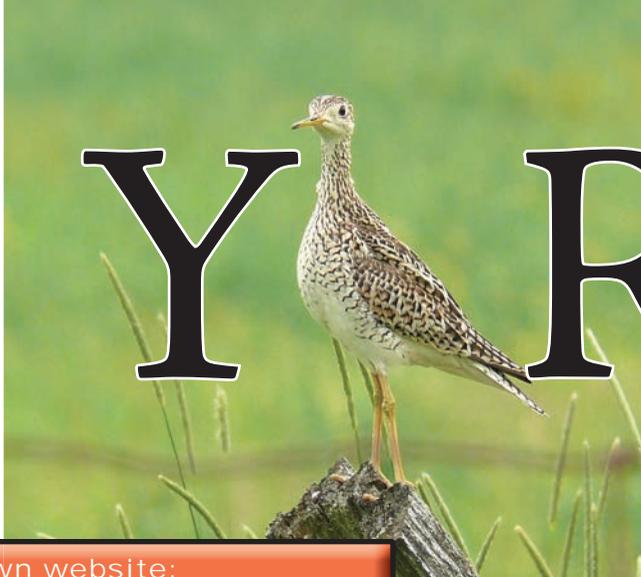


Upland sandpiper. Photo credit Dawn Scranton, DNR photo library.

YORK *Town News*

November 2019



YORK PRAIRIE STATE NATURAL AREA

—HEIDI HANKLEY



Driving along Highway 39 between York Center and Hay Hollow Roads, you might be lucky enough to catch a glimpse of an upland sandpiper perched on the sign marking the York Prairie State Natural Area (SNA). Comprised of three units totaling 145 acres, York Prairie SNA protects remnants of tallgrass prairie within the surrounding agricultural landscape. The area is home to over 100 native prairie plant species as well as the insects and wildlife that favor prairie habitat.

York Prairie SNA is owned by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and was designated a State Natural Area in 2002. State Natural Areas protect outstanding examples of Wisconsin's native landscape of natural communities, significant geological formations, and archeological sites. They also provide the public with recreational opportunities including hiking, fishing, and hunting. The Real Estate Program of the DNR makes an annual payment in lieu of real estate taxes to replace the property taxes that would have been paid to the local taxing authority had the land remained in private ownership. The payment for York Prairie SNA in 2018 was \$9,135.48, of which Town of York received \$965.06, with the remainder being distributed

to Green County, and the school districts and technical colleges that serve the town.

Field staff from the DNR conduct management work at York Prairie aimed at maintaining the high-quality prairie remnants and restoring the adjoining land to native cover. This work includes prescribed burns and invasive weed and brush control. Several town residents also serve as volunteer stewards at York Prairie, working on their own and also facilitating volunteer work days. These work days are on the 3rd Saturday of the month from 10am-noon. All town residents are invited to come lend a hand—no experience necessary! Activities include seed collection and brush/invasive removal. The group meets at the Marbleseed Unit. From Highway 39, turn north on York Valley Rd. and go about ¼ mile to meet at the gate and sign. Bring drinking water and wear clothing appropriate for the weather and work. Tools will be provided. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Heidi Hankley at 523-4095.

For more information about York Prairie SNA and to see maps of the units, visit the DNR website: <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Lands/naturalareas/index>.

New times of the Town Board meetings: 2nd Tuesday at 7:30 (instead of 8) and the Plan Commission meets 1st Tuesday at 7 pm. Check the town website for updates.

Prairie photo credit: Jerry Newman



Town website:
www.townofyork.org/

York Town Board meets every 2nd Tuesday of the month, 7:30 pm
e-mail: townboard@townofyork.org

Chairman: Stephen Van Hout
chairman@townofyork.org
608-523-1400

1st Supervisor: Tim Czerwonka
1stsupervisor@townofyork.org
608-239-3696

2nd Supervisor: Steve Hermanson
2ndsupervisor@townofyork.org
608-558-2035

Clerk: Heidi Hankley
clerk@townofyork.org
608-523-4095

Treasurer: Ann Carlson
treasurer@townofyork.org
608-527-3121

Assessor: Gardiner Appraisal Service
608-943-8013 888-756-9726
gardinerappraisal@gmail.com

