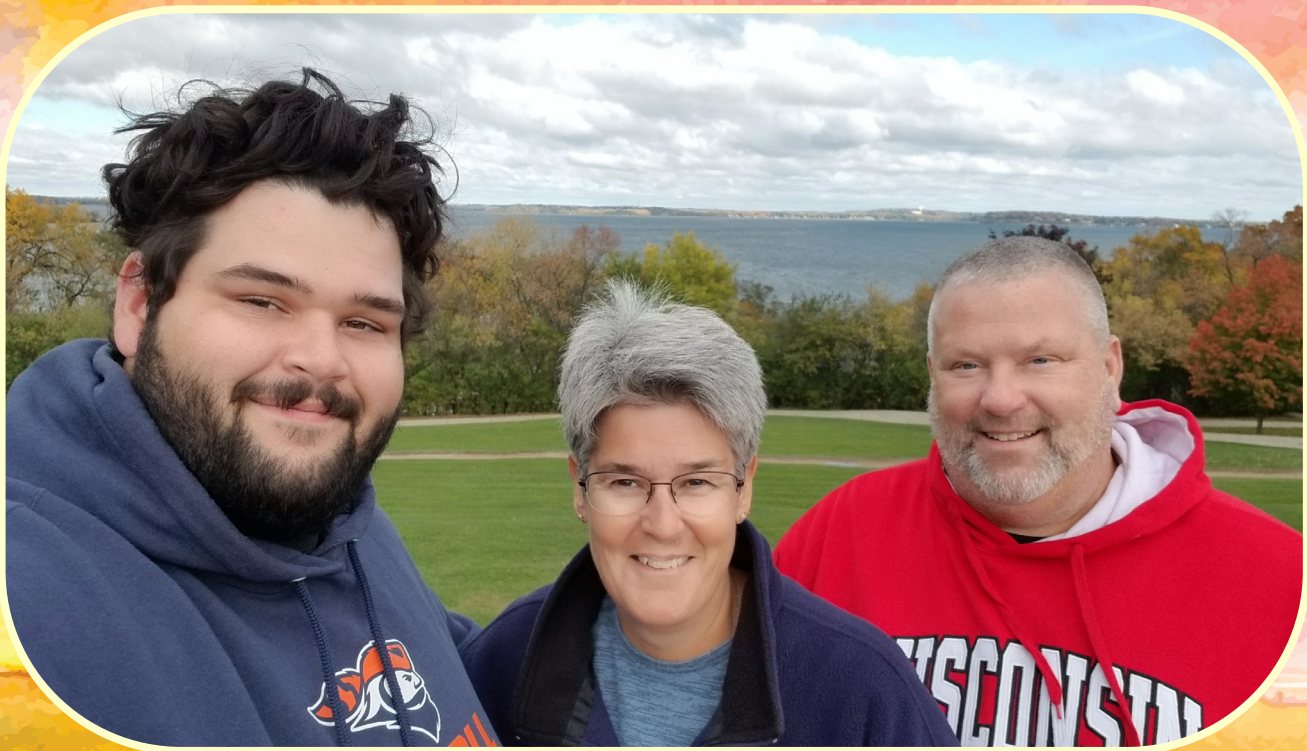


This newsletter is dedicated to

Ty Larson

an outstanding leader in conservation, a friend and mentor to many, who above all else, was a proud and dedicated husband and father.

Ty, you will be missed dearly.



"Ty is still with us. I hear his voice in the breeze through the trees, and I see him in the birds in the sky. He may have passed, but I know he is here with us still."

- Alexander Larson



A Man Who Could Fill an Entire Football Stadium With Those Whose Lives He Touched...

Tyrone "Ty" Larson, had already accomplished an outstanding career in conservation, having made significant and lifelong contributions to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Ty's unwavering dedication to preserving our natural resources and his remarkable achievements have left an indelible mark on this agency. The lasting impact he has made through his friendships, mentorships, partnerships and leadership runs as deep and enduring as the strongest roots of a mighty oak tree. It is an honor to acknowledge his exemplary service and the positive impact he has had on the conservation community and those who had the privilege to know Ty and work side-by-side with him.

