Natural Resources Conservation Service

Wisconsin Report 2013

NRCS technical assistance programs help protect the environment, preserve the nation's natural resources and improve agricultural sustainability through voluntary conservation of private lands.

USDA

From the desk of the State Conservationist

Greetings!

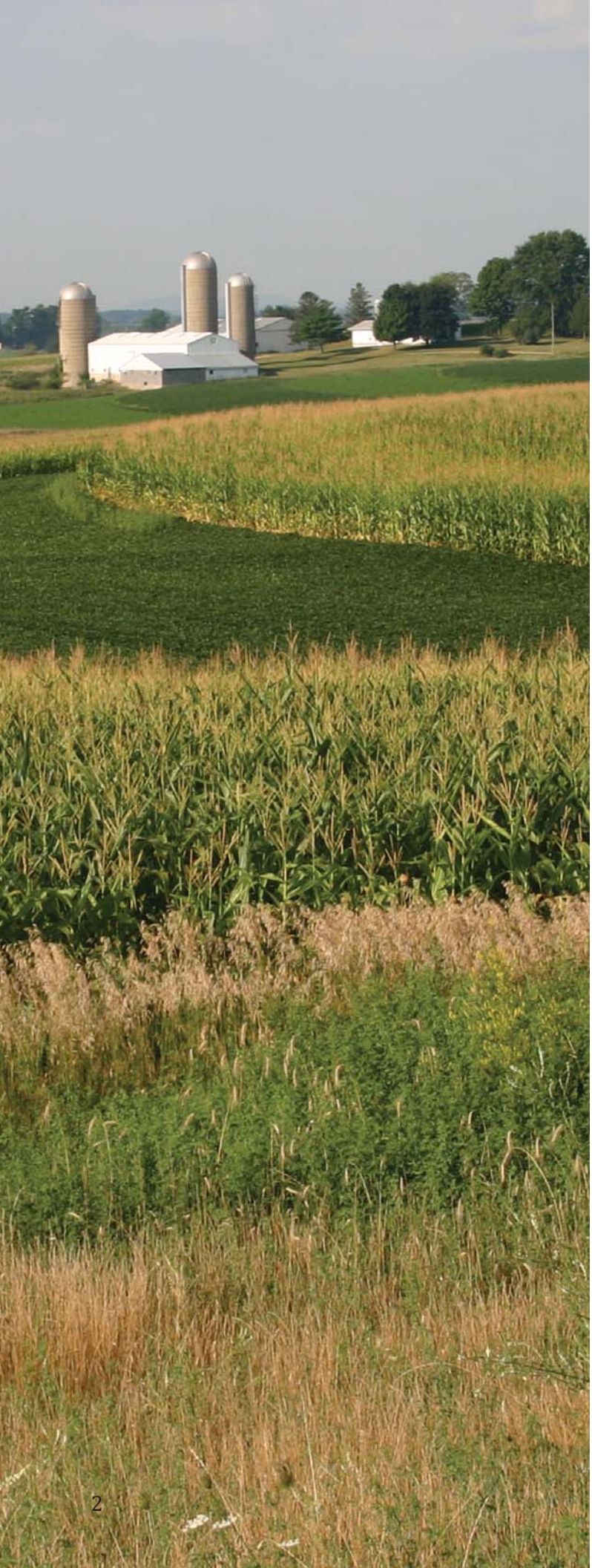
It has been one year since I arrived in Wisconsin to take on the job of State Conservationist, following in the footsteps of Pat Leavenworth, who had guided NRCS here for 18 years. It has been a challenging year, getting my feet on the ground, meeting the players in this grand conservation arena, and learning to love the cold, not to mention enduring a 16-day federal furlough in October.

As you will see in the pages ahead, we have had many great accomplishments in this first exciting year, and there are many people to thank for them:

- The farmers in Wisconsin who stepped up to enroll in the Conservation Stewardship Program and Environmental Quality Incentives Program, adding new acres of conservation; and the thousands of farmers and landowners seeking only conservation technical assistance to remedy an erosion problem, improve their water quality, conserve their water, or enhance wildlife habitat, thank you;
- The many partners in conservation that we work with, particularly the Land Conservation Committees and Departments, collaborating to make the most of our dollars and provide the best technical assistance and programs possible, thank you;
- The NRCS staff, who shoulder an at times overwhelming workload, but they gain the pleasure of seeing the work that they do build healthier land and water. In 2013, conservation plans were written covering 353,301 acres. We obligated $32 million in contracts with farmers for conservation efforts. To all of you, thank you! thank you! thank you!

I am proud to share with you the 2013 Wisconsin Report from NRCS, highlighting some of our conservation accomplishments. I welcome your comments and feedback, and look forward to another great year.

Jimmy Bramblett



The mission of the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service is to work with farmers and forest landowners helping them make good conservation decisions about their land.

NRCS programs are voluntary and incentive-based. Producers apply to participate in NRCS programs and we provide them with the technical guidance and financial assistance they need to implement proven conservation practices on their lands.

The conservation practices NRCS promotes - everything from practices that manage excess nutrients and waste on farms to practices that promote soil health, among a host of others, are helping to protect our natural resources for the long term while at the same time improving Wisconsin farms. It's about taking care of the landscape in concert with agricultural productivity.

Conservation Technical Assistance

NRCS has assisted Wisconsin landowners in conserving resources on private lands for over 75 years. Technical assistance is the help provided by NRCS to address opportunities, concerns, and problems related to the use of natural resources. It helps landowners make sound resource management decisions on private, tribal, and other non-federal lands. This technical assistance is the primary mission of NRCS.

