



Racine County

WISCONSIN

Land & Water Conservation

2017-2021 Five Year Report



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***THE MISSION of the Land & Water Conservation
Division is to protect, preserve, and enhance the
natural resources of Racine County.***



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Racine County Land and Water Resource Management Plan

Under the direction of the Racine County Land and Water Conservation Committee (LWCC), the Land and Water Resource Management Plan (LWRMP) provides conservation goals and workload guidance for the Land and Water Conservation Division (LWCD). Updated in 2013, the LWRMP focuses on preventing soil erosion and improving water quality throughout Racine County. The current plan is in effect through 2022.

From 2017 to 2022, the Land and Water Conservation Division received \$698,312 from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (WI-DATCP) for staff support, and \$504,153 for conservation practice installation. With LWCC oversight, the LWCD staff assessed Racine County resource needs, and utilized appropriate Federal and State funds to meet soil erosion and water quality goals.



Cost-Share Assistance

Practice	Total	Unit
Subsurface Drainage	108,900	Feet
Grassed Waterway Systems	12.93	Acres
Underground Outlet	31	Each
Grassed Diversion	669	Feet
Shoreline Protection	1,233	Feet
Rock Lined Waterway Systems	26	Each
Nutrient Management (New)	15,851	Acres
Surface Inlet	31	Each
Water & Sediment Control Basin	31	Each
Stream Crossing	111	Feet
Barnyard Runoff Control System	1	Each
Well Abandonment	3	Each
Critical Area Stabilization	10	Each

Cost-Share Assistance

Conservation Practices Installed

Cost-share assistance for conservation practices is provided through multiple Federal and State grants. However, the Division's primary cost-share funding source is WI-DATCP's Soil and Water Resource Management Program (SWRMP). The maximum cost-share rate for eligible conservation practices via SWRMP is 50% - 70%. In the last 5 years, our office assisted 91 separate landowners with the implementation of 13 different conservation practices. The total construction cost of installing conservation practices was \$1,037,235.66.



Racine County Riparian Buffer Program

The riparian buffer program was funded by a not-for-profit grant called "The Fund for Lake Michigan". The Fund for Lake Michigan is focused on making a positive impact on the health of Lake Michigan, its tributaries, and the life it supports. In Racine County, this grant focuses on habitat preservation, restoration, and the improvement of water quality in the Root River and the Lake Michigan watersheds.

Riparian buffers help to reduce agricultural runoff and erosion and are achieved by the installation of grassed buffers that filter out sediment and slow the rate of runoff and erosion. This grant program paid qualifying landowners \$3,000 per acre for establishing and maintaining riparian buffers over a 15-year contract. From 2016-2018, Racine County worked with 12 farmers to install a total of 30 acres of riparian buffers along the Root River and its tributaries reducing agricultural runoff and subsequent erosion and sedimentation with a \$90,000 grant from the Fund for Lake Michigan. Racine County's three-year contract ended in 2018. Racine County LWCD will continue to actively pursue applications for grants to create programs like this in the future.



**Fund for
Lake Michigan**
Clearly making a deep impact.



A Grass Buffer Can:

- Minimize Soil Erosion
- Intercept and Buffer Pollutants
- Improve Water & Air Quality
- Enhance Wildlife Habitat
- Conserve, Beautify, & Protect

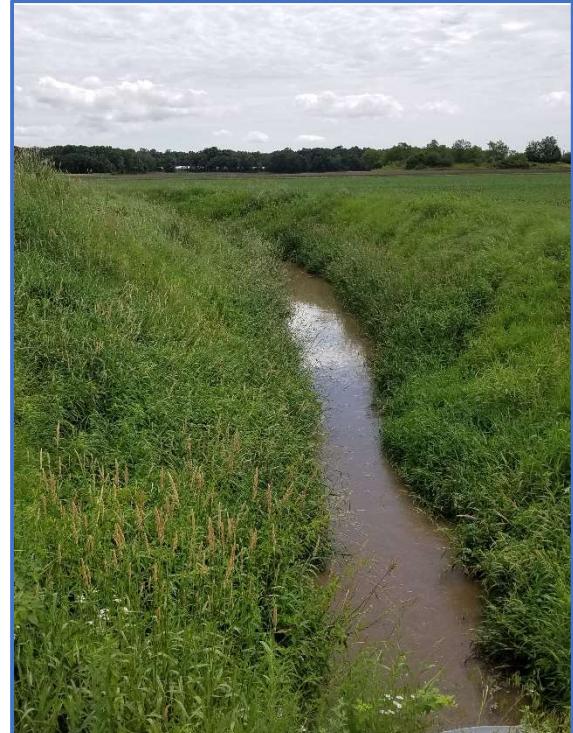
Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

