CAFO Update
The people and the science have spoken. Will the DNR listen?

By Forest Jahnke

As we see waterways across the region impacted by industrial agriculture and the factory-style “production facilities” called Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs), Crawford Stewardship Project remains on high alert and has done everything we can to engage the region in discussions about the direction of agriculture. We want this area to continue producing food and for farmers to be profitable and productive as much as anyone, but we refuse to accept that the only way for this to happen is through industrialization and market concentration.

It’s been a long couple years of expending just about every possible avenue short of direct action and civil disobedience to protect our county and the water we all rely on. Even after all this effort, we remain concerned about the potential impacts of Crawford County’s only CAFO, Roth Feeder Pig, possibly becoming the largest hog CAFO in the state, with a new expanded facility perched above the lower Kickapoo river.

We are so proud of the community response that has manifested and are honored to be working with so many dedicated and articulate people who care so deeply about this place we call home. The people understand the threats of an additional 9.4 million gallons of liquid hog waste on this sensitive landscape. We can only hope that the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and other decision makers recognize this as well, and listen to the will of the people!

CAFO Continued on Page 3

Wet Conjugations
A shared journey that keeps on going

By Omaru Heras

This year, Crawford Stewardship Project’s (CSP) Water Quality Monitoring (WQM) program, has proudly achieved its 13th Anniversary. A long journey of adventures, joy, frustrations and learning, resulting in more than 1,000 pathogen and nutrient lab samples collected at streams and springs; along with the monitoring of basic parameters such as: temperature (T), dissolved oxygen (DO), turbidity, pH, macroinvertebrates, flow, etc.

Water Continued on Page 4

Engage, Educate, & Empower

By Sarah Barron

Soon our cups of cider will be replaced with hot cocoa; our hiking boots with snowshoes. And in this time of slowing down, we reflect on our accomplishments and ability to connect with you all despite the presence of Covid-19.

EEE Continued on Page 5
Whether monitoring water or improving our website, we’re so grateful for your help! 
Thanks to all our volunteers and collaborators for helping progress our mission!

**Care to Lend a Hand?**

*Are you an experienced notetaker? Have ideas or input for us?  
Want to help the cause?  
We want to know!*

*Send your thoughts to sbarron@crawfordstewardship.org,  
fill out our volunteer interest form, or call at 608-632-1987* 

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**VOLUNTEERS**

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**PROJECT COLLABORATORS**

- 40 Acres & a Mule Project
- Citizen Action of Wisconsin, Driftless Organizing Cooperative
- Citizens for Safe Water Around Badger
- Citizen Lakes Monitoring Network
- Coulee Region Sierra Club
- Coulee Region Trout Unlimited
- Crawford County Land Conservation Department
- Eagle Cave
- Emerald Clean Water for All
- Family Farm Defenders
- Friends of the Lower Wisconsin Riverway
- Food and Water Watch
- Grant County Rural Stewardship
- Legion GIS
- Leuther Laboratories
- Midwest Environmental Advocates
- Richland County Land Conservation Department
- Richland Stewardship Project
- River Alliance of Wisconsin
- Rooted Spoon Culinary
- Socially Responsible Agriculture Project
- Sustain Rural Wisconsin Network
- Swamp Project People
- UW-Extension
- Thoreau College
- University of Wisconsin – La Crosse
- UW Stevens Point Water & Environmental Analysis Lab
- Valley Stewardship Network
- Vernon County Land & Water Conservation Department
- Water Action Volunteers Program
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
- Wisconsin Farmers Union
  - Vernon/Crawford County Chapter
  - Sterling-Crawford Local Chapter
  - Grant/Iowa County Chapter
  - South Central Wisconsin Chapter
- Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice
- Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene

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| Water Quality Monitoring Coordinator | Omaru Heras |
| Community Engagement Coordinator | Sarah Barron |
| Financial Coordinator | Lamar Janes |
| Consulting Agroecologist | Steve Oberle |
Public Hearing

On June 10, over 100 people showed up for the virtual public hearing on the Roth Feeder Pig II draft permits. At this hearing, 28 eloquent and passionate residents, landowners, and experts in the region called on the DNR to either do much more study, analysis, and impose conditions on this permit, or deny it outright.

