



Badger Report

AUGUST 2012

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Southwest Badger Receives Funding for Grazing Broker Pilot Project

Southwest Badger Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council, Inc. has received \$20,000 from the Pasture Project of the Wallace Center of Winrock International. The funding will allow Southwest Badger to begin a pilot project titled, "Southwest Wisconsin Grazing Broker Initiative." The Initiative is a partnership between Southwest Badger RC&D and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection, Iowa County Land Conservation Department and others.

The goal of the project and its partners is to work towards developing and strengthening the long standing relationship between conservation and agriculture, particularly to promote conservation practices perpetuating existing grasslands that hold the soil, improve water quality, and provide wildlife habitat in the project area. The project is focused on the 473,000 acre Southwest Wisconsin Grassland and Stream Conservation Area (SWGSCA). With high commodity prices and a potential reduction in CRP acres with the next Farm Bill, the project partners are concerned that

there could be detrimental impacts to area resources and the sustainability of agriculture in the landscape. This project provides a unique opportunity for the agricultural community and the conservation community to build a base of grassland resources and agricultural investment by promoting grazing through the establishment of a Grazing Broker.

The Grazing Broker is modeled after the consulting forester. The Broker will help connect landowners with grasslands to agricultural producers looking for grazing land, facilitate access to government resources for developing pastures, write grazing management plans, and provide technical advice to both livestock producers and non-agricultural landowners regarding all aspects of grazing.

Southwest Badger is seeking additional funding to fully implement the project. If you have questions or would like additional information about grassland conservation or the Grazing Broker Initiative please contact Angie Wright at (608) 348-7110 or via email at angie.wright@swbadger.org.

Drought Resources

Wisconsin Emergency Management's one-stop place for information related to all aspects of the drought.

<http://ready.wi.gov/>

U.S. Department of Agriculture Disaster and Drought Assistance website.

<http://www.usda.gov/drought>

An online marketplace where farmers in short supply of hay, forage and corn supplies can get help. There is also a new feature on the site created by Cooperative Extension to help drought-stricken farmers move their livestock to literally greener pastures.

<http://farmertofarmer.uwex.edu/>

UW-Extension Drought 2012 website .

<http://fyi.uwex.edu/drought2012/>

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<http://www.swbadger.org/>

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bottom of the page.

Military Ridge Prairie Heritage Area

Katie Abbott, Project Coordinator

Recently I transitioned from focusing just on the Military Ridge Prairie Heritage Area (MRPHA), to assisting landowners and planning outreach for the greater Southwest Wisconsin Grasslands and Stream Conservation Area (SWGSCA), which encompasses parts of Iowa, Lafayette, Green, and Dane Counties. The SWGSCA was modeled after and is an extension of the MRPHA partnership, and the MRPHA boundary continues to be a priority area within the larger (473,000 acre) landscape. For more details see www.swgsc.org.

Since early April I have gone on 25 site visits. Twenty-two were for program enrollments, including State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE), Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), and Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), totaling 731 acres. Three others were for general land management advice for people already in programs, totaling 160 acres. I also did the paperwork for ten of those program enrollments. I gave advice via phone or email to eight other landowners.

This is the pilot year for an important new grassland bird monitoring effort in Wisconsin. SWGSCA partners and I assisted in calling landowners to get permission to survey their properties, recruiting volunteers, and organizing volunteer training sessions. The Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative (WBCI) developed a grassland conservation plan that sets population goals for grassland bird conservation areas in focal landscapes

throughout Wisconsin. Grassland birds are declining faster than any other group of birds in Wisconsin and across the Upper Midwest. Data collected in this project will be used to set conservation goals and help assess the effectiveness of the combined conservation efforts by partners in the SWGSCA.

In outreach and education efforts, I organized a frog field trip attended by 19 people, led a prairie walk for ten people at Pendarvis historic site, narrated part of a bus tour for about fifty members of the Friends of the Wisconsin Historical Society, and created the summer SWGSCA newsletter. The Dodgeville library, UW-Extension Iowa County, and I planned a series of events at the library centered around prairie, including a "What is Prairie" lecture (12 people attended), film screenings of Green Fire and America's Lost Landscape (six people each), and a discussion of historical accounts of prairie in southwest Wisconsin that I lead (six people). I also worked with 4-H to hold their photography workshop at a local prairie, which was attended by fifteen students. I encouraged them to

continue taking prairie photos and enter them in the Iowa County Fair, where Paul Ohlrogge from UW-Extension and I will choose a dozen or more to show at our upcoming festival; choose the top three for prizes; and choose some to publish in our annual Land Management Calendar. Finally, I started a Facebook page for the SWGSCA partnership, so please go to www.facebook.com/SWGSCA and "like" us!

