



# The Alliance News

Dodge County Alliance for Healthy Soil & Healthy Water

Vol. 1 No.4, Summer 2021

The mission of the Dodge County Alliance for Healthy Soil & Healthy Water is to a build a community dedicated to soil and water health

Learn more about us!



Dodge County Alliance member, Jeff Gaska, explains the importance of conservation farming and the impact it has on Dodge County waterways. Click on the image above to view the 2 minute video made possible through Doug Condon's TechHerd video production company.

## Healthy Soil & Healthy Water at the Dodge County Fair

By Bill Boettge, Co-Chair of The Alliance

There will not be an October Alliance Meeting--Happy Harvest!

The Dodge County Fair that ran from August 18 – 22 drew in over 47,000 attendees, and many of which had the opportunity to stop at the Healthy Soil & Healthy Water (HSHW) booth to feature the Dodge Co. Alliance for HSHW and the Dodge Co. Farmers for HSHW. The HSHW booth (pictured below) had displays of cover crops and native plantings, both of which are beneficial for water and soil health. Many fairgoers, including farmers and shoreland property owners, stopped at the HSHW booth to learn more about ways they can be involved in improving water quality.

The booth was staffed by farmers from the Dodge Co. Farmers for Healthy Soil & Healthy Water as well as members of The Alliance. In addition to the show-n-tell of the planter boxes, information was given out on the many resources available regarding regenerative farming. Information about the value of native shoreland planting was also shared with shoreland property owners.

Overall, it was a successful event for contacting and informing community members about activities of The Alliance and the relationships between The Alliance and the Dodge Co. Farmers HSHW. Thank you to those who volunteered to staff the booth, Kevin Voigt for his support, and the many bees and butterflies who showed up to demonstrate the value of native plantings.

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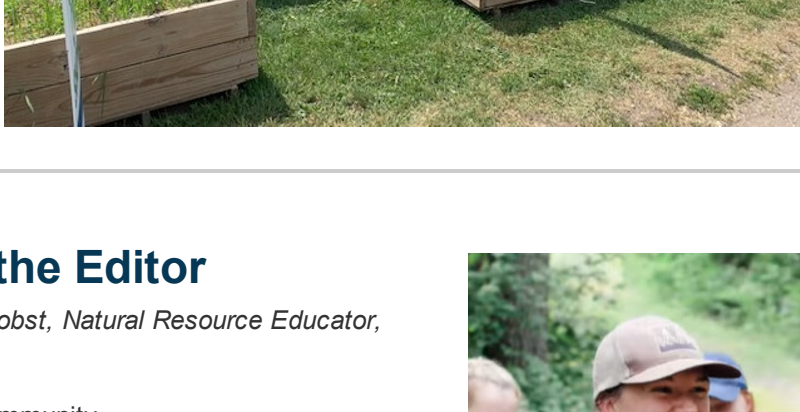
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## From the Editor

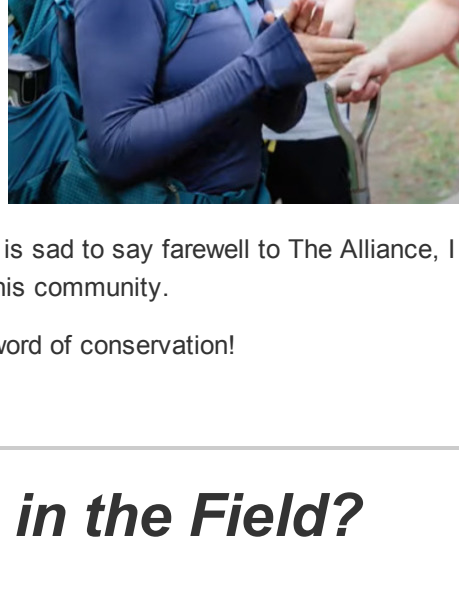
Michelle Probst, Natural Resource Educator, Extension

Alliance Community,

As many of you know, I have transitioned into a new position in Extension. I am now the Natural Resources Educator with Extension for Dane county.

