



Producer-Led Watershed Protection Program

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WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, TRADE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

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GRANT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Program Goal: To improve Wisconsin's soil and water quality by supporting and advancing Producer-Led conservation solutions by increasing on the ground practices and farmer participation in these efforts.



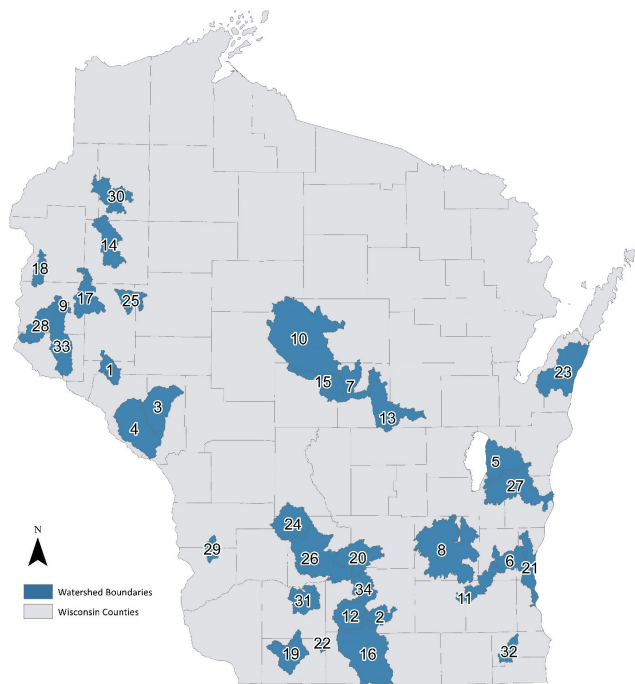
GRANT PROGRAM OVERVIEW



- Activities must address water quality improvement and must be driven by farmers
- At least 5 farmers within watershed boundary to apply
- Collaborating entity
- \$40,000 max per group
- Newly passed state budget increases annual funding to \$1,000,000 for Producer-Led projects

FUNDING OVER TIME

FY	Total Requests	Total Awarded	# of requests	# of groups awarded
2016	\$262,550	\$242,550	15	14
2017	\$197,065	\$197,065	11	11
2018	\$619,721	\$558,246	21	17
2019	\$869,815	\$750,000	27	24
2020	\$1,051,871	\$750,000	27	24
2021	\$1,043,910	\$750,000	33	30
2022	\$1,194,543	\$1,000,000	36	36



2016-2021 FUNDED PROJECTS

- **34 groups total**
 - Group participation ~10-30+ farmers
 - Watershed size ranges HUC 12+
 - Different collaborating entities:
 - Different group structures: 501c3, Board with president, vice-president, and other roles, others more loose structure
 - Different focuses of efforts

WHAT DO GROUPS DO WITH GRANT FUNDS?

- **Outreach and Education Events**
 - Field days, conferences, workshops, trainings
- **On-farm Research and Demonstration Projects**
 - Cover crop test plots, nitrogen use efficiency, manure application methods, planting green systems, managed grazing, No-till/reduced-till equipment demonstrations



WHAT DO GROUPS DO WITH FUNDS?

Incentive Programs

- Cover crops (various types of application)
- Interseeding
- Planting green
- Harvestable and non-harvestable buffers
- Reduced tillage (no-till, strip till)
- 60" corn
- Precision conservation management assessments
- Low disturbance manure injection applications
- Testing: soil fertility, soil health, forage, plant tissue



PARTNERSHIPS

- Local Farm Bureau chapters
- Ag associations (WI Farmer's Union, Dairy Business Association, etc.)
- NRCS
- Lake Associations
- University of Wisconsin- professors, extension agents, Discovery Farms, etc.
- Ag businesses and other local businesses
- The Nature Conservancy, Pheasants Forever and other conservation focused NGOs
- Crop consultants, agronomists
- Land Conservancies
- Adaptive management programs



EXAMPLES OF GROUP GOALS AND VISIONS

OUR GOALS

LASA recognizes that we have three main responsibilities in Lafayette County – protecting the natural resources, helping the public understand general farming practices and empowering members to improve farming techniques. These goals can be achieved through open communication and a willingness to share knowledge and research while being open-minded to new practices on our farms.

Vision statement

The Lake Wisconsin Farmer Watershed Council is working together to help farmers adopt improved practices that protect and improve surface and groundwater quality. They wish to work with and encourage farmers in the Lake Wisconsin area to learn and adopt new methods of reducing soil erosion and increasing water infiltration on the land they manage and accomplish this by maintaining or improving farm profitability. People who live, work, and play in the Lake Wisconsin area will all benefit from having high quality surface and groundwater.

Sauk Soil & Water Improvement Group (SSWIG)

The Sauk Soil & Water Improvement Group (SSWIG) is focused on improving the soil health and water quality of the area by minimizing runoff, increasing infiltration, and increasing the number of acres that incorporate comprehensive practices that will help to mitigate flooding events. They are currently working primarily in the Otter Creek, Honey Creek, and Narrows Creek - Baraboo River Watersheds.



