

Brown County Success from the Field

Managing Land One Generation at a Time

Andy Vanderloop's 120-acre property in Greenleaf, Wisconsin, has been in his family since the early 1900s. The property is dominated by 100 acres of rocky forestland, with the remaining 20 acres in cropland. In the early 1900s, Andy's grandfather grazed beef cows throughout the woods while running a business as a local cattle purchaser. When Andy's dad took over, the woods were not used as much and the fields were used for hay production.

As an adult, Andy lived and worked away from the farm, but he always had a close connection to the land that he explored as a child. Recently, he moved his family to live on the property with hopes to manage the land in a more natural way, while also earning some income. Andy learned about opportunities with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) while attending a woodland owners workshop and contacted the local USDA Service Center to see if there were any programs that could help him achieve those goals.

"To be honest, I was very skeptical about inviting agency staff out to my property; were they going to be critical on how I currently manage my land?" said Andy, "but once I was able to walk the land with them and learn from them, I soon realized they were in the business to help, rather than to criticize."

Andy wanted to manage his land properly, but was concerned about the expense to apply some of those management practices. After the NRCS visit in spring 2019, it was clear that much could be done through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) to complement Andy's goals.

Ryan Jacques, Soil Conservationist (Glacierland RC&D), walked the property with Andy and saw how his goals were aligned with these programs. "Just in talking to Andy out on his land, I can see how passionate he is about managing his land responsibly for wildlife and how much he just wants to do the right thing for the land," said Ryan. The forestland was previously in the DNR Managed Forest Law (MFL) tax incentive program for 50 years and was managed to maintain diverse and robust stands of timber. Andy wanted to continue to make good decisions for his woods, but was worried about making decisions without guidance from a forester. EQIP was able to fund a forest management plan and now Andy will be able to be confident in making wise management decisions for his woods. He also plans to use the updated management plan to re-enroll his forestland back into the DNR MFL program.



Agricultural fields were in continuous row crop for 7 years, but now are contracted to be converted to 15.3 acres of monarch butterfly habitat.



As prescribed in the forest management plan, girdled trees create snags and den trees to enhance wildlife habitat throughout the forest.

In addition to the forest management plan, Andy is in the first year of CSP for both his forest and agricultural land. As part of these contracts, he will convert 15.3 acres of cropland to prime monarch butterfly habitat by establishing a pollinator flower and milkweed seed mixture that contains more than 15 species.

Within the forestland, Andy will establish a similar mix to provide food habitat for pollinators and beneficial insects and plant a patch of trees and shrubs that will provide food and cover to a variety of wildlife species.

On his own since 2000, Andy has periodically planted pine trees near field edges to make them more visually appealing and to create a visual screen from the road, but is now looking to add more to the land and replace the row crops completely.

During the site visits with the NRCS, Andy learned about the invasive species that were present on his land, how to identify them and how to control them. Now, he is actively working towards controlling their spread.

Andy is grateful for the technical and financial support NRCS has provided and is excited to continue working in partnership over the next five years.

