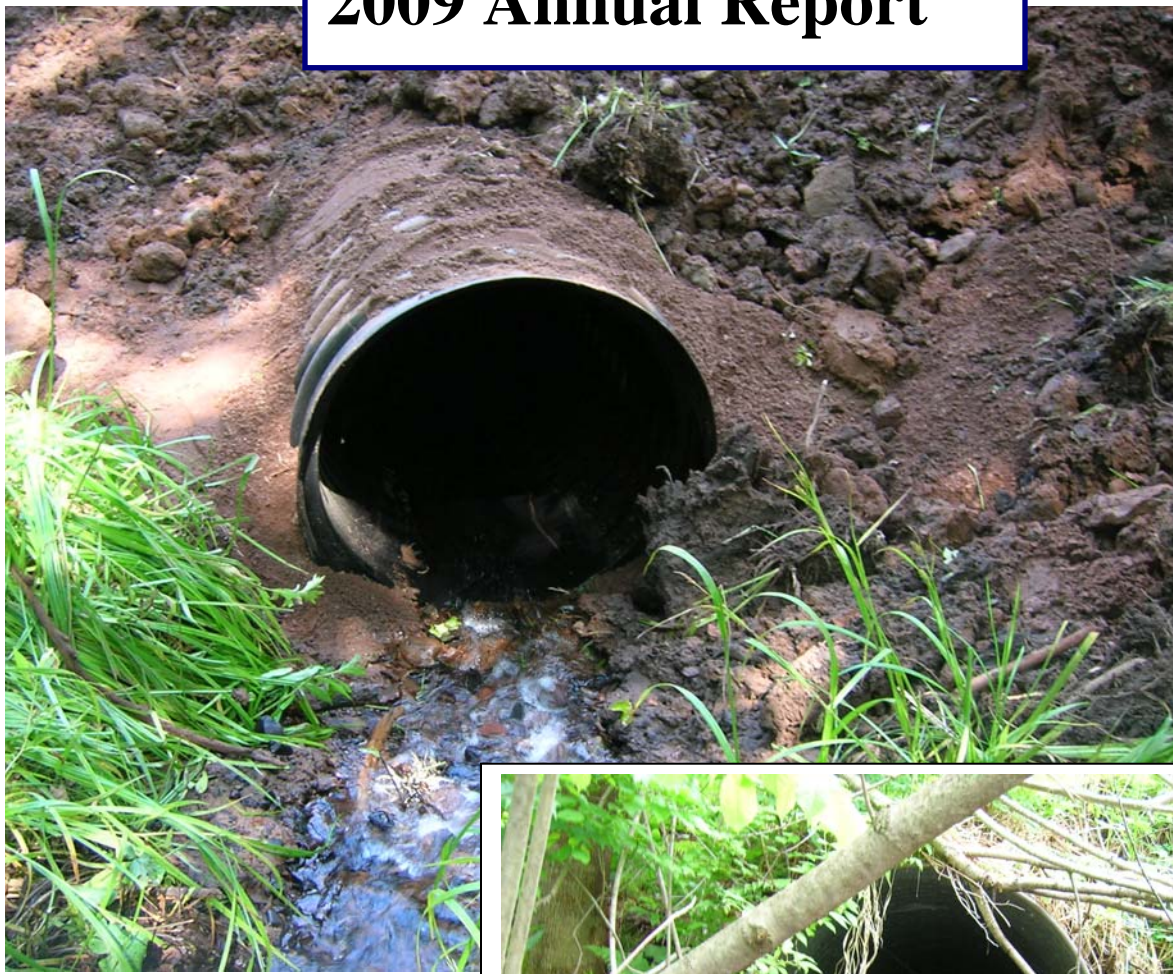


**Iron County
Land Conservation Department**

2009 Annual Report



After

*Access Road & Culvert
Replacements
Town of Gurney*



Before

The mission of the Iron County Land Conservation Department is to provide leadership and promote sound land and water stewardship through education, technical support and consistent program delivery.

