

# TREMPEALEAU COUNTY

## DEPARTMENT OF LAND MANAGEMENT

### 2014 ANNUAL REPORT

VOLUME I, ISSUE I JANUARY I—DECEMBER 31, 2014

#### ENVIRONMENT

AND

LAND USE

COMMITTEE

George Brandt

Kathy Zeglin

Michael Nelson

Jeff Bawek

Wade Britzius

Rick Geske

Jon Schultz

Curt Skoyen

BOARD

OF

ADJUSTMENT

James Andre

Nancy Horton

Gerald Hawkenson

Terry Koxlien

James W. Schwartz

Alternates

Charlotte Everson

Randy Severson

## Changes, Challenges & Achievements

The Department of Land Management received the completed report and experienced the challenges of a couple of staff recommendations from the Moratorium Health changes in 2014 but still met all obligations Impact Study Committee and began the task of head on. Our Contractors Workshop (See photos and article on Page 9) which was held in March was well attended and deemed a success. In April, the Uniform Dwelling Code Inspector position was vacated. In May, General Engineering Company of Portage, Wisconsin took over those inspection duties for the remainder of 2014. The Department was also busy filling nearly 200 orders of low cost trees and shrubs for the Wildlife Habitat Tree & Shrub Program thus getting conservation on the land. The annual Land Judging Contest was well received again with five schools participating (See article on the next page). Zoning and Building permits were brisk throughout the spring, summer and fall. Staff designed and implemented many Targeted Runoff Management (TRM) and Land and Water Resource Management (LWRM) conservation projects. The County was awarded a specific TRM grant for the North Branch & Upper Elk Creek subwatershed (See article on Page 7). The County/Department contracted with Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission to assist in rewriting the County Farmland Preservation Plan. The Environment & Land Use (E & LU) Committee, the standing committee for the Department experienced a court challenge from the applicants of their decision to deny a nonmetallic mining permit. That court decision was to be rendered in early 2015. The Committee with the help of DLM staff updated the Animal Waste Ordinance and the Telecommunications Tower section as well as part of the Nonmetallic Mining and Reclamation sections of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance. The Committee consented to and signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Natural Resource Conservation Service. In fall, the Farmland Preservation Specialist resigned from her County position. Until a new staff person could be hired those duties were covered by other staff. The E & LU Committee

received the completed report and recommendations from the Moratorium Health Impact Study Committee and began the task of deciding how to address each of those recommendations. The County was able to purchase LIDAR (Light Detection And Ranging). A remote sensing technology that measures distance by illuminating a target with a laser and analyzing the reflected light, thereby providing accurate elevation data throughout the county. LIDAR is to be available on the website for public use in 2015. The biggest accomplishment of the year was the completion of the U.S. Public Land Survey remonumentation project in the County. The project began in 1997 with a pilot project in the Town of Lincoln and then moved to the most heavily developing areas in the north and south. After that the project continued in the north and proceeded in a “checkerboard” fashion across the County, with the southerly portion of the Town of Arcadia being the last township to be completed. Once the remonumentation was completed in a particular township, all the property deeds for that area were pulled from the Register of Deeds office by the Land Records Department and the Real Property Lister and remapped for the County website. The completion of the remonumentation project is a great example of a fiscal commitment and cooperative effort made by past and present County Boards. The completion of this project means cost savings to landowners, when in need of a survey, since the public land survey corners have all been re-established and the monuments reset. It also makes the information retrieved from the County’s online mapping website as accurate as possible and very accessible to the public. With a competent staff much was achieved in 2014. With the addition of new staff members in 2015, we look forward to the year ahead and the changes and challenges it will bring.



