



**"Two years ago we made it a priority to understand the issues facing both the watershed and the farmers when it came to ag runoff," stated the USRWA Executive Director, Wade Moder.**

## **Forming a Producer-Led Coalition in the Sugar River Watershed**

### **Upper Sugar River Producer Coalition**

Collaborators: Dane County UW- Extension and Upper Sugar River Watershed Association

The Upper Sugar River Producer Coalition is targeting the Sugar River and West Branch Sugar River, which are both impaired due to excess phosphorus loading, in their recently funded producer-led project. The Upper Sugar River Watershed Association, who is partnering with the farmers on the coalition, has already established baseline water quality data to help prioritize the coalition's efforts. "Two years ago we made it a priority to understand the issues facing both the watershed and the farmers when it came to ag runoff," stated Wade Moder, the USRWA Executive Director.

The overarching goal of the group is to bring together like minded farmers, strengthening their coalition of water quality improvement efforts. As a newly

formed producer-led group, they will be using some of their grant funding to develop a mission statement, goals and work plan for their watershed. Farmer education will also be a primary focus.

In its first year, the group will host a field day and a "Lunch and Learn" educational workshop in partnership with Dane County UW-Extension's Crop and Soils Educator, Heidi Johnson for all of the producers in the Sugar River Watershed. To further engage producers in the watershed, the group will also develop an incentive program to fund the installation of various conservation practices. "The farmers in our group are excited to get this project off the ground," Moder said. The farmer leaders of the Upper Sugar River Producer Coalition

include: Brian Brown, Mark Keller, John Doerfer, Jerome Zander, Doug Brown, John Judd, Sherry Combs; Wade Moder, Upper Sugar River Watershed Association; Heidi Johnson, Dane County UW-Extension.

To get in touch with the group, contact Wade Moder at 608-437-7707.

**For more information on the Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grant Program or on the 2016 funded projects, please visit our webpage.**