2009 Year in Review

Iron County Land & Water Conservation Department

Throughout 2009, the Iron County Land and Water Conservation Department (LWCD) continued to build capacity and increase momentum with conservation efforts. The department was fortunate to secure more grant funds this past year than in any previous year. The county employs one full-time Land Conservation position through a Staff and Support grant from the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP). In addition, the LWCD was able to secure a Department of Natural Resources grant to fund a full-time Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator through 2011. Despite limited staff to meet local needs, the LWCD was able to capitalize on successful grant applications, expand program outreach, and increase the amount of funding cost-shared from the state to protect local water quality in Iron County. In addition, the department was very active in an extensive and very successful lobbying campaign with environmental organizations, County Conservationists, lobby groups, and the legislature to restore funding to Wisconsin's Soil and Water Resource Management (SWRM) Program that had been cut from the governor's budget.

In January 2009, Heather Palmquist was hired as Iron County's Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator. Heather developed an invasive species education program, assisted with conservation practices, managed the Native Plant Sale, and provided education outreach to Iron County schools and lake groups. She also wrote a successful DNR grant to purchase water quality testing equipment for the department.

The LWCD continues to provide technical and cost share assistance for a variety of non-point pollution and water quality concerns. Demand for this service grows annually. With project requests at an all time high in 2009, the department increased its Cost-Share Funding from DATCP by more than 100%. Requests for school programs and technical assistance were also at an all-time high. This resulted in an overall increase in the number of conservation projects installed, education programs conducted, and technical assistance provided.

Land & Water Conservation Committees and Departments have become very active in working to meet the challenges faced by declines in available funding. We will continue to seek out new strategies to meet the budget challenges. The Wisconsin Association of Land Conservation Employees has increased its advocacy for long-term, secure funding for the state's SWRM Program and they continue to pressure DATCP on its responsibility of funding to this program. The LWCD will continue to advance conservation at the higher levels of government where and whenever possible.

The Iron County Land and Water Conservation Department appreciates the local, regional, and state support for conservation efforts across Wisconsin and especially within the county. We appreciate the commitment and hard work from our local landowners, students, elected officials, and concerned citizens and we will continue to be an active partner to continue implementing conservation in the county. The future of our pristine water resources depends on our strength and commitment.

Sincerely dedicated to conservation,

MaryJo E. Gingras
County Conservationist

Iron County Land & Water Conservation

The mission of the Iron County Land & Water Conservation Department is to provide leadership and promote sound land and water stewardship through education, technical support and consistent program delivery.

<u>LCC Committee</u>		<u>LCC Staff & Support</u>	
Gerald Luke	Chairman	MaryJo Gingras	Conservationist
Ron Kern	Vice-Chairman	Heather Palmquist	Aquatic Invasive Coordinator
William Thomas		David Schultz	Wildlife Damage
Steven Smith		<u>Natural Resource Conservation Service</u>	
Vernon Moore*	FSA Representative	Gary Haughn	District Conservationist
Dale Wehmas*		Paul Johnson	Civil Engineering Tech.
Tom Popko*		Tom Cogger	Tribal Liason

* Denotes Non County Board Member

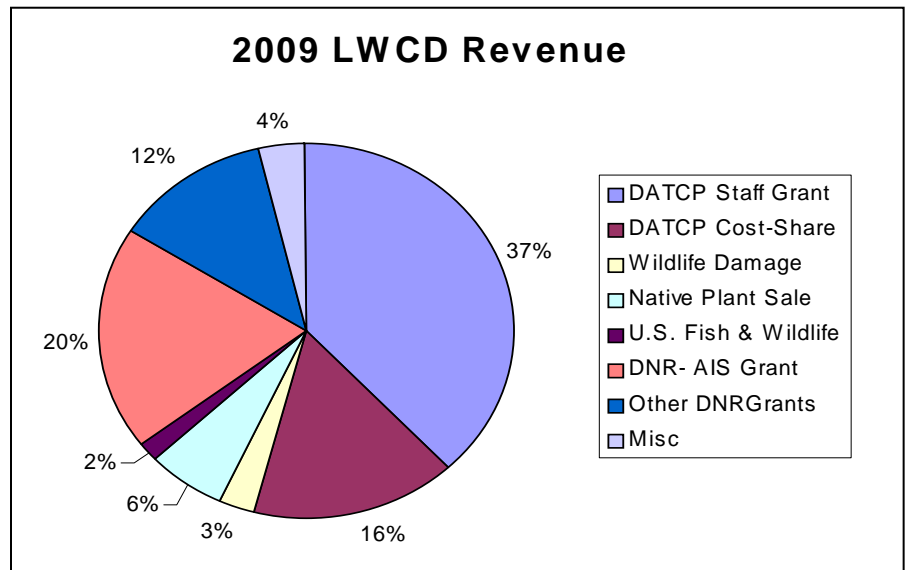
Land Conservation Committees were created under Chapter 92.06(1)(a), Wis. Stats. and have local responsibility for natural resource issues related to erosion control, sedimentation and nonpoint source pollution, and other duties as directed by the county board.

