with a drone before Winter Wheat harvest and the rest was drilled in after harvest. Conditions were perfect this year for flown on covers. There was discussion on when certain mixes should be used vs. other mixes. 33 people attended this meeting.

Fall Wrap Up

On November 21st, 32 members met in a more social environment to discuss what worked, what didn't, what challenges they faced, and what changes or new ideas they plan to make next year.

Incentives Programs

The farmer's group incentive program had 18 landowners participate in programs. Cover Crops, No-Till, and Strip-Till. The Cover Crop program had 1,684 acres enrolled, No-till had 1,455 acres, and Strip-Till had 2,000 acres.