Conservation Corner

Newsletter of the Waushara County Land Conservation Department

February 2022

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Message from Todd Wahler, Zoning Director:
2021 A Year of Challenges and Successes!

As we welcome in 2022, we usher out a year that was filled with on-going challenges and service constraints brought on by a 2-year pandemic. Many offices continue to either remain closed or access is severely limited as individuals work remotely, mask mandates are still in place in many parts of the County, including the courthouse, energy and material costs have skyrocketed and many companies are experiencing a major turnover in their employment base as baby boomers head toward retirement pastures. Our own zoning office lost a 29 year veteran this year with the retirement of Amy Schultz, Deputy Director of Zoning. With Amys departure comes the cost of re-building and re-structuring as well as the loss of almost 3 decades of knowledge. We are anticipating and gearing up for additional retirements in the next few years. Despite these challenges, our office has found significant successes. Our overall permit numbers were up at all-time high. While land use permits lagged just slightly below those from 2020, which was an all time high, sanitary permits eclipsed all recorded numbers since we have been keeping track. The great news behind that is that our overall revenue exceeded our budgetary expectations. With Amy's departure, we turned a challenge into a success as 2 in-house employees rose to the occasion and were justly promoted to fill the voids. Kyle Kutcher, Zoning Technician was promoted to Deputy Director and Cindy Rettler, Administrative Specialist was promoted to Zoning Technician. In addition, we hired Avery Lehr as a new Administrative Specialist in the front office. Avery's personality and disposition are a perfect fit within our department. In addition, after a 45-minute Q and A from DATCP, our LWRM Plan was approved in December of last year with final support and adoption by the County Board last month. Based upon the many uncertainties we have already faced what we anticipate, it is a little unclear as to what we can expect this year, however, we will endeavor to provide our community with the highest level of services.

Mission Statement: Promote conservation of our natural resources to a diverse group of landowners and future landowners in Waushara County, through educational opportunities, technical assistance and professional collaborations, that result in the long term stability of natural resources.

WELCOME AVERY LEHR, THE NEW ADMINISTRATIVE SPECIALIST

My name is Avery Lehr, I joined the Land Conservation and Zoning department as an Administrative Specialist in August. I grew up in Waushara County in the Spring Lake area. I enjoyed many years of showing livestock in the local County fair. I still enjoy raising many different animals and farming with my grandpa in Spring Lake. I have two dogs Ollie and Athena who I hunt with regularly and enjoy their soft side also of cuddling on the couch every evening. I enjoy hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, boating, and camping. I enjoy traveling every weekend with my significant other Dustin, and our dogs in our camper to many different places. I enjoy spending time with my family and doing many different activities with my two nephews and one niece. I currently am studying at Fox Valley for my Business degree where I plan on completing my bachelor's in Business. I look forward to working with all the staff and residents of Waushara County.

LWE COMMITTEE TOUR - HIGHLIGHTING LAND CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT ON SEPTEMBER 1, 2021 - See the following Cost Shared projects thru LWRM Funding:

The following projects were observed: Streambank Gully Repair and Grassed Waterway Project and Rebuild in the Town of Saxeville and Town of Bloomfield. John Olsen, Land Conservation Technician and Josh Saykally, Land Conservation Technician & Argonimist explained each of the projects timeline and reasons why they were necessary for the landowner to install the conservation practices. Committee discussed each project and commented on how well each project was designed.

STREAMBANK GULLY REPAIR

Gully forming on the edge of cropped field eroding down to the Pine River.

Overview of the field, with a wetland scrape and grading of the field to enable water to flow off to a more stable outlet.

GRASSED WATERWAY PROJECT & REBUILD

AFTER RUN-OFF EVENT

The three pictures above depict a newly installed waterway that had been washed out by a large fall storm. The waterway was repaired the following spring.

Helping Private Landowners

In 2021, The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has helped 10 private landowners restore over 117 acres of native prairie, oak savanna, and wetlands in Waushara County alone. These landowner sign up with USFWS through the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, which is a 10 year program that gives these landowners financial and technical assistance to improve their land for wildlife!