CREP is a partnership between the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Farm Service Agency (FSA), USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (WI-DATCP) and participating Land Conservation Departments throughout the State. CREP pays landowners to install filter strips along waterways or to return continually flooded fields to wetlands while leaving the remainder of the adjacent land in agricultural production. It is an opportunity for landowners to enroll agricultural lands into various conservation practices. If you are interested in participating in this program, call the Racine County Land and Water Conservation Division at 262-886-8440 for more information. In the last 5 years, Racine County LWCD worked with 24 landowners and enrolled approximately 337 acres of a variety of conservation practices, including; filter strips, riparian buffers, grassed waterways, and wetland restorations.



Eligible Practices

- FILTER STRIPS
- RIPARIAN BUFFERS
- GRASSED WATERWAYS
- WETLAND RESTORATIONS
- MARGINAL PASTURLAND WILDLIFE HABITAT BUFFER
- PERMANENT INTRODUCED GRASSES
- PERMANENT NATIVE GRASSES
- ESTABLISHED LEGUMES AND GRASSES
- OAK SAVANNA ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION AND TALL GRASS PRARIE ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION



Federal Conservation Program Assistance

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program

EQIP is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers through contracts up to a maximum term of ten years in length. Contracts provide financial assistance to help plan and implement conservation practices that address natural resource concerns. This in turn provides opportunities to improve soil, water, plant, animal, air, and other resources on agricultural land and non-industrial private forestland. Another purpose of EQIP is to help producers meet Federal, State, Tribal and local environmental regulations. In 2018, 14 new contracts were created for a total of \$67,280. There are a total of 11 landowners within Racine County that have received \$67,280 in cost-share assistance using this program.

EQIP		
Year	New Contracts	Contract Value
2018	14	\$67,280

Conservation Security Program

CSP provides payments to farmers following their conservation plans, which are handled by the NRCS. The Conservation Security Program is important to landowners because it provides much needed financial assistance allowing them to properly follow their conservation plans. CSP also assists the Racine County Land and Water Conservation Division achieve the goals and objectives of the Land and Water Resource Management Plan. In 2018, there were 5 newly created contracts in Racine County covering a total of 1625 acres. The 5-year value of these contracts is \$260,790.00. There are a total of 19 active CSP contracts on Racine County in varying stages of their 5 year contracts.

CSP						
Year	Existing	New	Total Contracts	New Acres	Total Acres	5-Year Acres
2018	14	5	19	1,625	5,195	\$633,270

Farmland Preservation Program

Racine County Farmland Preservation Program

The Farmland Preservation Program offers \$7.50 per acre tax credit for the A-1 zoning in the Townships of Burlington and Waterford. From 2017 to 2021, there were 23 participating farmers enrolled in the FPP each year with cropland totaling 4,180 acres. The average tax credit of this land was \$1,360. All participating farms receive annual conservation compliance letters and forms for participation in the program.



A farmer must comply with applicable state standards and a schedule of compliance to receive the Farmland Preservation Tax Credit even if cost sharing is not available. This requirement applies to farmers whose land is located in a certified farmland preservation zoning district (i.e. exclusive agriculture). Farmers can contact Racine County Land Conservation Division at 262-886-8440 for more information regarding applicable standards and compliance documentation.

Agricultural Performance Standards & Prohibitions

- **Soil Erosion**
Meet tolerable soil loss (T) on fields
- **Soil Erosion on Pastures**
Pastures must meet tolerable soil loss (T)
- **Nutrient Management**
Follow 590 nutrient management plan technical standard on all cropland
- **Barnyards and Feedlot Runoff**
Prevent direct runoff from feedlots or stored manure to waters of the state
- **Livestock Acceses**
Limit livestock access along waters to maintain vegetative cover
- **Manure Storage Structures**
Maintain manure storage structures to prevent leaking and overflow
- **Stacking**
Follow manure storage technical standards for constructing and abandoning
- **Clean Water Diversion**
Near surface water or areas susceptible to groundwater contamination
 - Do not stack manure in an unconfined pile
 - Divert clean water away from feedlots, manure storage, and barnyards
- **Phosphorus Index (PI)**
An average rotational PI of 6 or less and an annual PI of less than 12 on all cropland and pastures
- **Tillage Setback**
Prohibits tillage between 5 and 20 feet from perennial surface water to protect bank integrity
- **Process Wastewater**
Prevent discharges to waters of the state