Building Inspector: Mike Fenley
totalinspectionsservices@gmail.com
608-963-0652

Plan Commission meets every 1st Tuesday of month, 7 pm

Chair: **Marselino Miranda**

Curtis Moen 608-214-2291
608-527-2261

Bethany Storm
630-770-8446

Terri Nipple
608-527-4111

Linda Yates
608-523-4554

YTN Editor: Carrie Czerwonka
yorktownnews@gmail.com

—CHAIRMAN STEVE VAN HOUT

Time flies! It sure has flown by quickly this summer as I begin the sixth month as York chairman. What a learning curve I've had to adjust to. Absorbing the many facets of the town government is not only challenging, but fascinating as well. Before the election, I resolved to carry through with two things I choose as important if elected. Keeping things running in the same fashion was number one on my agenda. Number two was personal. If I were to work with the residents resolving issues my first response would be, "How can I help you?" We all share in the stewardship of this beautiful place we call home. Helping each other to address those issues is paramount in my opinion. The Driftless region is beautiful, but also an environment that creates challenging obstacles. Together we can take on those challenges and resolve those issues.

In consideration of keeping things the same, I wish to thank Dan Reeson and Nancy Anderson for their dedicated service for the last fourteen years working for our township. Through their attention to detail, fiscal responsibility and devotion to the needs of our community, they have been the perfect example of caring that I wish to emulate. People have told me working for the township is a thankless job. So again, a BIG Thank You! for the countless hours of service.

Another BIG thank you goes out to Sally Nealis for her volunteer work delivering aluminum cans that have been recycled. My wife and I happened to be there when Sally made her last pickup allowing us to help with this messy job. Some small changes would really make a big difference. Please don't use paper bags as they disintegrate from moisture. Plastic bags, however, fared well. The wired cage is only for aluminum. All other recyclables should be placed in the correct dumpsters. For those of you who do not separate those cans please consider doing so. Your cooperation with these details is much appreciated. Every penny paid out for those cans is donated back to local youth programs in need. Our youth and township "Thank You" as well, Sally.

One of the most important items on my learning curve is the upkeep of our town roads. Presently underway Green County is working on resurfacing four of our neediest byways including Sunny Side, Hustad Valley, Poplar Grove, and Hay Hollow. Our roads suffer in winters like the last one as the constant freeze, thaw, and sand/salt create wear and tear. Thank you to our road (See CHAIRMAN, p. 3)

—1ST SUPERVISOR TIM CZERWONKA

One of the things I look forward to every weekend is visiting the Recycling Center ("not the dump"). I enjoy visiting with townspeople and meeting the dogs. One of the biggest questions is what do I do with my old computer or my old TV?

E-waste, or "electronic waste" is various forms of electrical and electronic equipment nearing the end of their useful life—this includes batteries of all types, light bulbs, computer equipment, TVs, LCDs, radios, stereos—quite a few things we use every day.

Certain components of most e-waste are considered hazardous and require proper disposal. The Town of York provides disposal service of some common e-waste items—fluorescent tubes and small batteries—to property owners in the Town of York. The Town of York uses the services of PKK Lighting from Middleton. PKK is a fully licensed and insured collector of fluorescent tubes and batteries (but NOT lead-acid automotive) and ensures proper and legal disposal of these items.

The Town of York does NOT accept televisions, computers or other e-waste. If you have these sorts of items sitting around and don't know where to take them, File13 E-Waste Solutions in Madison will take these off your hands and recycle them appropriately. Their website is file13usa.com, and as of publication, they have weekday and weekend hours. There is a nominal charge per pound for some items such as televisions, and no charge for others.

Additionally the Green County Landfill MAY accept hazardous waste and e-waste, but it is absolutely advised that you call and get confirmation that they are open and accepting materials prior to taking items there. For more information, contact the Green County extension office at 608-328-9440.

—2ND SUPERVISOR STEVE HERMANSON

Another year has passed and we have some new faces on the town board. I'd like to thank Dan Reeson and Nancy Anderson for their many years of service to the town, and welcome Steve VanHout and Heidi Hankley to the town board.

We as a board decided to buy a new Ford F550 plow truck and sold the 2000 International plow truck. 19 years is exceptional for a plow truck. The new truck is 4-wheel drive, and handy in the summer. It's not as heavy as the old truck so I hope it will handle our winter needs. It seems in the last few years we've had more ice than snow. We went through more tailings than usual last year.

We continue to control trees along our roads. Keeping in mind school buses, dump trucks and farm equipment need clearance to safely navigate our roads. Also on private driveways, remember clearance for a fire truck or ambulance. You may have adequate clearance for your car, but not for emergency vehicles.