Last year there was mention about some exciting news coming down the trail in 2022. After applying for grants in 2021, partners and USFWS have acquired $133,000, which will support local jobs and stimulate the local economies of Waushara County, while also improving wildlife habitat. We partner with many organizations such as Waushara County LCD, Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, Ice Age Trail Alliance, and Golden Sands RC&D it's in our name.

For more information contact Brendan Woodall – Private Lands Biologist at 608-444-1689 or brendan_woodall@fws.gov (note the underscore in the email).

Photo: In 2021, over 3-acres of wetlands were restored to increase nesting and foraging opportunities for nesting waterfowl. These wetlands will provide a home for a suite of other wildlife species, while also improving water quality for local residents of Waushara County.

The Fox-Wolf Watershed Alliance has been very busy with the upcoming Fox-Wolf Watershed Alliance Conference to be held March 8-9 at the Hotel Northland in Green Bay.

Once again, our planning committee is putting together a great program! We are working to maximize all that we have learned about technology and hosting hybrid meetings this past year to bring you the best program possible! Experts from across the state and country will join us (in-person and remotely) to speak on topics you care about including: Regulation & Guidance

- Building Resiliency to Climate Change
- Watershed Recovery
- MS4 Management
- Green Infrastructure
- Community Engagement
- Vendor Presentations and more!

Fox-Wolf Watershed Alliance Conference - March 8-9

Other dates to remember:
44th Annual Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Convention - April 6-8, 2022
2022 Watershed Clean Up - May 7th, 2022
Check our Winnebago Waterways Facebook page for more events!

2021 PROJECTS

Terrestrial Invasive Species Work

The Central Wisconsin Invasives Partnership (CWIP), a cooperative group within Golden SandsRC&D, worked with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to restore habitat for the federally endangered Karner blue butterfly in 2021. CWIP staff spot-treated about 1.5 acres of invasive spotted knapweed on private land in the Town of Rose. CWIP helped pay for invasive spotted knapweed control by a contractor at an 8 acre property owned by the Town of Rose. CWIP also helped pay for native prairie seed/restoration work on properties in the Town of Coloma, Town of Richford, and the Town of Springwater.

We held some educational events not far from Waushara County. In August, we held a Forest Invasive Plant Field Day in Waupaca. We held a Prairie Invasive Plant Workshop in September in Oxford and an Invasive Plant Field Day at Muir Park near Montello in October.

Aquatic Invasive Species

AIS Educational Lessons:

We expanded our aquatic invasive species (AIS) lesson from 8 to 13 counties. The lesson is free to schools and provides a hands-on, interactive experience for 5th grade students. Students will have the opportunity to learn and understand how invasive species can affect our lakes, rivers, and other surface waters. This program provides students with an understandingabout how aquatic invasive species are dispersed and empowers them with the knowledge of what they can do to help slow down the spread. (See attached press release for more information)

General AIS Work:

In 2021 Golden Sands RC&D helped various lake groups including Pine Lake, Lake Huron, the West Branch Millpond, and Long Lake survey, map and control aquatic invasive species. Mapping and survey work was also completed for the White River Flowage. Early in the year we dug up purple loosestrife roots and taught volunteers how to rear purple loosestrife beetles for biocontrol. We additionally led AIS pontoon classes on Big Silver Lake and worked with residents on Big Hills Lake with their Healthy Lakes grant shoreline restoration, runoff diversion, and rain garden project.

Groundwater Education:

We partnered with Waushara County Land and Water Conservation Department to increase groundwater literacy for 5th grade students through our groundwater lesson program which educates students about what groundwater is, where it comes from, how it can be contaminated, and why we need to protect it. Our lessons also teach students about groundwater quality and quantity issues, which further emphasizes the importance of protecting this natural restoration.