## PERMITS ISSUED IN 2014

UDC/Building Permits	135
UDC Seals (Issued to new homes)	33
Land Use/Zoning Permits	222
Uniform Number System (911 Address)	54
Erosion Control Permits	78
Conditional Use Permits	6
Livestock Facility Permits	3
Animal Waste Storage Permits	4
Sign Permits	2
Public Hearings	26
State Sanitary Permits	86
County Sanitary Permits	20
Well Permits	85



Photos From Uniform Dwelling Code Inspector files



## NON-METALLIC MINING & RECLAMATION PROGRAM

Total Mines in County	75
New Mines (Conditional Use Permits)	1
Total Acreage	480*
Acres Reclaimed in 2014	20
Mines Inspected & Plans Reviewed	75
Mines Certified as Reclaimed	0
Industrial Sand acres permitted in 2014 only	0
Total Industrial Sand acres permitted to date	5,156*
*only an approximation due to acreage unknown for annexed sites	

## TRANSPORTATION FACILITY/EROSION CONTROL

Proposed Projects/Plans Reviewed	4
Townships Requesting Service	3
Bridge/Culverts-Engineered Hydrology Plans/Assessments	4
Erosion Control Permits/Plans Reviewed and Inspected (Includes 1 & 2 family dwellings & other land disturbances over 4000 square feet.)	78
Storm Water Plans Reviewed and Inspected	2

# CONSERVATION PRACTICES APPLIED ON THE LAND

One of the goals of the Trempealeau County Department of Land Management is to preserve, protect and enhance the land and water resources of Trempealeau County. The intent of the goal is to ensure that county natural resources are preserved, protected and enhanced for present and future generations. The Department of Land Management staff provides technical assistance for the survey, design, construction supervision and certification of conservation practices in the county. Financial assistance for the landowners constructing these practices was available through cost-share programs from the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection. The total state dollars paid towards these programs was approximately \$311,559.93 in 2014.

Contracts	22
Cropland Soil Erosion Control Plans	18,968 Acres
Manure Management Plans	54,811 Acres
Diversions	560 feet
Waste Storage Facility	1
Waste Transfer System	1
Critical Area Stabilization	0.1 Acre
Streambank Riprap	4,022 Feet
Grassed Waterway	2.4 Acres

<b>Land &amp; Water Resource Management Grant</b> (Funding Source - DATCP)	
16 contracts.....	\$106,999.00
<b>Targeted Runoff Management Grant</b> (Funding Source - DNR)	
6 contracts.....	\$204,560.93



**A Land & Water Resource Management (LWRM) Project - Critical area stabilization on Willis Breska property in the Town of Arcadia.**



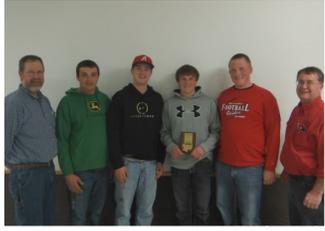
**A Land & Water Resource Management (LWRM) Project - Streambank protection on Gene Hodgen property in the Town of Ettrick.**



Before

After

# ANNUAL LAND JUDGING CONTEST



**2014 Land Judging  
1st Place Senior Team  
Arcadia**  
(L to R) Todd Mau, Zach George, Lee Pronschinske, Brice Mann, Blake Mann, Kevin Whalen



**2014 Land Judging  
1st Place Junior Team  
Arcadia**  
(L to R) Todd Mau, Cody Zastrow, Conner Bauer, Treyce Halvorsen, Collin Weltzien, Kevin Whalen



**2014 Land Judging  
Senior Individual Winners**  
(L to R)  
3rd-Briar Golden, (Arc) & Ty Stephen, (G-E-T)  
2nd -Zach George , (Arc)  
1st-Dakota Ziegler, (G-E-T)

The 2014 Trempealeau County Land Judging Contest was held on May 14th. Gale-Etrick-Trempealeau High School co-hosted the event with the Trempealeau County Land Management Department. Kent Haake, Agriculture Instructor along with Carla Doelle of the Department of Land Management coordinated the event. This years contest was held on the Tamarack Valley Dairy property located in the Town of Trempealeau. Schools participating were Arcadia, Independence, Eleva-Strum and Gale-Etrick-Trempealeau and Monticello. Plaques were presented in each division to the top school and to students with the three highest individual scores. The Land Judging Contest is sponsored annually by the Trempealeau County Land Management Department. Donna Ferran Guy, Soil Scientist with the Natural Resource Conservation Service, was the official judge. Todd Mau, Buffalo County District Conservationist assisted with pit preparation and judging. Participants in the Land Judging Contest had to examine soil from four pits. The characteristics of topsoil and subsoil had to be recognized. The texture, structure, depth, slope and drainage of the soil had to be determined. The fertilizer and lime requirements, based on the soil test for each pit, had to be judged. Contestants were also required to identify soil erosion and other limitations of the soil. They also classified the soil site according to its capabilities and recommended the correct farm management and conservation practices for the soil site.