All of our equipment such as tractor mowers are in good shape. We made improvements to the heating system last spring hoping for better energy efficiency. We're also installing a light at the recycling center for better service and safety.

Our biggest expense is road repair. We continue to spend what we can to keep our roads in good standing and minimize major repairs. We will receive more money from the state towards our roads which will be helpful. It's a challenge to keep up road repairs and not over spend our budget.

I'd like to thank everyone who takes the time to be involved in our local government.

WHERE DO YOUR PROPERTY TAX DOLLARS GO?

—HEIDI HANKLEY

When you pay your property tax, the payment is divided up and portions go to the school districts, technical schools, Green County, and the Town. The Town of York receives about 11% of the property taxes you pay each year, or 11 cents out of each dollar. The Town Board works hard to make this money go as far as possible to provide services to town residents, including:

- Town road and bridge maintenance
- Snow plowing and ice removal
- Mowing and tree trimming along town roads
- Operating the town's Recycling Center
- Paying for Fire and EMS services
- Running elections
- Administering town affairs

What's an easy way to help the town stay on budget? Recycle! Trash dumpsters cost the town two times more to empty than recycling dumpsters.

“We envision the Town of York as a rural farm-friendly community maintaining quality ground water, managed woodlands, wildlife and streams. Residences are located to preserve productive farmland. Population density and retail development are controlled by a land use plan.”

NEWS FROM THE YORK TOWNSHIP PLAN COMMISSION

—BETHANY STORM, PC SECRETARY

That Vision Statement for the Town of York brings a smile to my face. It greeted me the first time I approached the Town Board for my Driveway Permit. Since that early spring evening in 2014, I have been to the Town Hall countless times. I logged many hours as a member of the Rural Land Conservation Committee and I was recently appointed as the Secretary for the Plan Commission. One of my tasks is to review the Density Unit database as a part of the Town's Land Division-Development and Transfer Ordinance. This Ordinance was designed to achieve the goals of the Town's Vision Statement. I am honored to be working to uphold that Vision for our Town. For those of you unfamiliar with the Ordinance, the Purpose Statement reads:

The purpose of this ordinance is to regulate and control the division of land and the platting of subdivisions within the jurisdictional limits of the Town in order to promote the public health, safety and general welfare of the community. The regulations are designed to further the orderly layout and use of land to avoid undue concentration of population; to facilitate adequate provision for water, sewerage, schools, parks, playgrounds, and other public requirements; to minimize the public impact from subdivision of large tracts of land into smaller parcels of land; to encourage the most appropriate use of land throughout the Town; and to provide the best possible environment for human habitation.

This ordinance is designed to achieve the goals, objectives and policies as set forth in the Town of York

Comprehensive Plan, specifically:

To protect economically productive areas, including farmlands and forests;

To maintain the rural and agricultural character of the community;

To encourage the preservation of the family farm, cropland, and farmland in the community;

To encourage residential and commercial development to locate in areas least suited for agricultural purposes;

To discourage the fragmentation of cropland;

To protect natural areas including wetlands, wildlife habitats, lakes, woodlands, open spaces and groundwater resources.

Over the coming months I will be working to verify the information in the Density Unit database. You may have noticed the maps that once were searchable on the Town of York website are no longer available. Those maps were supposed to be used by land-owners years ago to verify the Density Units on their property. They were a snapshot in time. The database is currently searchable by: Owners Name, Address, City, State, Zip, or Tax Parcel Number at www.townofyork.org/resident-info/density-unit-search/. On that webpage you will see a link to the Green County parcel layer map landrecords.greencountywi.org/GreenCountyTaxParcelMap/. There you can use the information you find on our website to search for a map of the parcel.

As I go through the data we have, I may be contacting you directly with questions about land sales, divisions or transfers. Feel free to reach out to me at any time to explain the process in more detail. I can be reached at pcsecretary@townofyork.org.

FREE RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO ASSIST FARMERS THROUGH WISCONSIN FARM CENTER

The Wisconsin Farm Center, housed at the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, offers free services to farm families in need of advice about farm finances, farm succession planning, farm business entry or exit strategies, and other critical issues.