Ty's journey with NRCS began in 1995 as a Soil Conservationist in Green Lake and Portage, Wisconsin. He later accepted a full-time position as a Soil Conservationist in Michigan, where he served in various locations, including Adrian, Hastings, and Paw Paw. Over the span of 25+ years, Ty's commitment to conservation led him to take on increasingly significant professional roles within the agency. In March 2001, Ty became the District Conservationist for the Wisconsin Rapids Field Office, and later served in the Appleton and Stevens Point offices in Wisconsin. During this period, he was also the President of the Wisconsin Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society and graduated from the NRCS Midwest Regional Leadership Program. In October 2009, Ty was appointed as Wisconsin's Northeast Area Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations. For over a decade, he successfully managed conservation efforts across 21 counties and 15 field offices, supporting countless farmers and landowners in reaching their conservation goals and setting benchmarks for Wisconsin NRCS. He was instrumental in the establishment of one of our nation's first Demonstration Farm Networks and provided critical support during the development of one of the only Area-wide Conservation Plans in the state. In the summer of 2021, Ty's commitment to NRCS was further exemplified when he was selected to serve on detail as the National Program Manager for the Mississippi River Basin Initiative and National Water Quality Initiative with NRCS National Headquarters in Washington, D.C. And in January 2022, Ty was promoted to Minnesota NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Management and Strategy, where he continued to enrich our agency with his expertise and forge new, lasting connections.

Ty, a Wisconsin native and graduate from the University of Wisconsin-Platteville, grew up on the shores of Lake Waubesa. During his youth, his deeply rooted connection for land conservation began to cultivate, as he spent so much of his time helping both sets of grandparents on their farms by tending to the various farm animals and crop fields of hay, corn and tobacco. His love for Wisconsin was solidified long ago, and so, in July of this year, Ty joined Wisconsin NRCS once again by answering the call from NRCS Chief Terry Cosby to serve as State Conservationist for Wisconsin. Ty's family, including his wife Laura and their son Alexander, have been a source of pride and support throughout his journey. Laura's retirement from the USDA Farm Service Agency and Alexander's pursuit of a master's degree at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in Cartography and Geographical Information Systems (GIS) truly showcase a family-sized commitment to giving back to our land and to those who care for it. To Laura, Alexander and all of Ty's family, I know I speak for his NRCS family as I extend my sincerest condolences and promise you that his legacy will live on through all of us here at NRCS for many generations.

Ty Larson's outstanding contributions to conservation and his remarkable career in the field will not soon be forgotten. He held the mission of "helping people help the land" close to his heart, cherishing the pivotal significance of the word "people" within that mission statement. Such a passionate and genuine individual, known for his unwavering love for people and his ability to connect with everyone he met, is the type of person most of us only get the chance to meet once in a lifetime. Ty's legacy reminds us to continually strive to provide great customer service, to be the best version of ourselves as often as we can and to keep moving *Forward*, together.

'The Dash'

by Linda Ellis

I read of a man who stood to speak at the funeral of a friend. He referred to the dates on the tombstone from the beginning to the end.

He noted first came the date of the birth and spoke the following date with tears. But he said what mattered most of all was the dash between the years.

For that dash represents all the time that they spent life on Earth. And now only those who loved them know what that little line is worth.

For it matters not how much we own, the cars, the house, the cash. What matters is how we live and love, and how we spend our dash.

So, think about this long and hard. Are there things you'd like to change? For you never know how much time is left that can still be rearranged.

If we could just slow down enough to consider what's true and real, and always try to understand the way other people feel.

Be less quick to anger and show appreciation more, and love the people in our lives like we've never loved before.

If we treat each other with respect and more often wear a smile, remembering that this special dash might only last a little while.

So, when your eulogy is being read with your life's actions to rehash, would you be proud of the things they say about how you spent your dash?



**Poem submission provided by Kristin Foehringer,
Working Lands Climate Smart Specialist**



A SPECIAL FORWORD WELCOME

Greetings Wisconsin NRCS Staff and Conservation Partners,

Welcome to Fiscal Year 2024 and to our new Wisconsin NRCS Quarterly Newsletter: **FORWORD!** During my first week as your Wisconsin State Conservationist, I asked our Public Affairs team to shepherd the idea of developing a statewide quarterly newsletter. Together, Amanda Zelinski, State Public Affairs Specialist and Krisann McElvain, Public Affairs Specialist have made that idea come to life!

