



Badger Report

OCTOBER 2011

Pre-Conference Tours Added to Midwest Biomass Conference

Two pre-conference tour options have been added to the Midwest Biomass Conference at no additional charge. No registration is required for the pre-conference tours.

The first tour takes place Nov. 1 on a farm located between Boscobel and Fennimore at the Southwest Badger RC&D biomass demonstration site. The Biomass Demonstration Field Day at the Tom Ralston Farm will highlight the four-acre miscanthus demonstration, the 15-acre switchgrass demonstration, and a multi-species prairie planting. The tour begins at 1 p.m.

The second pre-conference tour also takes place Nov. 1 at the John Deere Dubuque Works factory in Dubuque, Iowa. The Dubuque Works manufactures crawler dozers, crawler loaders, skid steers, backhoe loaders, forestry track feller

bunchers and harvesters, knuckleboom loaders, winches and components for various heavy equipment products. The tour will begin at 1:30 p.m. at the factory.

The Midwest Biomass Conference is an opportunity to explore biomass energy production and local energy sustainability in the Midwest, a largely underserved area until recently. The conference offers networking between potential biomass producers, users, manufacturers of biomass solutions or equipment, students, researchers, consultants and market developers. The conference also provides insight for leaders of small communities, business owners and school representatives who may be interested in learning how biomass heating options could meet their needs at consistent reduced costs.

A full list of speakers, conference agenda and registration information can be found at www.midwestbiomassconference.com or call Angie Wright at Southwest Badger Resource Conservation and Development Council at (608) 348-7110 for additional information.

Midwest Biomass Conference

**November 2-3, 2011
Dubuque, IA**

Register Now!

www.midwestbiomassconference.com

Inside This Issue

Page Two

- Southwest Wisconsin AIS Planning Initiative
- Military Ridge Prairie Heritage Area

Page Three

- Forest Stewardship
- DAI Announces Two Major Initiatives
- Biomass Field Day

Bertjens Selected as State Biologist

Steve Bertjens, the former NRCS coordinator for Southwest Badger RC&D Council has embarked on a new journey in his conservation career. Earlier this month, Steve began working as the State Biologist for NRCS.

As the coordinator for Southwest Badger, Steve worked with partners to plan and implement the Military Ridge Prairie Heritage Area Project, Grant County Switchgrass Project, the Southwest Wisconsin Forestry Initiative, and the Model Emerald Ash Borer Implementation Project, to name just a few recent projects.

As the NRCS State Biologist, Steve will provide technical support to landowners and NRCS staff on wetland and wildlife habitat development and restoration projects. He will also be the agency lead on threatened and

endanger species as well as prescribed burning and renewable energy.

Steve has personally restored 26 acres of prairie and shrub cover on his farm near Kieler, which has a resident population of bobolinks. Steve has adopted a managed rotational grazing system on the farms pastureland to complete the conservation system.

Prior to serving as a RC&D coordinator he served as a watershed project manager with the Grant County Land Conservation Department providing conservation planning and technical assistance for implementation of the Lower Grant River watershed project.

Steve is a Graduate of the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point and is currently a member of the Jamestown Fire Department where he provides leadership and training for controlled burn operations.

Southwest Wisconsin AIS Planning Initiative

Don Barrette, Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator

Don Barrette, AIS coordinator, had a busy summer and got the AIS project off the ground and running. He completed AIS surveys and sampling on 59 sites across all nine counties of the Southwest Badger RC&D. Sites included 15 lakes and 44 small streams and rivers with the bulk of the sampling being done on trout streams. The surveys revealed several new infestations of invasive species particularly Japanese Hops, Japanese Knotweed and Purple Loosestrife. There was also new information obtained on the distribution of invasive animals such as the Chinese Mystery Snail and Zebra Mussel. All results were recorded for area distribution and entered into the state AIS database. Interns from Crawford and Green and Counties

assisted with the field work and the River Alliance, Valley Stewardship Network and County Conservationists from all nine counties provided assistance. We would like to thank all the participants for their help in completing the 2011 sampling period without any major issues. In addition to field work, Don was involved in the setting up two lake associations, gave multiple AIS presentations throughout the state to trout fishermen and school groups, and also attended state/regional AIS meetings and trainings to increase knowledge and awareness AIS issues.