Nutrient Management Planning

Nutrient management (NM) is a way for Wisconsin farmers to ensure that their crops receive nutrients at the right rate, time, and place to match crop needs and minimize nutrient losses from fields. Nutrient management planning is one of the best practices farmers can use to reduce excess nutrient applications to their cropland and the water quality problems that result from nutrient runoff to lakes, streams, and groundwater. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) tracks farms that develop and update their NM plans when NM Plan Checklist forms are submitted to DATCP by farmers, agronomists, and public agency staff. In the last five years, Wisconsin farmers made impressive strides toward implementing soil and water conservation through the development of NM plans. Farmers can now receive \$40 per acre towards establishing a nutrient management plan for eligible cropland. Racine County LCWD has enrolled 15,851 acres in nutrient management planning in the last 5 years.

To take advantage of current available funding and find out if your land is eligible, contact Racine County Land and Water Conservation at (262) 886-8440 ext. 3. Farmers may work with a crop consultant or advisor to write nutrient management plans or they may also qualify to write their own plans by successfully completing a training course every four years. Free software (SnapPlus) is also available for download.

All farmers are required to comply with new performance standards and having a NM plan is part of that compliance requirement. Racine County Land Conservation staff will work with farmers and landowners to add new practices to those they are currently implementing. More information can be found online about the benefits of establishing a NM plan at:

http://datcp.wi.gov/Farms/Nutrient_Management/index.aspx.

If you are interested in establishing a nutrient management plan for the cropland you rent or own contact the Racine County Land and Water Conservation Division.



Livestock Facility Siting

Laws, Regulations, & Permit Requirements

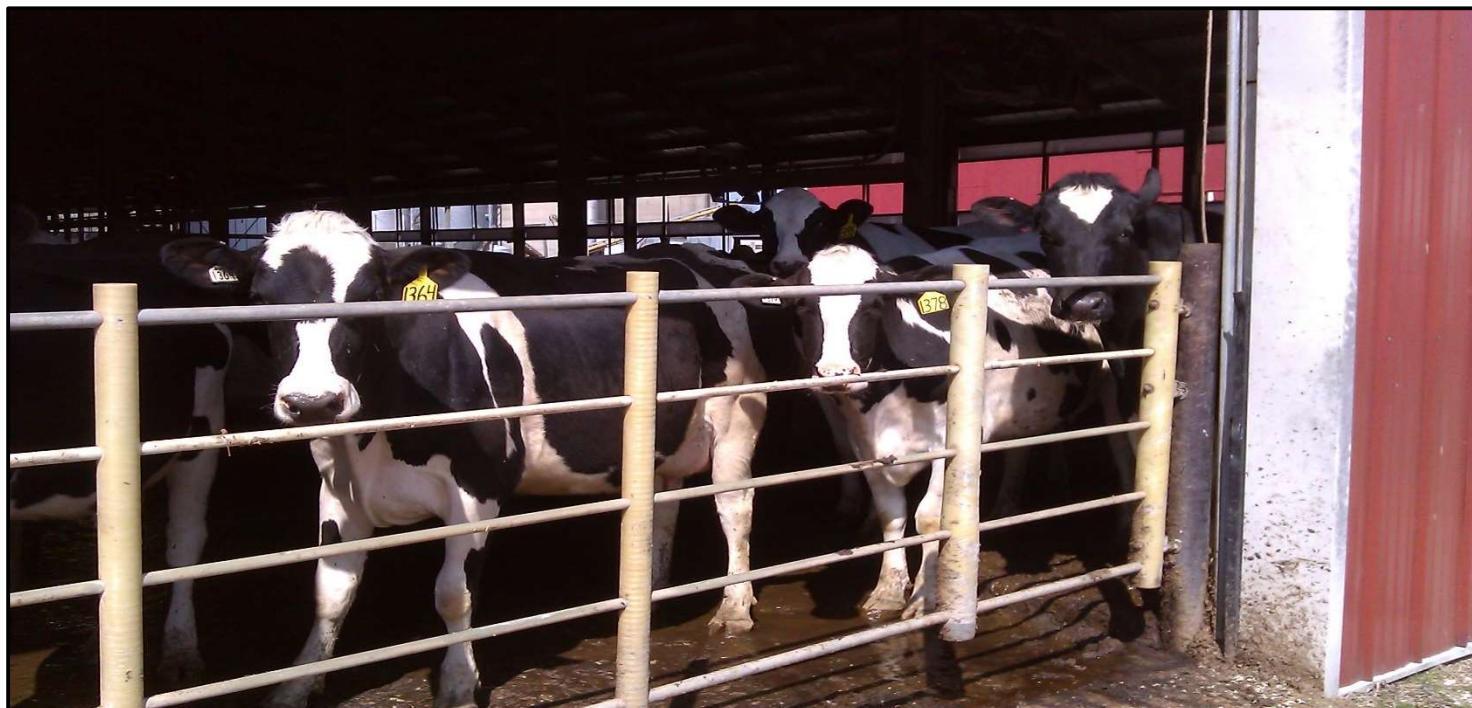
The Livestock Facility Siting Law, consisting of State Statute 93.90 and Rule ATCP 51, has changed how local governments regulate siting of new and/or expanding livestock operations. In 2006, Racine County adopted a Livestock Siting Ordinance (2006-91). State and County regulations require new and expanding livestock facilities with more than 500 animal units (AU) to apply for a Livestock Siting permit. Racine County continues to monitor current sites and review potential livestock facility sites.