The biggest outreach event of the year, the Southwest Wisconsin Prairie Festival, is yet to come. I am organizing the Festival with the help of SWGSCA partners, especially Paul Ohlrogge from UW-Extension-Iowa County and Erin Holmes from Pheasants Forever. It will be held at Folklore Village, near Dodgeville. The event kickoff is the evening of Friday, September 7 with a prairie walk, local food tasting, and film screening of "America's Lost Landscape: the Tallgrass Prairie." Saturday September 8 will have a variety of activities from 10 am to 4 pm, including kid's activities, prairie walks, adult art lessons, information lectures, music, and keynote speaker Jerry Apps. From 4 to 5 pm we will wrap up with music and a barn dance. More details can be found at www.swgsc.org/festival. We are still in need of volunteers, so if you are available for a couple hours that day please let me know! (katie.abbott@rcdnet.net or 608-935-2791 x134). Volunteers will get a free lunch that will include a locally-made brat or hotdog. This promises to be a fun, family-friendly day to celebrate and learn about the unique, once-vast prairie ecosystem of southwest Wisconsin.



4-H students that attended prairie photography workshop.

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Southwest Badger RC&D - Your conservation partner

Forest Stewardship

Patrick Dayton, Forester/Project Coordinator

The mild and workable winter has given way to the summer's sweltering heat which is causing concern in forests and farms all over the region. It was a busy spring and early summer, I worked with 26 landowners, wrote 222 acres of forest management plans, marked 76 acres of timber, marked 19 acres of timber stand improvement (TSI), and presented on direct seeding walnut at the local Walnut Council spring meeting.

So far, throughout the span of the emerald ash borer (EAB) project we have marked 690 acres of timber, 1,055,000 board feet (197,000 of ash), and 1,350 cords of wood. Approximately 200,000 board feet and 300 cords have already been harvested. The main partners on this project have been Wisconsin DNR, Kickapoo Woods

Cooperative, and Vernon County. The range of EAB has increased in southeast Wisconsin but it has not expanded its range noticeably in southwest Wisconsin. However, we remain on high alert as human



Horses taking a break from pulling pine logs in a thinning done by Amish loggers.

movement of firewood could quickly lead to new infestations. Southwest Badger RC&D recently sent our last direct mailing to landowners in the project area. Future work consists of me working with landowners to get the work done. I am looking forward to accomplishing more EAB work in the next year and starting new forestry projects for Southwest Badger RC&D.

Recently, a landowner thanked me for coming out and giving her a woods walk and talking about forestry at her property. She said it was nice to get useful information without having someone push "services or programs" at her. I think that statement is a tribute to the whole Resource Conservation & Development program.

Southwest Wisconsin Grazing Initiative

Dennis Rooney, Grazing Specialist

This spring I designed and printed four new pasture walk signs for the Great River Graziers Grazing group. I have attended seven pasture walks with an average attendance of 24. I have also worked on four grazing plans. I've worked on approximately ten EQIP Projects (Environment Quality Incentive Program) getting information for the NRCS on clients that are applying for cost sharing on pasture practices to improve their pasture management. The practices include prescribed grazing, fencing, forage and biomass planting, pipelines, watering facilities, heavy use areas protection, animal trails, and walkways, stream crossings, and brush management.

Many of my client contacts this summer have been about how to manage pastures and livestock during this extreme heat and drought. The pastures pretty well dried up in the middle of May and stayed dry all of June. I recommended that the clients take the cows off pasture and put them in a sacrifice paddock, a barn, or freestall barn and start feeding them stored feed until the pastures turned green and had a regrowth of six to ten inches before putting them back

on pasture. The problem the producers are facing now is a shortage of feed to make it through the winter. We are recommending planting an annual crop such as, two bushels



No till seeder available for rent from Great River Graziers.

of oats, with one bushel of winter wheat or rye and a couple pounds of turnips. If we get adequate moisture this mix should germinate and grow fast and will make a great fall pasture or could be harvested as silage or balage. For more information please contact me at 608-874-4239 or email dennis.rooney@ces.uwex.edu.

