



September 2010

[www.crawfordstewardshipproject.org](http://www.crawfordstewardshipproject.org)

### Calendar

#### At a glance:

**Sun, Sep. 19-26** VSN  
Voyageur canoeing the  
Kickapoo River.

**Sat - Sun, Sept 25-26**  
Gays Mills Applefest

**Tues, Sept 28** Media  
Event and Rally, Inter-  
national Dairy Expo,  
Madison.

**Sat, Oct 2** Farm Aid Con-  
cert, 12 pm, Milwaukee  
at Miller Park.

**Wed, Oct 6** Karst Identifi-  
cation Workshop, Medical  
Office Building, Viroqua

**Sat, Oct 16** Karst Identifi-  
cation Workshop.  
Myrick Hixon EcoPark, La  
Crosse.

**Tues, Oct 19** Movie  
"Food, Inc." Gays Mills  
Community Building

**Tues, Nov 9** Farmers  
Panel. Gays Mills Commu-  
nity Building, Gays Mills.

*full calendar back page*

## KARST AND KELVIN

By Edie Ehlert

After Professor Kelvin Rodolfo had taught university courses in global warming for several years, his wife, Kathy Crittenden, asked,

"So what are we doing about it?"

That question led the couple to buy a patch of ground in Vernon County and build a house that was inspired by the need for

a low-carbon footprint and energy independence. Built into a scenic south-facing slope, the house is powered with a wind turbine and solar panels, and overlooks their permaculture gardens.

**"The rock of our Driftless area is literally honeycombed."**

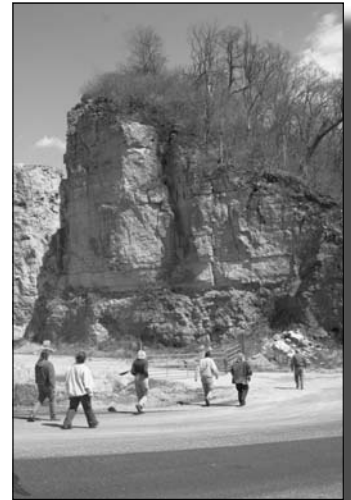
*Kelvin Rodolfo*

The earth-sheltered home is nicely vented and offered us a comfortable place to converse, even on the hot August day that I visited. Kathy was making wild plum jam

while we talked of activism and community, geology and clean water.

Kelvin is Professor Emeritus of Geology and Environmental Science at the University of Illinois-Chicago,

and Kathy is also a Professor Emeritus at the same school, in sociology. Kelvin was drawn to geology by an excellent teacher, inspir-



*Kelvin Rodolfo leads a group on a field trip after a Karst presentation.*

ing him to excel as a teacher himself. His Karst Identification Workshops sponsored by CSP continue to gain

*continued on page 3*

## MONITORING THE HEALTH OF OUR WATERS

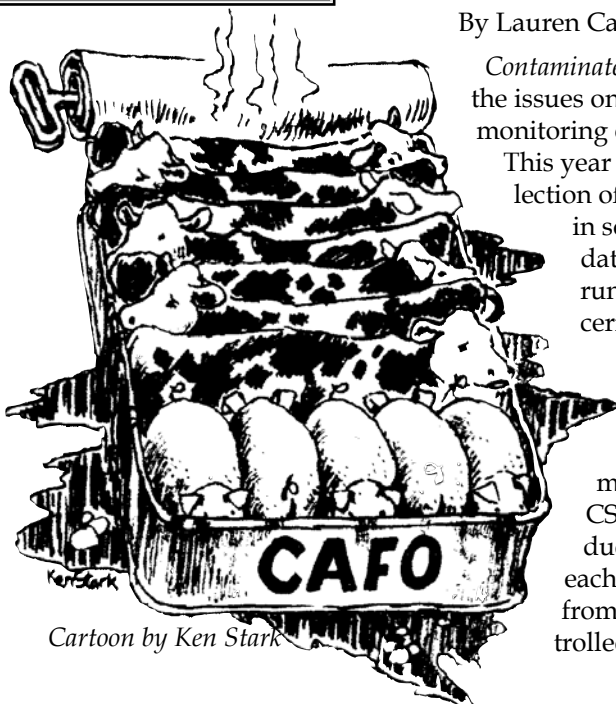
By Lauren Calvert

*Contaminated drinking water. Environmental pollution. Threatened wildlife.* These are the issues on the minds of CSP volunteers who are actively contributing to water monitoring efforts in our area.