Cooperating for Woods and Wildlife Project:

As part of this project we are also working on establishing Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP) cooperatives in Waushara County. Throughout the year we contacted landowners via email , phone and mail. Our goal is to connect neighboring landowners who are interested in collaborating with their neighbors to manage wildlife habitat and invasive species. To help increase awareness of DMAP Golden Sands held a landowner meeting at Kusel Lake.Kudos to Waushara County because this was our most attended landowner meeting of the summer! At this meeting, we discussed the state's Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP) and the importance of cooperative management. Both the DNR County Forester and Wildlife Biologist joined the event to answer landowner questions and help increase landowner interest in enrolling into DMAP

14th ANNUAL 2021 CONSERVATION FIELD DAYS EVENT AT

On September 30th & October 1st Waushara County Land Conservation and Zoning hosted the 14th Annual Conservation Field Day event at Lake Lucerne Camp & Retreat Center. The event is for all Waushara County 5th Graders. In partnership with UW-Extension, Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service and Golden Sands Resource & Development, students from Coloma, Redgranite, Tri-County and Wautoma (138 students) were in attendance. There are six learning stations for the students designed to make learning fun and provide hands-on environmental education. The stations included: Soils, Groundwater, Aquatic Invasive Species, Fisheries, Forest/Wildlife Management and Fire Management. The weather was great and it was nice to see the smiles and expressions as students were learning. Once again, we were very happy we could host this event in 2021!! A big thank you to all presenters!

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS:

Todd Wahler	Susan Herman
Jay Johnson	John Collins
Terri Hernandez	Diane Betta

THANK YOU TO THE PRESENTERS:

Raptor Education Group, Inc. (REGI)

WI DNR

NRCS

Students participating in hands on soil texturing

Students learning what type of fish were living in Lake Lucerne and why we should keep lakes healthy.

Students enjoyed naming the animal that matched with the pelt and learned interesting facts about that animal.

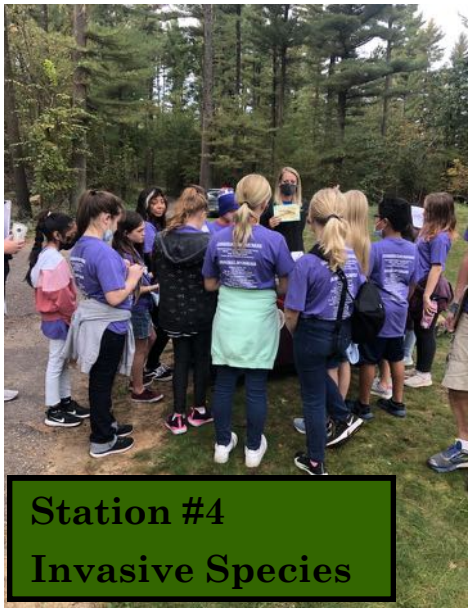
REGI
RAPTOR EDUCATION GROUP, INC.
A non-profit organization

Environmental Learning At It's Best

Briana Suriano introducing a Screech Owl named Lucy

Station #2 Groundwater

Students learning how groundwater moves and difference between high cap wells vs. a small well.



Station #4 Invasive Species

Students learning how invasive species can effect the habitats and ecosystems.

The generous donations allows us to hire REGI (Raptor Education Group Inc.) for the final presentation. REGI, located in Antigo, is an organization formed to rehabilitate injured birds. Briana Suriano, Raptor Educator, who gave the presentation, spoke about each of the visitors: Bengi an American Kestrel, Carson a Redtail Hawk, and Stella a Peregrine Falcon. The goal is always to return the wounded animals to the wild if possible, however if a bird cannot be returned to the wild, it is used as an educational animal. Briana Suriano discussed how students could help protect birds of prey and if you find an injured bird, please do not try to nurse the animal yourself, contact REGI or other organizations trained to work with wildlife.