The title of the newsletter is a play on words derived from the Wisconsin state motto, "Forward." Our state's motto reflects Wisconsin's drive to be a national leader and for being a forward-thinking state. It symbolizes the idea that Wisconsinites are always moving ahead, striving for improvement, and embracing change. My vision for this newsletter is for it to encapsulate the many accomplishments you all should be so proud of and spotlight the many ways Wisconsin NRCS staff are helping to advance our conservation goals. I want to motivate you all to participate in this newsletter by submitting photos, anecdotal material, suggestions for topics, stories, field day highlights, and more.

If you have other suggestions for the newsletter, or you would like to submit content, please email the Public Affairs team at nrcs-wi-publicaffairs@usda.gov. I want this to be something you all look "FORWORD" to receiving each quarter!

"Moving forward, continue to work as a community, continue to work on moving the plan forward, and as we say in Wisconsin: "Forward.""

- Ty Larson, Wisconsin NRCS State Conservationist, spoken during the 90th Anniversary Celebration of the Coon Creek Watershed Project.

WISCONSIN NRCS QUARTERLY PHOTO CONTEST

Each quarter, staff will be given a deadline to submit their photos by. You may only submit ONE photo per quarter under ONE category. Once the deadline has been reached, one winner will be chosen under each category. A quarterly prize will be given to each of the winners, with each photo receiving a spotlight in the following newsletter.

The categories are:

- **Urban Agriculture and/or Specialty Crop**
- **Wildlife**
- **Conservation Planning and/or Customer Collaboration** (e.g. any of the 9 steps)
- **Conservation on the Ground** (conservation practices applied or in use)

Photos will be judged on composition, creativity and relevance to the subject matter. Staff/partners can only win once per Fiscal Year.

Please submit your photos for the [Wisconsin NRCS Quarterly Photo Contest here!](#)

“ A MESSAGE FROM THE STATE CONSERVATIONIST

As we step into the new fiscal year, I hope we can draw strength from the challenges we've had to overcome in FY23 and in just these last few weeks. I know we have faced moments of uncertainty, and may we continue to persevere. Our dedication to conservation and our shared commitment to our mission has seen us through tough times before and together, we will continue to protect our natural resources, support our customers and serve our mission. Your resilience and dedication does not go unnoticed and it inspires me every day. I have full confidence that Wisconsin NRCS will continue making a positive impact in FY24! Let's embrace the opportunities that lie ahead and continue to work tirelessly towards our mission of "Helping People Help the Land."



The primary focus of this newsletter is the staff and to be picture heavy—I love a good picture, no matter what the photo is trying to capture. A good picture usually tells a story and sometimes, even draws an emotional connection. Again, this newsletter is meant to be fun and to showcase the great work you all are doing, and it's success depends on collaboration and staff input. Let's have some fun with this newsletter! Be well and take care of yourselves and families.

For the Resources,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tyrone R. Larson".

Tyrone R. Larson
Wisconsin State Conservationist

in loving memory of Ty



To allow staff time to pay their respects to Ty and his family, two hours of Administrative Leave is available for employees to attend the funeral service.

Employees should utilize accrued annual leave, credit, or comp time for leave in excess of two hours.

Arrangements will be held at:

**Gunderson Oregon
Funeral & Cremation Care**

1150 Park St.
Oregon, WI 53575

Tuesday, October 17, 2023

Visitation:

9:00AM - 12:00PM

Celebration of Life:

12:00PM - 1:00PM

[Online condolences
can be made here.](#)

The EAP provides a wealth of comprehensive services to employees and eligible family members to help provide optimal health and well-being and balance work and life responsibilities. You may contact the EAP for professional assistance and obtain support 24/7, 365 days a year as follows:

By call or text: 1-866-869-0276

By chat: Live with Espyr online at <https://care.espyr.com/>
(Organization ID or password to login is **usdafpac**)

By the Espyr Connect mobile app: download Espyr Connect from Apple Store or Google Play.