All farmers are eligible to contact Farm Center staff consultants through the Farm Center Helpline at 1-800-942-2474. All of the Farm Center's services are free and confidential. The Wisconsin Farm Center works with farmers one-on-one to provide free and confidential services, including:

- Farm financial consulting
- Farm succession planning
- Farm business entry or exit strategies
- Mediation and arbitration
- Critical economic and business management issues
- Etc. (herd health, specialty crop questions)

As the downturn in the agricultural sector lengthens, the Farm Center has seen an increase in stress levels among farmers. Dairy currently tops the type of farm calling the Farm Center Helpline, with a majority of callers concerned about finances. Stress is a major underlying factor, and Farm Center staff regularly gauge a caller's need for counseling vouchers, which are provided at no cost.

Farm Center Helpline: 1-800-942-2474

Farm Center website: FarmCenter.wi.gov

Meeting minutes are posted on the town website.

townofyork.org

(CHAIRMAN, CONTINUED FROM P. 2) crew: Wayne, Travis, and Steve who must not only put in the hours 24-7, but also must decide the balance between too little, too much, and when to plow or spread. Unfortunately, Mother Nature doesn't play fair. Guessing when and what is needed is just that—a guess. They are pivotal in providing roadways that create safe travel year-round. Thanks guys!

I've also learned the gamut of other folks who work for our township. My thanks to the poll workers, Plan Commission members,

recycle/garbage center workers, Rural Land Committee, Assessor, Town Hall cleaner, Housing inspector, and Town Board members. Hopefully I haven't forgotten anybody. It's a crew of hard-working folks that are truly dedicated to our best welfare.

A couple of other things that you might find of interest. The Recycle Center will be open on Wednesday nights from 5:00-7:00 PM year-round. We're even providing lights for your garbage pleasure. I have been told there have been some close calls between

moving vehicles versus folks moving about with items in hand. Please take care to back in slowly to avoid a collision. Quick note, please be kind to your recycle workers by not arriving just before close, as they have cleanup and closeup responsibilities.

We have a new service truck and may have seen Wayne out on patrol. Let's hope that shiny new rig sees little use this winter. We got lucky and were able to salvage some cash towards its purchase by selling the old truck with Badger Surplus. A cast (See CHAIRMAN, p. 4)

NEW GLARUS PUBLIC LIBRARY BUILDING PROJECT MOVING FORWARD

—SHELLY TRUTTMANN

This past May, the Village of New Glarus unanimously approved a site on the west side of the Village, on Highway 39, adjacent to the Swiss Center of North America, to be used as the location of a new library. Since then, the Library Board has been busy making decisions on concept plans and energizing the capital fundraising campaign. Last month the Village of New Glarus committed \$1 million to the project. These actions are setting in motion the final push to raise funds needed to build a library that will serve patrons today and meet the future needs of the service area.

The library's architects have drawn up a concept plan incorporating data on library use, input from the public and staff, and library experts. The concept plan outlines a building with 10,485 square feet of library space and an estimated total project cost of \$3.5 million.

To date, the Capital Campaign has raised \$1 million in donations, many from individual

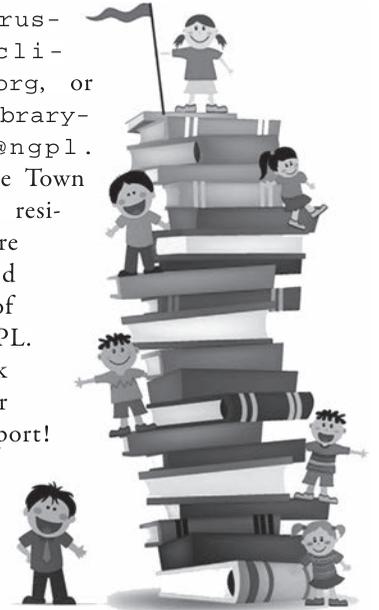
donors and memorials, including:

- A \$100,000 challenge grant from the Town of New Glarus. Additionally, the Town of New Glarus has given nearly \$32,000 to be used for the operating expenses of the new building.
- A \$5,000 pledge from the Town of Exeter.
- Several grants, including a \$15,000 Challenge Grant from the Schlecht Family Foundation (Duluth Trading Company).

As a member of the South Central Library System, the New Glarus Public Library (NGPL) provides a wide range and depth of items to York residents. The South Central Library System collection numbers 2.7 million books and serial volumes, 240,000 audio items, 410,000 videos, and many other resources.

With expanded programming space in a new library, the NGPL is committed to continue providing engaging and creative programs for both children and adults. In 2018 there were 70 adult programs as well as 136 children's programs.