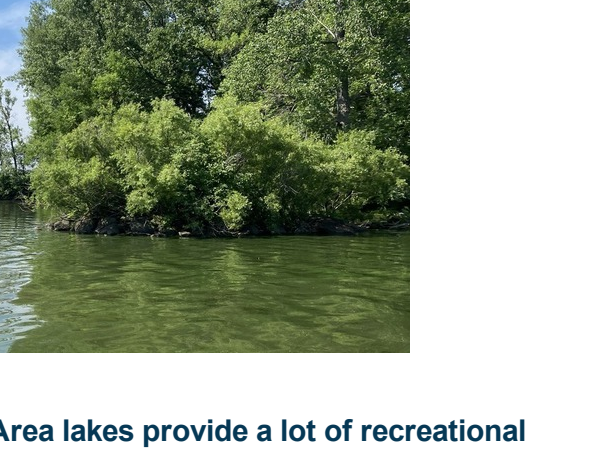
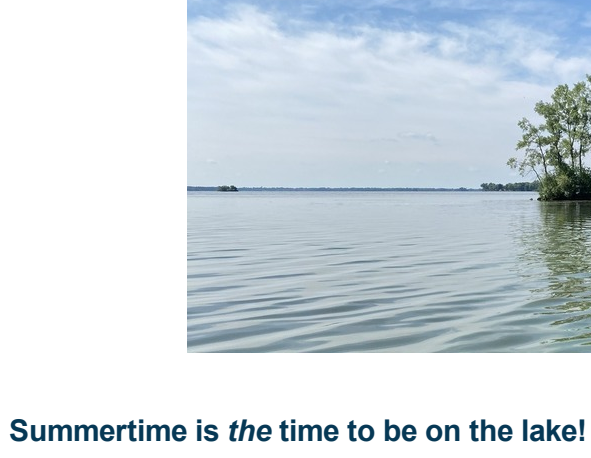
Getting to work with and learn from you all the past three years have been such a great experience for me. I loved editing this newsletter-- it allowed to me see all the wonderful work everyone is doing to improve water quality. While it is sad to say farewell to The Alliance, I have no doubt in the strength and relationships in this community.

Keep up great work, and keep spreading the good word of conservation!

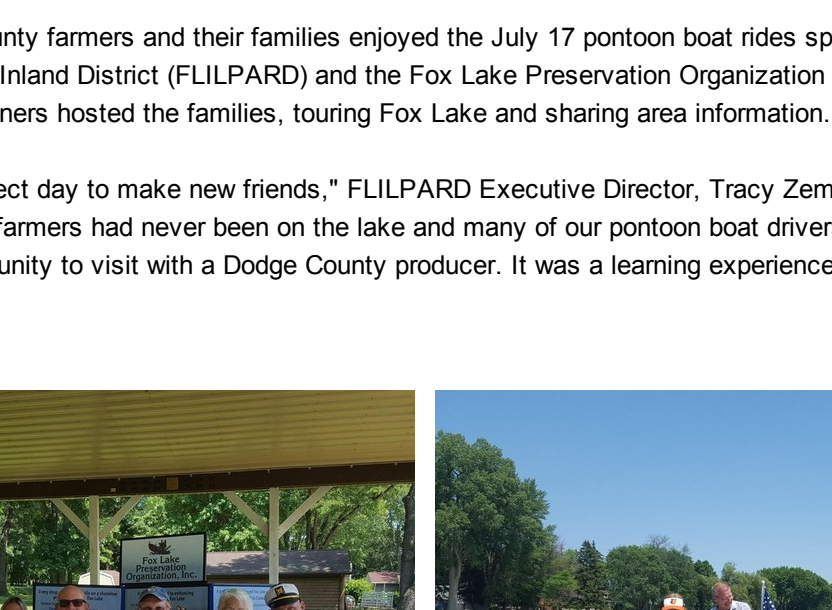


## What's Going on in the Field?

The beginning of September brings on corn silage harvest season. It's in full swing at T&R Dairy in Watertown. Corn silage is harvested as feed for dairy and cattle farms. With silage being harvested earlier in the season, Tony Peirick of T&R Dairy takes full advantage of the growing conditions after silage to plant a cover crop. Thank you to T. Wollitz Photography for the photos below check out more [here](#)