**Help
Southwest Badger
Promote Conservation,
Donate Now!**

Help support natural resource conservation and economic development in southwest Wisconsin.

Donations to Southwest Badger RC&D Council are welcome at any time.

You can donate online at <http://www.swbadger.org/> or mail your contribution to: Southwest Badger RC&D, PO Box 753, Platteville, WI 53818

All gifts are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

**We Appreciate Your
Support!**

Driftless Forest Network/My Wisconsin Woods

Zak Neitzel, Forester

Since starting with RC&D in late April I have been working with the Driftless Forest Network My Wisconsin Woods Project. This project is a partnership of several public and nonprofit organizations working together to provide landowners in southwest Wisconsin with the tools they need to manage their woodlands.

I have mainly been doing walkthroughs with landowners in La Crosse, Vernon, and Crawford counties who have requested service from a forester in response to the mailing campaign. So far I have completed

over 40 walkthroughs covering over 2,000 acres. The landowners have been as diverse as the properties themselves, with a wide variety of different goals, objectives, backgrounds, and ideas of what constitutes sound, sustainable forestry. The vast majority of the walkthroughs have been encouraging, with many of the landowners being interested in invasive species work, the MFL program, and timber stand improvement projects. The real test will come in the following months when we begin to do follow up with the

landowners to see which landowners are actively improving their woods and why.

I also have been fortunate to attend seven different DNR training sessions which will improve my ability to help landowners. Working out of the Richland Center DNR office has been a big help for me as there are three foresters here to answer any questions that arise after meeting with landowners. August is shaping up to be a pretty busy month, with two upcoming trainings and 16 landowner visits already on the books.

Upcoming Events

September 7, 2012 - 10 am - noon
Quarterly Council Meeting
Richland Center, WI

September 7, 2012 - 4:30 pm - 8 pm
September 8, 2012 - 10 am - 5 pm
Southwest WI Prairie Festival
Folklore Village, Dodgeville, WI

September 8, 2012 - 9 am - noon
Project RED Invasive Species
Detection Training
Steuben Lodge, Steuben, WI
For more information or to
register, contact Maggie Jones
(608) 872-2297 or mhjones@coun-
tryspeed.com

October 12, 2012 - 10 am - noon
Executive Committee Meeting
Spring Green, WI

October 12, 2012 - 1 pm - 3 pm
Finance Committee Meeting
Spring Green, WI

November 19, 2012 - 10 am - noon
Programming Committee Meeting
Spring Green, WI

December 14, 2012 - 10 am - noon
Southwest Badger Annual Meet-
ing Potosi Brewery, Potosi, WI

*Lunch will be available for \$18
(includes beer or rootbeer, tax,
tour and gratuity). Please call
608.348.7110 or email swbadger@
swbadger.org by November 30th to
register for lunch.*

Planning for 2013

The Southwest Badger RC&D Programming Committee is beginning to develop the 2013 Work Plan. The Council welcomes project suggestions from any organization, business, community or individual located in the Southwest Badger Area. Projects must address one of the Council's main goals which include:

- Protect, conserve, restore and where necessary, improve land, water, and related resources to assure the quality of the natural resource base for future generations.
- Support the development and enhancement of the environment to provide area citizens with an attractive, healthful, and satisfying place to live, work, and play.

- Support and promote social, economic, and natural resource development to improve the standard of living and provide adequate incomes for all area residents.

The Council will also be conducting a Needs Assessment Survey, please watch for it and help us identify important resource issues in the region.

If you have an idea for a project, a resource concern, or would like to participate in the Needs Assessment Survey; please contact Angie Wright by phone at 608.348.7110 or by email at angie.wright@swbadger.org. Project ideas must be received by November 1, 2012. The Programming Committee will evaluate project suggestions and develop a draft Work Plan which will be presented at the Southwest Badger Annual Meeting on December 7, 2012 at the Potosi Brewery.

Southwest Wisconsin
Prairie Festival
Free! Rain or Shine!
September 7, 4:30 pm - 8 pm
September 8 10 am - 5 pm
at Folklore Village, Dodgeville, WI

Southwest Badger Receives Funding for Technology Upgrades and Energy Opportunity Planning

Southwest Badger recently received \$1,800 from the Norcross Wildlife Foundation, Inc. to purchase a LCD digital projector and laptop computer. The Norcross Wildlife Foundation was founded by Arthur D. Norcross. The Foundation supports the environmental and conservation community by providing grants for practical needs, such as office and field equipment of all kinds, which are often difficult to address through other funders.

