Conservation Corner

*Conservation Corner is a weekly article produced by the Forest County Land &Water Conservation Department. For more information contact Steve Kircher, County Conservationist-Land Information/GIS Director at 715-478-1387 or by e-mail at* *lcc@co.forest.wi.us**.*

 **In a Press Release from Wednesday, January 8th,** the Legislative Speaker’s Task Force on Water Quality seeks to increase county conservation department funding by nearly three million dollars. “We heard overwhelmingly at the Task Force hearings throughout the past year that Wisconsin’s county conservation department staff are undisputedly our state’s greatest asset in protecting water quality,” **said Matt Krueger, Executive Director of WI Land+Water**. “At every hearing, county conservation staff and supervisors presented pragmatic solutions that demonstrated their unique role in helping landowners achieve management goals, while meeting conservation standards at the same time. These folks are the trusted, boots-on-the-ground professionals whose efforts to get conservation practices on the landscape prevent groundwater contamination and improve drinking water conditions. We commend the Task Force for recommending a much-needed increase in funding that will more adequately provide resources for local conservation departments to protect and improve water quality.”

WI Land+Water provided direct testimony to the Speaker’s Task Force on Water Quality last April, illustrating how, despite funding shortfalls, county conservation departments are making a difference in addressing water quality issues, working with farmers to promote healthy and productive soils, and responding to severe weather events and patterns.

“It is clear that the status quo is not working for water quality and the recommendations by the Task Force are good steps toward helping us change course,” **said Krueger.** “Wisconsin needs to make a serious commitment to funding conservation and water quality initiatives, which are bipartisan issues – all Wisconsinites need clean water.”