## The Lake Low-down



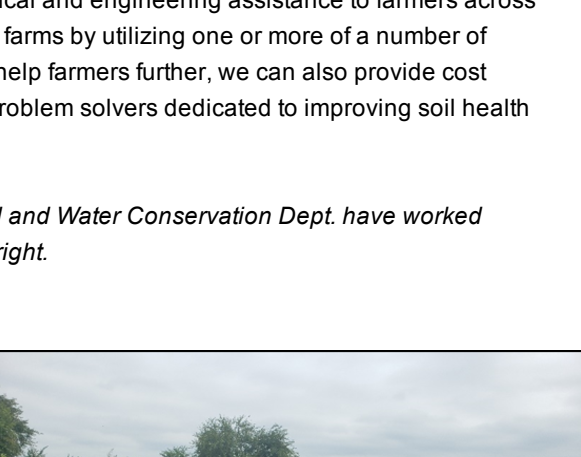
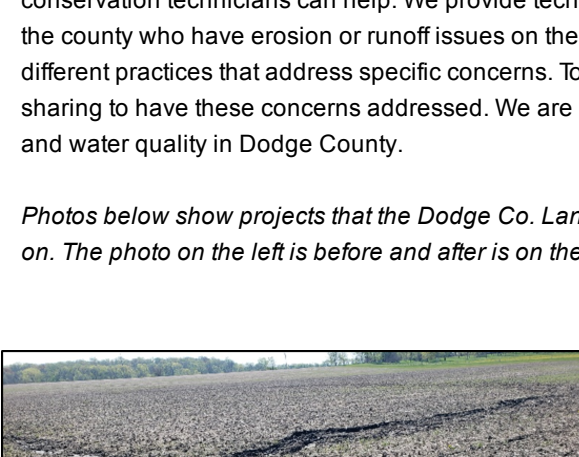
Summertime is *the* time to be on the lake! Area lakes provide a lot of recreational opportunitites. Check out the photo above from Beaver Dam Lake featuring a beautiful blue sky on a June summer day!

## All Aboard!

By Colleen Crane, Secretary for The Alliance

22 Dodge County farmers and their families enjoyed the July 17 pontoon boat rides sponsored by the Fox Lake Inland District (FLIPARD) and the Fox Lake Preservation Organization (FLPO). Lakeshore owners hosted the families, touring Fox Lake and sharing area information.

"It was a perfect day to make new friends," FLIPARD Executive Director, Tracy Zemlo, explained. "Many of the farmers had never been on the lake and many of our pontoon boat drivers had never had an opportunity to visit with a Dodge County producer. It was a learning experience for everyone."



Left: Our wonderful pontoon crew! (L to R): Tracy Zemlo-FLIPARD; Charlie Nelson-FLPO; Tim Meekma-FLIPARD, Jim and Terry Fabian-FLPO members