PERMIT REQUIREMENTS INCLUDE:

- ◆ Property line and road setbacks
- ◆ Management and training plans
- ◆ Odor management
- ◆ Nutrient management
- ◆ Manure storage facilities
- ◆ Runoff management

For more information about the livestock facility siting program, visit:

<http://livestocksiting.wi.gov>



Animal Waste Management Ordinance

Ordinance Guidelines

The Racine County Animal Waste Management Ordinance states that unregulated animal waste storage facilities not meeting current technical design and construction standards may cause pollution of the surface water and groundwater of Racine County. It may also result in harm to the health of county residents, livestock, aquatic life and other plants and animals, and decrease the property tax base of Racine County. It also finds that improper management of animal waste storage facilities and utilization of animal wastes, including but not limited to the land application of animal waste, may cause pollution of the surface water and groundwater of Racine County. Furthermore, technical standards developed by the United States Department of Agriculture – NRCS and adopted by the Racine County Board, provide effective, practical, and environmentally safe methods of storing, spreading and managing animal waste. From 2017 to 2021, Racine County LWCD has closed two animal waste storage facilities.

THE MAIN ISSUES

- New waste storage facilities require a permit
- Substantially altered waste storage facilities require a permit
- All cropland is required to have a certified nutrient management plan
- There is an animal waste stacking/storage setback of 20 feet from property lines
- All abandoned waste storage facilities must obtain a permit and be properly closed



Racine County Farmland Lease Program & Water Quality Analysis (MS-4)

RACINE COUNTY FARMLAND LEASE

There are five agricultural parcels rented for farming owned by Racine County. These fields range from 6 to 51 acres, and in total encompass 124 acres of tillable land. Leasees must develop and follow a Nutrient Management Plan in accordance with the NRCS 590 Standard. A copy of the plan must be provided to the lessor every four years. The 2017-2020 leases have been awarded to four bidders. Lease rates ranged from \$1/acre (on a land locked parcel) to \$140/acre.



MUNICIPAL SEPARATE STORM SEWER SYSTEM (MS-4)

The County's Wisconsin Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (WPDES) permit requires the development and implementation of a storm water management program. This program includes, but is not limited to, the installation and maintenance of pollutant controls, or "best management practices (BMP's)", for the reduction of total suspended solids (TSS) discharged from the municipal separate storm sewer system (MS-4) to the receiving waters of the state. Racine County has 97 outfalls, inspects 24 outfalls per year, and has 2 municipally owned storm water management facilities.

Racine County is required to achieve 20% TSS reduction in its MS-4 discharge areas. To assess the current pollutant loadings and reductions from the County's MS-4 System, Racine County hired a private engineering firm to perform a water quality analysis utilizing the Source Loading and Management Model (SLAMM). The results of the water quality analysis completed indicate that the existing storm water management facilities reduce the total suspended solids attributed to storm water runoff by approximately 45.4%. This meets the current 20% reduction requirement set forth in the Wisconsin Administrative Code NR 216.

