

Get to Know Your Council Member

Lance McNaughton

Lance McNaughton is the At-Large representative for Lafayette County and the Treasurer for Southwest Badger RC&D.

Lance was born in Portland, Oregon and was raised in Madison, Wisconsin. He received his BA in English from Carthage College in 1992, his law degree from Washington & Lee University School of Law in 1997, and a Masters in Public Policy from Duke University in 1998.

Lance arrived in Shullsburg in 1999 and opened McNaughton Law Office, a solo law practice focusing on estate work, real estate transactions, and business planning. He was elected Mayor of Shullsburg in 2004 and was recently reelected for a second term.



This summer he has served as the Interim Executive Director of the Lafayette Development Corporation. Lance also serves on the board of Lafayette County's Memorial Healthcare Foundation.

In the little free time he has, Lance enjoys playing his guitar, golfing, spending time with his yellow lab, Tucker, and making beer.

If you have comments, suggestions, contributions, or ideas for the newsletter, please contact Angie Wright at (608)723-6377 ext. 114 or email angie.wright@rcdnet.net.



Southwest Badger RC&D
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Badger Report

The Newsletter of Southwest Badger Resource Conservation and Development Council, Inc.

August 2006

What's Invading Your Woodland?

Forestry Invasive Species Specialist Can Help

“Garlic Mustard, Honeysuckle, Buckthorn”—What enticing names! Consider yourself lucky if these woodland invaders are not present on your property. However, if they are, addressing them now rather than later will save you lots of time and money.

Forest exotic invasive species such as garlic mustard, buckthorn, and honeysuckle are spreading throughout southern Wisconsin at an alarming rate. This spread will continue unless immediate action is taken. Forest invasive species are a major environmental concern because they out-compete native vegetation and shade-out native herbaceous plants. This intense competition dramatically reduces natural forest regeneration and leads to drastic changes in the native ecosystem, which are extremely difficult to reverse. Many high-quality woodland understories are so filled with invasives that tree saplings are being shaded out, rendering them unable to replace the mighty oaks, hickories, and maples when they are eventually harvested or die. In addition, a recent study found that sugar maple and other hardwood seedlings grew much slower when the soil came from an area infested with garlic mustard than from a mustard-free area. They found that garlic mustard disrupts the mutualistic associations between the trees and the belowground mycorrhizal fungi.

Forest invasive species also have detrimental impacts on migratory songbirds. Invasive species will dominate the forest edge and because invasives leaf out much earlier than native trees, forest birds build their nests in these edge areas rather than utilizing the interior of the forest. This leads to nest predation and brood parasitism, which is much less likely to occur in the interior of the forest. Many landowners are unaware of

the threat of forest invasive species and few landowners realize that they have invasives in their woodlands.

The good news is that this is one environmental problem that we can do something about. A little work now can make a tremendous difference in the battle to regain land from invasive species. To help reduce the spread of forestry invasive species and assist landowners with the elimination of these aggressive plants, the Southwest Badger Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council has hired Dan Bohlin to serve as the Invasive Species Specialist for southwest Wisconsin. Dan is available to meet with landowners at no cost to assist with the identification of invasive species, develop eradication plans, and provide technical assistance on the best methods to rid properties of invasives. If you would like to schedule an appointment with Dan Bohlin to meet with you on your property, contact the Southwest Badger RC&D office at 608-723-6377 extension 136.

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Making Things Happen!

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Green County—**Robert Hoesly (Secretary)**

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Staff Reports

Driftless Area Initiative Leads Cooperative Effort to Achieve Regional Conservation Goals

David Wilson, Project Coordinator

For the past year, the Driftless Area Initiative (DAI) has been heavily involved in an effort to increase and promote forest habitat for neo-tropical migratory birds. The process has met with great success by bringing together bird habitat and forestry management professionals from across the four-state Driftless Area. This partnership has worked to identify priorities for interior forest management and outline a set of practices that can benefit songbirds in large tracts of unbroken forest. We expect additional projects to develop out of the effort. Funding is currently being sought in partnership with several of the organizations involved in the initiative. The last in a series of landowner workshops bringing information and resources on sustainable forestry and improving forest habitat for songbirds will be held near Monona, IA on August 26th.

As the DAI wraps up activities for the Neo-tropical Migratory Bird grant, we are looking ahead to our broader mission of uniting organizations and individuals within the Driftless Area. The DAI will now focus on collaborative action to enhance and restore this region's ecology, economy, and cultural resources in a balanced, integrated fashion. The annual DAI Partners meeting held on Tuesday, July 25th gave us another push towards fulfilling this mission.

