**Week 12- Are You a Conservationist? / Game Camera Competition**

**Conservation Corner**

***Conservation Corner is a weekly article produced by the Forest County Land &Water Conservation Department. For more information contact Al Murray, Land&Water Resources Technician at 715-478-1387 or by e-mail at*** ***lcc@co.forest.wi.us******.***

**“Are you a Conservationist?”** People often confuse natural resource conservation with preservation. In my college years, “A Sand County Almanac” by Aldo Leopold was required reading. Aldo Leopold is often referred to as the father of modern conservation. Leopold’s “Land Ethic” called for moral responsibility to the natural world. At the core of the idea of a land ethic is simply caring: about people, about land, and about strengthening the relationships between them. Leopold’s vision grew out of a set of values that he developed from a lifetime of experiences in the outdoors. Leopold wrote that “we can only be ethical in relation to something we can see, understand, feel, love, or otherwise have faith in.”

While I did further my education in a “conservation” field, my ethical understanding of conservation was created long before that time, growing up fishing, hunting, and spending time in the forest with my family and later as part of my job. My father taught us early on, “you only shoot what you are going to eat”. He also told us about the forest conditions from the past, the history of logging camps in the area, and how those conditions, and deer hunting changed through time. We grew up learning the forests and lowlands by using “swamp roads” and ridges as our guides and watching conversions of hardwood areas to clear-cuts and then plantations. We also had a firm understanding that logging in the forest created changes that were good for wildlife and also that logging is what kept us fed and our local businesses in operation. I am sure that many of the readers of this article learned “conservation” the same way as I and they too are conservationist.

Many people view fishing and hunting as recreation, we must all understand that fishing and hunting are truly and integral part of conservation. Hunting and fishing are the most common way for many people to spend time on the land and over the years remember conditions and how they change. Management of fish and game populations are the goal of bag limits set by the Department of Natural Resources, hunters and fishermen carry out the management portion of that conservation activity. Money collected by the federal government as a tax on hunting and fishing equipment, from the Pitman-Robertson Act, pays for many conservation projects around the United States. If you are an ethical fisherman or hunter, you are a conservationist.

For all the hunters and conservationist out there that utilize game cameras, the Forest County UW-Extension Office in cooperation with this office will be sponsoring a game camera photo contest at the Forest County Fair. Entries must be submitted on entry day to the 4-H building on Thursday, September 6th from 3:30- 7:00. Awards will be given for the most unusual photo in the following categories: Feathered Animals, Deer, Bear, any other animal. The UW-Extension and the Land Conservation Department will retain the right to use photos for promotional purposes. Please contact the UW-Extension office if you should have any questions.

Thank you to all the readers and also for the positive feedback from these articles. Please look forward to future installments.