Please consider supporting and helping fund this project. The Capital Campaign is actively planning events and fundraisers; watch your local newspaper and social media outlets for information. If you would like to learn how to donate, or if you have any questions, check out the NGPL website www.newglarus-publiclibrary.org, or email library-board@ngpl.org. The Town of York residents are valued patrons of the NGPL. Thank you for your support!



(CHAIRMAN, CONTINUED FROM P. 3) of volunteers has put together a plan to spruce up the interior of the town hall. A little fresh paint, maybe some new curtains. They'll have their hands full as this remake is long overdue.

If you haven't read the letter from the office of our assessor (reprinted here in this newsletter, p. 6 and discussed by Tim), please take the time to do so. It's been brought to the Board's attention that a revaluation of properties in our township needs to occur at some point. Would it be beneficial to see a gradual rise in property taxes rather than a sudden escalation? This is something that will be on our agenda soon.

I consider myself fortunate to live in a progressive, beautiful, and friendly place which I call home. In my estimation, there are times when obstacles present normal common-sense solutions. When those obstacles are new and unexpected those solutions need to be settled based on what is best for most. Let's continue building community in a way that we have become accustomed to. When all is said and done, we sail this ship together.

Office hours for the building inspector are
11 am to noon on Thursdays at the Town Hall.
(608) 261-3898
(608) 963-0652

Town of York Recycling Center hours:
Saturdays 8 am to 12 pm
Wednesdays 5 to 7 pm (now, year-round!)
Closed on holidays

2020 ELECTIONS

—HEIDI HANKLEY

The 2020 election cycle is just around the corner! If you need to register to vote or request an absentee ballot, please visit myvote.wi.gov or contact Heidi Hankley, town clerk, at 523-4095 or clerk@townofyork.org. Special interest groups sometimes send out voter registration forms and absentee ballot request forms that appear to come from the clerk's office. These forms are often incomplete or inaccurate. To ensure that you are properly registered or to apply for an absentee ballot, please go to myvote.wi.gov or contact Heidi.

2020 WISCONSIN ELECTION DATES:

FEBRUARY 18, 2020	SPRING PRIMARY (IF NEEDED)
APRIL 7, 2020	SPRING ELECTION & PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCE PRIMARY
AUGUST 11, 2020	PARTISAN PRIMARY
NOVEMBER 3, 2020	GENERAL & PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

2020 trees for sale

Green County Land & Water Conservation Dept.

contact
Chris Newberry, Conservation Technician 608-325-4195 ext.120
Chris.Newberry@wi.nacdnet.net
<https://greencounty/wccd.com/services/tree-sales/>

Order by Dec 31, 2019

Pick up in April 2020

RECYCLING IN YORK

— CINDY AND KIM

Happy fall to all Town of York residents. We thank everyone who has done a wonderful job of recycling and continues to do so. Some items that need to be addressed are as follows:

Things that can be recycled in York:

Clean dry paper, junk mail, paperwork (shred if personal), cereal boxes, and paper packaging. Don't forget that TP tube. Please wash out cans, bottles, and plastic containers. Remove caps and lids as they are made out of different materials and are recycled in a different way.

Not recyclable in York: Automotive chemicals (e.g., oil, antifreeze, and brake fluid). Look for the next Green County Clean Sweep hazardous waste disposal program to dispose of unused chemicals safely. www.co.green.wi.gov/docview.asp?docid=20915&locid=148. Also, agricultural chemical containers cannot be recycled here.

If you have ag plastics (bale wraps, grain bags, hoophouse plastic, and so forth) you may be eligible for a free dumpster recycling program from Revolution Plastics, (844) 490-7873 (<https://green.extension.wisc.edu/files/2010/05/Revolution-Plastics-Flyer.pdf>). Revolution Plastics has been recycling Green County ag plastics continuously for 4 years now, and is working hard to keep this plastic from going into landfills or being illegally and dangerously burned. Revolution will provide a dumpster and empty it at no cost to you. Thank you for looking into this!

On the front door of the recycling building, there is a website listed (www.file13usa.com), which can tell you where to bring your unwanted electronic items (see Tim's article on e-waste, p. 2) and the cost, if any, for taking these items.

Not sure where to put it? Just ask your recycling crew.