CONSERVATION FIELD DAYS CONTINUED

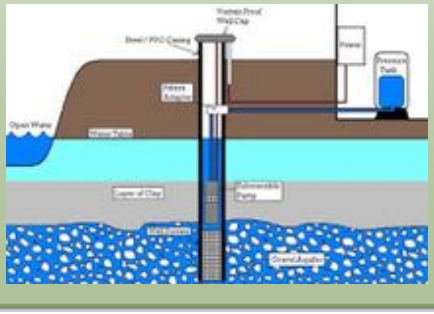
THANK YOU TO OUR 2020/21 SPONSORS:

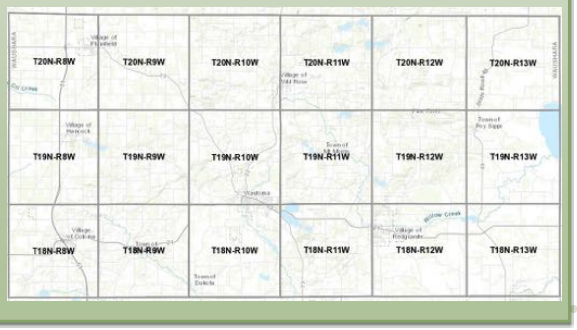
Richford Game Club
Will Enterprises
Big Hills Lake Management District
Bughs Lake Property Owners Association
Deer Lake Management District
Friends of Long Lake
Mt. Morris Lake Management District
Pearl Lake Protection & Rehabilitation District
Silver Lake Management District
White River Flowage Management District
Stone Ridge Piggly Wiggly of Wautoma
Tom Catlin
Mike & Fay McMonigal
Arnie & Marty Wilke
Hancock's Lions Club
Rotary Club of Wautoma
Wild Rose Lions Club
Waushara County Employees—Jeans for Kids & Conservation

WAUSHARA COUNTY WELL WATER TESTING PROGRAM:

Well testing began in 2018, Waushara County contacted private well owners to test nitrate and chloride levels in their well. Private well owners were randomly selected from sections where there is currently no data available. Participation is voluntary and Waushara County covered the cost of the tests. The project has taken 3 years to complete, and results will be shared with the Towns, lake groups and made available on the UW Stevens Point Well Water Viewer at: https://www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/watershed/Pages/wellwaterviewer.aspx. As with other private well tests results, exact locations of individual wells cannot be made available, but a summary of both Nitrate and Chloride levels within the Township will be.

The Waushara County Land/Water & Education Committee sees benefits to facilitate a county-wide water testing program for the following reasons: 1) better determine the state of private drinking water wells within the county and: 2) develop a current data base that would assist the county with providing resources to areas of the county where water quality would benefit most from BMP's aimed at improving water quality. Additionally, the Land Conservation & Zoning Department would be working towards meeting the goals and objectives of the County Land & Water Resource Management Plan (LWRM). Any questions can be directed to Ed Hernandez at the Land Conservation & Zoning Office at 920-787-0443





2021-2022 NMFE GRANT (Nutrient Management Farmer Education)

In 2021 Waushara County was awarded a Nutrient Management Farmer Education (NMFE) Grant from DATCP. There were 9 producers that took advantage of the grant to soil sample and develop a nutrient management plan on their farm. Due to Covid instead of a group class the grant participants worked with county staff one-on-one to train them and to develop a complete nutrient management plan. After the training the producers had a better understanding of what a nutrient management plan is and what it consists of, and they were then able to write nutrient management plans for their operations. With assistance from the Waushara Co. LCD staff soil samples were taken and tested, the results were input into the Snap-Plus, UW Wisconsin's nutrient management planning computer program, and they were all able to develop a nutrient management plan that met the 590 nutrient management standard. The NMFE Grant was successful, as it assisted 9 producers to write plans or updates on 1359 Acres.

Nutrient Management in Waushara County

Tractor spreading fertilizer

Erosion on a farm field

Waushara County's nutrient management acres continue to rise each year. In 2021 Waushara County had 37,556 acres under a nutrient management plan or approximately 40% of the county's cropland. The county receives approximately $25,000 a year in cost sharing from DATCP for nutrient management planning. At a rate of $40/Acre, that covers about 625 acres annually. Waushara County LCD encourages producers to have nutrient management plans especially when the operation is utilizing manure as a crop input. Any producer wanting more information about nutrient management or wanting to become certified to write their own plan you can contact: Josh Saykally – Waushara County Agronomist @ 920-787-0443.