Conservation Technical Shoreland Reviews

Shoreland Reviews

With increased construction along lakes and navigable waters, it is important that the health and integrity of the land be maintained as much as possible and runoff is kept to a minimum. Usually, shoreline alterations should be avoided when they are not necessary. Leaving established native plants along shorelines helps reduce sediment and pollution runoff and helps reduce bank erosion and property loss. Staff recommendations for erosion control practices are administered for any new construction, proposed alterations, and/or additions to structures within the County's shoreland jurisdictional areas.

Staff field checks are completed per landowner request for construction, or due to public concerns and/or complaints on shoreland property to determine if ordinances and standards are being met. Typical concerns include drainage, flooding, soil erosion, and animal waste runoff. Once a review has been completed, recommendations are made to prevent runoff issues into waterways, wetlands or abutting properties. Spot checks will be conducted during construction to ensure proper installation and maintenance of erosion control practices are properly maintained. If erosion control practices are not installed properly it can negate their effectiveness in controlling erosion and will require proper correction before work can begin. From 2017 to May 2022, LWCD has completed 376 shoreland reviews.



INCORRECTLY INSTALLED SILT FENCE.



PROPERLY INSTALLED SILT FENCE.



Non-Metallic Mining & Reclamation

Racine County adopted the non-metallic mining ordinance on May 22, 2001, and revised it on May 7, 2007. This ordinance requires all operators of active non-metallic mining sites to have a reclamation plan, permit, and financial assurance. The reclamation plan must comply with the State Standards in Administrative Code 135.

Nonmetallic mining is the extraction of stone, sand, rock or similar material from natural deposits. As of 2021, Racine County contains 1985 acres permitted for non-metallic. All mining owners or operators are required to identify their operation as active or inactive. A site is considered active if one load of material has left the site during that calendar year.

Mining operators are required to identify the total mining area, the active mining area and the reclaimed areas annually with the County. The total mining area is the total acreage of the permitted area allowed to be mined. The active area is the portion of the mining operation that is currently opened as part of the mining operation. This includes material extraction, exposed side slopes, stock piles, wash ponds, equipment, travel lanes or other buildings/facilities associated with the mining operation on site. Finally, the reclaimed areas are the portion of the mine that has been restored as stated in the reclamation plan on file.