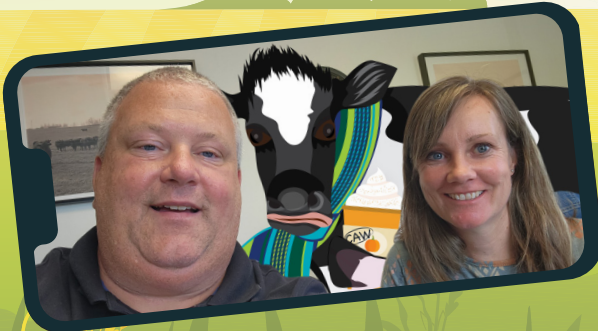
TalkNow® is in-the-moment mental health support to help individuals manage small to monumental issues with a qualified mental health professional when you can't wait. It is free, confidential and may be reached by calling 1-866-869-0276.

A virtual sympathy card on behalf of Ty's NRCS Family was sent to Laura, Alexander & Family ahead of his service. You are welcome to [view the card here.](#)

If you or someone that you know find it difficult to manage personal or workplace challenges and feel hopeless with suicidal thoughts, please reach out to the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline for immediate help or call 911. The Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is available 24/7, 365 days a year and you can reach them by texting or calling 988, and by chat.

STATE CON. "IN THE FIELD"

Selfies



WELCOME TO WISCONSIN NRCS

SAY “HELLO” TO OUR NEW HIRES

Each quarter, the **FORWORD** newsletter will announce all of the new, talented individuals who have joined Wisconsin NRCS. Whether they are new employees to our agency or have been promoted to a new position, NRCS is thrilled to welcome and introduce/reintroduce them!

Please say “hello” to all of our new team members and have fun getting to know them through their bios and photos below. Each person brings many talents, new energy and great expertise to our agency.

If you didn’t have the opportunity to introduce yourself this quarter and you were hired within the last few months (August 1st and after), fear not! Please feel free to submit your bio and photo using the [New Hire Bio Questionnaire form on SharePoint linked here](#). Leadership, please share this voluntary form with your new hires so we can say “hello” next quarter!

CURT LAWRENCE



WESTFIELD
FIELD OFFICE

I’m Curt Lawrence, former Soil Conservation Technician and new Natural Resource Specialist with the Wetland Compliance team. I grew up in east central Minnesota, met my wife and have been in Wisconsin since 2009. In 2014, I earned my BS in Conservation Biology and a certificate in Environmental Studies from UW–Madison. Prior to my career with NRCS, I worked with the DNR as a Wildlife Technician and with SE WI as an Area Wetland Compliance contractor. Outside of work I enjoy traveling, hiking, hunting, fishing, renovating houses and time with my family. My family and I live on a beautiful property just outside Wisconsin Dells and love the area—if you’re ever in need of recommendations, feel free to reach out. I’m excited to be part of the team and look forward to working with you all in this new role.

SAMANTHA (SAM) HUSS



APPLETON
AREA OFFICE

I’m Sam and I’m super excited for this new opportunity to learn and grow with NRCS! Over the past year, I’ve been working with Heartland Consulting to help out with NRCS’s administrative needs in NE WI. I started out at the Appleton, Lena and Oshkosh Field Offices before moving on to support the Eastern WI Wetland Compliance Team, which I couldn’t have been more excited to do. Before NRCS, I studied at UW where I majored in Environmental Studies and fell in love with all things wetland. When I’m not gushing about wetlands or wetland policy, I love to hike, travel, and hang out with my two cats. I’m so excited to continue working with you all!

JOSHUA (JOSH) GOLSON



ALTOONA
AREA OFFICE

My name is Joshua Golson. I am originally from Oregon where I graduated from Portland State University in 2019, with a BS in Biology. I previously worked as a National Environmental Policy Act Planner for the Forest Service, while living in Oregon and before transferring to Iowa NRCS as a Wetland Specialist in 2021. I currently work as a Natural Resources Specialist for Wetland Compliance in the Altoona Area Office. I like to go hunting and fishing, and riding bikes in my free time.