Only the owner/operator of Roth Feeder Pig, Howard “AV” Roth, spoke in favor of the proposal.

While we have worked through the formal DNR permitting process to the greatest extent possible, we have also been calling on them to do more, through an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and calling on elected representatives to support this. You heard our call to action and hundreds of you spoke out loud and clear, but what have the responses been?

The DNR has stated that they will answer all input received during the public comment period in their pending Notice of Final Determination for Roth Feeder Pig II. This ruling could come down tomorrow or in a couple months, and will be the basis for our strategy moving forward.

To hold your representatives accountable on this front, here are their responses to date:

Senator Brad Pfaff
Had a personal meeting with Deputy Secretary of the DNR, Todd Ambs, remains in contact with the DNR on this, and has asked the DNR to use everything possible to review environmental impacts.

Representative Loren Oldenburg
Is passing along comments to Governor Evers office, and has asked that the administration address the concerns identified in our request for an EIS.

Governor Tony Evers & Lieutenant Governor Mandala Barnes
Are passing along comments to the DNR and assure us that, “addressing pollution and water quality are top priorities for our administration”

These are all somewhat luke-warm responses, and not as proactive as we’d like to see, but both Loren Oldenburg and Brad Pfaff have been quite responsive and recognize this as a significant decision that many in their districts care about. Whether or not they have much influence on the Roth Feeder Pig II permit decision, this is a perfect opportunity to talk with them about your concerns and visions for water and land use, and the future of agriculture.
In 2018 and 2019, at most of the monitoring sites of concern, \textit{E. coli} (fecal coliform) and Total Phosphorus (TP) reached unprecedented levels due to the constant and heavy rainfalls and flood events. This data and the annual precipitation averages were compared with the rest of the records from 2009 up to date. Sadly, and certainly, the surface and underground water quality is being greatly impacted by the overwhelming "conjugation" of climate change, karstic geology, and unsustainable agriculture and farming practices that entail poor soil coverage leading to erosion, as well as the overuse of agrochemicals and nutrients (such as manure spreading). (See CSP’s WQM most updated report at crawfordstewardship.org)

Despite the hard-to-digest facts, driving to the sites allows me to savor the breathtaking Driftless landscapes, the time spent with the volunteers is a joy, and getting in touch with the water feels like home. Honoring these moments inspire me to stay on the path of promoting environmental awareness to care for the water, the land and all the other resources that keep us alive. This perspective doesn’t belong to me, it is one hopeful and healthy "conjugation" between all the amazing people who are already taking action.

So, let’s talk about some of the local efforts that are happening in this area with CSP’s WQM support:

The Swamp Project People (SPP) accomplished their Myrtle Lake’s first monitoring season this year, as a scientific key to help us determine its restoration process. The WQM training was based on \textit{E. coli} and TP sampling protocols, and the Citizen Lakes Monitoring Network basic methods. Located in old downtown Soldiers Grove and connected to the Kickapoo River, this spring-fed slough has been heavily impacted by threatening "conjugations" between the village burn pile, runoff, floods, aquatic invasive species, and trash. CSP is honored to help SPP focus on cleaning up swamps from years of neglect and build discovery parks to create a balanced relationship for all habitats.

The WQM Students Team from North Crawford and Youth Initiative Schools, did beautifully on their first WQM season at Bear creek (off of Hwy 131), too! It has been a fresh "conjugation" of great wet moments, mud, sun, sparkling water and popcorn. The goal is to continue monitoring in 2022 with more motivated youth, and to create a fun "Charlie Chaplin" style basic parameters guide/reference video for future WQM volunteers.

