



# STEWARDSHIP NEWSLETTER

Fall/Winter 2021

[crawfordstewardship.org](http://crawfordstewardship.org)

## 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*



Driftless citizens demand clean water protections at our Ferryville media event

## 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.

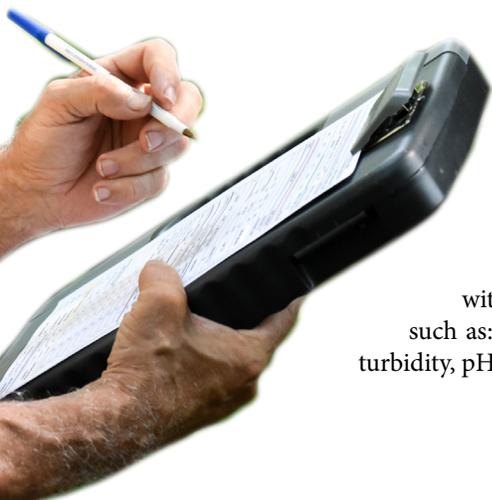
*Water Continued on Page 4*

## 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!**

## VOLUNTEERS

Christina Anderson	Fred Hausler	Ilana Pestcoe
Keith Bancroft	Lynn Henning	Chris Petersen
Dan & Sarah Barron	Omaru Heras	Chrissy Reynolds
Alison Barazani	Deb & Bill Hiller	Jeff & Susan Robinson
Denise Benoit	Gina Holtz	Kelvin Rodolfo
Sarah Bransky	Bill Hogseth	John & Audrey
Ellen Brooks	Karen Hudson	Rosenheim
David Bruce	Jill Hurwitz	Nancy Lu Rosenheim
Dylan Bruce	John Ikerd	Lynda Schaller
Kathy & Paul Byrne	Forest Jahnke	Jim Scheckel
Connie Champnoise	Rikardo Jahnke	Carl Schlecht
Aaron Colson	Lamar Janes	Emily Schmidt
Adam Cox	Judith Jellies	Laura Schultz
Deb Conlon	Maggie Jones	Deanna Shimpach
John Craig	Kathy Kachel	Doug Spany
Carol Dagnon	Eli Kramer	Jessica Spayde
Lisa Doerr	Peg Lamartina	Adam Stanton
Jimmy Dunson	Linda Leib	Arnie and Irene Steele
Dave Edinger	Eli Mandel	Sarah Tedeschi
Edie Ehlert	Mike Mossman	Ric Thill
Susan Estelle Kwas	Scott Mericka	Kat Tigerman
Nyah Forkash	Asha Meyers	Peggy Timmerman
Adrienne Fox	Tom Mortensen	Chrissy & Drew Watson
Ken Freedman	Mike Mueller	Cindy Wiar
Hanz Gil	Jane Mussey	Tony Wilkin-Gibbart
Jim Goodman	Dave Myers	Janet Widder
Dave Hackett	Eric Newman	M'Lou Wilke
Vance Haugan	Steve Oberle	Meg Wise

## 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

### 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](mailto:sbarron@crawfordstewardship.org),  
fill out our [volunteer interest form](#), or call at 608-632-1987*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**President** Edie Ehlert  
**Vice President** Ellen Brooks  
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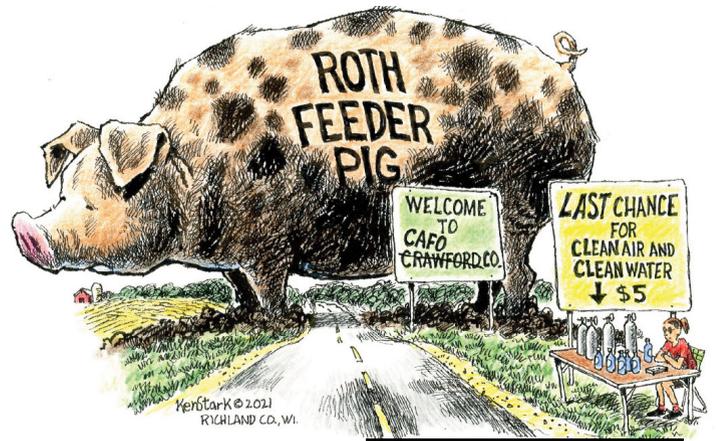
**Board Member** Marinella Pro  
**Board Member** Emily Schmidt  
**Board Member** Omaru Heras

