

STEWARDSHIP NEWSLETTER

Spring/Summer 2018

crawfordstewardship.org

MANURE LAGOONS ON SINKHOLES

*... and other insanities,
coming to a
community near you?*

Forest Jahnke,
Program Coordinator

If this sounds crazy to you, it should, but it is no laughing matter and it is already happen-

ing. Pipestone's Timberwolf RE feeder pig production facility plans to install their 7.3 million gallon manure lagoon on top of a large recognized sinkhole

Driftless Back to the Land Co-op

"Back to the future farming with pigs on pasture"

Meg Wise,
Outreach Coordinator

In Viola, WI, Mike and Susan Mueller raise pastured Hereford hogs at Pioneer Gardens Farm. Mike and Susan began their farm with the simple desire to provide what they needed for themselves, but have been such an inspiration to many in the area that Mike has spearheaded a producer co-op called Driftless Back to the Land Co-op (DBLC), established in November 2017. We were excited to interview Mike to learn more about what has been happening with DBLC, what's to come, and how others in the community can get involved as members, supporters and consumers of this new local co-op and its products.

With the economic trends in agriculture pushing farmers to "get big or get out" as they struggle to make a fair profit from their labor, it actually makes more sense to Mike to go back to small-scale. Small operations may lose some efficiencies of

scale, but, "Going small scale capitalizes on the efficiencies of small scale," Mike contends.

"The trend seems to be about getting bigger, but the industrial approach seems to be the issue. Sure, there are efficiencies gained, but there are many problems and costs. So if you can find ways where you do not need the expensive infrastructure for expansion, like our pasture-based production model, then you gain on the other side. You become more profitable because you're not getting these huge monthly bills just to pay for the equipment and infrastructure."

Mike has been quoted in the Crawford Independent as saying that "pasture-based production eliminates the danger from large lagoons of liquid manure. The people in our area are opposed to the industrial hog industry coming into our area, and so there is a lot of support out there for a viable alternative."

With the pastured production model there is no need



Courtesy of Richland County artist, Ken Stark

in Grant County. Despite overwhelming public concern at the hearing this past November and comments from neighbors and Crawford Stewardship Project, our Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) permitted this insanity in January. Anyone who still thinks our Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) regulatory and permitting system is working for our communities and watersheds should be pointed to this example of extreme irresponsibility.

The Timberwolf 5,500 animal unit facility is one of two controlled by Pipestone Systems (one of the largest corporate hog producers in the world) permitted by the DNR in Grant County that, together, will produce 280,000 feeder pigs, to be raised... where? Why right here in karstic hilly southwest Wisconsin, of course! They can't go much further than 50 miles, as they ship off piglets

to the "grower" facilities at a very delicate age. There is also a concerning trend in the industrial hog production business of setting up many slightly sub-CAFO status (threshold being 1000 animal units, or 2500 hogs) facilities to avoid state regulation. This is a dangerous loophole that needs to be addressed, and likely at the local level, with what limited resources our counties and townships have.

Pipestone will be promoting their facilities as helping local farmers stay competitive, but the CAFO model of production has proven to be unsustainable, not resilient to climate change, and is particularly unsuited to our sensitive region. We know that this system leads to fewer farmers, crumbling local economies, and many long term health and environmental impacts. Are we willing to give our land and labor and sacrifice our

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"SINKHOLE INSANITY" continued page 5

Thank you volunteers and project collaborators!

Crawford Stewardship Project's many accomplishments and scrappy reputation can be largely credited to our wonderful volunteers and project collaborators. Our volunteers and collabora-

tors are willing to go above and beyond to help our community learn about, understand and value our land, water and air and the threats to our ecosystems and natural resources. Thank you!

Volunteers

Glory Adams
Sylvia Attleson
Chris Balustreri
Harriet Behar
Ellen Brooks
Phil Burgess
Kathy and Paul Byrne
Connie Champnoise
Deb Conlon
Ken Cornish
Adam Cox
Diane Craig
John Delaney
Driftless Brewing Company
Debbie Dudek
Edie Ehler
Jonathan French
Magnus Goltermann
JoAnn Gonas
Kerry Grant
Dave Hackett
Monique Hassman
Fred Hausler
Brendan Heberlein
Kathleen Hein
Ella Hein
Omaru Heras Ornelas
Bill and Debbie Hiller
Lumen Hobbins
Jane Holzhauer
Craig Hromadler
Forest Jahnke
Rikardo Jahnke
Lamar Janes
Judith Jellies
Niels and Beth Jensen
Brad Johnson
Maggie Jones
Rachel Jovi
Gloria Kapp
Jack Kehe
Carol Anne Kemen
Mandy Kepler
Jack Knight
Cindy Kohles