USDA * APHIS * WILDLIFE SERVICES ANNOUNCEMENTS

Barry Benson worked for USDA, Wildlife Services from 1991-2021. He retired on January 20, 2021. Thank you Barry for your years of service to the Land Conservation Department.

Wyatt Puent graduated with a Wildlife Ecology Degree from UW-Stevens Point in 2013. He has worked for the USDA-Wildlife Services for over 8 years having worked in Texas, Florida, Wisconsin and Washington state. Wyatt has experience working with a wide variety of cooperators including but not limited to the US NAVY, US Fish and Wildlife Service, state natural resources departments, and a variety of aquaculture and agriculture farmers. Wyatt is currently finishing up his first field season as the Wildlife Damage Specialist for Waushara, Portage and Adams counties and looks forward to the coming 2022 field season. Welcome Wyatt!

2021 WILDLIFE DAMAGE AND CLAIMS STATISTICS

THE WISCONSIN WILDLIFE DAMAGE ABATEMENT & CLAIMS PROGRAM PROVIDE DAMAGE PREVENTION WHEN WILD DEER, BEAR, GEESE & TURKEY DAMAGE AGRICULTURAL CROPS.

128 ACRES DAMAGED

14 PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

103 DEER HARVESTED

7 CLAIMANTS FOR CROP DAMAGE

DEER DAMAGE PAYABLE PAYMENTS TOTALING - $31,347.92

2021 WQIP & LWRM PROGRAMS

In 2021 Waushara County landowners received cost-sharing to help defray costs of construction and implementation of best management practices (BMP's). Grants for cost-sharing are available through the Waushara County Water Quality Improvement Program (WQIP) and from Land and Water Resource Management (LWRM) funds, which constitute state grant monies.

The Waushara County Water Quality Improvement Program (WQIP) has $25,000.00 available in 2022 for structural practice funding. The Land and Water Resource Management (LWRM) program has approximately $50,000.00 in structural practice bond funding available as well. After receiving potential projects from interested landowners, they are rated and ranked according to priority resource concerns for both cost-sharing programs which can range from 50% to 70% depending on practice. For example, in 2021 the cost-shared practices that qualified included grassed buffers, riparian buffers, streambank stabilization, wetland restorations, grassed waterways and grazing systems.

"A newly planted shoreline vegetated buffer" installed thru the Water Quality Improvement Program (WQIP).

WAUSHARA COUNTY
COST-SHARE PROGRAMS

Rock Lined Waterway installed thru the Waushara County Water Quality Improvement Program & (WQIP) Land and Water Resource Management (LWRM) program.

If you have any conservation projects or best management practices (BMP's) you might be interested in completing, please contact the Waushara County Land Conservation Department (920)787-0443 for project eligibility and cost-sharing information. Listed below is a partial practice list of best management practices (BMP's) available for possible cost-sharing.

Cost-Share Practice list

Manure Storage Facilities	Manure Storage Abandonment
Barnyard Runoff Control System	Access Roads or Cattle Crossing
Animal Trails & Walkways	Diversions
Field Windbreak	Grade Stabilization Structures
Heavy Use Area Protection	Prescribe Grazing
Fencing	Livestock Watering Facilities
Milkhouse Waste Control	Riparian Buffers
Roof Runoff	Water & Sediment Control Structures
Streambank Protection	Other Shoreline Protection
Streambank Shaping & Seeding	Terraces
Waste Transfer System	Grassed Waterways
Well Abandonment	Wetland Restoration
Shoreland Habitat for Developed Areas	

LAND CONSERVATION POSTER CONTEST

Land/Water/Education Committee selected the winning posters on January 5th. This year we received 225 entries. Students were able to earn first through third place. The first place winning posters were then entered in the Lake Winnebago Land and Water Conservation Association District Area Contest, held on January 28th. Primary Division - (Grades K-1) First place winner was Lexie Young, Elementary Division - (Grades 2-3) First place winner was Claire Meier, Middle Division - (Grades 4-6) First place winner was Axton Miller, Junior Division– (Grades 7-9) First place winner was Caeden Miller and the Senior Division- (Grades 10-12) First place winner was Hailey Rompasky.