This year several committed individuals stepped forward to assist with the collection of water quality data in three sites near the Roth CAFO near Wauzeka in southern Crawford County. Working in teams of two or three to collect data once per month, these volunteers work to ensure that factory farm runoff is not degrading the quality of local waterways. And their concerns are grave enough to draw them from as far as 30 miles away for the task.

Although the permitting process for CAFOs includes provisions for protecting water quality, the well-publicized lack of post-permit monitoring and enforcement is one of CSP's top issues. Wisconsin CAFOs produce millions of gallons of liquid manure each year. Excess nitrogen and phosphorus from potential over-spreading or uncontrolled runoff can severely endanger aquatic

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*Cartoon by Ken Stark*

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# FRUSTRATION WITH THE LIVESTOCK SITING LAW

INTERVIEW WITH EDIE EHLERT, CSP COORDINATOR

by Jack Pfitsch

Two visions of the future of the Wisconsin rural landscape square off in the debate over the effectiveness of Wisconsin's 2006 Livestock Siting Law. Working with Sustain Rural Wisconsin Network (SRWN), CSP has strongly defended a vision of a diverse rural landscape populated by people and animals that are sustained by the land. The other vision of a muscular agricultural system populated by trucks and huge machinery, moving grain, animals, and manure, day and night, through a featureless corn and soy landscape is supported by the Dairy Business Association (DBA), a professional lobbying organization representing and funded largely by mega dairy interests in Wisconsin.

Edie Ehlert says, "The bottom line is that nobody has a right to run neighbors off their land or out of their homes." At the Crawford County Fair farmers and local landowners came to the CSP booth and signed the CSP petition calling for local control in livestock siting. Edie says, "Local farmers said again and again, 'Yep, the state and the feds are running us out of business.' It is gratifying that many local farmers understand the situation, but the frustration is that our farm policies are being guided by the corporate ag industry."

CSP and SRWN have worked hard to get these public voices heard at the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) public input sessions. "It is so clear at these hearings that people who are not directly connected to the industry do not like this law. They all speak to the same concerns for the safety of our water, air pollution, and the preservation of our rural communities."

We are seeing push back from the DBA, which testifies to the many voices speaking out against the law. At the July DATCP Board meeting, the DBA stacked the meeting

with fifty or so farmers singing praises for the present law. CAFOs like the statewide uniformity of the law. The only way local governments that are zoned agricultural can restrict CAFOs is by designating specific regions where CAFOs can be built. But this option turns out to be politically unfeasible. No CAFO has been denied a permit in Wisconsin. The number of CAFOs has experienced a 30% increase since the first of the year and many applications are in process.

Furthermore, the law requires scientific proof of a threat to human health and safety to zone out CAFOs. Edie points out, "We could spend hundreds of thousands of dollars and still DATCP would not accept the information, leaving local government unable to pass more stringent standards." The uniform state law prohibits any local government from using additional considerations like proximity to schools, fragile geological conditions, water quantity issues, and impact on road traffic to deny a CAFO a permit. It effectively makes it impossible for local government to control the placement of CAFOs in agricultural areas.

The perception of DATCP is that the opinions from the public hearings on the law are split 50/50. SRWN has challenged that perception by sending people to comb over the record of responses. SRWN argues that certainly more than fifty percent of the testimony expressed great frustration with the current law. The stacking of the July DATCP Board meeting with speakers by the DBA clearly indicates that the industry experts also recognize the realities of public opinion.

Recently, DATCP formed a Technical Committee to review the Rule of the Law. This committee of sixteen was chosen by DATCP. SRWN nominated nine people from around the state for that committee, but none were chosen. The Technical Committee will likely report its findings the end of 2010. CSP

and other SRWN coalition members are currently pushing for a policy review of the law to address issues brought forward by citizens at the listening sessions.