Shane Kouba

Eli Kramer
Peg LaMartina
Laura Lee
Linda Lieb
Asher Malipaard
Eli Mandel
Erin Martin
Andrew McComb
Jane Mussey
Christine Myhr
Scott Noe
Steve Oberle
Cynthia Olmstead
Johanna O'Tigham
Mark Ottson
Ilana Pestcoe
Marinella Pro
Rachel Rebman
Cory Redfield

Barbara Regnery

Crisse Reynolds
Kelvin Rodolfo
Lynda Schaller
Joe Schwarte
Ken and Chris Stark
Michael Steinmetz
Jake Stephens
Kathleen Sullivan
Sara Tedeschi
The People Brothers Band
Ric and Rosa Thill
Häven Varnes Epstein
Michael Varnes Epstein
Meg Wise

Citizens

Driftless Area Back to the Land Cooperative
Driftless Community Action Network

Driftless Defenders

Echo Valley Hope

Facing Forward Vernon

Family Farm Defenders

Farms Not Factories

Friends of the Lower

Wisconsin State Riverway

Grant County Rural

Stewardship

Green County Defending Our Farmland

Legion GIS

Leuther Laboratories

Midwest Environmental Advocates

Prairie du Chien Public Library Preserve Grant County Farmland

Richland Stewardship Project Save Our Unique Lands Socially Responsible Agricultural Project

South Central Wisconsin Farmers Union

South West Wisconsin Area Progressives

St Croix County Defending our Water

Sustain Rural Wisconsin Network

Upper Mississippi River Region Interleague Organization - League of Women Voters

Valley Stewardship Network WDRT Community Radio

Wisconsin Farmers Union Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters

Wisconsin Network for Peace Justice and Sustainability

Project Collaborators

Concerned Citizens for Smart Growth
Coulee Region Sierra Club
Dodge County Concerned




Community radio listeners choose CSP!

Thank you WDRT listener members for selecting Crawford Stewardship Project as the local non-profit to partner with WDRT for their Spring Pledge Drive! Community radio and community organizing have gone hand-in-hand since the existence of radio, and CSP is honored and excited to be recognized by the WDRT listeners for our work. As we move forward with our project through participatory democracy, citizen science, and community education, we look forward to a long and fruitful partnership with local media of, by, and for the people and planet!

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Community Outreach & Water Quality Meg Wise

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Water Quality Program Update

*Meg Wise,
Outreach Coordinator*

We have exciting updates for our water quality program at Crawford Stewardship Project, including open volunteer positions and upcoming trainings, awards for key CSP stream monitors, and increased interest in our community and beyond in stream monitoring.

CSP will be partnering up

ers and community members are encouraged to come and learn about this unique citizen science opportunity.

Volunteering only requires six days a year, about an hour each month from May to October! Topics covered in this training include: stream ecology, water quality measurements, stream-side habitat assessment, macro-invertebrate diversity, and data

and refreshments will be provided. Please bring a bag lunch.

Choose the training
that works best for you!

Saturday, April 28, 10 a.m. -3 p.m. at West Fork Sportsman's Club, 3574 County Road S, La Farge
or

Saturday, May 5, 10 a.m. -3 p.m. at Mother Earth Green Center, 48395 County Road E, Steuben (1/2 mile east of Hwy 131, look for signs).

To register for this free training please contact Meg Wise via email: mwise@crawford-stewardship.org or by phone: 608-632-9410.

CSP is also looking for volunteers to fill water quality testing volunteer positions at sites of specific concern near Wauzeka. Please contact Meg if you are interested.

Congratulations to Bill and Debbi Hiller who will be awarded the Water Action Volunteers adult volunteers award at the Water Action Volunteers Symposium on April 20! The Hillers began their monitoring in 2013 at Gran Grae Creek. As part of an ongoing CSP monitoring project, the Hillers have collected water quality data of four different streams near the Roth Feeder Pig CAFO along

the Wisconsin River in Crawford County.

The Hillers say that "we've never intended to do this work for recognition and got involved when we moved to the area to become acquainted and learn more about the area through organizations like CSP and VSN. Without the hard work of people like you, this volunteerism wouldn't be possible."