Every county in Wisconsin has a conservation team to assist in conservation planning. These plans are specific on-farm resource assessments and serve as the foundation for participation in other programs. Having a conservation plan allows interested parties to participate in financial assistance and easement programs. CTA is carried out by NRCS in cooperation with local county conservation professionals.

Conservation Accomplishments of ALL NRCS Programs* Highlights for FY 2013

- Conservation Plans Written on 353,301 acres
- Wetlands Created, Restored or Enhanced on 2,928 acres
- Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans Written = 86
- Land with Conservation Applied to Improve Water Quality = 423,623 acres
- Land with Conservation Applied to Improve Soil Quality = 388,828 acres
- Land with Conservation Applied to Improve Irrigation Efficiencies = 5,608 acres
- Grazing with Conservation Applied to Improve Resource Base = 21,494 acres
- Non-Federal Land with Conservation Applied to Improve Fish and Wildlife Habitat Quality = 37,130 acres
- Forest Land with Conservation Applied to Protect and Improve Vegetative Condition = 23,956 acres

*Source: Performance Results System (PRS) report for NRCS Wisconsin September 2013

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides a voluntary conservation program for farmers that promotes agricultural production, forest management and environmental quality. EQIP offers financial and technical help to eligible participants to install or implement structural, agronomic or management conservation practices on their land to protect soil and water quality.

Farmers develop a conservation plan, if they don't already have one, for the acreage affected by the EQIP practices. Conservation practices must meet NRCS technical standards. NRCS evaluates and ranks each application, with higher priorities given to the practices that address local resource concerns, and provide the most environmental benefit.

Financial Assistance FY13 = $32.4 million*
Number of Contracts FY 13 = 1550
Number of acres = 147,955
*includes all initiatives and special funding

EQIP Grazing Success Story
Winter Bale Grazing Offers Perfect Solution for Richardsons

In 2006, Art and Rheta Richardson were forced to sell their dairy herd after Art suffered a debilitating hand injury. That left them with some difficult choices. "This land is dear to us," Rheta explained. "We could have sold, plowed for corn – it was big decision what to do, at the age of 67."

They had always had a small beef herd, and decided to focus there at first, grazing the old way – like Rheta's dad did when he started in 1959.

NRCS District Conservationist Lisa Neuenfeldt in Waupaca told Art about a great new way to graze when he was in the office working on a nutrient management plan. Lisa considers grazing to be one of the best practices available for soil health and successful family farm operations.