Administrative Activities

- Administered **\$91,415** in DATCP staff and support funding for the department in 2009.
- Administered **\$46,687** WDNR Lake Protection grant for the Aquatic Invasive Species Program.
- Administered **\$37,750** of DATCP cost share on 9 conservation practices.
- Administered **\$23,200** WDNR grant for Lake Superior water quality protection for agriculture.
- Administered **\$4,000** U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service grant for cold-water fisheries protection.
- Administered **\$9,100** Bad River Watershed Association grant for fish passage restoration.
- Administered the Wildlife Damage Program.
- Coordinated the Native plant sale including **\$10,273** in sales.
- Provided **\$3,000** scholarships and awards to 4 Iron County students from the program proceeds.
- Lobbied at state-wide hearings for Soil & Water Resource Management program funding.
- Served as NW Representative on the WALCE Board.
- Served on the WALCE Personnel Improvement Committee.
- Attended the WALCE annual professional development conference.
- Served as chair of the NW Lakes Conference.
- Attended County Conservationist meetings.
- Attended public hearings and Conservation Board meeting to lobby for SWRM Program funding.
- Provide technical support and conservation planning for 3 townships and the Forestry Dept.
- Attended NCWMA meetings.
- Developed & administered the department's budget.

2009 Fiscal Report

DATCP allocated \$91,415 for staff and support costs and \$37,749 for Cost-Share for conservation practices in 2009. These grants accounted for 53% of total revenue captured. In addition, the department secured many additional grants to implement our program to its full potential. The table below illustrates Iron County's funding sources from 2006-2009.



Budget Summary *(includes actual expenses & approximate revenues)*

	2009	2008	2007	2006
DATCP Salary Grant	\$91,415	\$85,000	\$85,000	\$85,000
DATCP Cost-Share	\$37,749.01	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$31,560
Wildlife Damage	\$6,777.33	\$6,382	\$7,733	\$4,077
Native Plant Sale	\$14,180.32	\$1,983	\$1,691	\$783
Nutrient Management	---	\$36,398	---	---
U.S. Fish & Wildlife	\$4,000	\$2,500	\$2,000	\$2,000
Carryover funds	NA	---	\$20,000	---
DNR- AIS Grant	\$46,686.90	---	---	---
Other DNRGrants (3)	\$29,909.75	\$1,050	\$2,580	\$3,225
Misc	\$8687.60	---	\$3,995	---
TOTAL Revenue:	\$235,405.91	\$153,313	\$142,999	\$126,645
Program Management:	\$228,578.20	\$175,697	\$164,713	\$149,318
Difference	+\$6,827.71	\$22,384	\$21,714	\$22,673
Additional Grants paid directly to owners	\$12,520.00			

Land & Water Resource Management (LWRM) Plan

Chapter 92 of the Wisconsin Statutes grants authority to Land Conservation Committees (LCC) to set policy for local soil & water resource management. Their policies are administered through the LWCD.

Iron County adopted its first Land & Water Resource Management Plan in 1999. The plan provides County government the flexibility and funding to address statewide goals as well as locally identified priorities. The plan was revised in 2004 and again in 2009. Goals and activities were revised, including a new goal for invasive species management. Revisions are required to remain eligible for funding. The plan goes to the Land & Water Board for approval on February 2, 2010.

Implementation of the plan is driven by the annual workplan, which includes goals, objectives, and activities identified by the LCC through extensive public participation.

Partnerships with local producers and combined funding opportunities with NRCS have promoted farmers to address barnyard and manure management concerns. Agricultural practices, streambank stabilization, riparian habitat restoration, and technical assistance to Towns continue drive the conservation practice workload of the department. In 2009, we fielded 50 site visits and over 300 requests.

The LCD has worked cooperatively with county departments and local agencies as opportunities arise including the Forestry, Zoning, and Highway Departments, and others. The department maintains a strong commitment to adults and youth through partnerships with the County Lakes Alliance & lake groups, Hurley & Mercer Schools, North Lakeland Discovery Center, and Master Gardeners.