Due to large infestations of Japanese Hops and Japanese Knotweed in more than one county state and regional AIS coordinators suggested that a committee be established

to govern management and eradication practices. Don Barrette will be the lead on the Japanese Hops and Japanese Knotweed problems in our region. Don will be the lead on organizing volunteers and partners to eradicate Japanese Knotweed on Willow Creek in Richland County.

Don has begun to plan for the 2012 season and looks forward to another busy year of sampling and AIS coordination throughout the region. If you have any questions about a plant or animal you have recently discovered and are concerned it may be an Invasive Species please email Don at don.barrette@swbadger.org or contact him by phone at 608-219-7842, 608-348-7114. He would be glad to assist you in your AIS efforts.

Military Ridge Prairie Heritage Area

Katie Abbott, Project Coordinator

In late August I returned from a wonderful summer maternity leave. I initially spent some time going to meetings and catching up with partner organizations. I have worked with four landowners so far, including site visits, invasive species control advice, and one burn plan.

Before I went on leave in April, we found out that the 4,000 acres allotted to the State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) program in southwest Wisconsin had been used up. While that was a great success, there were still many landowners interested in the program. An additional 1,000 acres was requested. After a long process, the additional acres were approved over the summer, so landowners are still able enroll in SAFE in the MRPHA.

I helped Iowa County UW-Extension and the Iowa County Recreation and Prairie Restoration group plan a Conservation Field Day for 6th grade students in Iowa County, which included Barneveld, Mineral Point, and Highland Schools.

About 120 students came out to the Iowa County Farm, a 430-acre prairie restoration near Bloomfield Manor, west of Dodgeville. Students were split into groups that rotated through seven different stations throughout the day, with a break for lunch. I enjoyed leading a session on prairie, where I gave a brief introduction about the ecosystem to students and then sent them out to explore the prairie on a scavenger hunt.



Students working on the prairie scavenger hunt at the Iowa County Conservation Field Day

In the other six sessions students learned about game fish of Wisconsin, aquifers (including building their own edible aquifer), predators and food chains, animals of the grasslands, pollinators, and GIS and survey equipment. I think everyone -students, teachers, and presenters- was exhausted after the full day outside. After postponing the event for a week due to rain, we had great weather and a fun day overall.

In recent outreach efforts, I wrote an article for local newspapers on fall seed collecting and sent out the MRPHA fall newsletter. The coming winter will slow down the site visits but provides opportunities for outreach planning and events. I plan to create another calendar for MRPHA landowners, hold a land management workshop, and hold a landowner appreciation event, to make up for the fall picnic that was skipped this year due to my leave.

Forest Stewardship

Patrick Dayton, Forester/Project Coordinator

As acorns drop and leaves fall it becomes a nice time of the year to be a forester in Wisconsin. The shock of being separated from NRCS is starting to wear off and it is becoming abundantly clear that people still have a need for the conservation work I'm doing.

Much of my work this quarter was on the Emerald Ash Borer project. I recently realized that it really did not take long for this small insect to travel a long distance by way of human transport. The emerald ash borer was first discovered in the Detroit area in 2002 and it was discovered in the Victory area in 2009. It is thought that the bug has been in the Victory area for 3-5 years (as determined by the size and range of tree mortality). I have noticed the same thing within the Victory area: while the area of impact does not seem to be expanding quickly, we are continuing to find the emerald ash borer in new

locations - La Crosse County and Winona, MN. This pattern seems to confirm that DATCP's course of action of monitoring and restricting firewood movement is the right focus.