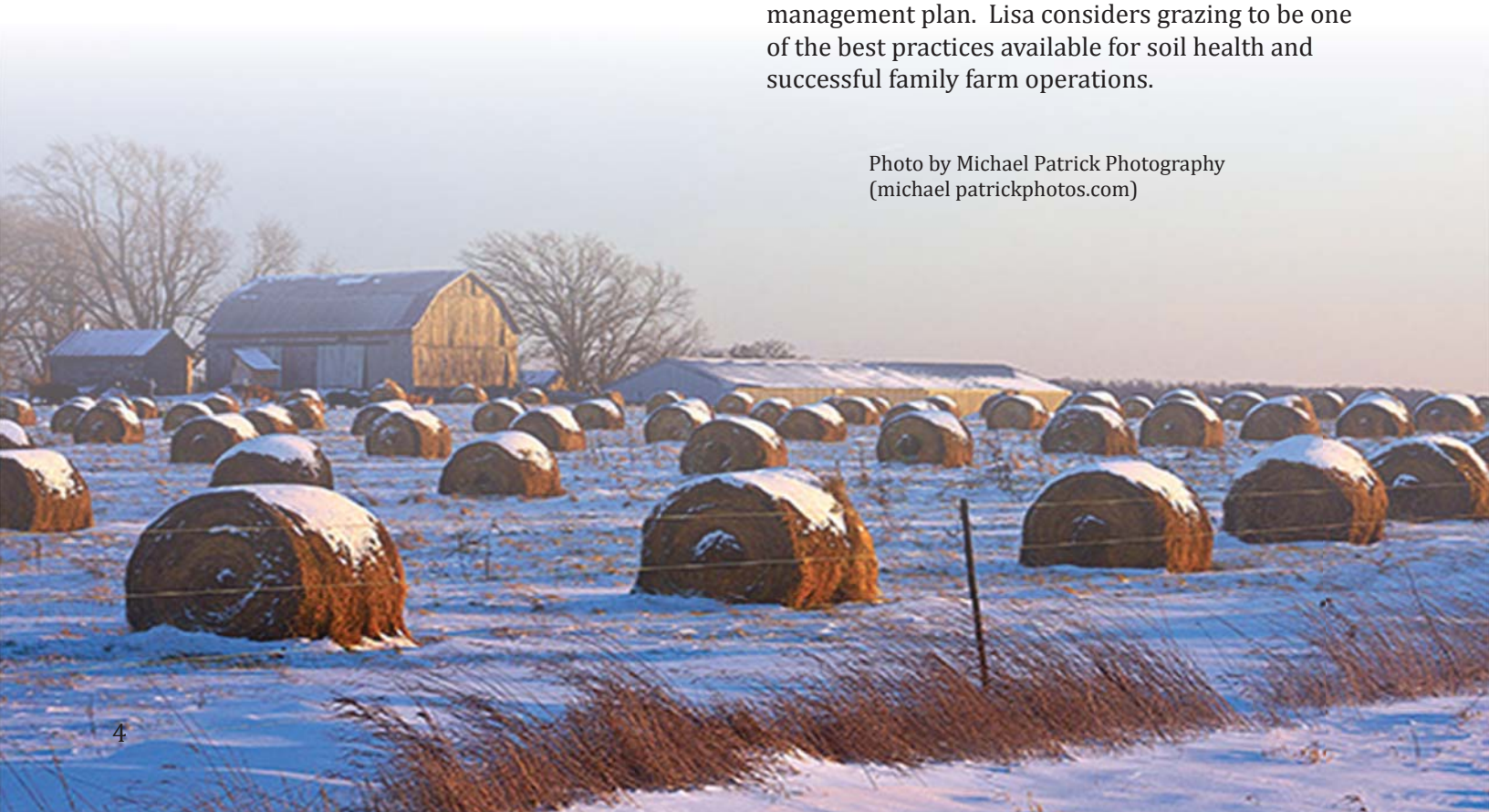


Photo by Michael Patrick Photography
(michael patrickphotos.com)

Getting Started

"NRCS is so helpful, they have been phenomenal," says Art. Adam Abel, NRCS Soil Conservationist, worked with Art to help him get started with a prescribed grazing plan for the farm, including pasture size and layout, fencing and watering systems and how to outwinter cattle in north central Wisconsin.

NRCS helped Art calculate how many animals the land could support, and Art has followed those recommendations when purchasing animals and selling stock. The NRCS technical assistance made all the difference, according to Art and Rita. They had lots of questions as they got started, and practical guidance from NRCS led to success.

The Richardson's applied to the Environmental Quality Incentives Program for financial assistance for fencing, watering systems and other practices.

Fencing

A well-planned fencing layout allows for flexible management, whether it be grazing, taking a crop of hay, or outwintering. Payments for both interior and perimeter fencing are available through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

Watering Systems

All paddocks have water via above ground pipeline for seasonal use. Buried pipelines supply winter water hydrants, which are heated and energy efficient, allowing steady access through even the coldest days.

Feed and Forage

With 240 acres, 110 acres are now grass and hay for baling, and the rest are fenced and seeded for grazing. Large round bales are harvested through the growing season from the hay fields and also from the pastures when there is excess forage.With the old grazing system, pastures were depleted by Aug 1, but with the managed rotation, grazing can continue to November.

Winter Management

In the winter, cattle feed on round bales that have been placed evenly across the field. The portable fencing is easily moved to allow cattle access to a few bales at a time. The outwintered fields recover very quickly in spring. Different fields are rotated for outwintering each year to move nutrients around the farm.

"The system works for Art and Rheta because they understand about leaving enough residue for healthy and rapid plant regrowth," notes Adam. "What you leave is what you get back."

Art no longer spends hours cleaning barns and hauling feed as he did with the dairy. On his farm, it takes him 15 minutes to move the fence to a new pasture or a new row of bales. Year round grazing systems offer a great alternative for any farm, especially small farms, beginning farmers and as Art and Rheta demonstrate, retiring farmers.

"I was skeptical. But this is such a pleasure. It's fun and so easy, and so much better for the land and our health, and it's profitable," proclaims Art.

Conservation Stewardship Program

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) encourages agricultural and forest landowners to maintain existing conservation systems and make new conservation improvements such as improved soil erosion control, better water quality practices, wildlife habitat management, or energy efficiency improvements. CSP provides financial and technical assistance to help land stewards conserve and enhance soil, water, air, and related natural resources on their land The CSP encourages farmers to broadly improve their conservation effort to protect water and air quality, improve soil quality, store carbon in soils, add wildlife habitat, conserve water, and save energy.

Financial Assistance FY 13 = $1.7 million
New Contracts FY13 = 308 contracts
Number of New Acres FY13 = 94,424

Being a good steward of the land has its rewards.

CSP Success Story
800,000 Acres Enrolled in CSP in Wisconsin

Over 300 Wisconsin farmers enrolled 94,425 acres, in the Conservation Stewardship Program during the 2013 sign-up, pushing the state total over the 800,000 acre mark.

Calvin Sebranek, of Richland County, enrolled the 800,000th acre into the Conservation Stewardship Program in Wisconsin.

To show their support for conservation and the Conservation Stewardship Program, the Wisconsin Dept. of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection and the Michael Fields Ag Institute joined with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in recognizing this milestone, and honoring Mr. Sebranek for his stewardship of the land at an event in Madison on Dec. 10.

The Sebranek farm is a 400 acre cash grain/beef operation in Richland County that has been in the family since 1942.

Conservation and environmental protection has always been a priority on the farm. In 1975, Calvin's dad constructed the first grade stabilization dam on the farm. Under Calvin's ownership several other conservation practices have been initiated. The cropland is farmed no-till with contour and conservation buffer strips. Through the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) Calvin has successfully completed a comprehensive nutrient management plan including the development of a 285 acre nutrient management plan.

One long-term problem on the farm has been the increasing loss of cropland due to the encroachment of eroding streambanks. Fancy Creek runs through the most highly productive cropland on the farm. In recent years, severe storms have damaged the cropland and stream ecosystem. With assistance from NRCS District Conservationist Carlton Peterson, the Sebranek's applied for EQIP to help restore the stream and stop the cropland erosion. Since 2008, over a mile of streambank protection and habitat improvement has been completed.