The table below summarizes the projects funded in 2009 through the Cost-Share Program.

Completed LWRM Cost Share Projects – 2009 (pictures start on page 5)							
Project Type	Name	Actual Cost	DATCP CS \$	Other \$	Source	Landowner	Size
Livestock Watering	Jeff Lauren	\$18,386.39	NA	\$18,386.39	NRCS/DNR	\$ 0	500 Ft.
Access Road-Crossing	IC Forestry	\$11,025.86	\$ 4,918.10	\$ 4,000.00	USFWS	\$ 2,107.76	250 Ft.
Access Road- Culvert	Kimball Town	\$14,331.21	\$ 6,675.35	\$ NA		\$ 7,655.86	360 Ft.
Access Road- Culvert	Gurney Town	\$19,063.45	\$13,344.42	\$ 1734.47	County	\$ 3,984.56	550 Ft.
Access Road- Culvert	Anderson Town	\$19,131.45	\$ 6,970.76	\$ 9,100.00	BRWA	\$ 3,060.69	500 Ft.
Habitat Restoration	Testin	\$ 3,547.56	\$ 2,483.29	NA		\$ 1,064.27	1,050 Ft ²
Habitat Restoration	Knudtson	\$ 2,687.00	\$ 1,880.90	NA		\$ 806.10	2,100 Ft ²
Habitat Restoration	Arnold	\$ 2,108.84	\$ 1,476.19	NA		\$ 632.65	1,275 Ft ²
Windbreak	Martinez	\$ 466.41	NA	\$ 466.41	DNR	\$ 0	350 Ft.
Windbreak	Cattelino	\$ 4,250.00	NA	\$ 4,250.00	DNR	\$ 0	2,750 Ft.
TOTAL:		\$94,998.17	\$37,749.01	\$37,937.27		\$19,311.89	

2009 Conservation Practices



**Livestock Watering Facility
Jeff Lauren**



DNR Grant:	\$14,966.39
NRCS:	\$ 3,420.00
Total:	\$18,386.39

**Access Road-Crossing
Iron County Forestry**

DATCP:	\$4,918.10
U.S. FWS	\$4,000.00
<u>Landowner:</u>	<u>\$2,107.76</u>
Total:	\$11,025.86



**Access Road-Crossing
Town of Kimball**



DATCP:	\$6,675.35
<u>Landowner:</u>	<u>\$7,655.86</u>
Total:	\$14,331.21

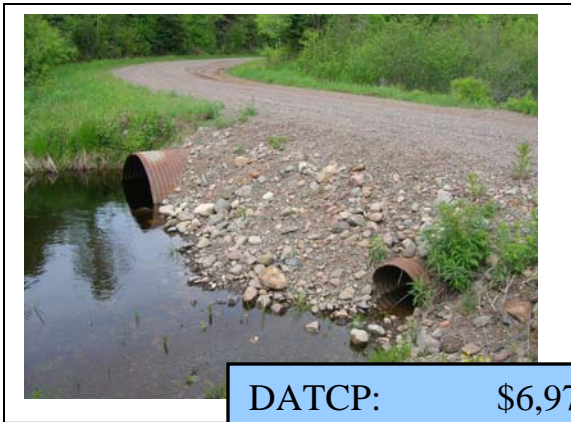
2009 Conservation Practices



**Access Road-Culvert
Town of Gurney**



DATCP:	\$13,344.42
County:	\$ 1,734.47
Landowner:	\$ 3,984.56
Total:	\$19,063.45



**Access Road-Culvert
Town of Anderson**



DATCP:	\$6,970.76
BRWA	\$9,100.00
Landowner:	\$3,060.69
Total:	\$19,131.45



**Habitat Restoration
Testin**



DATCP:	\$2,483.29
Landowner:	\$1,064.27
Total:	\$3,547.56

2009 Conservation Practices

Shoreland Habitat Restoration Knudtson

DATCP:	\$1,880.90
Landowner:	\$ 806.10
Total:	\$2,687.00



Shoreland Habitat Restoration Arnold

DATCP:	\$1,476.19
Landowner:	\$ 632.65
Total:	\$2,108.84

Habitat Restoration Martinez

DNR Grant:	\$ 466.41
Landowner:	\$ NA
Total:	\$ 466.41



Windbreak Cattelino

DNR Grant:	\$4,250.00
Landowner:	\$ NA
Total:	\$4,250.00

Land & Water Resource Management (LWRM) Plan (Cont.)

