

Conservation Matters

by the Monroe County Land Conservation Dept.

Dealing with invasive species in Monroe County

Educated in the UK with a degree in Agriculture and a dissertation on World food problems and the potential contribution of Forest Farming (Agroforestry), Mic has always had a keen interest in conservation practices.

After a stint in South America working as a cacao (chocolate) fermentation specialist Mic returned to the UK and worked with the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, becoming proficient in hedge laying, hawthorn and holly, then tried drystone wall repair work on a wild moorland site in Northern England.

Eventually Mic ended up propagating and growing trees for some of the U.S.'s top nurseries.

When the Armstrong family returned to Wisconsin after a few years in Oregon, Mic volunteered for Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Earth Watch and soon landed a position as intermittent Soil Conservation Technician, which eventually led to the full time position in Sparta.

Apart from designing and supervising the construction of conservation practices such as grassed waterways, dams and streambank stabilization, Mic has helped with the rebirth of the Monroe County Invasive Species Working Group (MCISWG). With representation from Monroe County the cities, towns, highways, Fort McCoy, agencies such as DNR and NRCS as well as landowners and volunteers, the group is working on becoming an Association to manage grant money so that volunteer efforts can have significant impact. A representative from the Lower Chippewa Invasive Partnership came to the last meeting relating a lot of success stories and practical information.

A new feature of the MCISWG get-togethers is a pre-meeting where we visit a site somewhere near Sparta to look at specific invasive plant infestations and get landowner and expert practitioners together to strategize the best management options. The last one we looked at was Japanese knotweed *Fallopia japonica* or *Polygonum cuspidatum* at a couple of sites in Sparta.

Japanese knotweed is an herbaceous perennial that forms large colonies of erect, arching stems (resembling bamboo). Stems are round, smooth, and hollow with reddish-brown blotches. Plants reach up to 10' and the dead stalks remain standing through the winter.

Also known as Fleece Flower, Mexican Bamboo, Japanese bamboo it was often used as a swap plant at garden clubs around the country, which as it turns out, was a very bad idea.

•New infestations of Japanese knotweed often occur when soil contaminated with rhizomes is



Mic Armstrong, a soil conservation technician with the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service in Monroe County, holds a stalk of Japanese knot weed, an invasive species that has spread to the area.

transported or when rhizomes are washed downstream during flooding.

- The plant poses a significant threat to riparian areas where it prevents streamside tree regeneration, and increases soil erosion.

- Root fragments as small as a couple inches can resprout, producing new infestations.

- It disrupts nutrient cycling in forested riparian areas.

- Plants contain allelopathic compounds (chemicals toxic to surrounding vegetation)

In the UK it is such a serious problem that there are companies that specialize in its control and also lawyers who specialize in litigation when it moves to the neighbor's land.

It loves to grow in mortar between bricks or in cracks in concrete, once there it becomes even more difficult to control.

In Monroe County we are currently mapping the infestations (try looking at the Edmaps website), and can give landowners advice on best management practices. Leaflets are available and there will be some useful information on the Monroe County website. For more information, including the legal status, go to the WI DNR website and search invasive species.

The next MCISWG core meeting will be held October 25 at 2 p.m.

The pre-meeting will meet on Fort McCoy at the compass course on Havenwood Road just off of Hwy. 16 where the group and anyone interested will be looking at Glossy Buckthorn and discussing identification, management options, costs and expected results. The group may make another quick stop behind the BP station (Theater Road in Sparta) to look at Common Buckthorn and its identification.

Contact Mic at (608) 269-8136 ex 118 or john.armstrong@wi.usda.gov for more information.

Here are the websites referred to:
<http://www.co.monroe.wi.us/departments/land-conservation/>
<http://www.edmaps.org/distribution/>
<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/invasives/fact/japaneseknotweed.html>

1st Community Credit Union Welcomes New Loan Officer

1st Community Credit Union is pleased to announce the recent appointment of Kendra Nichols to Consumer Loan Officer in our Sparta office. Kendra grew up in

CARD SHOWER

Please join with family and friends as we shower

Janet Anderson
with cards to celebrate her
80th Birthday
(October 22nd)

Cards may be sent to Janet at
P.O. Box 142
Norwalk, WI 54648



Janet

10/12/16

Rotarians plan holiday event December 1st

The Sparta Rotary Club made plans to host their booth in Mueller Square for the annual kriskindlemarkt, part of the Dec. 1 celebration of the holidays in downtown Sparta, previous to dedication ceremonies for the community Holiday Lights display in Evans-Bosshard Park

The Rotarians are again planning to hand out free holiday cookies and offer hot cider at the event as the Children's Christmas Parade rolls through the downtown area.

Members decided Tuesday evening at their regular weekly meeting to pursue the event. The Rotarians were instrumental in starting the Holiday Lights display early in the century.

Club President Tony Polkoski called last year's Rotary booth a "very successful event" and asked members to either give a monetary

donation or bake cookies to give away that evening.

Organizers of the event said Mueller Square, located in downtown Sparta, will be offering more attractions for parade attendees that evening.

In other business, the Rotarians learned the bench donation project in memory of long-time member Mike Weber will be held Monday, Oct. 23, at 10 a.m., noting his wife, Darlene will be in town for the dedication of the unit to be placed near the Sparta Chamber of Commerce depot building. Weber was a long-time Rotarian. All members were encouraged to attend.

"Mike really enjoyed rotary," Polkoski said.

Joe Gossart, a regular visitor from Scotland, was a guest at the meeting.

The Sparta Rotary Club meets every Tuesday evening at 7 p.m. at Jakes Northwoods. New members are welcome.

Ask your
Neighborhood
Provider
by Linda Starnen



Flu season is right around the corner!

Influenza is a respiratory infection that produces fever, chills, sore throat, muscle aches, and cough that lasts a week or more. The flu can be deadly for the elderly and those with compromised immune systems or who are suffering from diabetes, kidney dysfunction and heart disease.

Even healthy people can get very sick from the flu and spread it to others. Each year about 36,000 Americans, mostly in these high risk groups, reportedly die from flu complications such as pneumonia.

Annual flu vaccines are now available. Getting vaccinated before flu activity begins helps protect you once the flu season starts in your community. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends getting your flu vaccine before it begins spreading in the community.

It takes two weeks after the vaccination for antibodies to develop in your body to protect you against the flu, so it's best to get your shot early in the fall. Flu vaccines will continue to be given throughout the 2017-2018 flu season.

The CDC recommends that everyone ages six months and older receive an annual seasonal flu vaccine. Getting a vaccination is

Commit

■City of Sparta Planning mission will meet tonight, Oct. 16, 6 p.m., at City Hall, W. Oak St., Sparta.

■City of Sparta Joint Board will meet Tues., Oct. 17, 5 p.m., at City Hall, 201 W. Oak St., Sparta.

■Housing Authority of Monroe County will meet Wed., Oct. 18, 7 p.m., at City Hall, 201 W. Oak St., Sparta.

Cataract Unit

5882 Cataract Rd., N.

Annual Christmas

Wednesday, Oct. 18

Serving from 4-6 p.m.

Meal includes homemade chicken, cranberry salads, coleslaw, bread, etc.

Cost: Adults - \$10.00

Children under 10 - \$5.00

Carry-outs Available

American Dream



"Call Ryan for help"

Open House

La Crosse | Black River Falls | Independence

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- ✓ Learn about academic programs
- ✓ Tours, refreshments, and more at each location

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westerntc.edu/openhouse

WANT TO PROTECT YOUR FAMILY FROM THE FLU?