**(L to R) 2014 Land Judging  
Junior Individual Winners**  
3rd-Cody Rombalski, (Ind)  
2nd-John Gooden, (Ind)  
1st- Collin Weltzien, (Arc)



# STAFF UTILIZES FLOODPLAIN MODEL FOR TEACHING

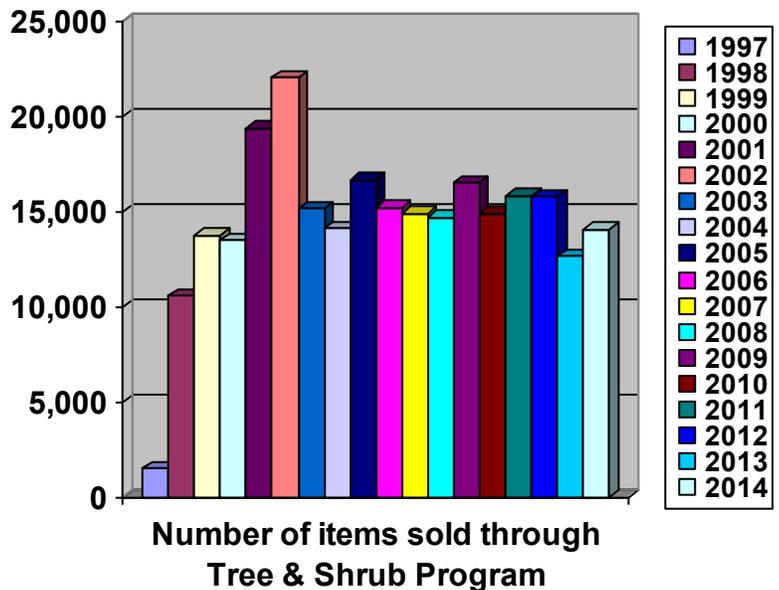
The Department of Land Management had inquiries regarding the Ward Stormwater/Floodplain Model this past year. Zoning and Environmental Specialist Jake Budish made a trip to the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Environmental Day, which was held in Perrot State Park in Trempealeau on September 25<sup>th</sup>. Good and bad land use practices were demonstrated as to how stormwater is affected by upstream development and can affect building practices and infrastructure downstream. Schools and other organizations are encouraged to take advantage of using this model as an effective learning tool. They are to contact the Department of Land Management staff if interested.

## 8th Grade Environmental Day



# WILDLIFE HABITAT TREE & SHRUB PROGRAM

The Wildlife Habitat Tree & Shrub Program began in 1997. The purpose of the program is to provide home/landowners with the opportunity to purchase small quantities of low cost nursery stock for wildlife habitat enhancement. This program continues to be very popular with the public. In 2014, approximately 14,074 tree and shrubs were sold. To date, approximately 261,398 items have been sold through this program.





## BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

The Board of Adjustment is a five member board with two alternates (See front cover for board members) which are appointed by the County Board Chairman. Gerald Hawkenson was re-appointed as a Board member. Charlotte Everson was newly appointed to the Board as an alternate. The primary purpose of the Board of Adjustment is to review and decide cases where there is a conflict with a zoning decision or where a deviation from the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance is sought. The Board of Adjustment could participate in three types of decision making; administrative appeal, variance, or special exemption. The Board of Adjustment heard 9 public hearings in 2014.

## WILDLIFE DAMAGE & CLAIMS

Trempealeau County contracted with USDA Wildlife Services to administer the Wildlife Damage Abatement Program. The Wildlife Services consultant is DeWayne Snobl.