Promoting land and water conservation outreach is the number one priority of Iron County's LWCD. The department dedicates vast amounts of time, energy, and funding to promote stewardship and resource protection to students, farmers, municipalities, elected officials, landowners, and the general public. This is the only department in the county that fills the niche.

With 495 lakes and 222 streams in Iron County, many of the the department's education outreach programs revolve around water protection and conservation practices. Outreach conducted is accomplished through more than two dozen press releases and lake association articles, distribution of education packets to new shoreland owners, lake association programs and pontoon days, programs for elected officials on water quality and economic value, attendance at Loon Days, and various water-based programs for students. The department works with lake associations on grant writing, lake planning, and restoration.



Heather teaching macro invertebrate I.D. at conservation camp (above).

* * *

MaryJo discussing invasive species at Mercer Loon Days (left).

In 2009 the department worked with students from the Mercer Environmental & Tourism Charter School to install a rain garden in the school's courtyard. The students selected plants, built the garden berms, and planted it. The rain garden will serve as a demonstration to manage roof runoff, encourage infiltration, and provide education on native plants.

This was the second year that local schools participated in the WI Land & Water Conservation Association annual Conservation Poster Competition. The LWCD worked with Hurley K-6th grade on soil education and 25 students entered Iron County's competition. Participants each received a ribbon and first place winners received a **\$50** savings bond from the LWCD. Four of the posters went on to the regional competition where one finished 1st place and one 2nd place.

Thanks to a successful WI DNR Aquatic Invasive Species Grant, education efforts in 2009 were expanded to include aquatic invasive species. Heather Palmquist was hired as the Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator to direct the program through 2011 (see AIS Education, page 8).

In addition, the department works closely with the agricultural community to provide nutrient management planning and education. The department offered 2 planning update workshops and one field day for demonstration of a newly purchased No-Till Planter.

Information & Education Activities

1. Distributed **\$3,000** in scholarships to students funded by the Native Plant Sale.
2. Distributed 25 Shoreland Folders & Restoration Guides.
3. 46 Education signs for boat landings.
4. Media campaign; 140 radio/tv/news ad
5. Woods & Water Project; 35 students.
6. Hurley School field day; 55 students.
7. Hurley Habitat field trip; 15 students
8. 6 Water programs; 30 students.
9. 16 Envirothon Classes; 10 students.
10. 8 WQ & AIS Camp programs; 60 kids.
11. 24 AIS education programs; 150 students.
12. Assisted High School Conference on the Environment; 8 students.
13. Shoreland Restore program; 50 attendees.
14. Clean Boat, Clean Waters; 25 attendees.
15. AIS Media campaign.
16. Rain Barrel workshops; 20 participants.
17. Master Gardener program; 25 attendees.
18. Spoke at 2 Town Board meetings.
19. Hosted Conservation Poster Contest.
20. Fleet Farm Days booth; 100+ attendees
21. 8 Lake Association talks; 230 attendees.
22. Mercer Lakes Field Day; 14 attendees.
23. Loon Days booth; 150+ attendees.
24. Held 2 nutrient management workdays.
25. No-Till Planter Demo Day; 12 attendees.
26. WI Public Radio guest speaker.
27. Developed database for WQ monitoring.



*No-Till Planter Agriculture Demonstration.
September 29, 2009.*



*Mercer lakes aquatic plant field day.
June 23, 2009.*

Total I & E Outreach:

Field days, workshops, education booths:	10
Education programs taught:	77
# Student & adult program attendees:	1117 (student 538/adult 579)
Handouts, publications, pamphlets:	500
Native Plant Sale brochures distributed:	1050

Education & Conservation Programs

Aquatic Invasive Species Program

This past year was the first year of Iron County's AIS program. The focus of the program is to develop county-wide education, prevention, and outreach to stop the spread of aquatic invasive species throughout the area. The program is funded through a DNR Grant from January 2009-December 2011. Previously, there was no mechanism in place to prevent the spread of AIS, or even to provide education on a county-wide scale.

Education efforts involved students, lake groups, landowners, recreationists and elected officials. A great accomplishment was creation of a media campaign designed to educate residents and visitors on AIS, economic impacts and prevention methods. The Iron County Economic Development Committee funded the media campaign and the LWCD worked with Mercer Environmental Tourism Charter School (METCS) to develop a television commercial. The campaign included 16 newspaper ads, 84 radio announcements and 40 television commercials.