About 60 people from conservation organizations throughout the Driftless Area gathered in Prairie du Chien, WI in support of the DAI vision. Key items on the agenda included a memorandum of understanding that the Driftless Area Initiative has been developing with Trout Unlimited and The Nature Conservancy, and the broader issue of achieving regional conservation goals through cooperative efforts among the dozens of organizations active in the area. Discussions were lively, and the partners in attendance were nearly unanimous in voicing the need for an overall strategy to guide conservation efforts in the Driftless Area.

As the DAI continues to develop this strategy, we will work to facilitate partnerships and collaborative projects that improve and maintain water quality, improve economic viability of working lands, build expertise and funding to implement projects, set

(Staff Reports Continued on page 3)

Welcome, Tammy!



Tammy Enz joined the Southwest Badger RC&D staff on July 14, 2006 as the Coordinator for the Platte River Watershed Citizen's Group. She will work to coordinate efforts to form and strengthen a citizen-led watershed group to address the Platte and Little Platte Rivers in Grant County, Wisconsin.

Tammy is a native of Platteville and a graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Platteville with a degree in civil engineering. She has also worked as a freelance magazine writer for the past three years.

Tammy has strong roots in the watershed. Her ancestors settled in the Platte River valley prior to the Civil War and have made their livelihood there ever since. Tammy and her husband, along with their two young children, own a home on the river. She is looking forward to working with residents and landowners in the watershed to seek solutions and publicize issues that will enhance and protect the Platte River for future generations to enjoy.

Good-Bye and Good Luck!

Jaclyn Blackburn resigned her position as the Communication and Education Specialist as of July 20, 2006. Jackie has taken a position with the Soil and Water Conservation District in Iowa.

In her time with Southwest Badger Jackie worked on the Grant County Conservation Security Program (CSP) signup and the Driftless Area Initiative. Southwest Badger RC&D would like to thank Jackie for her service and wish her well in her new endeavors.

Upcoming Events

August 26, 2006

Forestry for Bird Habitat Workshop
Monona, Iowa

August 31, 2006

State Association of RC&Ds meeting
Stevens Point, Wisconsin

September 8, 2006

Southwest Badger RC&D Council Meeting
Richland Center, Wisconsin

September 7-10, 2006

Wisconsin Woodland Owner's Association
Annual Meeting
Onalaska, Wisconsin

September 28-29, 2006

Light on the Land Forestry Field Day
Blackhawk Wildlife Area, Sauk City, Wisconsin

November 2-3, 2006

Wisconsin Association of RC&Ds
Annual Conference
Eau Claire, Wisconsin

December 15, 2006

Southwest Badger RC&D Council Meeting
Richland Center, Wisconsin

Council Secures Grants for Watershed Work

The Department of Natural Resource recently awarded Southwest Badger RC&D two grants under Wisconsin's River Protection Management Grant Program. The Council received a \$10,000 River Planning grant for the Platte River Watershed Citizen's Group project and a \$43,600 River Management grant for the Military Ridge Prairie Heritage Area project.

The Platte River Watershed Citizen's Group is a new project that was initiated by a small group of concerned and committed landowners in the watershed. The grant will help the group form a formal watershed organization and begin collecting information and developing a strategic plan for the watershed.

In the Military Ridge Prairie Heritage Area, the Council will use the River Management grant to improve stream corridor management and increase the quantity and quality of grassland cover to reduce runoff, improve infiltration, and provide wildlife habitat.

priorities for regional needs, and gain regional/national support for environmental protection in the Driftless Area.

We will achieve these goals by working on the local level and across boundaries to unite organizations and individuals. The DAI will work with partners to obtain grants for implementation of projects and to develop public education programs. Educational efforts will focus on developing an understanding of how natural systems work in interaction with alternative economic uses of the land.

Forest Stewardship Initiative

Patrick Dayton, Stewardship Forester

The topic of using wood as an energy source, referred to as woody biomass utilization, has been a hot topic in the forestry profession lately. Efficient and profitable use of wood has always been a goal of foresters, loggers, sawmills, and society. However, current concerns about energy consumption and high fuel prices have increased interest in alternatives to fossil fuels. The amount and availability of wood resources across the country may bring woody biomass to the forefront of the energy issue. While concern has not risen to the point of public outcry or led to meaningful change in government policy, many resource managers see the imminent dilemma and are poised to respond.