Right: Dodge County producer Gary Zastrow & family toured with Captain Kyle



Left: FLPO member Mike Drury provided the Boeder family a tour of Fox Lake

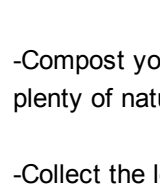
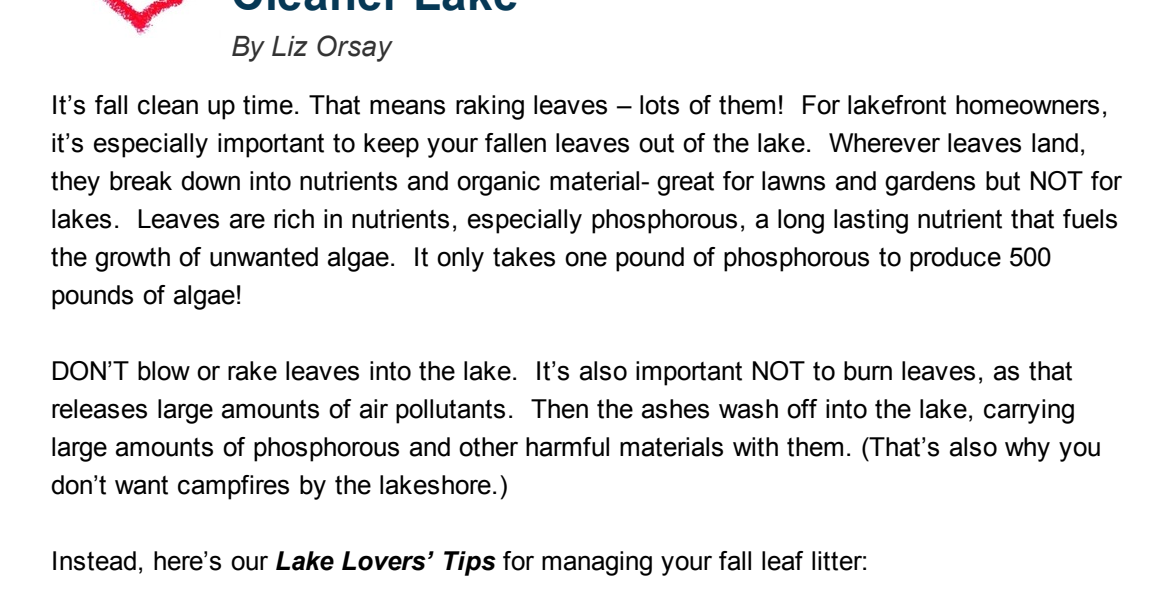
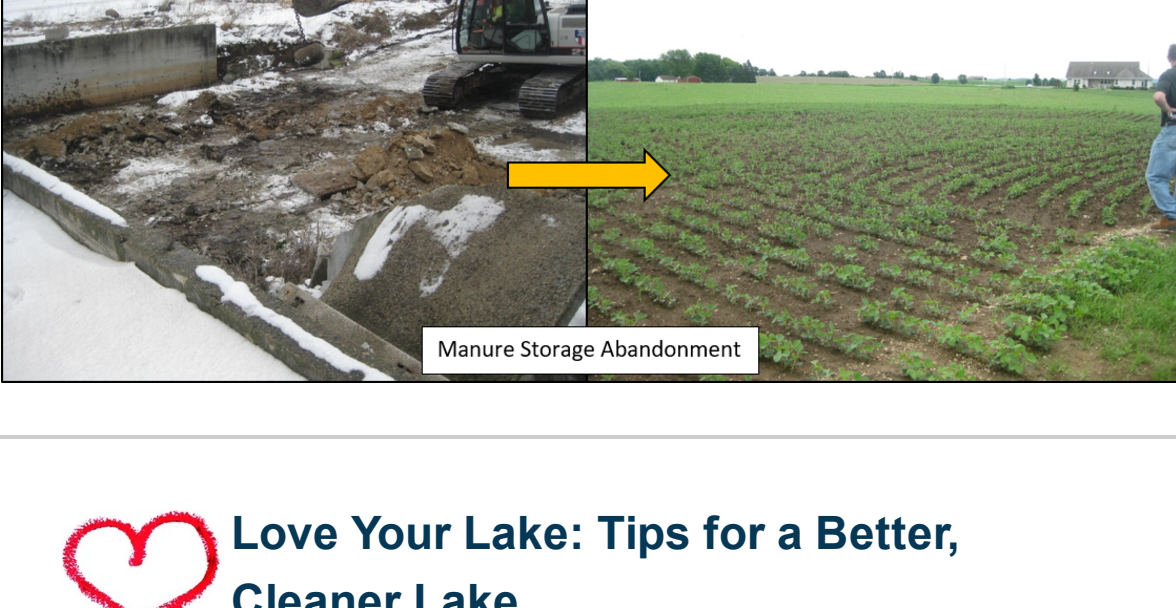
Right: Fox Lake producer Jonathan Gibbs & family enjoyed the hospitality of FLPO members Sarah & Mike Drzewiecki

## What is a Conservation Technician and How Can They Help You?

Jared Winter, Conservation Technician, Dodge County Land and Water Conservation Dept.

It is plain for anyone who studies conservation to see that cover crops, reduced tillage, and proper nutrient management is a great way to keep erosion and runoff low and water infiltration high on any given farm. However, for as beneficial as these practices are, there are just some situations where erosion will still prevail in which case gullies form in farm fields or other issues arise. That is where the conservation technicians can help. We provide technical and engineering assistance to farmers across the county who have erosion or runoff issues on their farms by utilizing one or more of a number of different practices that address specific concerns. To help farmers further, we can also provide cost sharing to have these concerns addressed. We are problem solvers dedicated to improving soil health and water quality in Dodge County.

Photos below show projects that the Dodge Co. Land and Water Conservation Dept. have worked on. The photo on the left is before and after is on the right.



## Love Your Lake: Tips for a Better, Cleaner Lake

By Liz Orsay

It's fall clean up time. That means raking leaves – lots of them! For lakefront homeowners, it's especially important to keep your fallen leaves off of the lake. Wherever leaves land, they break down into nutrients and organic material- great for lawns and gardens but NOT for lakes. Leaves are rich in nutrients, especially phosphorous, a long lasting nutrient that fuels the growth of unwanted algae. It only takes one pound of phosphorous to produce 500 pounds of algae!

DONT blow or rake leaves into the lake. It's also important NOT to bum leaves, as that releases large amounts of air pollutants. Then the ashes wash off into the lake, carrying large amounts of phosphorous and other harmful materials with them. (That's also why you don't want campfires by the lakeshore.)