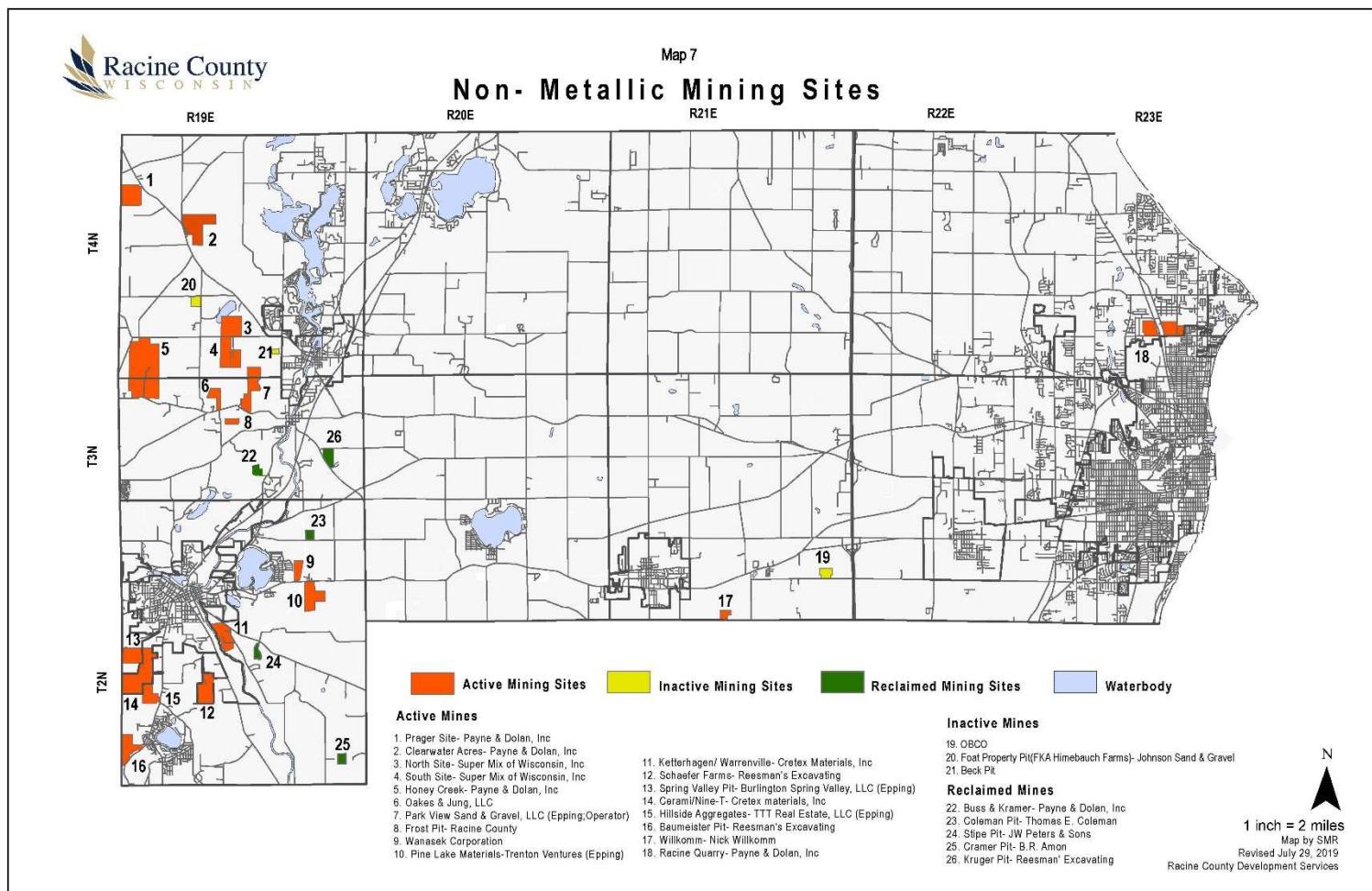


ACTIVE MINING SITE



IN PROCESS OF RECLAMATION

Non-Metallic Mining & Reclamation



RACINE COUNTY NON-METALLIC MINING RECLAMATION

The LWCD staff conducts reclamation plan reviews, on-site mine reclamation inspections, and site plan related analysis in reference to non-metallic mining compliance. In determining the phases of reclamation and compliance, our staff works cooperatively with private sector geologists, environmental specialists, and reclamation managers. The staff reviews include analysis of setbacks, slopes, topsoil replacement, plantings, erosion control, and other site-specific concerns. This program will ensure that mine sites are returned to a productive and beneficial land use once mining is completed.

Once a site is fully reclaimed and returned to proposed post-mining condition, the site becomes a valid asset for agriculture, wildlife habitat, or residential/commercial/industrial development. The Reclamation Plan developed is based on the desired future use. Without proper site reclamation, this scarred land could be left in an undesirable state of overburden stockpiles, dangerous vertical slopes, unwanted substances, and potentially polluted surface and ground water.

9 Key Elements Watershed Restoration Plans

9 KEY ELEMENTS RESTORATION PLANS

Racine County has multiple watershed-based plans that are consistent with EPA's Nine Key Elements. Watershed plans consistent with EPA's nine key elements provide a framework for improving water quality in a holistic manner within a geographic watershed. The nine elements help assess the contributing causes and sources of nonpoint source pollution, involve key stakeholders and prioritize restoration and protection strategies to address water quality problems. Development of watershed-based plans funded with Section 319 funds must be consistent with EPA's nine elements. The elements can be used in watersheds with impaired waters or used to protect watersheds not yet impaired. The nine elements are:

1. Identify the causes and sources
2. Estimate pollutant loading into the watershed and the expected load reductions
3. Describe management measures that will achieve load reductions and targeted critical areas
4. Estimate technical and financial assistance and relevant authorities needed to implement the plan.
5. Develop an information/education component
6. Develop a project schedule
7. Develop the interim, measurable milestones
8. Identify indicators to measure progress and make adjustments
9. Develop a monitoring component

Root-Pike Watershed Initiative Network (Root-Pike WIN) is a non-profit organization that seeks grants and awards grants to projects that will preserve, promote, and protect watershed health. They have established three 9 Key Element Plans in Racine County; the Pike River Watershed Plan 2013, the Root River Watershed Restoration Plan 2014, and the Wind Point Watershed Restoration Plan 2015.