WELCOME TO WISCONSIN NRCS (CONT'D)



**BARABOO
FIELD OFFICE**

RICHARD BREUNIG

I grew up helping on my family's farm in rural Dane County, WI. I graduated from UW–Stevens Point with a bachelor's degree in Wildlife Management: Research and Ecology. After graduating, I worked for a private habitat restoration company where I started as a land technician before being promoted to project manager. After some time, I began working for FSA in Columbia County, WI until I went back to working in conservation with NRCS in Sauk County as a Soil Conservation Technician. After 2 years, I transitioned into my current position as a Soil Conservationist at the Baraboo Field Office. In my free time, I like to go hunting, fishing, traveling and spending time outdoors with my wife and 3 kids.



**DODGEVILLE
FIELD OFFICE**

ISABELLE (BELLE) EVERT

After almost 2 years working as an NRCS partner employee with Glacierland RC&D, I have officially started my career with NRCS as a Soil Conservationist at the Dodgeville Field Office. I graduated from UW–River Falls, studying Environmental Science where I conducted research on water quality and biochar amendments. For the past two summers, I did volunteer stream monitoring with the Rock River Coalition. I grew up on a small dairy farm in Mazomanie, WI and I enjoy spending time outside in my garden, going on nature walks, crafting, and reading books.



**WHITEFIELD
FIELD OFFICE**

REED LALLY

Hi, my name is Reed Lally. Before accepting the Soil Conservationist position at the Whitehall Field Office, I was the Parks and Conservation Specialist for the Trempealeau County Department of Land Management. Prior to the county, I was a land manager for Superior Fresh in Hixton, WI. I live in Trempealeau County on my in-law's family farm. I enjoy the outdoors and spending time with my family and friends. I look forward to working with and getting to know everyone in the area field offices.



**PRAIRIE DU CHIEN
FIELD OFFICE**

MATHEW ROSS

I am the new Soil Conservationist at the Prairie du Chien Field Office. I grew up in the Fingers Lakes Region of New York and graduated from SUNY Cobleskill in 2014 with a bachelor's degree in Animal Science. Fresh out of school, I began my USDA career with the FSA in Onondaga County, NY. Since then, I've worked for FSA in Michigan and finally here in Wisconsin as the County Executive Director for Vernon County. After 9 years with FSA, I'm excited to shift gears and join the NRCS family! I'm looking forward to working with everyone and helping our participants put meaningful conservation on the landscape!

WELCOME TO WISCONSIN NRCS (CONT'D)

CHELSEA GRUBER



MONROE
FIELD OFFICE

I'm the new Soil Conservation Technician in the Monroe Field Office. I grew up in Plain, Wisconsin as the middle of 5 siblings in an outdoorsy family. I attended college at UW-Platteville where I graduated with a degree in Reclamation, Environment, and Conservation with an emphasis in Biology. While in school, I was an Interpretive Ranger Intern for the National Park Service and an NRCS Pathways Intern in Montana. Following graduation, I took a year-long position as a Soil Conservationist in MN until transferring to FSA in Green County, WI. I now live in Monroe with my fiancé Rhett—we plan to get married next summer! We have 3 cats and 2 dogs and enjoy camping, fishing, kayaking, cooking, and reading.

HUNTER HART



ONALASKA
FIELD OFFICE

My name is Hunter Hart, and I am the new Soil Conservation Technician at the Onalaska Field Office. I grew up in West Salem, WI, and graduated from Fox Valley Technical College in Appleton, WI. After School I worked for the Wisconsin DNR until I found the great people of NRCS as an affiliate through Golden Sands RC&D, and then as the technician in Buffalo County. I am excited to get to work in the southwest area in my home county. In my free time, I am an avid fisherman, kayaker, and I can't wait to get into the marsh to do some duck hunting.

LURIAN MORALES FALCON



WAUSAU
FIELD OFFICE

I am a believer in one of the famous quotes of Dr. Hugh Hammond Bennett which states "If we are bold in our thinking, courageous in accepting new ideas, and willing to work with instead of against our land, we shall find in conservation farming an avenue to the greatest food production the world has ever known..." Through my daily work, I work with one goal in mind: Help farmers reach conservation goals that in turn will improve the production system on their land. I am thankful for this job opportunity and will do my best to assist the farmers achieve their conservation goals in Wisconsin.