Another success was the development of AIS prevention signs to be placed at boat landings. The AIS Coordinator developed a 3'x5' sign to be posted at 16 different landings throughout the county. In addition, 25 smaller wooden signs (16"x20") were created with METCS. These signs have a wood-burned image of the aquatic invasive species found in the lake and identification.

Presentations, trainings, workshops, and public events for lake groups, students, visitors and recreationists were a priority. Lake folks were educated about AIS and were encouraged to talk to users about prevention steps to "stop the spread." Workshops were held on Clean Boats, Clean Waters (CB/CW) and Citizen Lake Monitoring (CLM). A lakes tour was hosted to look at native aquatic plants and discuss their important values. Education in the schools was also a focus with multiple presentations to classes on AIS and prevention. Accomplishments included:

- CB/CW & CLM Workshops held 5/30/09 & 6/13/09 - 25 participants total
- Media campaign - 84 radio announcements, 40 TV commercials, 16 newspaper ads
- AIS education in schools – 24 programs – 150 students
- Conservation Camp: 8 WQ/AIS programs; 60 students
- Boat landing signs - 16 signs 3'x5' & 26 signs 16"x20"
- Reports to County Land Conservation Committee– 4
- Lakes monitored and reported in SWIMS data base – 5 lakes
- Lakes monitored by volunteers and data entered into SWIMS – 3 lakes
- Presentations informing partners of AIS grants and funding – 5 presentations
- Researched existing AIS strategic plans
- Formed partnerships with WDNR, Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC) and Northwoods Cooperative Weed Management Area (NCWMA)

Woods & Waters Project



Since 1999, Hurley and Mercer students have gained first-hand experience in conducting field research through studying the link between Iron County forest types, soils, wildlife, and water quality through the Woods & Waters Project. This unique program draws students into the field to study water quality and loons during summer and to track pine martin in the fall/winter.

In 2007, the Woods component changed its focus from previously studying the American Fisher to the Pine Martin. Little is known about the Pine Martin in Wisconsin and Iron County happens to have one of the only reproducing populations in the state. Students in this project study their forest home range structure, behavior, and reproduction.

A female pine martin was captured and collared in early 2009. Mercer area DNR staff oversaw the chemical immobilization, fitting of a radio collar, body measurements, and release of the animal back into the forest. During the winter, radio telemetry equipment was used by students to track and record their martin's movements.



Joe Vairus, Iron County Forestry, teaches students about forest management.

The Waters component of this unique program includes placing loon platforms on six lakes throughout the county. The platforms are monitored by students through the summer to record success of nesting. The program has increased successful reproduction by more than 50%. In addition, the students learn about the impacts of water quality and shoreland development on loon reproduction. The research and data has been amazing for these students to be part of.



Both schools analyze their data, create reports, and present their findings at an Annual High School Radio Telemetry Conference in Ashland. Hurley has also presented this project at the Wisconsin High School Governors Conference. Some of the students that have participated in this project have gone on to complete a degree in Natural Resources or Wildlife Management.

Mercer students identify aquatic bugs.



Native Plant Sale



The 2009 Native Plant Sale marked another very successful year. The sale this year was a

cooperative effort through both the Iron and Ashland Counties Land & Water Conservation Departments. Since the program began in 1993, more than 250,000 trees and shrubs have been sold. This sale provides an opportunity for landowners to purchase small quantities of native seedlings, grasses, and wildflowers at a low cost. All of the plants in the sale are native to northern Wisconsin!

There are a number of environmental and social values in promoting native species. Many of these plants are raised locally and collected from native seed in this region. This supports local nurseries and ensures greater survival because the plants are adapted to northern Wisconsin's climate. Once established, they require less maintenance because they do not need water, fertilizer, or pesticides.

Multiple layers of native plants (groundcovers, shrubs, and trees) provide the essential food, shelter, and space for a diversity of wildlife. These plants have broad and often deep roots, thus reducing soil erosion and promoting water percolation into the soil. As water percolates down into the ground nutrients are absorbed that would otherwise runoff into nearby lakes or streams.

Benefits and uses of these seedlings include: wildlife value, timber, windbreaks, shoreland habitat restoration, and more.