Calvin and Joyce have long believed in leaving the land better for future generations and held a strong sense of sustainable farming and environmental protection for family and community. CSP emphasizes conservation performance to earn higher payments. In CSP, farmers choose from many conservation enhancements to improve soil health, water quality and quantity, air quality, plant resources, wildlife and energy conservation.

Some popular enhancements include:

- Establishing cover crops to protect and improve soil health.
- Using new nozzles that reduce the drift of pesticides, lowering input costs and making sure pesticides are used where they are most needed.
- Modifying water facilities to prevent bats and bird species from being trapped.
- Rotating feeding areas and monitoring key grazing areas to improve grazing management.

Calvin Sebranek (L) accepting a plaque recognizing the CSP milestone from Jimmy Bramblett, State Conservationist.

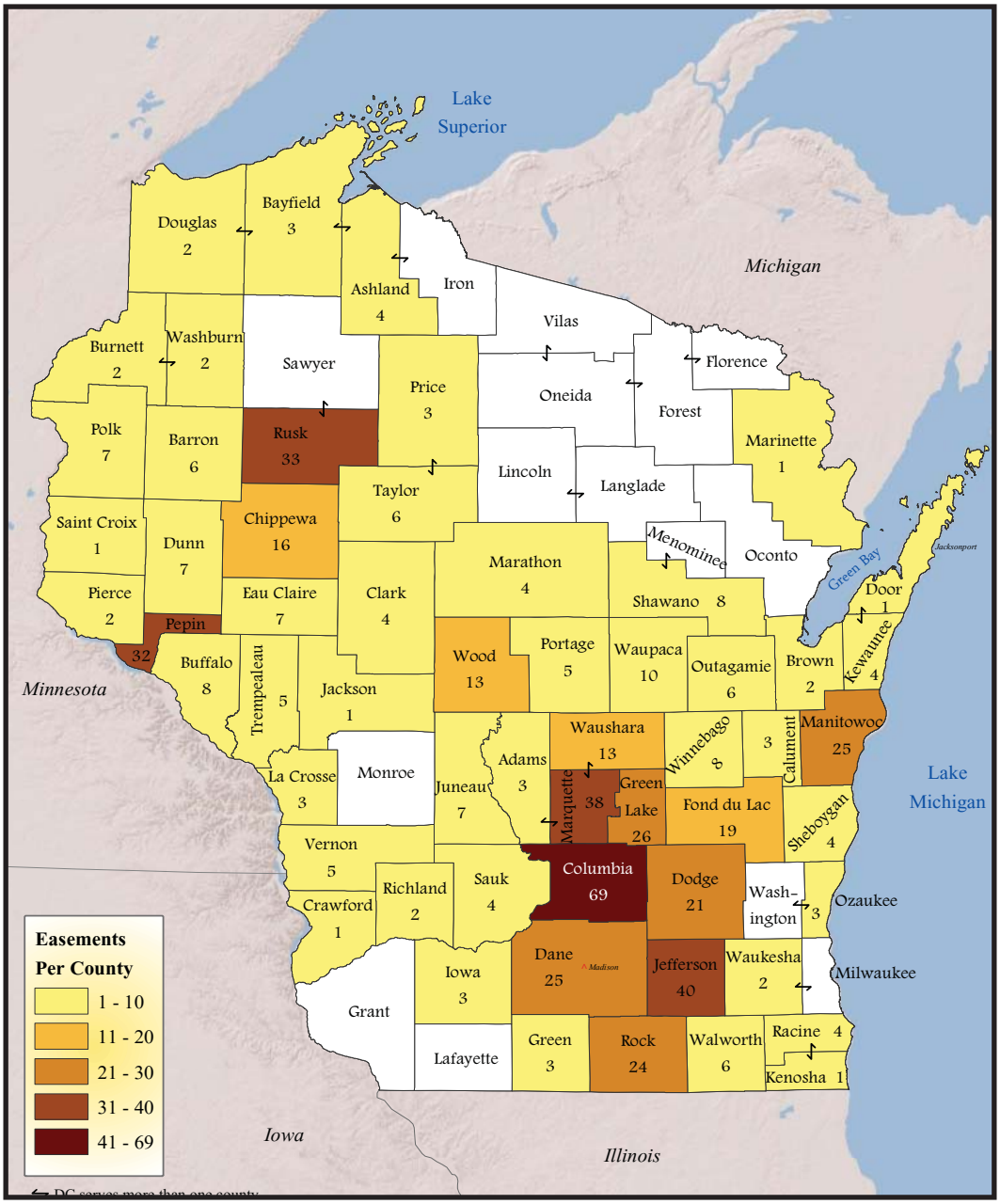
Easement Programs

Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)

WRP is a voluntary land retirement program to restore, protect and enhance wetlands on private property. It is an opportunity for landowners to receive financial incentives to restore wetlands that have been drained for agricultural production or have been altered by multiple flood events. WRP provides long-term benefits on a landscape scale. NRCS technical specialists work cooperatively with private landowners to maximize the benefits of the restored land for water quality, wildlife habitat and diversity, flood prevention and groundwater recharge.

In FY13, Wisconsin obligated $4.7 million* in 12 contracts covering 817 acres.
* includes acquisitions, restoration and maintenance funds.