Wood has historically been used for energy output and will likely resume its role as an important fuel provider to this country. However, it will not be the sole answer to our energy needs and it will not be used in the same manner as it has been in the past. Expecting urban residents to chop and split wood might be romantic, but it is not realistic.

Southwest Badger RC&D and Vernon County have begun looking at these issues and intend to harness the drive for renewable resource utilization to improve the local economy and reduce dependence on outside energy sources. Following are a few possible projects Southwest Badger is considering. We welcome your collaboration and ideas.

- Meet with businesses that could use woody biomass. Find out volume needs, value of product, method of delivery, how we can increase the

utilization of woody biomass thereby increasing the value of forest management on private lands.

- Bid out small diameter and pulp wood sales. Cooperate with a logger or logger organization to demonstrate the viability of using a chipper or industrial grinder in the area.
- Host a demonstration day for loggers, timber stand improvement consultants, and consulting foresters focusing on equipment for harvesting, chipping, transporting, and utilizing small diameter woody biomass and pulp wood. The majority of loggers in southern Wisconsin own equipment specialized for harvesting saw logs which is of little use in harvesting biomass. The demonstrations may lead to increased biomass harvesting and supply.
- Expand biomass utilization efforts currently underway in Vernon County to the rest of the Southwest Badger Counties. The expanded program would facilitate use of future wood waste generated by local sawmills, municipalities, loggers, and private landowners by using a centralized drop-off point for processing and/or transport.
- Develop and implement a professional training course for loggers at a local technical college. The course would teach proper conservation principles, cutting techniques, investment costs, and overall business practices. Assistance would be needed from the logging industry and technical schools to develop a course, build a curriculum, and find instructors.

Vernon County and Southwest Badger are considering all of these ideas as possible future projects. It is imperative that forest managers and wood utilizing industries in Wisconsin move ahead with existing and new research to put into practice effective wood utilization. The agricultural industry already has a jump on the process both in practice and promotion. The benefits of deriving energy from wood as opposed to intensively-managed annual crops are evident. Most notably is the fact that trees only need to be planted once and don't need tillage or fertilizer. Foresters will need to ensure that Wisconsin woodlands are still managed sustainably, but for new purposes. Consumption and conservation of forest resources must be balanced so the short-term gains do not impact the long-term benefits of woodland management.

Welcome, Dan!



Dan Bohlin joined the Southwest Badger RC&D staff on June 26, 2006 as the Forestry Invasive Species Specialist. Dan has done presentations on the threat of invasive plants to southwest Wisconsin woodlands at the Light on the Land Forestry Field Days. He is now available part-time to help private landowners who want to learn about the invasive plants that threaten their woodlands.

In 1998, after a 30-year Air Force career, Dan took over his parents' retired dairy farm near Stitzer. Most of his time is spent on restoration/rehabilitation projects, particularly those dealing with the woodlands on his End-O-Way property. Working with a professional ecologist, Dan developed a woodland management plan and learned about the exotic invasive plants that were overtaking his woodlots. Since then, he has done extensive work on his property developing different techniques for controlling invasive woodland plants like honeysuckle, garlic mustard, and buckthorn.

In addition, Dan has shared what he's learned about invasive plants with other private woodland owners. He has hosted workshops on his property focusing on invasive plants for the Bad Axe Chapter of the Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association (WWOA), the Aldo Leopold Foundation, and the American Tree Farm System's woodland habitat conservation program. End-O-Way Farm has received several awards for Dan's conservation and woodland management efforts. He is an active member of several woodland management organizations and a charter member of the Invasive Plants Association of Wisconsin.

Dan can be reached at the Southwest Badger RC&D office at (608) 723-6377 ext. 136 or via email at endoway1@tds.net.

Welcome, Katie!



Katie Abbott will join the Southwest Badger RC&D staff on September 5, 2006 as the Military Ridge Prairie Heritage Area Coordinator. Katie will be working out of the Dodgeville USDA Service Center. You will be able to reach Katie by phone at (608) 935-2791 ext. 134 or via email at katie.abbott@rcdnet.net.

Katie grew up in the Wisconsin countryside, exploring the flowers, rocks, and bugs with her brother and sister. As she got older she did less playing and more studying of the natural world, earning a Bachelor of Science degree in biology from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. She recently finished her Master's degree in conservation biology from the University of Minnesota, where she wrote her thesis on tools that aid managers and landowners in making decisions about riparian buffers. She spent the last year working as an intern with Riverland Conservancy, helping manage their preserve in Merrimac, Wisconsin. Katie is looking forward to working with landowners, partners, and the council to conserve the Military Ridge Prairie Heritage Area.