- Landowners filing claims –4
- Damage Claim Payments Requested—\$19,977.97 (2013 claims paid in 2014)
- 2013 Deer Donation (total deer donated) - 15

## OTHER NOTEWORTHY ACTIVITIES

- Continued to service landowners under Farmland Preservation Contracts.
- Participated in the Conservation Aids Program enabling the Associated Rod & Gun Clubs to receive \$3,546.00 in DNR grant money for stream bank restoration and stabilization along the Borst Valley Creek in the Chimney Rock township.
- Assisted the Forester with tree planting.
- Participated in the Wisconsin Deer Donation Program.
- Maintained a webpage at the Trempealeau County government site - [www.tremplounty.com/landmanagement](http://www.tremplounty.com/landmanagement).
- Continue to include three non-county board members on the E & LU Committee, one of which is the FSA Committee Chair, one is a town representative and one is engaged primarily in livestock agriculture.
- Continued to put up newly ordered 911 signs and also work closely with Land Records in an effort to contact landowners and correct 911 sign discrepancies within the County.

## NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT FARMER EDUCATION PROGRAM

In cooperation with Brad Sirianni, Western Technical College Farm Business Production Management Specialist the DLM has assisted with group classes having focused on the economics of nutrient management as well as learning more about nitrogen and phosphorus management. By involving nitrogen and phosphorus management and its relevance to efficient crop production, environmental stewardship and long term land and water management in the Farmer Education Program, farmers will be more likely to implement and follow their nutrient management plan on their farm and rented land. The computer software program SNAPPLUS2 (Soil Nutrient Application Planner) is used to write nutrient management plans. It ensures that farmers properly credit legume sources of nitrogen and manure nutrients (N-P-K). It aids with economically planning manure and fertilizer applications to cropland. With assistance, landowners write their own plans using this software. A major component of nutrient management planning is proper soil sampling. Crop fields are soil tested every four years with a sample taken for every five acres. The Department of Land Management assists landowners with soil sampling logistics by using current crop field maps and making soil sample bag labels for crop fields. This helps to assure that soil tests can be matched to the proper field a soil sample was taken from. The conservation plan is updated with current crop rotations and tillage methods and written to "T" (tolerable soil loss). Soil types for each field are determined and entered in the program. Maps are created on the Interactive/Online 590 Restriction Maps site linked through SNAPPLUS2. Current field boundaries are drawn as well as marking wells and other significant information. Water quality management areas are identified as well as restricted manure spreading areas and seasonal spreading areas. Farms are evaluated for compliance with NR151 (Runoff pollution performance standards). Annual manure production is calculated and education provided in how to handle spills and other waste handling emergencies. The importance of annually updating your plan is also emphasized. Classes are held in the computer lab at the Western Technical College in Independence, December through February.

### ELK CREEK WATERSHED INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS



In 2014 the Department was awarded a Targeted Runoff Management grant for the purpose of extending an offer of cost-sharing to all the landowners within the boundaries of the North and Upper branches of the Elk Creek Watershed in an effort to install practices to reduce sediment, animal waste and further improve the aesthetics and recreational value to the invaluable and irreplaceable Elk Creek. Landowners in this watershed were eligible to sign a cost-share agreement with the DLM to install water quality best management practices to help achieve compliance with the State's Performance Standards and Prohibitions. Conservation practices eligible for cost-sharing included; manure storage structures, barnyard runoff control systems, grassed waterways, critical area stabilization and streambank stabilization. Carla Doelle and Keith VerKuilen arranged informational meetings which were held at the Town of Hale building in February. Rob Herman, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Trout Habitat Specialist was available to answer questions and provide information on streambank restoration and trout habitat improvements that could be achieved by these projects. This year three landowners took advantage of the program and installed practices totaling \$21,925.19. Other landowners have expressed an interest and more practices will be installed in the coming year.

# SURVEYOR'S REPORT

The County Surveyor's position is an appointed, part time position. Office hours average 8 hours per week.

County Surveyor Duties, in part, consist of:

- Maintain a filing system for all survey records
- Provide assistance to Land Records, Zoning and other county staff
- Be available to answer survey related questions from the public
- Provide technical review of Certified Survey Maps prior to recording
- Keep Zoning and Land Records Committees informed on surveying related issues
- Statutorial duties as described in Chapter 59.45 of State Statutes
- Provide land surveying services for remonumentation and dependant resurvey of United States Public Land Survey (USPLSS) corners and maintenance.