Southwest Badger also received \$1,250 from the Alliant Energy Foundation for the Southwest Wisconsin Renewable Energy Opportunity Plan. Southwest Badger is working with the Southwest Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

and the UW Department of Urban and Regional Planning to create a Renewable Energy Opportunity Plan for Southwest Wisconsin. The project began in 2011



Southwest Badger Executive Director, Angie Wright, accepting check from Troy Pittz of the Alliant Energy Foundation.

and is expected to extend over three years. The Plan will demonstrate the unique opportunities, requirements, and challenges related to developing renewable energy projects in southwest Wisconsin. The Plan will review the region's resources; identify renewable energy opportunities; review economic, social, and other limitations; identify infrastructure and investment needs; and examine job creation and business development opportunities. Preliminary data collection on available resources and renewable energy projects in the region was completed in 2011. The current phase is focused on in-depth data collection and analysis for Lafayette County and creating a protocol to use for the other eight counties in the region.

Southwest Wisconsin Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Initiative

Don Barrette, Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator

Just a brief overview of this summer's AIS activities. AIS coordinator Don Barrette has been very busy helping finalize a grant proposal in Richland County where he, Cathy Cooper, and other partner groups are involved in a Japanese Knotweed control project on Willow Creek.

Don and AIS intern Laura Sefton have also been in the field sampling for

invasive species. At this point sampling has been completed in three (Lafayette, Crawford, and Iowa) of the nine counties.

Don and Laura have also been active in outreach and education. They have attended county fairs in Lafayette and Crawford counties and have plans to attend fairs in Grant, Iowa, Richland, and Vernon counties later this summer. Don and Laura

will be at the Grant County fair August 16-19 and would be happy to answer questions about invasive animals and plants.

If you have questions or concerns about AIS issues, Don can be reached by phone at (608) 348-7114 or (608) 219-7842 and by email at don.barrette@swbadger.org.

Southwest Badger RC&D Annual Meeting

Date: December 14, 2012

Time: Meeting: 10 am to noon

Lunch - noon to 1 pm

Brewery Tour - 1 pm

Location: Potosi Brewery
209 S Main Street,
Potosi, WI

Menu: Wisconsin Fish Fry with coleslaw and fries, or Beef tips over pasta, with vegetable, both meals include roll, pie and coffee or tea. Vegetarian option available upon request.

Price including Tax, Tip, Tour, and beer or rootbeer is \$18.00

Please make checks payable to Southwest Badger RC&D Council.

RSVP by November 30th.

Call (608) 348-7110 or email swbadger@swbadger.org

We look forward to seeing you there!



Southwest Badger RC&D
 1370 N. Water Street, Suite 3
 PO Box 753
 Platteville, WI 53818

Council Members

Crawford	Peter Flesch
Grant	Dale Hood
	John Schindler (Treasurer)
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LaCrosse	Andrew Londre
	Don Bina (Vice President)
	Marc Schultz
Lafayette	Leon Wolfe
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Richland	Larry Sebranek
	Mark Shepard
Sauk	Gerald Lehman
	Eugene Hausner (Secretary)
Vernon	Herb Cornell
	Dan Arnold

Staff

Katie Abbott	Military Ridge Prairie Heritage Area Coordinator katie.abbott@rcdnet.net
Beth Ballweg	Bookkeeper/Office Manager swbadger@swbadger.org
Patrick Dayton	Stewardship Forester pdayton@vernoncounty.org
Brian Graham	Forestry Technician
Mike Lieurance	Biomass Field Technician melieurance@tds.net
Zak Neitzel	Driftless Forest Network Forester zak@mywisconsinwoods.org
Dennis Rooney	Grazing Specialist dennis.rooney@ces.uwex.edu
Angie Wright	Executive Director angie.wright@swbadger.org
Don Barrette	Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator don.barrette@swbadger.org

Southwest Badger RC&D

1370 N. Water Street, Suite 3 | Phone: (608)348-7110
 PO Box 753 | Email: swbadger@swbadger.org
 Platteville, WI 53818 | Website: www.swbadger.org