NRCS Wetlands Reserve Program Easements to date



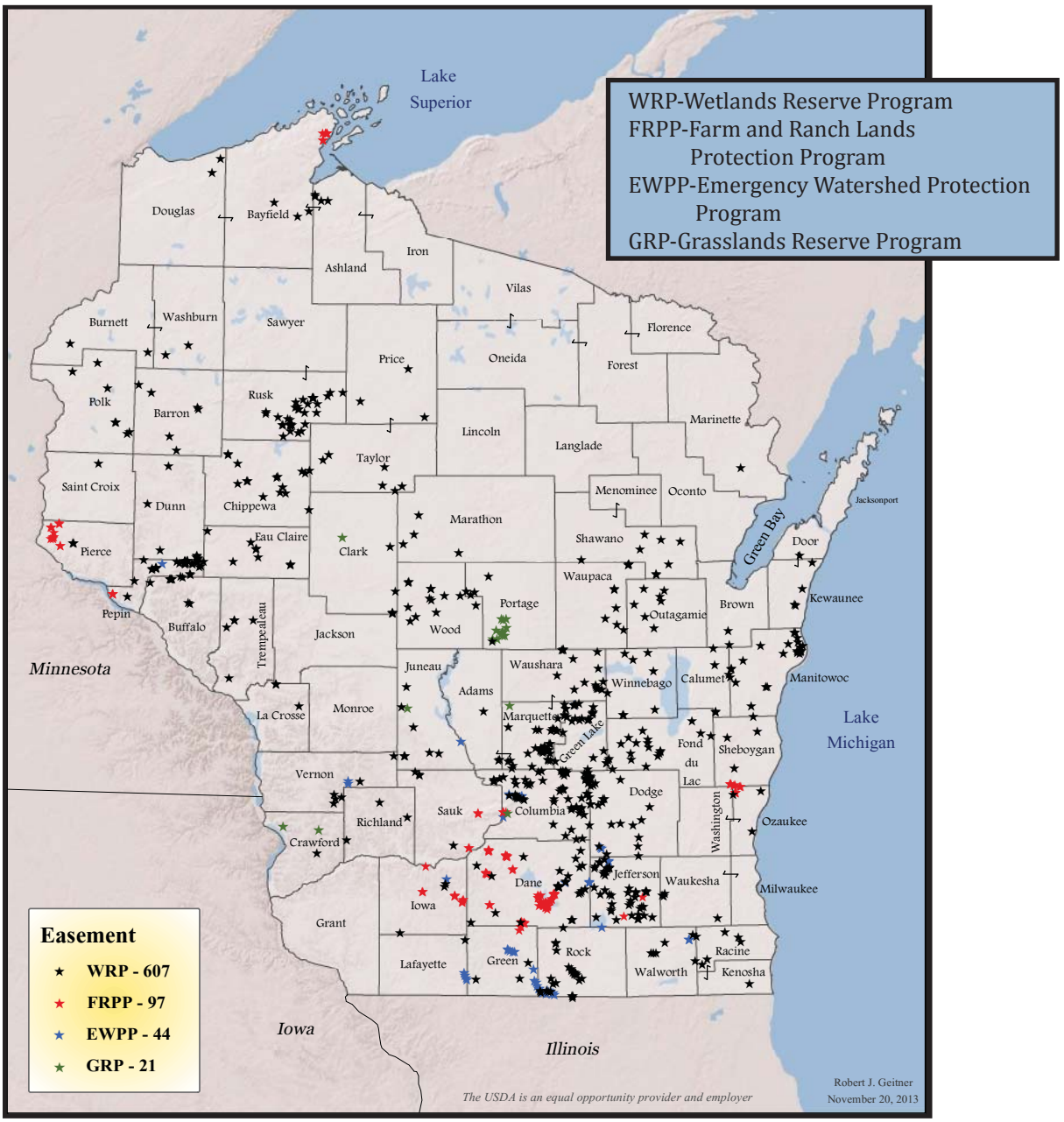
Easement Programs

Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP)

FRPP provides matching funds to help purchase development rights to keep productive farmland in agricultural uses. Working through existing programs, USDA partners with State, Tribal, or local governments and non-governmental organizations to acquire conservation easements from the landowner. USDA provides up to 50 percent of the fair market easement value of the conservation easement.

In FY13, Wisconsin obligated $1 million in four contracts covering 1,291 acres.

NRCS Conservation Easements to date - All Programs



Landscape Initiatives - Conservation Beyond Boundaries

NRCS recognizes that natural resource concerns transcend farm, county, and state boundaries. The most effective way to increase protection of natural resources is to target conservation to the most vulnerable or valuable areas and to apply a systems rather than a practice-by-practice approach to conservation. By approaching large-scale resource concerns on a landscape level, this science based approach puts conservation in the right places.

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) in Wisconsin has focused on three Lake Michigan watersheds: Lower Fox, Manitowoc-Sheboygan, and Milwaukee River. NRCS is working with conservation partners to combat invasive species, protect watersheds and shorelines from non-point source pollution, and restore wetlands and other habitat areas. NRCS is also working with Federal and local partners to measure the effects that conservation practices have on water quality. The overall strategy is to accelerate conservation practice implementation in each focus watershed, so that water quality actually improves downstream.

Through financial and technical assistance from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), NRCS helps private landowners with conservation planning using a variety of conservation practices, such as cover crops, conservation crop rotations, filter strips, prescribed grazing and wetland restoration.

In FY13, Wisconsin obligated $1.32 million in 40 EQIP contracts in these watersheds.

GLRI Success Story - From Planning to Pasture

Josh Odekirk (L), NRCS District Conservationist presents Terry Groth of Farm 45 a farm sign recognizing his participation in GLRI.