KRISTIN BIRSCHBACH



HILBERT
FIELD OFFICE

I graduated from UW-Platteville and then spent 10 years working as a Nutrient Management Planner for a private Agronomist in Calumet County. I was a Program Technician with FSA for 3 years before making the move over to NRCS. My husband and I (along with our two young children) own and operate a rotational grazing beef herd and cash crop farm in Fond du Lac County.

WELCOME TO WISCONSIN NRCS (CONT'D)



CATIE HAIGHT

You may recognize me from my former position as a Conservation Planner with the Oconto County Land & Water Conservation District. I'm excited to join the agency and contribute to the great work that the NRCS carries out! In my free time I enjoy spoiling my dogs, Finn and Ollie, and losing various forms of hooks, lures, and/or line (A.K.A. fishing)!

LENA
FIELD OFFICE



ELIZABETH ASENDORF

After being an affiliate with NRCS through Glacierland RC&D for almost two years, I'm happy to be officially hired on as a permanent NRCS employee. My life has really come full circle from growing up on a farm in small-town Minnesota to now working and building relationships with farmers within the agricultural community of Calumet County. Excited for this next chapter in my life and I'm ready to get to work!

HILBERT
FIELD OFFICE



BRENT FETTING

I was born and raised in Michigan, where I received a BS in Biology. I received my master's degree from Oklahoma State University, where I studied Wetland Ecology and amphibians. I have worked in wetlands in some capacity since 2010, making delineations in Michigan, Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, Minnesota, California, Iowa, and East Texas, all before joining the NW Region in Altoona. I enjoy bird hunting, being on the water, craft beer, football, and visiting the Northwoods with my wife Amanda (a Minnesotan), and my dog Winnie, named for nearby Winona, MN.

ALTOONA
FIELD OFFICE



FRANK LAZAR

My roots lie in northern Wisconsin. I pursued my bachelor's degree in Soil and Crop Science at UW-Platteville, with an emphasis in Reclamation, then pursued my master's degree in plant breeding and genetics at UW-Madison. Prior to graduating from my master's program in 2023, I worked on cranberry breeding and management. My passion for wetlands and agriculture developed significantly during my academic journey, as did my hobbies, such as trout fishing and enjoying the outdoors. I am eager to "get my feet wet" and explore the new aspects of the agricultural and wetland industry through NRCS. In my free time, I enjoy spending time with my wife and dog, as well as fishing with friends, snowmobiling, building e-bikes, and running my citrus nursery.

BARON
FIELD OFFICE

WELCOME TO WISCONSIN NRCS (CONT'D)



DANIEL BLAIR

I earned a Bachelor of Science in Fisheries and Wildlife Management and a Minor in Aquaculture from Lake Superior State University. I worked in the UP of Michigan for a couple years before coming to Wisconsin, where I worked as an affiliate Soil Conservationist in Appleton for a year and a half. I am excited for the opportunity to be full-time with the NRCS. Outside of work, I enjoy fishing and bird hunting.

 APPLETON
FIELD OFFICE



BRIANNA SCHROEDER

I am Brianna Schroeder, and I am very excited to be joining the NRCS team. I grew up in Westby, WI, where I developed a love for the outdoors. I graduated from UW-Platteville with a degree in Reclamation, Environmental Conservation. In my free time I enjoy hiking, disc golfing and being outdoors with my husband.

 LUXEMBURG
FIELD OFFICE

Hello + Welcome
to the
WISCONSIN NRCS
Family!



UPCOMING CONFERENCES, EXPOS & MEETINGS

SECTION 508 LIVE!

OCT. 19 @ 6AM & 1PM
NOV. 16 @ 6AM & 1PM
DEC. 21 @ 6AM & 1PM

STATE TECH. MEETING

CANCELLED
(RESCHEDULED, DATE TBD)

STATEWIDE TEAMS CALL

NOV. 1 @ 8:15AM
DEC. 6 @ 8:15AM

WWASH CONFERENCE*

DEC. 7-8 @ 9AM / 7:30AM

*STAFF WANTING TO REGISTER TO ATTEND THIS EVENT MUST FOLLOW THE PROCESS OUTLINED BY M&S. PLEASE REACH OUT TO [PAM FLORITO](#) WITH QUESTIONS.