SRWN once again presented the need for policy review at the September DATCP Board meeting. Policy issues that need to be studied include the impacts of the Law and related DATCP policies on local government; land use conflicts; public health and welfare; natural resources; diversity of agriculture and rural economies. Procedures need to be put forward to deal with these areas not covered by the Technical committee.

If a DATCP policy review of the rule determined that the current law is inadequate to these tasks, legislative remedies can be recommended. Public pressure on our legislators continues to be an aspect of the remedy. Apparently lobbyists for big agriculture think by influencing DATCP and lobbying the legislature, they can maintain the easy road they have with the current livestock siting law.

However, the failure of the law to provide local governments with the tools they need to protect their citizens continues to motivate public opinion from the ground up. Those of us that share a vision of a populated and healthy rural agricultural landscape must get informed about the complex issues facing us. We must fund organizations like SRWN and CSP so they can research the scientific and legal footing for defending our right to live and breath in the country.

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# CRAWFORD STEWARDSHIP PROJECT UPDATE

## HAPPY 3RD ANNIVERSARY!

By Edie Ehlert

Crawford Stewardship Project celebrated our 3rd anniversary in August. We've been most fortunate to carry on our work in Crawford County as well as inspire actions with our compatriots working to stop the proliferation of Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO). We also work to promote sustainable agriculture and a diverse local rural economy.

Recent actions include an impressive turnout by citizens and the statewide coalition, Sustain Rural Wisconsin Network (SRWN) expressing our frustration with the Livestock Siting Law and asking the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, (DATCP) for a thorough review of the Rule. Our call for a Policy Review Committee continues.



*"Cows on Parade", 2009 Apple Festival Parade in Gays Mills, one of the many volunteer projects of CSP. Please donate to support our silly, serious, and effective projects.*

The legislation governing CAFOs was largely written by corporate interests with an agenda to support these operations. This puts our struggles into perspective.

The CAFO in southern

Crawford County received its water discharge permit (WPDES) from the DNR on May 1st despite large and well-spoken opposition from residents and landowners of the County. Monitoring at

that site is now the next step to keeping close watch on our resources.

We will not be ignored and marginalized. The citizens of this state are becoming increasingly aware of the dangers of CAFOs to our water, our air, our Wisconsin farmers, the animals, and the very fabric of our rural communities.

People want food raised sustainably, free of chemicals, antibiotics, and hormones with consideration for the welfare of the animals.

**We remain proud of our 700 supporters, our 80 volunteers, and our board and staff who continue to work hard for our county and statewide efforts.**

### **KARST AND KELVIN**

*continued from page 1*

popularity with an ever-changing PowerPoint presentation and Kelvin's accessible and inspiring teaching style. The workshops include field trips to area karstic sites, offering us first-hand observation of the vulnerable and beautiful landscapes in our area.

Kelvin is working on a karst geological study of the 88 square miles encompassed by the townships of Viroqua, Jefferson, and Webster in Vernon County, a project led by Dr. Lynn Chakoian of Viroqua and funded by the Nuzum Foundation. Kelvin

studied 600 well reports in that region and has determined that over 30 percent of the wells are drilled into karst. "The rock of our Driftless Area is literally honeycombed," says Kelvin. Cracks, crevices, sinkholes, springs, and disappearing streams are all characteristics of our karstic geology.

A karst study that has been done in northeastern Wisconsin is a good initial guide for what we need studied in our Driftless region, but the issues there are different in one important respect. In the northeast, the karstic rocks near the surface are themselves the aquifer, and thus

can be flushed clean of pollutants fairly rapidly. But in the Driftless, our main sources for domestic well-water are not aquifers in the karstic rocks near the surface, but deep sandstone aquifers beneath them. According to Kelvin, "The principal role of our karstic rocks is not to contain groundwater for our wells, but to conduct rainwater and snowmelt down into the sandstone aquifers beneath them. And once a sandstone is contaminated, it remains contaminated forever." Furthermore, most of the groundwater pumped out of a typical well has percolated down from the surface an

average of just two miles away, and virtually all comes from the surface less than five miles away. So what we and our neighbors do on the land directly affects our water quality.