One of our biggest thrills was when a neighbor, an avid trout fisherman, thanked us personally after seeing our name on a stream report from the DNR for a stream that he was thinking of fishing!"

Hearing increased interest in stream monitoring from those in surrounding counties, particularly around factory farms in Grant and Richland Counties, we welcome anyone to our basic trainings and offer assistance finding resources. Check out the other basic trainings happening around the state: watermonitoring.uwex.edu/wav/events.html#WAV

We look forward to the upcoming water monitoring season and hope to see you at the trainings and on the water!



again with Valley Stewardship Network (VSN) to teach basic water quality trainings through the state DNR Water Action Volunteers program. Landown-

ership will be loaned to interested volunteers. Please bring hip boots/waders if you have them, a pencil, and clipboard. Snacks

A Call for Immigrant Voices

*We want to hear your story!
¿Migraste aquí? ¡Queremos escuchar tu historia!

In our search to give voice to the voiceless, we are digging into an often overlooked part of our local agriculture: immigrant farm workers. It is important to know the stories of those who travel long distances to contribute their en-

ergy to the local agricultural community.

**Buscando una forma de expresión justa e igualitaria en lo referente a la agricultura local, queremos conocer las experiencias de los inmigrantes que han contribuido, con su tra-*

jo y presencia, en el desarrollo de esta comunidad agrícola.

If you are an immigrant to this area, or know any willing to share their story, please contact us! We are happy to keep identities anonymous, if desired.

**Eres un inmigrante en esta región o conoces a alguien que esté dispuesto(a) a compartir su historia? ¡Contáctanos por favor! De ser necesario, con gusto mantendremos ésta(s) identidad(es) anónima(s).*

Karst Campaign Update

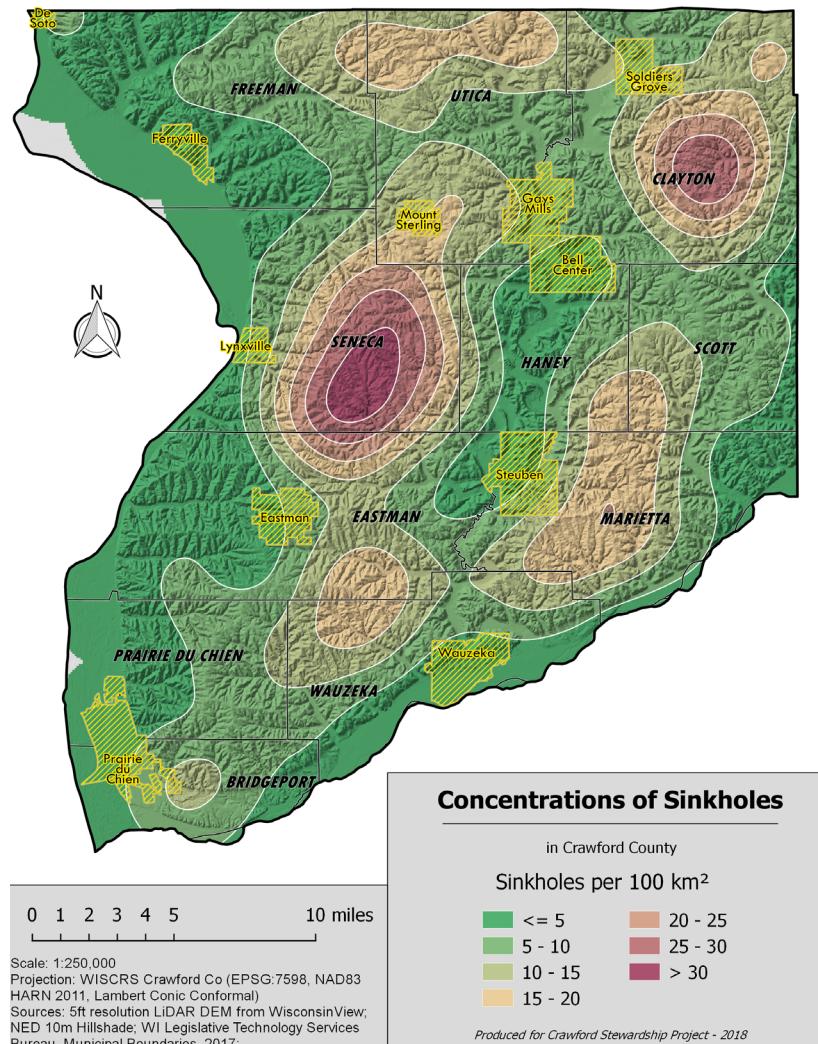
Citizen science and grassroots advocacy gaining traction

*Forest Jahnke,
Program Coordinator*

It is exciting to note the attention that karst geology, groundwater, and well-water quality are getting these days on a state, regional, and county level. Crawford Stewardship Project continues to prioritize these discussions, studies, and push for science-based action to protect public health and welfare and the ecosystems on which we rely. Now is the time to collect this long-overdue information and make it known that we care about our drinking water!