The rolling landscape of Washington County was carved by glaciers. It is this landscape that brought Terry Groth of Jackson, Wisconsin to the NRCS office for some advice. He originally planned to crop the land but the steeper slopes on parts of his farm were prone to excessive erosion. Josh Odekirk, District Conservationist in Washington County, worked through the planning process with Terry and developed a conservation plan to address the resource concerns on the highly erodible soils on his farm.

One alternative to cropping the highly erodible fields included seeding them down to permanent cover. Since Terry was already raising sheep in confinement, a rotational grazing system was a perfect fit. His plan outlined a system that included forage and biomass planting and fencing.

"Fencing from the NRCS is a very important part of the success of my operation," said Terry. "This grazing system would not have happened without the fencing, which was installed with assistance and funding from NRCS." To complete the system, a pipeline and watering facility were installed and the pastures next to the stream were fenced off, allowing for a 30 foot buffer to intercept any nutrients and sediment from the field. Now grass-fed lamb from Farm 45 is sourced to local markets, creating jobs and investing in the local economy by providing quality meat to local vendors.

Farm 45 is owned and operated by Terry Groth and located in the Milwaukee River Watershed, 15 miles from Lake Michigan. This watershed is one of the targeted areas for the Initiative.

GLRI - Lower Fox Phosphorus Reduction Priority Watersheds

Through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, a special sign up for farmers in the Lower Fox in the Green Bay area focuses on reducing phosphorus entering Lake Michigan.

In FY13 Wisconsin obligated $2.83 million in 68 contracts to farmers for phosphorus reduction in these targeted areas.

Phosphorus Reduction Area Success Story - Plum Pride Farm

John Malvitz (L), NRCS District Conservationist presents Marvin and Patty Biese with a GLRI farm sign.

Marv Biese is a third generation farmer. All together Marv and his wife Patty farm 500 acres and milk 320 cows with 250 young stock. They employ three full-time and five part-time workers. In 2010, a fire destroyed their original barn. They quickly recovered and built a new barn and expanded to where they are today. They are proud to have upgraded to a state of the art operation with new milking facility, milking three times a day.

Plum Pride strives to be an environmentally friendly operation. Over the last few years, NRCS has worked with Plum Pride to plan and address the resource concerns on their growing operation, says NRCS District Conservationist, John Malvitz.

The farm is implementing conservation systems that demonstrate what the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) effort is all about. With incentives from both the Conservation Security Program (CSP) and Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Plum Pride has implemented the following: cover crops, grassed waterways, stream crossings, hay harvesting for wildlife, split applications of nitrogen, plant tissue testing, low drift spray nozzles, heavy use protection for animal walkways, a filterstrip (buffer) and roof runoff structures. They also recently poured a concrete feed pad this fall with plans to integrate a leachate collection system.

"Farms like Plum Pride make me confident that GLRI effort can work," says Malvitz. "It has been a pleasure to work with the Plum Pride Farm to implement conservation practices that will help reduce nutrient loading into the Plum Creek."

Plum Pride Farms located in the Plum Creek Watershed in Brown County is owned and operated by Marvin and Patty Biese. This watershed is one of the targeted areas for phosphorus reduction. Plum Creek is a tributary to the Fox River and flows through the Plum Pride Farm. The creek is a major source of phosphorus to the Fox River which eventually empties into Green Bay.

Significant erosion from farm field runoff on the Plum Pride Farm

Completion of a new grassed waterway

Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watershed Initiative

NRCS continues to help farmers in the Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative (MRBI) area. Financial and technical assistance is helping farmers install conservation practices to minimize runoff and reduce the deposition of excess nutrients into nearby streams.

In Wisconsin, three key Dane County watersheds, Pheasant Branch, Waunakee Marsh and Sixmile Creek, are the focus of intense agricultural conservation efforts to reduce nutrients feeding into Lake Mendota. This was the fourth year of a multi-year project between NRCS and the Dane County Land and Water Resources Department.

In FY13, Wisconsin obligated over $150,000 in 19 contracts in the three Dane County watersheds.

National Water Quality Initiative

The National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI), improves water quality, and aquatic habitats, and reduces sedimentation in priority watersheds with impaired streams. NRCS helps producers implement conservation practices such as cover crops, filter strips and terraces to control and trap nutrient and manure runoff. NWQI was offered in three Wisconsin watersheds in FY13: Horse Lake-Horse Creek in Polk County, Pigeon Lake-Pigeon River in Waupaca County, and Big Green Lake in Green Lake County.

In FY13, Wisconsin obligated $1.6 M in 35 contracts in these watersheds.

Driftless Area Landscape Conservation Initiative

The Driftless Area Landscape Conservation Initiative's (DALCI) primary purpose is to restore, improve and protect the unique and diverse species found in the region's working lands, forests, streams and prairies.