Proceeds from the Native Plant Sale funded scholarships for high school students as well as scholarships for teachers to attend science-based workshops at Trees for Tomorrow Natural Resources Education Center.

2008 Native Plant Sale:

- ❖ 10,400 trees
 - ❖ 950 shrubs/ ferns
 - ❖ 4,314 grasses/wildflowers
-
- ❖ **15,664** Total Plants Distributed
 - ❖ Total profit \$1,983.10
 - ❖ Awarded \$1000 college scholarship
 - ❖ Awarded \$100 Scholarship for Land Conservation Camp (2)

2009 Native Plant Sale:

- ❖ 11,350 trees
 - ❖ 1,860 shrubs/ ferns
 - ❖ 5,784 grasses/wildflowers
-
- ❖ **18,994** Total Plants Distributed
 - ❖ Total profit \$ 1,980.00
 - ❖ Awarded **\$3,000** in scholarships for a Hurley and a Mercer student to attend the Crex Meadows Youth Conservation Camp

Nutrient Management

Water Conservation Department (ABDI-LCD) began to educate farmers and other landowners

about NR 151: Agricultural Standards and Prohibitions. It was a great strategy because all four counties had decided to use education, rather than enforcement, to gain compliance with NR 151.

Iron County cooperates with Ashland and Bayfield Counties to encourage local farmers to attend an annual presentation hosted by the University of WI-Extension Agricultural Resource Agent titled "*NR 151 Agricultural Performance Standards and Prohibitions.*" In addition, Iron County holds an annual Nutrient Management Plan update class to assist local farmers in updating their Plans. There are seven producers in the county that require a Nutrient Management Plan and six of them completed their plans in 2008. Approximately 1,200 are enrolled in nutrient management plans. Another education program will begin in the spring of 2010 for additional farmers interested in the program.

Wildlife Damage Abatement Program

The Wildlife Damage Abatement & Claims Program (WDACP) was created by the Wisconsin Legislature in 1983 and has been implemented in Ashland, Bayfield, Douglas and Iron Counties since 1987. Iron County's program is administered out of the Ashland County LWCD office.

The emphasis of the WDACP is on abatement (alleviation) of damage from deer, bear, turkey and geese through techniques such as: modification of agricultural practices, fencing, live trapping and relocation of bear, repellents, scare devices and wildlife population control through managed hunting. In the 4-county area, there are a variety of commercial crops being damaged by wildlife including corn, sunflowers, soybeans, buckwheat, forage, apples, cherries, plums, strawberries, blueberries; carrots, beets, beans and other garden vegetables, cut flowers, honey and livestock.

ABATEMENT: The wildlife damage program responds to dozens of program inquiries and damage complaints annually. For those people that meet program eligibility requirements, some choose to enroll and implement abatement measures when damage is first reported.

CLAIMS: Program participants must call for damage appraisals at least 10 days prior to harvest to remain eligible for damage reimbursements. They must comply with program requirements and have properly implemented the recommended abatement measures to have their claims approved by the Land Conservation Committees and the WDNR. Iron County had one program participant in 2009 with \$8,908.65 of appraised bear damage to his corn crop.

BMP	Best Management Practice
CREP	Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program
CSA	Cost Share Agreement
DATCP	Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection
EQIP	Environmental Quality Incentives Program
FPP	Farmland Preservation Plan
FSA	Farm Service Agency
GIS	Geographical Information System
GLIFWC	Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Service
I&E	Information & Education
LCC	Land Conservation Committee
LWCB	Land & Water Conservation Board
LWCD	Land & Water Conservation Department
LWRM	Land & Water Resource Management
NCWMA	Northwoods Cooperative Weed Management Area
NRCS	Natural Resource Conservation Service
NWLC	Northwest Wisconsin Lakes Conference
NWLWCA	Northwest Wisconsin Land & Water Conservation Association
RC&D	Resource Conservation & Development
USFWS	United States Fish & Wildlife Service
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
UWEX	University of Wisconsin Extension
WALCE	Wisconsin Association of Land Conservation Employees
WDACP	Wildlife Damage Abatement and Claims Program
WDNR	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
WLWCA	Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association



"It's time for McWit to leave. He's learned all the acronyms we use."



This Department extends an appreciative Thank You for your contributions in our outstanding accomplishments and success in soil & water conservation.

Federal
United States Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)

- Ted Koehler, Wildlife Biologist