After our multi-county efforts last year in the Conservation Congress, a dozen resolutions to recognize all karst areas as sensitive areas and implement groundwater studies in counties lacking them passed with overwhelming support in counties across the state. The Conservation Congress District Leadership Council approved a combined version of these resolutions to be on all County Conservation Congress ballots for a vote this year.

In January, the Crawford County Land Conservation Committee passed the resolution that Crawford Stewardship Project crafted, urging the state to recognize our geological sensitivities, respect our local authority to implement protective measures beyond state standards, and to fulfil its regulatory commitments. In February the Crawford County Board of Supervisors unanimously passed this resolution to the state, affirming our county's commitment to these issues and unwillingness to wait for the state government



to provide solutions.

Days after this resolution passed, the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board took up the proposed changes to NR 151 manure management rules to protect the groundwater in eastern Wisconsin. Crawford Stewardship Project was there once again to place maps in front of the board showing how vulnerable Crawford County and all of southern and western Wisconsin is, and to demand action before conditions reach the crisis levels of Kewaunee County. The rule changes were adopted unanimously, marking a small step forward for eastern

the entire county as a high density area for sinkholes. We have also broken this information down to create a sinkhole "heatmap" (showing zones where there are particularly high concentrations), giving us another useful tool for susceptibility mapping.

We are already using the maps we've created through our Karst Landscapes and Groundwater Susceptibility Survey of Crawford County in our advocacy, and we encourage our supporters to check out our progress on our online Karst Viewer at legiongis.com/karstotography

We plan to have the full report finalized this year, and from there will be building momentum for next steps including a well testing campaign, integration of our information with state mapping programs, and generally using this data to show the need to protect this area from polluting practices.

Other counties in the region are taking measures to gather similar data. Lafayette, Grant, and La Crosse Counties are sponsoring well testing programs, educating on the importance of and subsidising private well tests. Grant and Vernon counties are also exploring options for groundwater susceptibility studies as well, and have consulted with CSP regarding our work. Soon, thanks to all the good work being done on many levels, Iowa County will no longer be the only county in southwest Wisconsin with detailed information on karst geology and groundwater risk areas.

Together, we will build our knowledge and protect our sensitive watersheds, above and below ground.

"SINKHOLE INSANITY" continued from page 1

water quality to feed the growing demand for pork in China? If not, we must act now, and act decisively.

This is exactly what some local communities are doing. Liberty and Harmony Townships in Vernon county recently passed year-long moratoria on any further permits for farms over 750 and 250 animal units, respectively, while they study impacts and evaluate next steps. Clayton Township in Crawford County signed on to the statewide resolution for a Wisconsin CAFO moratorium until reasonable local control can be established and the state regulatory program is fully funded and implemented.

It is very exciting for us to see this proactive stance of some of our local municipalities, and this is what we advocate for in our educational efforts. A successful event organized and supported by several organizations throughout Wisconsin on this front packed the Boscobel AmericInn with well over 200 people on January 20. Our wonderful panel discussed the karst geological sensitivities of this



John Ikerd brings over 200 to their feet in support of defending our basic rights from corporate economic colonization

area, national trends in the hog CAFO industry, actions taken to protect health and welfare in other areas of the state, and the local alternatives to this model of pork production presented by the new Driftless Back to the Land Cooperative. John Ikerd, our keynote speaker, brought everyone to their feet at the end of the day with his speech on the economic colonization of our communities epitomized by the CAFO model and how we can resist this by upholding our most basic rights.

Even more importantly, all this action has helped spur the formation of a new group, Grant County Rural Stewardship!

Crawford Stewardship Project is actively advising and supporting the bold residents of Grant County who have chosen to stand up, speak out, and question the industrial and extractive direction that agriculture has taken. With our long history of catalyzing grassroots organizations, we are hopeful for many successful collaborations with Grant County Rural Stewardship. Follow them on Facebook @grantcountyruralstewardship for news and updates.