Survey records received in 2014 continued to be indexed and filed by virtue of computer data base software. Older records are being entered in to the database as time permits.

In 2014, the remonumentation and resurvey program concentrated in two major areas.

The first project area is the congressional township of T20N., R.9W., being a portion of the civil Township of Arcadia. The goal of this project is to remonument the unmonumented USPLSS corners, verify the existing monumented USPLSS corners, perform the horizontal control survey of all of the USPLSS corners and prepare and file the required documentation. As of the end of 2014, the horizontal survey has been extended to all of the USPLSS corners. The final positions of all of the USPLSS corners have been determined and monumented.

The second project area is the congressional township of T.20N., R.10W., being a portion of the civil Township of Arcadia. The goal of this project is the same as the previous one. As of the end of 2014, the horizontal survey has been extended to all of the USPLSS corners. The final positions of all of the USPLSS corners have been determined and monumented.

In 2014 we also started the maintenance program of the remonumented USPLSS. The goal of the maintenance program is to monitor the loss of USPLSS corner monuments and prevent the USPLSS from reverting to the level that required the remonumentation project. The process consists of field visiting the corners and verifying the monument condition. If monuments have been damaged or disturbed, new monuments are set based on the reference ties and/or the documented coordinate value.

In summary, 2014 ended with the completion of the remonumentation program. 2014 was found to be a very productive year in completing the process of the complete remonumentation and dependant resurvey of the USPLSS system in Trempealeau County, thereby providing the necessary foundation for future land records modernization activities as well as providing the monumentation for public and private land surveys. The Surveyor also reviewed 66 Certified Survey Maps.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph P. Nelsen  
Trempealeau County Surveyor



**NE corner  
Section 13,  
T20N, R10W  
In 2012, found  
original government  
stake mark which  
was set in 1846**



**East Quarter  
Corner Section 27,  
T20N, R9W  
In 2012, found  
original  
government stake  
mark which was set  
in 1848**



**East Quarter  
Corner Section 2  
T20N, R9W  
In 2012, Found  
original  
government stake  
mark which was set  
in 1848**

# POWTS (Private Onsite Waste Treatment Systems) and WELL PROGRAMS

Trempealeau County issued 86 state sanitary permits (62 new, 24 replacement) and 20 county sanitary permits (10 reconnections, 7 repairs and 3 privies) in 2014. Trempealeau County also participates in the Wisconsin Fund Grant Program which provides partial reimbursement for system replacement to qualifying individuals and businesses. Participation in the Wisconsin Fund Grant Program requires compliance with the maintenance program requirements set forth in SPS 383.54. In Trempealeau County, Wisconsin fund applicants were awarded grants totaling \$20,100.00 to replace condemned septic systems. In 2014, 1,562 maintenance notices were sent to individual POWTS owners. Historic records are being transferred and paper records are being scanned and digitized to result in a truly “searchable” database.

Trempealeau County Department of Land Management serves as a DNR delegated well agent conducting construction and drill hole sealing and abandonment inspections, as well as issuing well location permits. In 2014, 85 well permits (57 new, 26 replacement and 2 reconstruction) were issued by this Department.

*Trempealeau County issued 86 state sanitary permits (62 new, 24 replacement) and 20 county sanitary permits (10 reconnections, 7 repairs and 3 privies) in 2014*

## CONTRACTORS WORKSHOP

The Contractors Workshop was held in February at the Whitehall Country Club with approximately 52 contractors in attendance. Contractors were given instruction on insulation types and application and dealing with moisture in buildings. Guest Speakers were LeRoy Stublaski from the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services and Randy Fenske from Wausau Supply. The contractors in attendance received Wisconsin Dwelling Contractor Qualification Continuing Education credits.