## STAFF

**Program Coordinator** Forest Jahnke  
**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.



Courtesy of Richland Co artist, Ken Stark

Jim Scheckel

*We have monitored the water below the current operation for years. What have we found? Predictably high levels of E. coli, phosphorus, and much more... Rather than distant entities whose sole concern is to maximize profits, the immediate community should have the final say in whether a CAFO is placed on top of us. Those of us living next to CAFOs are considered collateral damage.*

Mary Christiansen

*The negative impacts of these operations are felt by the community, not the business that is using and polluting our common resources. They should have a fund set aside to cover such impacts.*

Cory Redfield

*Other local CAFOs have repeatedly proven themselves incapable of environmental compliance or stewardship, and the aforementioned problems are already on display. Just look at Iowa.*

Aaron Colson

*I have friends and neighbors who have already moved away, just from the threat of this operation.*

Carl Schlecht

*It was years ago that I consecrated my life to the protection of clean water. I live a quarter mile from this proposal, and my back yard is the Kickapoo. All this, and our groundwater will be imperiled if the DNR does not conduct an Environmental Impact Statement and address these concerns.*

Ellen Brooks

*The bedrock maps used by the DNR are from 1876. Without further study, we are taking great risk in assuming we know what is underground, especially in karstic Crawford County.*

Ben Wilson

*Wisconsin's water is under attack. Water is life, and it is time for Wisconsinites to demand that our leaders protect water.*



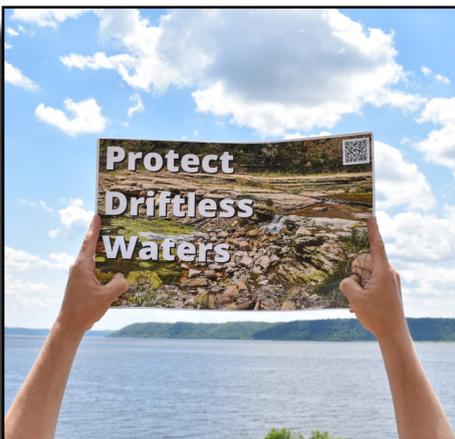
Left: Water from a clean spring  
Right: Water from a spring downstream of RFPI

### 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 Mandela 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.



*Water Continued From Page 1...*

SPP: Justus Benson and Randy Swiggum taking samples from a canoe at Myrtle Lake.

In 2018 and 2019, at most of the monitoring sites of concern, *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](http://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 *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.



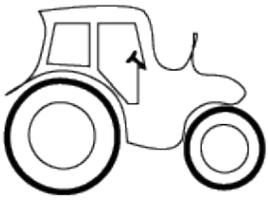
Students: Emily Schmidt, Nyah Forkash (downstream), and Sarah Bransky (not shown) testing Bear Creek’s water flow with the help of a tennis ball.

2021 Water Quality Monitors: Back: Deb Hiller, Carl Schlecht, Kat Tigerman, Ric Thill, Fred Hausler. Front: Bill Hiller, & WQM Coordinator Omaru Heras. (Missing: Jim Scheckel)



**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](mailto:oheras@crawfordstewardship.org)



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## 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!



CSP Coordinator Sarah Barron showing a Karst Exploration Attendee the new slope map poster.



CSP Coordinator Forest Jahnke at the karst exploration.



Karst Exploration Attendees meandering down the cave. Photo Credit for above 3 images: Dan Barron

### 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.



Forest Jahnke presenting to children at Youth Conservation Day



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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.

**Yard Signs**

\$10

Show your solidarity with local farmers by adorning your yard with one of these signs.

**Slope Map Postcards**

5 for \$5

Your words matter, and what you're writing on should too. Whether you are a long-time letter-writer or new to the communication avenue, these postcards will delight anyone opening their mailbox.

**CSP Logo Insulated Water Bottles**

\$20

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.

**To learn more about these items, visit [crawfordstewardship.org](http://crawfordstewardship.org)**

**or send a message to [contact@crawfordstewardship.org](mailto:contact@crawfordstewardship.org) or call 608-632-1987**

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