



Golden Sands
Resource Conservation
& Development Council, Inc.

Growing Partnerships, Expanding Horizons

Golden Sands RC&D

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2019 Highlights

OFFICERS

Hugh O'Donnell | President
Alvin Barden | Vice-President
Reesa Evans | Secretary
Gary Beastron | Treasurer

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Ed Hernandez | Personnel/Finance
Pat Kilbey | Water Resources
Alvin Barden | Ag/Forestry/Wildlife

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Kason Morley | Adams County
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Gary Beastron | Marathon County
Diane Hanson | Marathon County
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Bill Leichtnam | Wood County

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Merlin Becker | Waupaca County
Hugh O'Donnell | Wood County
Alvin Barden | Vilas County
Donald Peterson | Waupaca County
Reesa Evans | Adams County
Bob Walker | Wood County

CORPORATE MEMBERS

Shannon Rohde | Central Wisconsin Windshed Partners (CWWP)
Deb Jakubek | Wisconsin Farmers Union

STAFF

Joshua Benes | Executive Director / Woodland & TIS Coordinator
Amy Thorstenson | Advising Director / AIS Coordinator
Denise Hilgart | Administrative Manager
Chris Hamerla | AIS Coordinator
Anna Cisar | AIS Coordinator
Asa Plonsky | TIS Coordinator
Amanda Burzynski | Environmental Education and Outreach Coordinator
Rachel Bouressa | Grazing Specialist
Madeline Abbatacola | AIS Tech
Lexi Glad | AIS Tech
Sam Coates | CBCW Tech
Robert Benedict | CBCW Tech
Tanya Davendorf | CBCW Tech
Andy Richardson | Soil Conservationist
Shannon Johnson | Soil Conservationist
John Zinn | Soil Conservationist
Jacob Hawes | Soil Conservationist
Dana Lawrence | Farm Outreach Specialist
Marty Sytsma | CWWP Technician
Kayla Sytsma | CWWP Technician
Jeff Ross | Environmental Educator

Executive Director's Report

Bringing 'Conservation That Works!™' to More People and Places

Golden Sands RC&D's vision is to make Central Wisconsin a better place to live and work through cooperative efforts. In the book *A Sand County Almanac* by Aldo Leopold, Leopold points to community being at the heart of stewardship: "All ethics so far evolved rest upon a single premise: that the individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts. The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants and animals, or collectively the land."

Engaging Cooperative Action

Golden Sands RC&D aims to strengthen and build communities, and we do that through Leopold's teachings. We bring people together to conserve the communities in which we belong – communities that include soils, water, wildlife, and forests.

This year, we celebrate many new cooperative efforts that have been enabling organizations, landowners, and communities to become better stewards of the land. We are working on developing new Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas (CISMAs), to bring governmental departments, organizations, landowners, and volunteers together in the fight against invasive plants.

We are working closely with our newly developed woodland cooperatives. Our goal is to connect landowners so that they may work together to enhance the health of woods and wildlife. We continue to provide educational resources to local farmers, lake associations, boaters, and school students about what it takes to be effective stewards of land and water in Central Wisconsin.

Exploring New Opportunities

In 2019, we added two new Soil Conservationists who are now working out of NRCS offices in Southwest Wisconsin. We also took on a Farm Outreach Specialist who served Lafayette County, and started to develop a new CISMA that will serve the Fox Valley, including Brown and Winnebago counties. Statewide, we are now partnered with the GrassWorks organization to coordinate area grazing networks and promote and provide resources for those interested in managed grazing. All these new opportunities are outside our existing service area.

As our organization grows, we are looking into the feasibility to serve organizations and counties that we haven't worked with in the past. In 2020, we plan on continuing to explore the feasibility of serving other communities while working with existing RC&Ds in Wisconsin to enhance conservation efforts statewide. If you want to collaborate with us to become a better steward, we encourage you to join us! We are always looking for new partners and volunteers for our efforts.

In partnership for conservation,

Joshua Benes
Executive Director



Forest Health

Golden Sands RC&D facilitated follow-up landowner meetings for landowner cooperatives in 2019. These meetings provided landowners opportunities to connect with their neighbors, learn about how they can work together to conduct shared timber sales, and how they could access cost-share programs to improve habitat. Landowners in several cooperatives have started working together to conduct shared timber sales and apply for cost-share programs to enhance forest health.