This year's theme, **Healthy Soil, Healthy Life**

The Lake Winnebago Land and Water Conservation Association District Area Contest was on January 28th: Caeden Miller (Grades7-9) will move to the State Contest on March 2nd & 3rd

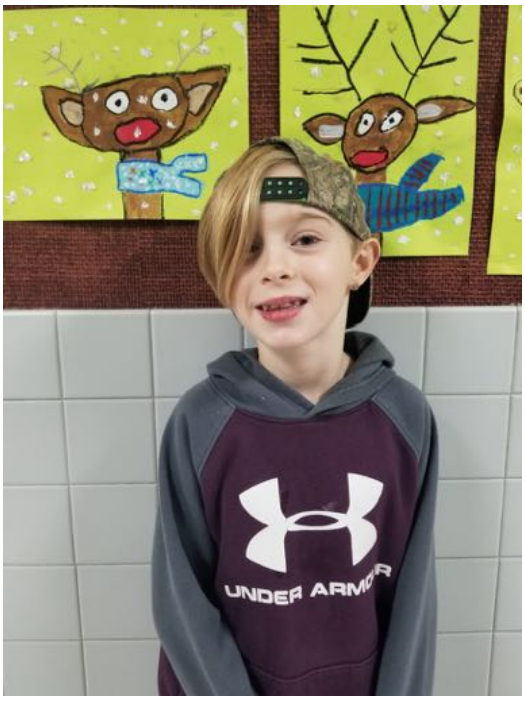
CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL WINNERS

PRIMARY DIVISION (GRADES K-1)

Wild Rose Elementary School

1st Place– Lexie Young

<u>2nd Place</u> - Jolynn Schimelpfenig



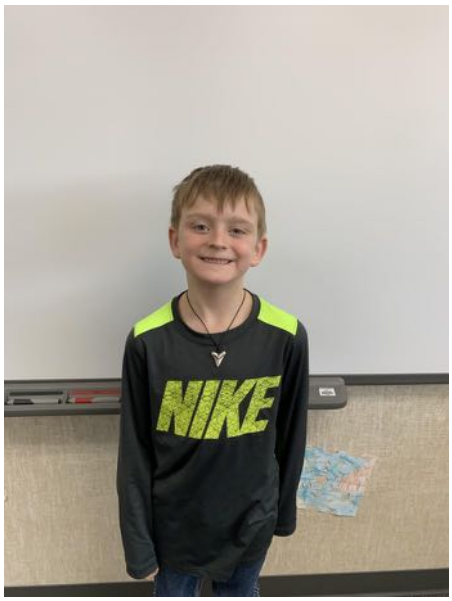
<u>3rd Place</u>– Madeline Durham

ELEMENTARY DIVISION (GRADES 2-3)

Wild Rose Elementary School

1st Place—Claire Meier

2nd Place— Oliver Vergin



3rd Place— Marlin Schimelpfenig

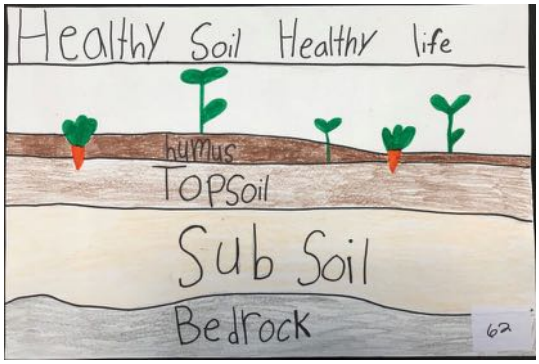
MIDDLE DIVISION Grades (4-6)