We are looking for (even more!) volunteers to “conjugate” with the WQM community and be a part of monitoring the sites of concern in Wauzeka and Marietta Township, from May to October next year. Stay tuned for more info on 2022 WQM training dates and/or contact Omaru at: oheras@crawfordstewardship.org
Farms, Factories and the Future Forum

Shortly after our spring newsletter hit mailboxes, we held a virtual farming forum with 57 presenters and participants from across the upper midwest. The day was composed of three sections. The first was a time to share the details and concerns regarding our local piglet factory expansion proposal, Roth Feeder Pig II. In the second session, we heard from farmers working sustainably on the land and what their concerns and inspirations were for farming in the future. Our last discussion was an engaging dialogue with leaders working on curtailing the negative effects of factory farming in their regions. It was a day of learning from each other and confiding in the peace that solidarity can bring.

Yard Signs

If you've taken a drive through Steuben and the lower Kickapoo River, which some have plans to turn into a spreading area for the state’s largest hog CAFO, perhaps you've seen another one of our projects reach completion.

Yard signs were printed and distributed to show solidarity among the impacted community, and to spread awareness of the local struggle to promote sustainable farming in place of the factory farming.

Driftless Slope Map Poster

Perhaps your wall is now decorated with one of our long-requested items, a driftless slope map. Joshua Wachuta’s image of the steepness of slopes in the driftless region is a beautiful educational tool that we’re happy to distribute to supporters.

kARsT Campaign

In our spring newsletter, we put out a call to authors and artists to assist us in creating a children’s book on karst hydrogeology. It will be packed with important information and wisdom - as well as beauty, excitement and fun - as seen through the experiences of a mischievous little raccoon and her friends.

We're pleased to be working with Asha Myers as our author and Susan Estelle Kwas as our illustrator. The book is well underway, and we're excited to keep you updated on future progress!

Karst Exploration

On a warm September 11th, we held our 10th Annual Karst Exploration at Eagle Cave, offering this special tour free of charge in honor of this International Year of Caves & Karst. Around 40 people from infants to elders attended the event. We started the day with our beloved Professor Kelvin Rodolfo’s 500,000 million years of local geological history from Forest Jahnke and an active discussion. Kyle Hanke of Eagle Cave guided us through the passageways of the cavern. We're grateful to Organic Valley for supplying tasty cheese and meat snacks, to Thrivent for donating funds for advertising and cave entry fees, and to Eagle Cave for hosting us and providing such an engaging cave tour.

Future

Unfortunately, like many groups, we've been unable to have all of the events that we were planning, due to Covid constraints. Our Underground World Puppet show re-launch is being postponed for a year, and our Love the Land Event has been moved to early summer 2022. We're hoping that in providing some additional time, and planning to accommodate for Covid-safe spaces, we'll be able to see you all soon! Until then, we wish you safety, and hope you can virtually engage with us at future events or on social media.
Complete Your Early Holiday Shopping with Merchandise From Your Local Land & Water Stewards

Limited supplies available

Slope Map Poster $10
By popular demand, we’ve adapted Josh Wachuta’s vibrant image into a poster. This bright visual will have you cherishing the uniqueness of the Driftless area watersheds.

Karst Posters $10
All the goodness of the Driftless karst geology combined into a beautiful poster. See how water flows through the karst and what plants and animals you’ll find in this area.

Farms yes Factory Farms no

Slope Map Postcards 5 for $5
Whether you want to drink a warm beverage when the snow starts falling, or quench your thirst on a hot summer day, this is the bottle for you. These sleek water bottles have almost no plastic parts, and will keep your beverages at the temperature you want them for hours on end.

Yard Signs $10
Show your solidarity with local farmers by adorning your yard with one of these signs.

Yard Signs $10

Slope Map Postcards 5 for $5

Visit us online!

To learn more about these items, visit crawfordstewardship.org or send a message to contact@crawfordstewardship.org or call 608-632-1987