FIELD NOTES:

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE FIELD?

The "A&W" team, comprised of Nathan Pelkey, Maria Larson, Caleb Armstrong, and Amy Neigum got to view a drone seeding of Cover Crops for a Conservation Stewardship Program participant who is also a member of the Eau Pleine Partnership for Integrated Conservation. [Watch the video here!](#)

To celebrate, the team headed over to A&W for some root beer floats!

Submission provided by: Amy Neigum, District Conservationist



The photos below are from a two-day outreach event with over 300 5th grade students in attendance each day. Eight different conservation agencies/partners, including NRCS also participated! Jerry Clark, the UW–Madison Extension Agent in Chippewa County, has been putting on the event for over 20 years. His primary objective is to introduce the students to various conservation careers and topics!

Submission provided by: Gabriela Strobel, Soil Conservationist

The tabletop rainfall simulators (pictured on the right) were used during the first day of The Chippewa County Conservation Days at Brunet Island State Park to teach students how rainfall can behave differently between different land uses and how that affects our clean water cycle. The students made observations and formed conclusions on how runoff, infiltration, vegetation, and amendments might contribute to water's potential for pollution or filtration.



Each day, the students learned from different conservation agencies, all covering a range of conservation topics. Topics included potential future conservation occupations, clean water, invasives, pollinators, clean energy, and more. The NRCS station, featured "The Power of Rain," overlooking Lake Wissota.

FIELD NOTES (CONT'D)

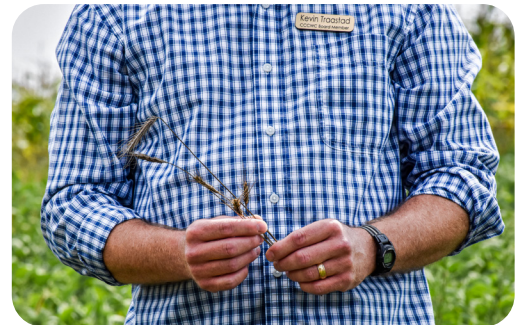
Last month, the Coon Creek Community Watershed Council (CCCWC) held a '90th Anniversary Celebration', on the grassfed organic dairy farm of Tucker and Becky (Luckasson) Gretebeck. Prior to the celebration held at the Gretebeck's 'Pumpkin Patch,' a group of about 60 people took a guided tour of the watershed on two school buses.

The tour took participants to the Coon Valley historical marker sign, commemorating the Coon Creek Watershed Project, area farms where conservation practices such as strip crops and terraces continue to be employed, the Norskedalen Nature & Heritage Center and to Mark and Mary Sebion's farm to view a flood control structure. Steve Becker, State Engineer, spoke to the group about the design and how the 'full flow' structure releases water slowly—taking the water as fast as it comes, dropping the water from one elevation to another.

The celebration event featured remarks from local farmers, the Aldo Leopold Foundation, and state and federal conservation agency representatives, including our very own Ty Larson.

A full album of the watershed tour and celebration will be coming soon! Until then, please enjoy a few highlights from the day.

Submission provided by: Amanda Zelinski, State Public Affairs Specialist



FIELD NOTES (CONT'D)

Laura Watson, Resource Conservationist and Amy Schaefer, NE Area Farm Bill Biologist, led a class of Conservation Biology students from UW–Green Bay through a tour of the Luxemburg Field Office to give them an understanding of what USDA-NRCS does for producers and landowners and explain the potential career paths available.

Students were then invited to the property of Matt and Erin Stender, where they got to view installed conservation practices learn why they were selected and the planning process involved.

Matt and Erin Stender are enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) through NRCS. Students had the opportunity to view a CRP-State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) planting, conservation cover of grass and clovers, wetland restoration (Scrape), and tree plantings while visiting the property.