Southeastern Wisconsin Fox River Commission

The Southeastern Wisconsin Fox River Commission (SEWFRC) was established in 1997 by the State of Wisconsin pursuant to 1997 Wisconsin Act 27. The SEWFRC was created in response to citizen and community concerns over water resources problems in the Illinois-Fox River system. At the time, severe restrictions on navigation, flooding and drainage, water uses, and water quality were reported along the Fox River mainstem and its impoundments. These problems had been an increasing concern of the communities and residents within the Fox River watershed since the late-1960s, or for more than 25 years prior to the establishment of the SEWFRC.

The initial SEWFRC implementation plan was published in 1998; another plan issued in 2011 updates that plan and makes recommendations for SEWFRC activities over the next decade. Since its formation, SEWFRC has undertaken and completed a number of significant projects within its jurisdiction, along the reach of the Fox River between the City of Waukesha in Waukesha County, and the Village of Waterford in Racine County. These projects have addressed a number of serious concerns related to erosion, water quality, and navigability of the River. Funding for these efforts has been largely through direct appropriation by the Wisconsin Legislature, although the 2017 through 2019 Racine County has budgeted \$10,000 each year for toward the Commission. The project applicants provided additional funding in support of these projects. The Commission has supported numerous projects within the planning area and has contributed approximately \$1.7 million to projects that help improve the Illinois Fox River basin. In Racine County within the last 5 years, we have installed 1,051 linear feet of shoreline protection projects. If you would like more information on this subject, go to www.SEWFRC.org.



Strategies to reduce pollution from rural runoff

- Riparian buffers
- Conservation tillage
- Grassed waterways
- Cover crops
- Manure storage
- Nutrient management
- Livestock controls
- Wetlands and prairies
- Drainage water management
- Saturated buffers
- Woodchip bioreactors (trenches)
- Drain tile controls

Racine County Information, Programs, and Events

Racine County Tree Program

Beginning in 1984, the tree program has provided Racine County citizens the opportunity to purchase and plant seedling trees at minimal prices for conservation uses (i.e., wind breaks, wood lots, and the promotion of wildlife habitat). Trees are preordered and delivered to the Racine County fairgrounds in mid-April and must be picked up within two days of delivery. In the last 5 years, the Land and Water Conservation Division sold over 117,000 trees to 1,394 landowners. Since 2021 The two to three year old seedlings are sold in bundles of 25, priced at \$18 per bundle. A variety of pines, spruces, shrubs, ad hardwoods are available for purchase on an annual basis. The program also includes native prairie mixes and wildflowers for owners interested in a native conservation cover.

For questions regarding the tree program, contact our office at 262-886-8440. The deadline for ordering your trees typically ends in February. For additional USDA plant guides visit: <http://plants.usda.gov/java/>



Racine County Fair

Each year the LWCD staffs a booth at the Racine County Fair. This has always been a great opportunity to provide the public with informational pamphlets and to answer questions on how the LWCD can assist citizens with their conservation concerns. It also helps build relationships with landowners that have been helped in the past and people we hope to serve in the future.



Poster Contest

The Annual National Conservation Poster Contest provides kindergarten through twelfth grade students an opportunity to convey their thoughts about soil, water, and related natural resource issues through art. It also highlights the educational outreach efforts of conservation districts and their state conservation associations, auxiliaries, and agencies. The poster contest theme follows the annual Stewardship theme. The contest is co-sponsored by the National Association of Conservation Districts and the NACD Auxiliary. Each year, the poster contest starts at the district level. District winner advance to the state level, and state winners advance to the National Contest. National winners are recognized each year at the NACD Annual Meeting and are also eligible for cash prizes. For participating, all kids will receive a certificate of participation and the new knowledge of the yearly theme. Please help Racine County bring back this fun and educational event to the students K-12. In 2021, Racine County LWCD had one elementary school class of 25 students participate in the poster contest. Individuals and teachers with questions regarding district contests or for more information can visit: <https://wisconsinlandwater.org/our-work/youth-education>

Racine County Information, Programs, and Events

LEAN – “Efficiency in Government”

LEAN Management is an idea based on a collection of principles, methods and tools to improve speed and efficiency by eliminating the wasteful expenditure of resources. Essentially, LEAN works to preserve the quality of a product or practice while eliminating steps that may convolute it. Although LEAN Management originated in private sector manufacturing, the tools and methods are being successfully applied to public sectors. Racine County Land Conservation has successfully used this LEAN Management in various processes. It also gives staff an effective tool to suggest modifications to procedures, they use daily, where improvements to the process could be helpful.