DNR forester Julie Peltier and Town & Country RC&D forester Luke Saunders inspecting bark peeling of an ash tree near Newburg to ensure it is safe to move out of quarantine.

I have been a part of two timber sale bid openings within the last few months in which ash was a component (one in the quarantine area and one outside) and so far it

seems like ash is still saleable. One logger informed me that demand could even increase in the short term as people begin to worry about the long term production of ash wood. I have found that loggers are willing to comply with the quarantine rules even if they are not completely happy about them.

The Emerald Ash Borer Project is becoming more enjoyable for me as we move forward. My knowledge of the borer has increased, which has made it easier to assist landowners, and my understanding of what the project can accomplish has increased as well. I am currently working with landowners who are going to have timber harvested or some improvement work done, landowners who need some work set up for them, and landowners who want initial walk-throughs. It provides me with the spice of variety. Enjoy the Wisconsin autumn season.

Biomass Field Day

In 2010, the Council established a 4 acre miscanthus demonstration; a 15 acre switchgrass demonstration containing three varieties of switchgrass; and a multi-species prairie planting. The Biomass Demonstration Field-Day will take place on Tuesday, November 1 at 1:00 p.m. with a tour of miscanthus plots and hybrid switchgrass plots at the Tom Ralston

Farm near Fennimore. The plots are located at 15941 County Road T Boscobel, WI 53805. There is NO COST associated with the tour and NO REGISTRATION is required.

Contact Southwest Badger RC&D at 608-348-7110 or email angie.wright@swbadger.org for more information.

DAI Announces Two Major Initiatives

John Walsh, executive director of the Driftless Area Initiative announced the organization will be engaging in two major initiatives. The first involves a partnership with National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to create the Driftless Area Landscape Conservation Initiative. If approved by NRCS the Driftless Area would benefit from a significant increase in on-the-ground conservation dollars which would flow into the area.

DAI made the announcement that they are working with several other groups to sponsor the Driftless Symposium, a major region wide watershed conference, scheduled for March 26-27, 2012, in La Crosse, Wisconsin. Southwest Badger RC&D is also involved with this project and is coordinating the effort. To learn more about the initiative and how to attend, visit darestoration.com.

Upcoming Events

November 1, 2011 - 1 pm
Biomass Demonstration Field Day
Ralston Farm, Fennimore, WI

November 2-3, 2011
Midwest Biomass Conference Grand
River Center, Dubuque, Iowa

December 16, 2011 10:00 am-12 pm
Southwest Badger Annual Meeting
Blue Spoon Cafe, Prairie du Sac, WI

March 2, 2012
Quarterly Council Meeting
Richland Center, WI

March 27-28, 2012
Driftless Area Symposium
La Crosse, WI



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

Council Members

Crawford	Peter Flesch
	Ron Leys
Grant	Donald Splinter
	John Schindler (Treasurer)
	Grant Loy
Green	Cathy Cryor Burgweger
	David Wisnefske
Iowa	Bill Grover
LaCrosse	Don Bina (Vice President)
	Marc Schultz
Lafayette	Leon Wolfe
	Lance McNaughton (President)
	Jack Wiegel
Richland	Virginia Wiedenfield
	Mark Shepard
	Paul Kinney
Sauk	Lester Wiese
	Eugene Hausner (Secretary)
Vernon	Herb Cornell
	Dan Arnold
	Will Beitlich

Staff

Katie Abbott	Military Ridge Prairie Heritage Area Coordinator katie.abbott@rcdnet.net
Patrick Dayton	Stewardship Forester pdayton@vernoncounty.org
Brian Graham	Forestry Technician
Mike Lieurance	Biomass Field Technician melieurance@tds.net
Dennis Rooney	Grazing Specialist dennis.rooney@ces.uwex.edu
Angie Wright	Administrative Coordinator angie.wright@swbadger.org
Don Barrette	Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator don.barrette@swbadger.org

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