

Sustainability Tours

1. La Crosse Myrick Hixon Ecopark Tour

On May 1, 2008 the Myrick Hixon EcoPark (MHEP) of La Crosse, WI was created. The MHEP is a partnership of the Hixon Forest Nature Center, the City of La Crosse, eight La Crosse area Rotary Clubs, and UW-Extension. This new partnership has been involved in the construction of a new nature education center at the current site of the city owned Myrick Park Zoo. This new EcoPark partnership will manage the La Crosse City owned Myrick Zoo, indigenous wildlife exhibits, the 1,100 acre La Crosse marsh, and the 800 acre Hixon Forest. This new facility promotes the value of the natural world, educates people about environmental issues, and actively engages children and adults in ways they can make a difference in the quality of their environment. The new MHEP environmental nature center is adjacent to the Zoo, the La Crosse marsh, within walking distance of the Hixon Forest and the state Great River and Sparta-Elroy Bicycle Trails. Access to a variety of hardwood forests and wetlands provides powerful hands on tools for environmental education. The variety of environmental attractions so closely available at the Myrick Hixon EcoPark will make it a major tourist and visitor destination. The tour will start with a welcome from the EcoPark's executive director and president and a brief discussion on the complex partnership needed to run all aspects of the EcoPark. The buildings' "green technology" will be explained and examined.

2. Family Sustainability Tour

Enjoy a highly engaging afternoon of group activities and table talks focusing on the heart of our counties...families! This session will help you, as county elected officials, gain an understanding of the challenges facing today's families, and how these issues impact your work in county government. Learn about Extension's educational programs that are working to support families in crisis. You will have the opportunity to "tour" to several table talks focusing on some of these issues: divorce, drug court, caregiving, food insufficiency, foreclosure prevention, youth alcohol abuse, poverty.

(Note: This tour will be held on-site at the Radisson hotel.)

3. La Crosse Sustainability Tour

Rain gardens are one measure property owners can take to encourage rain water infiltration instead of generating stormwater. Stormwater contains contaminants such as oils and grease, lawn fertilizers, bacteria, and other various suspended solids that enter surface water bodies. In La Crosse, the County CNRED agent has facilitated several rain garden projects aimed to educate residents and property owners of some of the options for preventing the generation of stormwater from their property. This tour will view several of those gardens including:

La Crosse Southside Neighborhood Center
Karl Green's home
Three Rivers Waldorf School
Town of Campbell's Community Center
Holmen School District's Administrative Center
Town of Holland's town hall

In addition, this tour will visit County Board member Marilyn Pedretti's straw built home. This home was built with almost 100% green products, and is completely "off the grid".

Come see the various exhibits of sustainability at its best in La Crosse County!

4. Coulee Region Agriculture Diversity Tour

Welcome to Coulee Country! Our agriculture is more diverse than many areas of the state. This tour will be highlighting two recent additions to the area's agricultural enterprises that the county UW Extension Agents have been working with. The Cashton area is home to an Amish community with a thriving fresh market produce, greenhouse and bedding plant industry. You will be visiting an Amish farm that grows bedding plants and fresh market vegetables. We will then take a short drive to wine country where we will visit a local vineyard in this area's growing grape and wine industry.

For further information on any of these tours, please contact Liz Hilts at 715-284-1176.