Of course these important developments will have to be juggled with the many other facets of our project. We continue to review the Nutrient

Management Plans for the largest farms in the county, and plan on broadening the scope of these reviews for a better idea of trends and general concerns. We are working with the Concerned Citizens for Smart Growth to find the best outcome for the Premium Iowa Pork slaughterhouse proposal north of Viroqua. Aside from all the local work, we continue to actively participate in the leadership of the Sustain Rural Wisconsin Network to craft and implement a coordinated statewide strategy to address the issues we see with factory farms on our landscape and in our watersheds.

"BACK TO THE FUTURE" continued from page 1

for manure lagoons, imminent threats to our ground and surface water in sensitive areas like ours. DBLC's aim is to have all members follow pasture-centered "Level 4" standards of the Global Animal Partnership (GAP) production standards,



Mike Mueller at Pioneer Gardens Farms

which is part of a 5-step international Welfare Rating Program to "help improve animal agriculture, encourage welfare-friendly farming practices and inform consumers about the animal farming systems they choose to support."

The co-op and all that will come along with it will be a great asset to the community. The idea is to eliminate competition between producers who produce the same product such as pork and to create continuous opportunity to all DBLC members by securing a constant demand for high value products, which guarantees sales. This will also give consumers another outlet for buying quality meat.

Currently, Mike and DBLC are working on building their sales and marketing avenues. Once markets are determined, DBLC can then divide the labor and help guide members with getting set up for the production process.

A concrete next step for Mike and collaborators is a butcher shop in Soldiers Grove. Mike says there will likely be a butcher shop there by fall! The butcher shop would be separate from

DBLC, but co-op members and their products will be the top priority.

This butcher shop will greatly benefit the community since the only shop left in Crawford County is in Eastman. In the last two years, we have seen a shop between Viroqua and Westby and a shop in Gays Mills close their doors, leading to a serious lack of animal processing capacity in the area. DBLC members will also be able to have their products in the retail space at the shop. Products are not limited to pork, and can include fruits, vegetables and other meats so long as they follow GAP level 4 protocol.

In the future, other expansions can be considered by DBLC, such as delivering to other cities and working with institutions such as schools and hospitals. "For now, we're trying to take it step by step so we don't trip

along the way. We want to make sure what we do is successful and leads to a consistent product and service to the customer. To do that we have to start slow and make sure everything is up and running well and then we can expand."

What this means is that DBLC is looking for more producers to come on board for this opportunity! "There are dairy farmers that are hurting who already have a farm and buildings to use to rotate animals. This is a tremendous opportunity to the farming community, which is hurting so bad right now. Even if they don't want to do hogs 15 years from now, it might be enough to get them through the next couple of years until the price of milk comes back or something else changes."

Help us spread the word of this local farming opportunity!

Crawford Stewardship Project
P.O. Box 284
Gays Mills WI 54631

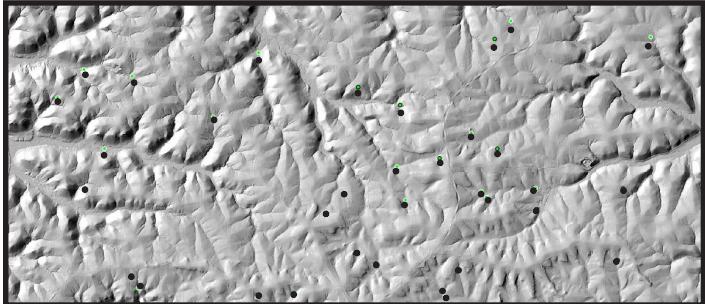
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Karst Geology Exploration

Join us for our first on-the-ground sinkhole verification!



Seneca County Highway Building
21515 WI-27, Seneca, WI

**Saturday July 28
1:00 - 4:30pm**

Our geological guru, Professor Emeritus Kelvin Rodolfo, will again grace us with his expertise on the local geological history before leading us out to the field to explore some sinkholes. For this expedition, we will be test-running methods for citizen scientists to verify, or “ground-truth”, probable sinkholes, as identified from aerial imagery in our previous karst citizen science events. This is a great opportunity to gain a better understanding of our hydrology & contribute directly to the improvement of important regional data about our groundwater susceptibility! Light refreshments will be provided.

Please bring appropriate clothing for walking through the woods and on slopes.

*This event is free and open to the public,
though donations to the cause are much appreciated.*