The Viroqua pilot study of karst speaks to the need for enlarging the scope of the work to include the entire Driftless Area. CSP is working with Kelvin to find the support and political will to promote this need. And if you haven't made it to one of the Karst Identification Workshops, check out the opportunities in the newsletter calendar for fall presentation dates.

# Thank You!

**We wish to express our gratitude to these people and organizations that have made our work possible through their generous donations and grants in the past two years.**

Lisa Aarli and Gail Owens  
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Eileen and Charley Young  
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## ***HEALTH OF WATERS*** *continued from page 1*

wildlife and human health.

And the risks are not just reserved for surface water – this particular geological features in our corner of the state can lead surface contamination very quickly into deep water reserves that will remain contaminated forever after the event.

This danger makes the rapid detection of worsening water quality of the utmost importance.

During this spring and summer, CSP combined efforts with the Sustain Rural Wisconsin Network (SRWN) and the Valley Stewardship Network (VSN) in order to increase water quality monitoring work. SRWN continues to collaborate with other statewide organizations to advocate for more state level monitoring and definition of phosphorus standards. VSN held several afternoon courses to train volunteers to monitor according to the Water Action Volunteers (WAV) protocol.

WAV, a cooperative effort of the Wisconsin DNR and the University of Wisconsin Extension, provides the standards for what data should be collected and how. VSN provides the equipment and training and volunteers provide the time. The CSP

volunteer teams measure water temperature, transparency, flow, and oxygen levels monthly from April



***We can't take for granted that our water will be protected. But we can test the water. Karst rock and open waterways are only the above ground visual we have of our Driftless Area water.***

to October, and assess the population of certain types of aquatic wildlife twice per year. The data takes only about 45 minutes to collect and results are reported back to Sarah Grainger, VSN's Water Quality Program Manager.

Eddie Ehlert, Crawford Stewardship Project Coordinator, views the water quality monitoring efforts as an opportunity, a challenge, and "a positive step towards creating a state-wide water quality and nutrient monitoring program around CAFOs." The Sierra Club's Water Team is also involved in efforts to establish a state-wide program. In addition to the drive to protect local habitat and human safety,

successes in neighboring states and isolated regions of Wisconsin continue to provide a source of inspiration

and motivation.

The data that water quality volunteers collect not only helps monitor regulatory compliance around factory farms, but also contributes to an overall understanding of the water in our region. On September 19th, Sarah Grainger, the "VSN Voyager," will launch an eight-day canoe trip down the Kickapoo River to "trace 10 years of citizen based monitoring in the Kickapoo River Valley." According to the VSN website, "information collected by the VSN Voyager will be combined with data from the past ten years in a Watershed Assessment Report to be published next year." The trip will include several community events

along the way, including water quality demonstrations, and will celebrate with a finale party on September

26 at 6 p.m. in Steuben.

If you are interested in more information about any of these issues or events, please visit one of the websites below. If you are interested in volunteering to help with CSP monitoring efforts, please contact Edie Ehlert at [edieehlert@centurytel.net](mailto:edieehlert@centurytel.net). There could be no better excuse to spend an hour creek

side enjoying and protecting the beauty and serenity that the Driftless has to offer.

**For more information about VSN and their water quality-monitoring project,** visit [www.kickapooovsn.org](http://www.kickapooovsn.org)

**For more information about how manure management issues affect water quality,** visit [dnr.wi.gov/runoff/ag/waterquality.htm](http://dnr.wi.gov/runoff/ag/waterquality.htm)