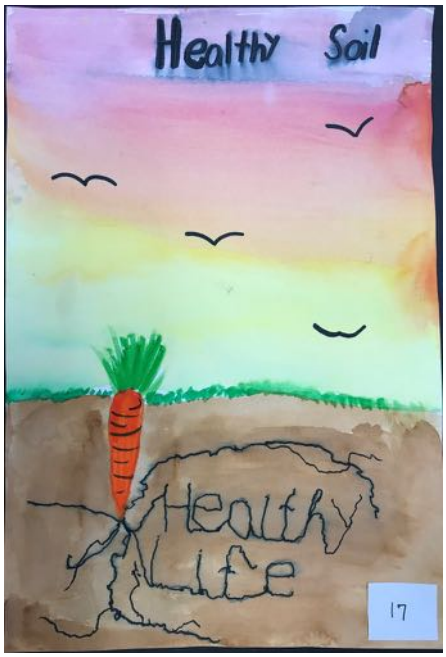
Parkside School

1st Place—Axton Miller

Wild Rose Elementary School

2nd Place—Mia Klinger





Parkside School

3rd Place— Marcus Marks

JUNIOR DIVISION Grades (7-9)

Wautoma High School

1st Place– Caeden Miller

Parkside School

2nd Place— Meaghan Marks

Parkside School **JUNIOR DIVISION GRADES (7-9)**

3rd Place— Colton Buechner

Tri-County High School

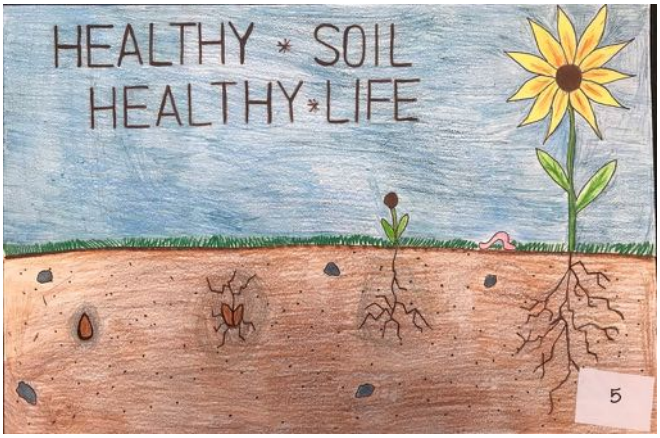
1st Place— Hailey Rompasky

SENIOR DIVISION GRADES (10-12)

THANK YOU TO ALL THE STUDENTS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE LAND CONSERVATION POSTER CONTEST

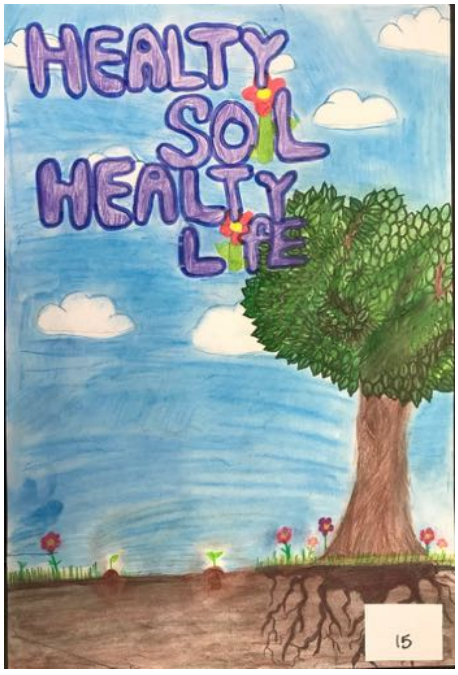
Tri-County High School

SENIOR DIVISION—GRADES 10-12)



Wautoma High School

3rd Place—Kayla Banda



WAUSHARA COUNTY LAND/WATER EDUCATION COMMITTEE
Mark Piechowski - Chair
Mike Kapp - V. Chair
John Jarvis - Secretary
Robert Wedell—Member
Randy Loehrke, FSA Rep.