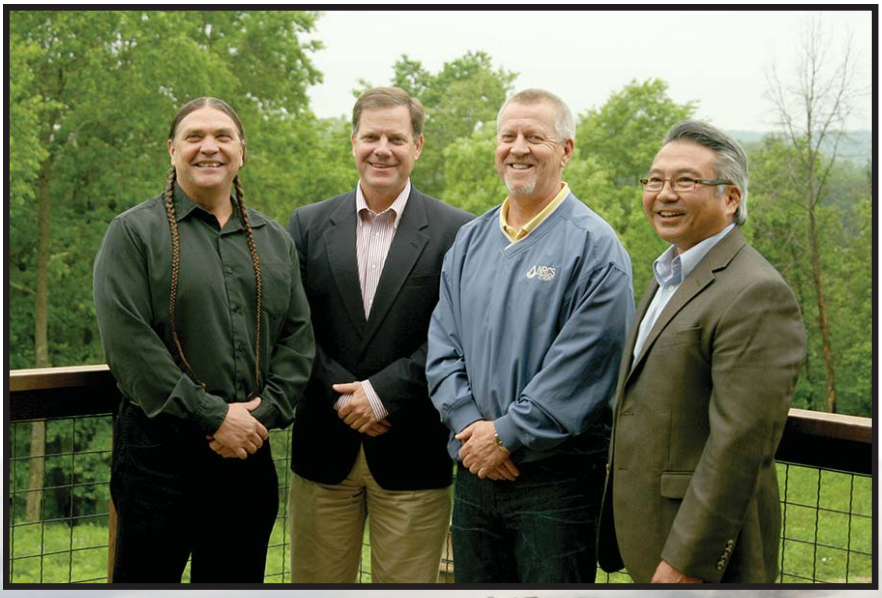
A collaborative approach is the hallmark of this initiative. It brings together individuals, conservation organizations, and state and federal agencies. It looks at the watershed on a landscape scale and evaluates the best land treatment options.

Goals/Objectives

- Manage working lands to reduce erosion
- Manage woodlands for increased diversity
- Restore prairies, manage grasslands and oak savannas for habitat
- Restore cold water streams

The Driftless Area Landscape Conservation Initiative was approved by NRCS in FY13. This designation targets additional funding for erosion control and fish and wildlife habitat projects in the four-state area.

In year one of the five year initiative, Wisconsin obligated $2.37 million in 198 contracts on working lands, forestland, prairies and savannas, as well as cold water streams.



The Driftless Area covers portions of the states of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa and Illinois. State Conservationists met with partners involved with the Initiative in June 2013. Pictured here from left to right is Ivan Dozier, STC Illinois, Jimmy Bramblett, STC Wisconsin, Don Baloun, STC Minnesota and Jay Mar, STC Iowa.

Grazing

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 lands. Grazing lands include permanent pasture, pasture rotated with cropland, prairie, and oak savanna. Owners and managers of these grazing lands address natural resource concerns while contributing to the economic viability of their rural communities. GLCI emphasizes high quality, voluntary technical assistance and expanded research and education for farmers and managers of grazing lands.

NRCS has the primary responsibility to carry out the GLCI. NRCS Grazing Land Specialists and Soil Conservationists have the expertise and experience to provide technical assistance to landowners and managers regarding the long-term productivity and ecological health of their grazing land. Through GLCI efforts, WI NRCS has developed a training program for certification as a "Prescribed/Managed Grazing Planner" which enables NRCS and partners to assist land owners and managers in developing Managed Grazing Plans. This plan establishes a proper stocking rate, forage type, as well as facilities design for the type of livestock and intensity of grazing management desired. Wisconsin now has 55 conservation employees who are certified as Prescribed Grazing Planners, including 32 NRCS employees and 23 county or non-profit organizations.

Highlights for FY 2013

- 140 farmers provided with technical assistance.
- 268 grazing plans implemented covering 12,243 acres.
- 5 Introductory Training Workshops for Conservationists.
- 3 Workshops for Grazing Land Planners and Grazing Educators.
- Approximately 6000 acres converted from cropland to pasture saving 12,000 tons of soil from sheet and rill erosion.
- Reduction in phosphorus and nitrogen runoff by 80 percent compared to cropland.

NRCS Grazing Specialist Brian Pillsbury assisting Fond du Lac County dairy grazier Dan Flood.

Outreach

Outreach is part of NRCS' daily business. We work to ensure that programs and services are made accessible to all customers, while placing special emphasis on those who may be underserved. Historically, underserved audiences have included minorities, tribes, women, the disabled, new farmers, limited resource farmers and small-scale farmers.

Outreach involves understanding underserved customers and their needs, learning how best to communicate with various groups, earning the trust and acceptance of underserved customers, and developing partnerships and working relationships.

2013 was a successful year for NRCS outreach efforts. In Wisconsin, some of the activities include:

- Extensive outreach conducted for the National Hispanic and Women Farmer Claims Process - In Wisconsin, 147 claim packets requested. Outreach coordinated with FSA and RD.
- Organized a number of events for visiting dignitaries including tours for Secretary Vilsack to World Dairy Expo and hosting several visitors from the Czech Republic.
- Agreement with College of Menominee Nation to train tribal members to identify, train and certify Technical Service Providers (TSPs). Project adopted as a national model to work with Tribes.
- Continued coordination with the Wisconsin Tribal Conservation Advisory Council (WTCAC) to ensure NRCS Program meet tribal resource needs. Stewardship Report completed with collaboration of the 11 Wisconsin Tribes.
- Conducted educational seminars and published several informational brochures for Hmong, Beginning Farmers, and Limited Resource farmers.
- Buffalo County Prairie Management Meeting "Caring for the Faces and Spaces of Wisconsin"
- Participated in Veterans Career Fair which was an excellent networking opportunity.

Educational seminar conducted by NRCS to help Hmong growers learn about the USDA programs available to them.

Soils

Unlock the Secrets in the Soil

NRCS knows that soil is the foundation of sustainable agriculture. An educational initiative called "Unlock the Secrets in the Soil" is providing farmers with important information about caring for their soil resource. Healthy soils are important for several reasons. These soils are more productive and farmers optimize production, improving their bottom line. Environmentally, keeping the soil healthy keeps nutrients on the farm - not in the local waterways. It also holds water for living plants and reduces the chance of flooding by allowing the water to infiltrate into the soil.

