

# Juneau County Success from the Field

## Leading by Example, Outdoors Forever Conservation Club

The Outdoors Forever Conservation Club was chartered back in 1987 and is headquartered in Mauston, Wisconsin. Their mission statement reads, "Outdoors Forever is dedicated to youth outdoor education, wildlife habitat, and the safe, ethical and wise use of our natural resources." Their conservation efforts have spanned throughout Juneau County, instilling a wonderful conservation ethic to both young and old through many youth conservation programs, demonstrated stewardship on their owned lands and encouragement to other landowners to conserve and protect their natural resources.

Outdoors Forever has been a true conservation partner for many years with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Since 1998, through the Farm Service Agency's Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), they have planted and maintained over 35 acres of warm season grass buffer strips that serve as buffers between active cropland and the Lemonweir River. These buffers not only improve water quality, but also serve as nesting habitat for numerous song and gamebirds, as well as providing fall habitat for over 1,500 pheasants the club releases per year.

Outdoors Forever also participates in the NRCS Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and was awarded both cropland and forestland contracts. The club was rewarded for the conservation stewardship they have promoted over the years. The program also spurred them to plant additional pollinator habitat acreage to warm season grasses and forbs.

Recently, the club decided to put the remaining actively cropped acreage at their clubhouse property into wildlife habitat. They used the continuous signup of CRP to enroll 4.2 acres of wetter area soils into shallow water habitat and enroll 16.7 acres into the CRP Monarch Safe Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) program. NRCS designed the scrapes and pollinator seed mixes that helped create a very large block of diverse wildlife habitat at the clubhouse. "When we were made aware of the Monarch SAFE program, we felt that the program fit our mission statement goals to provide wildlife habitat in Juneau County," stated Club Secretary Tom Jodarski. "We were very happy to partner with the Mauston office of the FSA and the NRCS."



*A CRP scrape surrounded by pollinator habitat designed by NRCS and funded by FSA.*



*NRCS District Conservationist Jon Field speaks at the Outdoors Forever annual Mauston 5th Grade Conservation Day.*

"We will continue to have a very valuable partnership with Outdoors Forever," said NRCS District Conservationist Jon Field. "Our annual Mauston 5th Grade Conservation Day gives us the opportunity to teach kids the value of pollinators to our food production and our natural environment." A future plan is to install signage across the SAFE acreage to point out different pollinator friendly species. Outdoors Forever continues to lead and set a great example to the agriculture and conservation communities of Juneau County!