Brochures

Educational literature with a focus on restoration, cover crops, lawn care, and water quality are distributed to the public via this office and UW-Extension online at: <https://learningstore.uwex.edu/Publication-Catalogs-C240.aspx>

Spongy Moth Suppression Program

The Spongy Moth Suppression Program is a voluntary partnership involving the State, County, local municipalities, and landowners in a WI-DNR organized aerial insecticide treatment to suppress damaging Spongy Moth populations; which in turn can cause heavy tree defoliation. The suppression program sprays are completed in May and June; areas qualifying as spray blocks are determined in the fall.

To schedule an investigation, contact our office at: 262-886-8440 or for more information call 1-800-642-6684, go online to https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/SMAerialSpray.aspx or <https://spongymoth.wi.gov/Pages/home.aspx>

Ties to the Land Newsletter

Our yearly newsletter, “Ties to the Land”, provides timely updates on conservation programs, as well as news and information that can be used to promote a healthy environment. Currently, the newsletter is distributed via email. Please contact our office if you would like to be on the recipient list or read online at: <https://www.racinecounty.com/departments/public-works-and-development-services/land-conservation/partners-resources>

Wildlife Damage Abatement Program

Wisconsin has a program that assists farmers when wildlife damage their agricultural crops. The Wildlife Damage Abatement and Claims Program (WDACP) provides damage prevention assistance and partial compensation to farmers. The Wildlife Damage and Abatement Claims Program is a cooperative effort by Racine County, USDA Wildlife Services, and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WI-DNR), to control agricultural crop damage caused by wild deer, elk, bear, geese, and turkeys. Wildlife managers issue agricultural damage shooting permits to farmers for removal of deer, and occasionally bear, geese, and turkey, that cause damage. Contact wildlife service within 14 days of the first observation of damages to crops each year to be eligible for abatement and/or compensation. If you have crop damage that you believe qualifies, USDA APHIS Wildlife Service. Contact: USDA-WAUPUN – Wildlife Service at 1-800-433-0663 or 920-324-4514 within the allotted time or online at <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/wildlifehabitat/wdACP.html>

Racine County Information, Programs, and Events

Watershed Protection Committee of Racine County

The Watershed Protection Committee of Racine County (WPCR) consists of a board of 19 local farmers. WI-DATCP recognizes this producer led group which leads efforts in erosion control, water and soil quality improvements, and providing information to farmers and rural landowners regarding the use of conservation practices. These practices include grassed buffers, ditch bank sloping, and streambank protection. The WPCR also considers other conservation practices showing the benefits of soil health such as strip till, no till and cover crops. The WPCR also increases awareness to be good stewards of the land while improving yield. This information will establish conservation knowledge to improve land and water quality, work with all agencies and partners to achieve better land and water quality, and host field days and winter meetings to improve local knowledge. The Mission Statement of the WPCR is as follows: "Establish growing conservation knowledge to improve land and water quality."

WPCR has initiated an applied research effort on farmland located at Racine County's Case Eagle Park in Rochester. This research directly addresses the major barrier to widespread conservation practice implementation that would vastly improve surface water quality: Economics. Within the conventional agriculture community, the fear of yield loss and income reduction from using conservation practices, such as no-till and cover cropping, is well documented and the most cited reason for not using them. Individual successes WPCR members' farms suggest otherwise. Farming is a business, and business decisions are driven by data, not testimonials, which is why we're doing a "head to head" comparison of conventional and regenerative systems based on economics.

The WPCR hosts Winter Workshops and Summer Field Days for farmers and citizens can learn more about conservation practices, see those practices in action, and encourage farmers to implement them on their operations. WPCR offer farmer mentorships where the leaders of the WPCR assist one or two farmers in the Racine County area who are just beginning the journey of implementing conservation practices on their farms.

Since the WPCR's inception in 2017 and being established in 2018, the WPCR have had a total of 260 people in attendance at their Winter Workshops and 274 people attend their Summer Field Days. The group has also cost-shared 8,838 acres of cover crops with 48 farmers for a total of \$127,578 in Racine County; as well as 17 acres of grassed buffers across 8 farms for a total of \$4,500 in incentive payments.

Information about the WPCR and their programs can be found online at <https://www.wpcracinecounty.org/>





This report is available on the following website:

<https://www.racinecounty.com/departments/public-works-and-development-services/land-conservation/partners-resources>

This report features the programs and projects completed from 2017 to 2021, which highlight the roles and responsibilities of the Land and Water Conservation Division, under the direction of the Land and Water Conservation Committee.