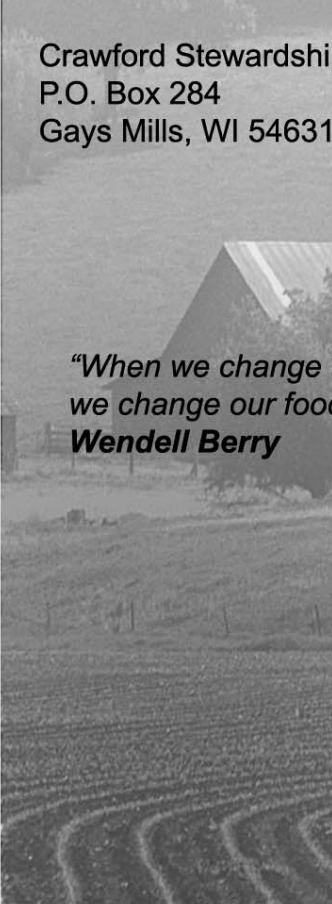
**For more information about Water Action Volunteers and monitoring activities,** visit [watermonitoring.uwex.edu/wav](http://watermonitoring.uwex.edu/wav)

**For more information about water quality issues within Sierra Club,** visit [wisconsin.sierraclub.org/issues/water.asp](http://wisconsin.sierraclub.org/issues/water.asp) [michigan.sierraclub.org/issues/greatlakes/animalfactorypollution.html](http://michigan.sierraclub.org/issues/greatlakes/animalfactorypollution.html)

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*"When we change the way we grow our food,  
we change our food, we change our society, we change our values."*  
**Wendell Berry**

# C a l e n d a r

## **Sunday, September 19-26**

VSN Voyageur. Valley Stewardship Network Water Quality Program Manager Sarah Grainger will be canoeing the Kickapoo River. Visit their website for special events along the way, [www.kickapoovsn.org](http://www.kickapoovsn.org)

## **Saturday & Sunday, September 25-26, Gays Mills**

Applefest. This annual event brings thousands to Gays Mills for apples and fun. CSP will have a booth in front of the Kickapoo Exchange Food Coop. Please contact us to work a 2 hour shift, [msp.county@gmail.com](mailto:msp.county@gmail.com) or 608-735-4277.

## **Tuesday, September 28**

Media Event and Rally. 4 p.m. Family Farm Defenders (FFD), Farm Aid and others from across the state at beginning of International Dairy Expo in Madison. Speakers, cow costumes, signs, offer media event and gathering in support of sustainable family farms and bring CAFO issues forward. Contact us to join car pools to attend. [msp.county@gmail.com](mailto:msp.county@gmail.com) 608-735-4277

## **Saturday, October 2**

Growing Hope for America, Farm Aid Concert, 12 pm, Milwaukee at Miller Park. SRWN will have a booth and has 6, \$27.50 tickets for folks who can take a shift and wear cow costumes and pass out cards with their new website address. Contact Jennifer Nelson, [jenelson7@centurytel.net](mailto:jenelson7@centurytel.net) for more info. [www.farmaid.org](http://www.farmaid.org) for more concert info and to order other tickets.

## **Wednesday, October 6**

Karst Identification Workshop, free, co-sponsored by Alliance Concerned for Environmental Safety (ACES) and CSP, 7 pm, the Medical Office Bldg, 407 S. Main St., Viroqua, next to hospital, Conference Room A, lower level. Science and beauty of Driftless area geology by Dr. Kelvin Rodolfo, with excellent information and conversation. Field trip to view local karstic features.

## **Saturday, October 16**

Karst Identification Workshop. Another presentation of Driftless area geology with Dr. Kelvin Rodolfo. Co-sponsored by Mississippi Valley Conservancy, Myrick Hixon EcoPark, and Crawford Stewardship Project. Presentation and discussion 10-12:30 at Myrick Hixon EcoPark, 789 Myrick Drive, La Crosse. Field trip to follow, bring a bagged lunch.

## **Tuesday, October 19**

Movie Night with "Food, Inc." Filmmaker Robert Kenner lifts veil on nation's food industry, exposing highly mechanized underbelly hidden from American consumer with consent of government regulatory agencies, USDA and FDA. Film shows ills of system, featuring experts and social entrepreneurs revealing what is happening, where we are going from here. Co-sponsored by Gays Mills Library and CSP, 7 pm, Gays Mills Community Building, Gays Mills.

## **Tuesday, November 9**

Farmers Panel. Four local farmers panel presentation and discussion of farming in Driftless region. Co-sponsored by Gays Mills Library and CSP, 7 pm, Gays Mills Community Building, Gays Mills.