The four key messages for healthy soil are:

- Keep the soil covered as much as possible
- Disturb the soil as little as possible
- Keep plants growing throughout the year to feed the soil
- Diversify as much as possible using crop rotation and cover crops

NRCS Soil Health Information can be found at http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/soils/health/

NRCS is the premier soil conservation agency in the world - founded on soil science. No organization or agency can match NRCS when it comes to soil expertise and technical science delivery.

Soil Health Field Day

Brian Briski, (L) Karla Petges and Jeremy Zeigler, NRCS, demonstrate infiltration rates of healthy and degraded soils at a field day.

This Soil Health Field Day, August 2013, in Washington County, with 45 farmers in attendance, was one of several held throughout Wisconsin in 2013.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program
Top 40 Practices by Financial Investment - FY 2013

Practice	Contracts	FY 2013 Dollars
Waste Storage Facility	94	$10,144,896
Streambank and Shoreline Protection	168	$2,117,720
Heavy Use Area Protection	208	$2,048,583
Nutrient Management	453	$1,556,834
Manure Transfer	124	$1,550,554
Cover Crop	273	$1,300,231
Fence	342	$1,055,085
Pumping Plant	94	$898,798
Grade Stabilization Structure	152	$844,110
Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan - Written	94	$725,440
Seasonal High Tunnel System for Crops	98	$649,099
Grassed Waterway	310	$605,141
Closure of Waste Impoundment	54	$589,444
Prescribed Grazing	324	$557,031
Mulching	517	$518,233
Access Road	72	$486,008
Irrigation System, Sprinkler	19	$429,095
Irrigation Water Conveyance	25	$378,378
Stream Crossing	151	$371,598
Pasture and Hay Planting	123	$358,390
Stream Habitat Improvement and Management	74	$346,907
Forest Stand Improvement	87	$315,908
Subsurface Drain	88	$294,541
Tree/Shrub Establishment	101	$290,242
Lined Waterway or Outlet	42	$283,287
Pipeline	32	$278,774
Waste Facility Cover	8	$277,945
Underground Outlet	128	$253,837
Roof Runoff Structure	77	$246,960
Obstruction Removal	218	$241,300
Tree/Shrub Site Preparation	134	$192,999
Brush Management	198	$185,895
Wastewater Treatment Strip	49	$176,393
Critical Area Planting	647	$175,822
Spoil Spreading	101	$167,303
Pest Management	36	$126,955
Forest Trails and Landings	25	$99,161
Sediment Basin	10	$95,980
Pond Sealing or Lining, Compacted Clay Treatment	6	$92,961
Conservation Cover	69	$84,645
Herbaceous Weed Control	19	$81,122

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Underground Outlet	128	$253,837
Manure Transfer	124	$1,550,554
Pasture and Hay Planting	123	$358,390
Watering Facility	116	$68,049
Spoil Spreading	101	$167,303
Tree/Shrub Establishment	101	$290,242
Seasonal High Tunnel System for Crops	98	$649,099
Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan - Written	94	$725,440
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Subsurface Drain	88	$294,541
Forest Stand Improvement	87	$315,908
Roof Runoff Structure	77	$246,960
Stream Habitat Improvement and Management	74	$346,907
Access Road	72	$486,008
Conservation Cover	69	$84,645
Closure of Waste Impoundment	54	$589,444
Diversion	50	$54,860
Wastewater Treatment Strip	49	$176,393
Forest Management Plan - Written	46	$51,711
Well Decommissioning	46	$23,790
Upland Wildlife Habitat Management	43	$17,175
Irrigation Water Management	42	$28,900
Lined Waterway or Outlet	42	$283,287
Prescribed Burning	40	$12,206
Residue and Tillage Management, No-Till/Strip Till/Direct Seed	40	$68,640

Earth Team Volunteer Program

The Earth Team/NRCS partnership works. It is a great example of cooperative conservation that results in environmental benefits everyone can enjoy. NRCS applauds the volunteers' hard work, dedication, and commitment to improving our nation's land, air and water.

Earth Team volunteers choose us. They believe in us, our mission and the benefits we offer the environment. They choose to work alongside us on our conservation projects. They do this for the experience, the self-satisfaction, to help the environment and for a hundred other reasons.

Wisconsin Volunteers
Cultivating Careers through Volunteerism

Assistant State Conservation Engineer (ASCE) is a mentor for seniors in the College of Ag and Life Sciences.

Scott Mueller, ASCE, is actively involved with the Biological Systems Engineering classes at UW-Madison. Seniors are required to complete a Senior Design Project to graduate. Many of these projects are completed under Scott's guidance.

A group of students, which included an Earth Team volunteer, worked on a design to restore the hydrologic conditions needed to support a wetland system. The student design team worked closely with Scott and NRCS subsequently used their design to construct the wetland.

This real world experience is very beneficial for the students and NRCS. Many of the students in the Senior Design Project have become volunteers for NRCS. Gaining this valuable training and experience with NRCS, has helped these volunteers secure career positions in the conservation field.

In FY13, Earth Team volunteers in Wisconsin collectively donated $102,486 worth of assistance to us, our mission and to our customers. Eighty-five volunteers invested 4,629 hours of their time with us.*

**Value of a volunteer hour is $22.14*

Dave Hvizdak, Earth Team Volunteer and former NRCS Soil Scientist.

"When the land does well by its owner
and the owner does well by his land;
when both end up better by reason of their partnership,
then we have conservation"

Aldo Leopold, 1939