NOTES FROM THE TREASURER

— ANN CARLSON

Property taxes: Once again this year you can pay your property taxes online using a credit card (2.39% fee), debit card (\$3.95 flat fee), and electronic checks (\$1.50 flat fee) on the Green County Website. An advantage to paying electronically is that you get confirmation of your payment and can print a receipt immediately. Both of these options are available through the secure county website (www.co.green.wi.gov). A listing of the 2019 tax roll will be posted on the Green County (**SEE TREASURER, PAGE 6**)

GREEN'S PRAIRIE CEMETERY ASSOCIATION

Report to the York Town Board, Green County, WI

September 10, 2019

The GPCA held its annual meeting on Saturday, September 7th, 2019. This was our first meeting to reorganize since David W. Green passed away in June. Jim Grant is now our President after having served as a Director for the past 2 years. Jim is a Prairie Enthusiast. He has regularly attended our Memorial Day activities at GPC and participated in many prairie burns. We are pleased to welcome Town of York resident, Ellen Caskey, as a Director to fulfill Jim Grant's remaining 1-year term.

Those in attendance at the Annual Meeting were Dan Gartzke, Treasurer and host, Jim Grant, Director, Tom Mitchell representing the Prairie Bluff Chapter of TPE, Tom Wolf, a guest and now a 3-year Director and me as Secretary.

Dan Gartzke, Treasurer, reported a balance on hand of \$7349.88 on Sept. 1, 2019 including the 2018 income of \$300 from Town of York, with no expenditures and a \$5 credit for a business savings account by the Marine Credit Union.

We burned the north portion of GPC on 4/21/19 using water to protect the stones. We would usually burn a larger portion of the cemetery, but this was one of those years that it was very difficult to accomplish all the scheduled burns due to the excessive rains in spring.

Our 2019 Memorial Day activity was a first as we met indoors here at the Hall. Dave Green presided. He gave a report on the John Stewart cemetery plot on the Gary Thompson farm. Jeanne Ausmus donated the painting of a GPC burn now hanging in this hall.

We honored the veterans buried in GPC including: 1 Blackhawk War, 4 from the War of 1812, and 6 Civil War veterans. Dobson-Johnson Legion Post 142 placed the flags on the veteran grave sites.

We continue to remove the lilies and other alien plants that appear in GPC. The prairie naturally reseeds itself in these small bare places. The flea beetles purchased some years ago seem to keep the cemetery spurge from spreading. These beetles seem to grow in number as the spurge increases and decreases when the population is reduced.

Pechmann Memorials was unable to install the Nathan Sherman War of 1812 stone, repair and reset 6 others due to an over abundance of work. We contracted for up to \$1000 of work at GPC in 2017. We will continue to pursue getting this accomplished by Memorial Day 2020.

We are hoping to install a flag pole structure to reflect the era of the GPC residents by Memorial Day 2020. We plan a special 175th year of the establishment of GPC on Memorial Day 2020. We will make an attempt to properly honor David W. Green's contributions to GPC. You have a couple of Dave's books here in the Hall. We welcome your suggestions too. We hope to have at least one cannon from that period, too.

Respectfully submitted,

William E Kuenzi, GPCA Secretary



NEW GLARUS ADVENTSFENSTER 2019

— CARRIE CZERWONKA

Adventsfenster? What's that? If you didn't catch on last year, this year you will have another chance. Every day, from December 1 through 24, a new window will be "opened" in New Glarus, with a story or songs or historical notes shared along with free hot chocolate and goodies galore. The event calendar can be found at www.facebook.com/newglarusadventsfenster/. All ages are welcome, come to one window reveal, or come to them all. It is a great reason to get out, see the sights, and enjoy one another this holiday season. This tradition from Switzerland begins December 1st at Roy's Market.

July 30, 2014

Town of York
Dan Reeson, Town Chairman
N8161 Reeson Lane
Blanchardville, WI 53516

Dear Town Board,

Comparing the total 2019 assessed value of the assessment roll to the 2019 equalized value set by the Wisconsin Department of Revenue, the 2019 level of assessment will be approximately 81% versus 85.33% in 2018. This increase is due mainly to inflation of sales ratios comparing assessed values and sale values.

The Town is not required to do a revaluation until the level of assessment has been under 90% four years straight. This will be the third year. After four years, the Town will receive two years of warnings from the Wisconsin Department of Revenue. The Town would be mandated to do a total revaluation in 2022.

I do not recommend waiting until the last year. The longer you wait, the larger the change in values will be. Also, the equity between classes of property becomes poor.