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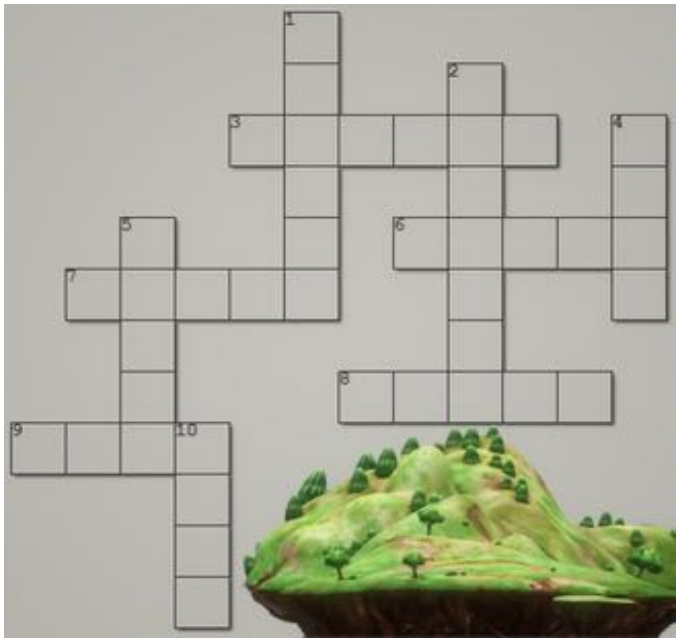
Visit us on the Web!

www.co.waushara.wi.us

2021 Conservation Department Staff: (left to right)

Ed Hernandez– County Conservationist, John Olsen - Conservation Specialist, Josh Saykally– Conservation Specialist, Laura Johnson– Administrative Specialist, Todd Wahler -Director Land Conservation & Zoning

SOIL SCIENCE CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Across

3. A soil horizon makes up five distinct _____ of soil, starting from the topmost portion to the base.

6. Clay is a type of soil where _____ tends to puddle rather than soak in.

7. The natural organic bits found in the soil formed from the biological decomposition of plant and animals is called _____.

8. The bedrock is a layer of solid _____ that exist at some depth below the ground.

9. _____ is a mixture of organic matter, minerals, gases, liquids, and organisms that together support life.

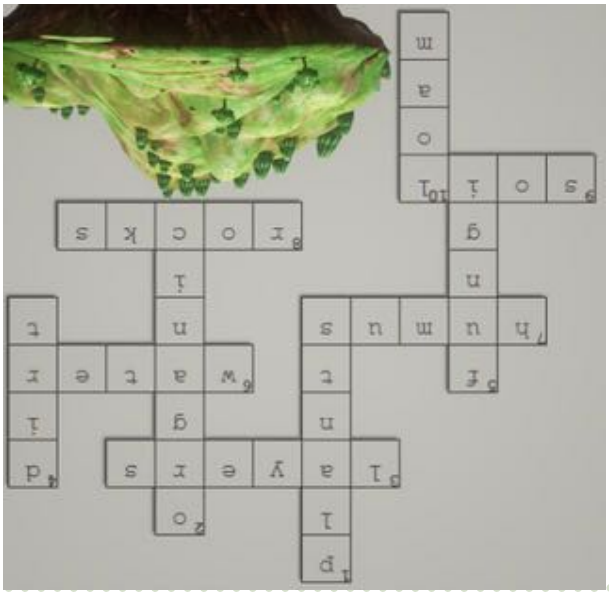
Down

1. _____ absorb carbon dioxide from the soil to produce food and release oxygen into the air.

2. _____ matter is any material produced originally by living organisms that are returned to the soil and undergoes a decomposition process.

4. _____ refers to unclean matter, especially when in contact with a person's clothes, skin, or possessions.

5. Decomposers, such as bacteria and _____, are found in the soil and aid in breaking down dead plant and animal matter.

10. Most common garden plants prefer _____ soil due to the balance of different-sized mineral particles (sand, silt, and clay).

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