Laura asked the 19 students in attendance if any of them had ever been to a USDA Service Center before and not one of them had. In fact, most of them didn't even know NRCS existed and were surprised to learn that nearly each county in Wisconsin has an office, with technical staff available to work with farmers and landowners, to help put conservation on the ground.

Submission provided by: Laura Watson, Resource Conservationist



FIELD NOTES (CONT'D)



Staff from Wisconsin NRCS, Dane County Land & Water Resources Department (LWRD) and the University of Wisconsin–Madison Division of Extension, gathered on the Sime family farmstead as former Dane County Executive, Joe Parisi unveiled the newly developed Dane Demonstration Farms Network. Wisconsin NRCS Area Officer and current Acting State Conservationist, Josh Odekirk, spoke on behalf of our agency's partnerships and projects, and the many possibilities this new network of farms lends to conservation education. The \$1 million project is the first of its kind in the Mississippi River basin, but marks the 8th Demo Farms Network to be developed in Wisconsin. The Dane Demonstration Farms Network currently consists of [three participating farms](#), which includes the Sime Farm. *Special thanks to Brooke Lerum, Resource Conservationist for her contribution in arranging this press event [covered by NBC15 Madison!](#)*

Submission provided by: Krisann McElvain, Public Affairs Specialist



Each year, Wisconsin NRCS and FSA share a joint booth during the annual World Dairy Expo, held at the Alliant Energy Center in Madison, WI. The World Dairy Expo is a 4-day event that brings together thousands of dairy producers, companies, organizations and other dairy enthusiasts to compete, network and exchange ideas. Each year the booth is voluntarily ran by agency employees and serves as one of our biggest outreach opportunities! Pictured is John White, WI-NRCS State Outreach Coordinator, Brandon Gingher, Administrative Support for Partnerships and two of our FSA friends!

Submission provided by: Brandon Gingher, Administrative Support

CONSERVATION CHAMPIONS

A Familiar Face Representing Our FPAC Family

Last month, Sarah Chan, Civil Engineer and Asian American and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Special Emphasis Program Manager (SEPM) with the Civil Rights Advisory Committee (CRAC), was selected to participate in 'Celebrating Service' with Secretary Vilsack and Deputy Secretary Torres Small. Read about her personal experience below.



"It was a tremendous honor to represent FPAC and NRCS during the town hall. I don't think I realized that when I was selected. I thought it was a random selection of folks. But there I was, on a panel with USDA folks with 20+ years of time in the agency. So, to be selected to serve on a panel addressing not only Secretary Vilsack and Deputy Secretary Torres Small, but the USDA as a whole was a very daunting yet exciting opportunity. At one point I saw there were 10k viewers online which made me even more nervous than I already was. I wanted to touch on the work NRCS does to help the nation's farmers and producers. Most importantly, I wanted to showcase how rewarding our efforts are when we see one of our producers excelling in the community. Secretary Vilsack mentioned how 8% of the workforce is under 35 years, and how we need to find new ways to retain younger employees. For me, seeing the impact I'm able to have on real people, as opposed to large corporations, is why I enjoy working at NRCS. I can also see opportunities to grow and learn early in my career, all thanks to supportive colleagues who recognize my desire to grow. In the spirit of 'celebrating service,' I hope my 2-3-minute story helped to remind folks of why we do what we do, and the impacts we can make in the community."

- Sarah Chan

[Click here to watch the event recording on YouTube](#)
(tune in at 39:14 for Sarah's segment!)

**SARAH, WISCONSIN NRCS IS IMMENSELY PROUD
OF YOU AND YOUR JOURNEY THUS FAR. THANK YOU
FOR THE IMPACT YOU CONTINUE TO MAKE ON
ALL OF US!**



Photos above taken by: Abby Johnson, Management Analyst



[Click here to view more photos from the 'Celebrating Service' town hall.](#)



The Public Affairs team has set up an NRCS Wisconsin photo album for staff to view and/or share photos in remembrance of Ty. [Click here to view the 'In Memoriam' photo album on SharePoint.](#)

We hope you enjoyed this Fiscal Year's first **FORWORD** Wisconsin NRCS Quarterly Newsletter!

We hope Ty enjoyed it too. *For the Resources.*