Water Quality

Golden Sands RC&D's regional aquatic invasive species (AIS) program covered eight counties in 2019. Starry stonewort, a prohibited species, was confirmed by DNR to be in Marquette County's Lake Emery this past fall. We conducted a full lake survey in October to define size and density of starry stonewort present in the lake. We will continue to assist DNR on Lake Emery and monitor nearby water bodies while working with the public to educate and prevent further spread.

Sustainable Agriculture

Through a grant partnership with NRCS, Golden Sands has had the opportunity to provide grazing plan writing services through a certified Technical Service Provider, as well as promotion through outreach events, including pasture walks and a spring workshop. Managed grazing works to mimic natural ecosystems, and can benefit the overall health of the environment by minimizing soil compaction and enhancing soil quality, providing vegetative cover to help reduce soil erosion and sediment runoff, enhancing wildlife habitat, improving water yield and quality, and sequestering atmospheric carbon in the soil.



Wildlife Habitat

In 2019, Golden Sands RC&D partnered with Wisconsin Waterfowl Association (WWA) and University of Wisconsin Extension Lakes to create an informational video for waterfowl hunters. The video focuses on diverse, quality habitat and how preventing the spread of invasive species plays an important role. It can be viewed at <https://www.wisducks.org/habitat/invasives-control/>. Golden Sands RC&D also continued to collaborate with partnering counties, WI Trappers Association, and private citizens on ways to improve or restore wildlife habitat.

Working Together Against Invasive Species

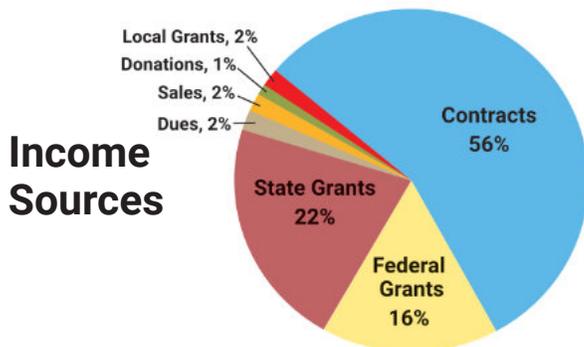
One of the most substantial problems facing Central Wisconsin ecosystems is invasive species. Because invasive species spread without regard for administrative or property boundaries, controlling them is a stewardship activity best addressed with collaboration.

Golden Sands RC&D is working to develop new groups called Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas (CISMAs) to address invasive species across these boundaries. These groups are developing throughout Wisconsin and the nation. By creating these partnerships, CISMAs are more effective in what they do and in leveraging funding in our region for education, mapping, and direct control of invasive species.

In 2019, Golden Sands RC&D established two CISMAs. The Central Wisconsin Invasives Partnership (CWIP) was created to serve seven counties in the center of the state, and is starting to implement educational and control projects. The Northeast Wisconsin Invasive Species Coalition (NEWISC) had one visioning meeting, and will ultimately serve four counties near the Fox Valley. Both groups are working to establish relationships with landowners, local government, roadside managers, community service organizations, and other groups.

Golden Sands RC&D has also been a leader on aquatic invasive species (AIS) education, monitoring, and control in the region. Our AIS coordinators bring lake associations and conservation professionals together to address invasives, such as Eurasian watermilfoil and flowering rush, that threaten the ecology of our lakes and the recreational opportunities that are available on them.

We work with municipalities, local government and community partners to explore alternative AIS prevention and education options such as boat wash stations and regulations. Our staff's professional knowledge and relationship with numerous groups and organizations puts us in the unique role of building collaborative partnerships to address AIS.



About Us

Golden Sands RC&D is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit celebrating more than 45 years of solutions for a healthy economy and a healthy environment in Central Wisconsin. We now serve 12 Central Wisconsin counties, including Adams, Green Lake, Juneau, Marathon, Marquette, Monroe, Outagamie, Portage, Taylor, Waupaca, Waushara and Wood.

We Welcome Your Support!

Name: _____

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