Instead, here's our **Lake Lovers' Tips** for managing your fall leaf litter:

-Mulch your leaves in place with a mulching mower. The mulched leaves will decay quickly, fertilizing your lawn naturally. Mulched leaves may also be placed in garden beds. By mulching them first, they are less likely to blow away.

-Compost your leaves. Compost enriches garden soils by providing organic matter and plenty of natural nutrients.

-Collect the leaves and take to a composting site. For example, residents of the town of Fox Lake can take their leaves to the town hall on County Road F.

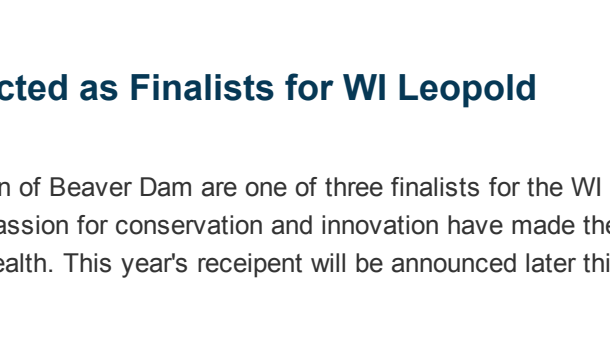
-Keep driveways, streets and catch-basins free of leaves. Leaves left in the street make a phosphorus-rich tea that washes down storm drains and directly into our lakes.

**Don't let leaves litter (and pollute) our lakes!**

## Farmers Making Headlines in Dodge County!

### 5th Annual August Field Day Draws in Farmers Across Dodge County

Over 120 were in attendance for Dodge Co. Farmers for Healthy Soil & Healthy Water August Field Day. A special thanks to the Oechsner family for hosting the event in their new farm shop. Dan Smith from UW-Nutrient & Pest Management discussed challenges that farmers faced this year with cover crops, but also discussed the continued benefits of covers and why farmers should incorporate cover crops into their system. Wayne Fredricks, a farmer from Iowa, also presented on the economics of cover crops. Photo above was provided from Tony Peirick



### Dodge County Farmers Featured During Statewide Field Tour

High-Gem Holsteins & Normandes, owned and operated by Chris and Brenda Conley and family of Neosho, were featured as part of Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation's Leaders of the Land: A State Sustainability Series. Photos from the event can be found [here](#).



### Dodge County Farm Selected as Finalists for WI Leopold Conservation Award

Charlie Hammer & Nancy Kavazanjian of Beaver Dam are one of three finalists for the WI Leopold Conservation Award. Their passion for conservation and innovation have made their operation a leader in soil and water health. This year's receipt will be announced later this year. Read more [here](#)

## Updates from Partners

### Dodge County Land and Water Conservation Dept

John Bahnek, County Conservationist

Occasionally our office will receive complaints about manure runoff or soil erosion. We take these complaints seriously and investigate them along with the DNR. One recent complaint is where the landowner did everything right. After taking off winter wheat, the landowner applied manure and worked it in. He then planted cover crops to protect the field until spring. After a couple days, Mother Nature decided to add her two cents and dropped 5" of rain on the field. As you can imagine sediment, seed and probably some manure ended up in the lake. Even when you do the right things, they do not always work out.

Our tree brochures will be out the first part of October. If you do not receive one, you can check out our [website](#).

### Rock River Coalition

Addie Schlüssel, Stream Monitoring & AIS Program Coordinator

Our dedicated volunteers have been out in the stream all summer, collecting total phosphorus samples and measuring water quality. Meanwhile, I've been documenting populations of aquatic invasive species (AIS) to help focus our AIS prevention program. We've also enjoyed meeting with our partners in the Fox Lake area, and we look forward to working with them on stream monitoring soon.

### University of WI-Madison, Division of Extension--Dodge County:

Michelle Probst, Natural Resources Educator, Extension

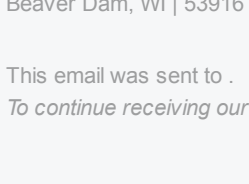
Summer seems to have come and gone! The late summer brings a lot of field days around the region. While I attended a lot of them, I was able to get in a soil pit at a field day in Racine county. The weather was perfect and the soil was even cooler!

The Extension Dodge County [website](#) has information about local upcoming programs.

Dodge County Alliance for Healthy Soil & Healthy Water

email: [contact@healthysoilhealthywater.org](mailto:contact@healthysoilhealthywater.org)

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