Enclosed is a guide page from the Wisconsin Property Assessment Manual. The Town of York's last full revaluation was completed in 2013. The Town could do an Exterior Revaluation program since it has not been 10 years since the last full revaluation project.

A revaluation would create more equity, but only new construction will increase tax revenue for the Town. Basically budgets are divided by the total assessed value of the town to arrive at the mill rate. Other factors such as school, road, and other aids effect the final mill rate.

Attached are pages 19 and 20 from the 2019 Guide for Property Owners publication with an example of tax rates and levies.

Please contact me with any questions or a cost quote if the Town would like to proceed with and exterior revaluation program.

Sincerely,
Employee, Gardiner Appraisal Service, LLC

WHAT IS A REVALUATION?

— TIM CZERWONKA

(The following information is gathered from the Wisconsin Department of Revenue and a letter sent to the Town Board by the Town's appraiser. This letter can be found on the town's website, and is retyped at left.)

A revaluation is a complete review of all residential property in a town. Both the lot and improvements are reviewed. Wisconsin law requires market value assessment of all property. This assessment is based on fair market value. Estimating the market value of property is a matter of determining the price a typical buyer would pay for it in its present condition. This is done by the Assessor. The Town of York uses Gardiner Appraisal Service. Some factors the assessor considers are dollar amounts similar properties are selling for, what it would cost to replace the property, and any other factors that affect value. It is important to remember that the assessor does not create this value but rather interprets what is happening in the marketplace.

Please note! A revaluation would create more equity, but only new construction will increase tax revenue for the Town. See Ann Carlson's article on this page to read about how the mill rate is set.

The Town is not required to do a revaluation until the level of assessment has been under 90% for four years straight. As of 2019, this will be the third year. After four years the Town will receive two years of warning from the Wisconsin Department of Revenue. The Town will be mandated to do a total revaluation in 2022.

Comparing the total 2019 assessed value of the assessment roll to the 2019 equalized value set by the Wisconsin Department of Revenue, the 2019 level of assessment will be approximately 81% versus 85.33% in 2019. This increase is due mainly to inflation of sales ratios comparing assessed value and sale values.

Our assessor does not recommend waiting until the last year. The longer we wait, the larger the change in values will be. Additionally, the equity between classes of property becomes poor.

The Wisconsin Department of Revenue has a *2019 Guide for Property Owners* available online. <https://www.revenue.wi.gov/DOR%20Publications/pb060.pdf> This is a well-written resource for the property owner covering the assessment process, Board of Review, Revaluation and Levy and Rates.

(TREASURER, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5) website (<https://ascend.greencountywi.org/LandRecords/PropertyListing/RealEstateTaxParcel#/Search>). Collections at the York Town Hall will be on **Saturday, December 28, 2019** and **Saturday, January 25, 2020**.

Mailing payments to the Town Treasurer is the most efficient payment process after paying online (see above). All payments with a postmark date of December 31, 2019 and prior will be posted in 2019. All payments with a postmark of January 31, 2020 will be applied to the first installment in 2019. All payments made after January 31, 2020 are to be mailed to Green County. This year, receipts can be obtained online (visit www.townofyork.org/finance/property-tax-bills/ for more information), via email, or with a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Escrow checks exceeding taxes due will be accepted and the overpayment refunded to the tax payer after the next town board meeting. Any two-party checks need to be endorsed by the taxpayer, and all checks written

prior to February 1, 2020 need to be made payable to: Town of York.

Dog license fees remain unchanged: males and females, \$10; spayed and neutered, \$5; multiple dog fee of \$40 for up to 12 dogs and \$4 for each additional dog. A copy of rabies vaccination including the rabies manufacturer and ID number is required to be on file before a dog license will be issued. What is a mil rate and how is it determined? A mil rate is basically the dollar amount of tax per \$1,000 of assessed value. When all levies have been set by the state, county, township, schools, and vocational districts, a mil rate is computed for each by dividing the amount levied by the total assessed value. Residents of York have one of three mil rates, depending on which school district they reside in. The mil rate seen on the tax bill is the state mil rate + the county mil rate – the county sales tax mil rate + the township mil rate – the school tax credit mil rate + the mil rates for the school district and vocational district in which the taxpayer owns land. Typically, as assessed value increases, the mil rate decreases.

WON'T YOU BE MY NEIGHBOR?

