



Oconto County

Land Conservation Division

of the Land & Water Resources Department

2019 Annual Report

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Animal Waste Management Ordinance

The Oconto County Animal Waste Management Ordinance has been in effect since 2001. The Land Conservation Office has been issuing permits for any operator with more than 10 animal units that is constructing, altering or expanding buildings to house animals, and the construction or altering of animal waste storage units or barnyards. Operators must first receive an Animal Waste Management permit before they can receive a building (land use) permit. In 2019, 15 determinations were reviewed in which 7 permits were issued for 5 animal housings, 2 animal waste storage facilities, 2 transfer systems, 1 roofed barnyard and 1 animal waste storage closure. We aide projects by providing a survey layout of the farmstead, design practices that are required by the ordinance and state regulations, and inspect construction of practices.

County Cost Share Program For 2019

The county cost share program has been active for over 10 years now. A total of \$20,000 is budgeted every year to aide in funding projects. The agricultural funding is used to reduce pollution from soil erosion to manure runoff, shoreline restoration uses the funding to restore and protect lakes and stream shorelines. At the beginning of each year the LCD starts a yearly signup for applications for cost share money. All the applications are rated for their potential pollution and or environmental benefit. In April the committee selects projects and funding amounts to be awarded to selected applicants that they feel will accomplish the most for the money spent. In 2019 the county cost share program installed 1 Stream Protection project, 1 Well Closings, 2 Shoreline Restoration projects, 2 stream crossings and 5 participants in our farmer's education program.

2019 Funding Available = \$20,000

2019 Soil & Water Resource Management Grant Program

In 2019 the Land Conservation Division received \$60,000 in funding from the Wisconsin Dept. of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) to be used on Best Management Practices that are identified in Oconto County's Land and Water Resource Management Plan. We have a yearly signup that starts January 1st of each year and is on-going throughout the year. As we near the construction season, we take the practices that have been signed up and rate them for the amount of pollution that is being caused. The LCC Committee ranks them in an order of priority and funding levels. In 2019 SWRM funded 2 Grassed Waterways, 2 Stream Crossings and 4 Shoreline Protection projects.

2019 Funding Available = \$60,000

West Shore Green Bay Northern Pike Habitat Project

Since 2011 the Land Conservation Division has been involved in Northern Pike habitat restoration and removing stream impediments. While our first grants have expired, in 2020 we were awarded an additional \$200,000 by the Fox River Trustee Council and \$10,000 from the US Fish and Wildlife fisheries Program to work in conjunction with Marinette County along with previous fund dollars in the amount of \$178,862 for Oconto County. These funds are to increase and protect Northern Pike spawning habitat by restoring/enhancing wetlands and removing fish passage obstructions along tributary streams of the Bay of Green Bay. In 2019, 2 acres of spawning wetlands were restored/enhanced, 8 stream obstructions were removed opening an additional 19.7 miles of stream for fish passage.

2019 Funding acquired and available for projects = \$388,862

Wildlife Damage Program

In 2019, 6 landowners were issued shooting permits for deer damage and 3 landowners were issued Turkey shooting permits. In the past hunters could donate deer for the local food pantries but for 2019 Oconto County did not have any processors participate in this program.

2019 Total funds provided = \$20,033

Land Conservation Youth Education Program

The Land Conservation Division in the last few years has put a renewed effort in our Youth Education Program. It has been shown that you need to start with youth when you are trying to change society's way of thinking on issues. We offer conservation based educational programs to all schools and organizations and the interest has grown tremendously. In 2019 we worked with 9 schools within the county reaching over 567 students.

Department of Ag, Trade and Consumer Protection

Each year the Land Conservation Division applies to the Department of Ag, Trade and Consumer Protection for funding to provide the county with staffing money to help implement the county Land and Water Resource Management Plan and other state mandated programs. For 2019 DATCP awarded the Land Conservation Division \$139,166.00.

Total Staffing Grant = \$139,166

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Collaboration Grant

Starting in 2019 and running through 2021 the LCD received \$155,000 from the USDA NRCS for hiring staff to expand upon our nutrient management program and other farm bill programs.

Grant Award = \$155,000

Oconto County Lake Protection Grant

Oconto County's lakes and waterways are a very important resource that we cannot afford to forget. This great resource is a key component to many recreational activities like boating, swimming and fishing which is vital to the economy of the county. With the need to protect these waters and the limited water quality data available the Land Conservation Division applied for WDNR grants to continue the process of studying our lakes and streams. In 2019 the LCD was awarded 3 grants.

2019 Available WDNR Funding = \$121,921

Oconto County Healthy Waters Cost Share Program

2018 was the first year of the new program intended to provide financial assistance for municipalities, associations and organizations to help protect, enhance and restore Oconto County's streams and lakes. Applications are accepted each year until September 15th, are reviewed by the citizen advisor committee and recommendations are brought to the LCC committee for final review and to award funding to qualifying applications. In 2019 the LCC awarded 6 grants which totaled \$28,916 that had total project costs of \$439,343.

2019 Funding Awarded = \$28,916

Other Funding

The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), which is a federal office, and the Land Conservation Division office are co-located and work together to accomplish conservation efforts with Oconto County landowners and operators through sharing staff, office supplies and equipment. NRCS has several programs: Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) which provides cost sharing for conservation practices and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) which provides incentives to operators for new and existing conservation practices. The Land Conservation Division provides consulting services, technical design and installation inspection for these projects.

Total EQIP and CSP Funding 2019 = \$1,167,250

Total Program Funding for Oconto County in 2019

Total County Cost Share = \$20,000
Total SWRM Cost Share = \$60,000
Total Northern Pike Project Funds = \$388,862
Total Wildlife Damage Funds = \$20,033
Total DATCP staffing grant = \$139,166
Total USDA NRCS Collaboration grant = \$155,000
Total WDNR Lake Protection = \$121,921
Total Healthy Waters Cost Share = \$28,916
Total NRCS EQIP & CSP Funds = \$1,167,250

Total Funding for 2019 = \$2,075,128

In conclusion:

The above programs are part of our Land and Water Resource Management Plan in an effort to fulfill our Mission Statement:

“To serve landowners of Oconto County to manage, protect, and improve land and water resources through cooperation with Federal, State, and private agencies, and secure funding to provide technical and monetary assistance to achieve sound environmental practices to permanently benefit our land and water resources.”

A fair portion of the economic activity in Oconto County is derived from agriculture and recreation\tourism. It is vital to the county to ensure these activities continue to prosper while still preserving our natural resources.

Respectfully submitted,

Ken Dolata
County Conservationist