### 2014 DEPARTMENT OF LAND MANAGEMENT STAFF

- Kevin Lien.....Director
- Judy Betker.....Farmland Preservation Specialist
- Jake Budish.....Zoning & Environmental Specialist
- Mark Carlson.....Zoning & Sanitary Specialist
- Carla J. Doelle.....Zoning & Agriculture Conservation Specialist
- Nick Gamroth.....Real Property Lister
- Virginette Gamroth.....Service Specialist
- Vickie Stalheim.....Fiscal Manager
- Keith VerKuilen..... Zoning & Environmental Specialist
- Joseph P. Nelsen.....County Surveyor

## Air Monitoring Set up



*2014 saw substantial cooperation compared to 2013 in regards to installing and maintaining erosion control practices, and compliance to the County's revised Chapter 13: Non-Metallic Mining and Chapter 20: Non-Metallic Mining Reclamation*

## 2014 MINING OPERATIONS

The Trempealeau County Health Department lifted the moratorium on August 30, 2014, which was implemented on August 30, 2013 for a maximum of one (1) year. The moratorium applied to expanding or new industrial sand operations. A Moratorium Committee was formed and developed a Public Health Impacts of Non-Metallic Mining Final Report. If interested in reading and or acquiring an copy of the report please go to the Trempealeau County webpage <http://www.trempealeaucounty.com/default/> and look for Moratorium Committee: Public Health Impacts of Non-Metallic Mining Final Report or contact the Trempealeau County Department of Health. The findings and recommendations from the report could be applied to the Trempealeau County Comprehensive Ordinance, specifically to Chapter 13: Non-Metallic Mining and Chapter 20: Non-Metallic Mining Reclamation. The Department of Land Management was vital to the implementation and collection of the field data for the air monitoring on behalf of the University of Iowa. The findings of the data and monitoring have yet to be released by the University.

The annexation of Sand Products of WI, LLC to the City of Blair took place as of April 2, 2014 when the City adopted the mining company's plan for the mine, processing and rail load-out. Another major annexation took place on August 26th with the industrial sand company of Superior Silica spearheading annexation of the Guza Mine, which is over 2 miles south of Independence. The site was shut down in October by the County after violations to the Reclamation plan that was still under Cameron Rail, LLC and held by the County. The site was allowed in November to conduct only over-winterization activities on the site by both entities present at the mine site of Cameron Rail, LLC and Superior Silica. By the end of the year the mine site was still under enforcement by the County. The County has 24 Industrial Sand Operations, as follows; 18 mines operational, and 6 mines in development.

Of the 18 mines that are operational 5 industrial sand operations are annexed to the Cities of Blair, Arcadia, Whitehall and Independence.

The number of permitted sites has gone down some due to some owner/operators not fulfilling conditions and also lapsing on annual renewal fees. The County in 2014 had no acres permitted for Industrial Sand Operations, due to the yearlong moratorium.

2014 saw substantial cooperation compared to 2013 in regards to installing and maintaining erosion control practices, and compliance to the County's revised Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance Chapter 13: Non-Metallic Mining and Chapter 20: Non-Metallic Mining Reclamation.

The following changes were made to Chapter 13: Non-Metallic Mining, which states that the applicant shall be allowed twelve (12) months from the date when the conditional use permit was preliminarily approved to satisfy all preliminary conditions. The preliminary approved conditional use permit shall lapse as a matter of law upon the failure to satisfy all of the preliminary conditions prior to the expiration of the twelve (12) month period. If the applicant cannot satisfy the preliminary conditions within the twelve month period, then County may allow one extension of time to the twelve (12) month period to satisfy the preliminary conditions, upon the applicant showing just cause. The length of any extension shall be for a fixed period of time at the discretion of the County. In order to seek such an extension, the applicant must submit a written request to the Department of Land Management prior to the expiration of the 12-month period. A letter was sent out to all the in preliminarily approved sites that stated that the applicants must satisfy all preliminary conditions within one year or the Conditional Use Permit will lapse.

Overall forecast for the upcoming 2015 could shape up to be another extremely productive and busy year.



**Quarrying  
Limestone  
at the  
Irvine Quarry  
Town  
of  
Gale**

**Sand Mining  
Operations  
at  
Whistler's Pass  
Quarry**

**Town  
of  
Dodge**



**Rossa  
Mine  
  
Town  
of  
Arcadia**

# MINING RECLAMATION PHOTOS



**Olson Pit - Reclamation  
Town of Trempealeau**

**Suchla Pit  
Reclamation**

**Town  
of  
Arcadia**



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*Department  
of Land  
Management*