—STEVE VAN HOUT

Greetings Neighbors! Ahhh the Driftless region, what a gorgeous place to call home. Outsiders often visit our little farm and comment on the tranquil and captive nature of our surroundings. It reminds me that what we share is special and I shouldn't take it for granted but rather savor it continually. Jerilyn and I moved on to our 10-acre farm on York Center road nearly 25 years ago. As teachers in the New Glarus Schools, we searched many of the available homes for sale in the area. Our selected home's original foundation dated back to the middle 1800s, making it one of the oldest buildings in the area. That's cool! Our first priorities were to remodel and make an addition. But for a city boy gone country, I had a huge learning curve ahead. Looking back on those first few years I recollect there

were plenty of issues I did not anticipate. The first was the fencing rule. I had the good fortune to meet with then Town Chairman Gordy Peterson for a quick lesson. "Meet your neighbor face to face at the halfway point on the fence line shared by both," he said. "Extend a hand of acquaintance and first determine whether there will be animals to contain on either side of the fence. If yes, all the shared fence to the right was my responsibility, to the left was my neighbors." Time to buy some fencing tools.

That was then, and now we have a new ordinance in effect that changes that outdated rule that is easy to understand and a little more friendly. You can read that here: www.townofyork.org/download/ordinances/Fencing-Ordinance-08-01.pdf

That was just the beginning of hundreds of items both good and bad I would have to acquire living in the country. Of the many things

I have discovered along the way, easily the most important, was the gift of neighbors. It was Jerilyn's idea to walk up and down our road and knock on doors to introduce ourselves. This was surely something I had never done living in previous towns, villages, or cities. She, on the other hand, has grown up understanding the joy of knowing and interacting with the families around her. We share with our friends and family how blessed we are to live in an enchanted valley full of wonderful, kind, and talented people. There have been countless times when a neighbor has come to our rescue. We have taken the opportunity to return that support whenever possible. Whether it be a meal for someone sick, assisting them out of a deep snowbank, helping with a stray animal, sharing extra vegetables, giving a ride to the emergency room, tilling a garden, helping to move a heavy load, splitting some wood, borrowing a tool, or sharing a cold beverage on the porch, we are there for each other. The list of things we can do for each other is endless. Whether we like it or not, there are things we must share. The air we breathe, the water we drink, the roads we travel on, and the tax burden for their upkeep. I find it comforting to know that, even though we at times live in what seems to be an uncertain world, we are surrounded by family, friends, and neighbors that are willing to extend that hand. If you should happen by our place, stop in and join us on the porch. We can swap handshakes, a story, or a cold beverage. If I could play on the words of the late-great John Denver; "Thank God I'm a Country Boy!"



Left: Bethany Emond Storm measuring dissolved oxygen (DO) in her stream using a Hach test. If a sudden drop in DO is found, it could identify an acute issue with the stream that would require notification to the DNR.

MONITORING OUR WATER: CITIZEN SCIENCE

—BETHANY EMOND STORM

For the past three years, the Blanchardville Women's Club and the Pecatonica Pride Watershed Association have been coordinating a group of citizens to monitor streams in and around our Township. There were eight groups out monitoring this year; two groups on Daugherty, three groups on Sawmill, and one each on Apple Branch, Erickson, and Brennan Creeks.

The citizen scientists follow the Water Action Volunteer, or WAV, monitoring protocol organized by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The volunteers get out into the same stretch of stream once a month from May through October and gather data on the flow, dissolved oxygen, turbidity (clarity), and depth. Twice a summer the WAV groups look at what critters are living in their stretch of stream, and once a year they do a habitat assessment.

Bethany Emond Storm, April Prusia, and Kriss Marion also gather phosphorus samples from six sites within the Lower East Branch of the Pecatonica: four samples from Daugherty Creek, one from Erickson Creek, and one from Sawmill Creek. (See WAV, p. 8)

Below: Meg Pokorny and Carrie Czerwonka of Wading Ladies consult with future entomologists and record a biotic index for their portion of Sawmill Creek.



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Top: April Prusia, Bethany Emond Storm, and Kriss Marion, enjoying a nice summer day, WAVing. Right: York's newest Board members enjoying our first snowfall of the season. Yes, we love York's water in all its forms. Left: Carrie Czerwonka measures air temperature at Sawmill Creek.



(WAV, CONTINUED FROM P. 7) These data are entered into an online database

managed by the DNR, and available on the DNR website:
dnrgis.wi.gov/H5/?viewer=Water_Condition_Viewer.