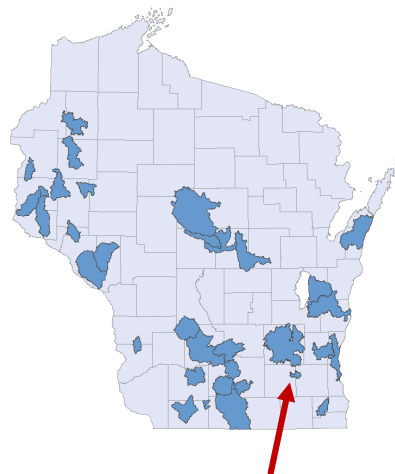
Project Examples: Farmers for Lake Country Aerial Seeding Program

PROGRAMS

Farmer Education Events – These free sessions help farmers to get a better understanding of the excellent funding available through NRCS for aerial seeding of cover crops and many other Best Management Practices. Other topics include strategies being implemented by local farmers that are protecting land and water resources.

Aerial Cover Crop Seeding Program – In 2020, the group completed its fourth aerial cover crop planting program. Oats, barley, wheat and other custom blends were flown into standing corn and soy beans. Please contact Darrell Smith for more information:

Cell: 414-313-4323 * E-mail: dsmith.earthcare@gmail.com



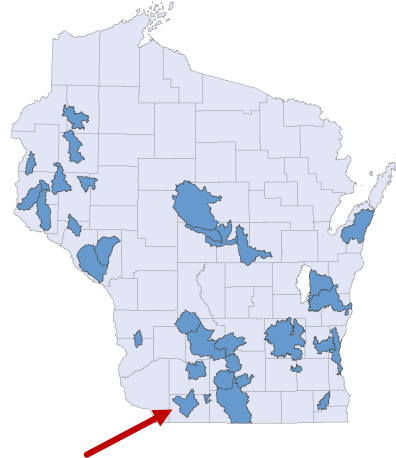
Project Examples: Lafayette Ag Stewardship Alliance Supply Chain Sustainability

FREE TRIAL | AUDIO & VIDEO PODCASTS | STUDENT STORIES | TRADE POLICY | PRESS RELEASES | EVENTS

Home | PRESS RELEASES | LASA, Farmers for Sustainable Food, Grande Cheese Company: Framework, pilot project earn national dairy sustainability award for collaboration

GREEN BAY, Wis. — A group of Wisconsin farmers and partners in the dairy food supply chain are earning national praise for creating a framework for conservation projects that protect soil and water quality, keep farms financially viable and demonstrate a commitment to sustainability to communities, customers and regulators.

The first-of-its-kind framework and its use in a pilot project in southwestern Wisconsin were recognized today by the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy with an "Outstanding Supply Chain Collaboration" award. The recipients — Farmers for Sustainable Food, Grande Cheese Company and Lafayette Ag Stewardship Alliance (LASA) — drove development of the project.



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, TRADE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

FARMER TO FARMER LEARNING | BUILDING COMMUNITY | "AG-VOCATES"

You're Invited!
HEALTHY SOILS, HEALTHY CROPS!
 Ozaukee Demo Farms Network and
 Clean Farm Family Field Day

Wednesday, June 30th
10:30 am - 12:30 pm
 Clean Farm Families Hwy. 57 Demonstration Plot
 Across from 1671 Beech Lane Fredonia, WI
 LUNCH PROVIDED

Topics Include:

- Farmer Panel discussion on experiences
- Infiltration comparisons
- Physical Structure observations
- Cover crop options and management
- Roller/Crimper
- Nutrient Management

Please Join Pecatonica Pride Watershed Association for a FREE Field Day, Tour, and Lunch

You're Invited!
POP UP FIELD DAY ON THE PECATONICA:
MIKE BERG FARM
JULY 2 10AM
 Riverbank Restoration Tour

Berg Farm
 HWY 78 at Lee Bridge, 1.5m south of Blanchardville
 Friday, July 2, 10am to 1pm
 - River Bank Restoration
 - Cost Share and Phosphorus Trading
 - Citizen Science WAV Stream Monitoring
 - Conservation Professionals

FIELD DAY
7-9 P.M. JULY 15
 Hosted by Friendsuh Family Farms
 Meet at 465 75th St, Clear Lake, WI

Topic: Impact of Spring and Fall manure applications on no-till fields planted in rye, including examination of the sub-soils



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STATEWIDE NETWORK

- Annual workshop
- Regional meetings/trainings/support
- Networking with other farmers throughout the state
- Farmer-Led Webinar series



WHAT CAN MAKE GROUPS SUCCESSFUL?

- Strong farmer leadership
- Diverse partnerships
- Diverse funding
- Outreach component
- Tracking of progress to report on success
- Plans for growth - expanding membership and continuing to innovate



PRODUCER-LED TRACKING PROJECT

- Tracking conservation outcomes of the producer-led program
 - Conservation Systems Analysis
 - Individual Practice Analysis (No-till and cover crops)
 - Other reports

DATCP Home > Producer-Led Tracking Project

Producer-Led Tracking Project

Tracking Conservation Outcomes of the Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grants Program

Since the inception of the Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grants Program in 2016, producer-led groups have played an important role in advancing conservation practices and promoting soil health farming systems across the agricultural landscape. This work helps improve water and soil quality throughout the state.

Moving forward, it is imperative to track and quantify the outcomes of the program as we continue to build and advance the efforts of producer-led groups. In 2019, DATCP initiated this tracking project to help provide a more detailed picture of the program's impacts to watersheds of the state.

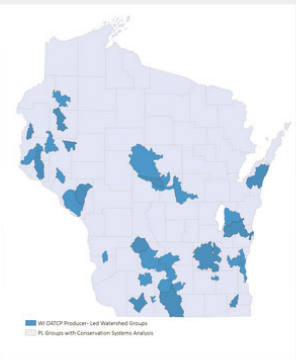
To date, group projects cover more than 600,000 acres of cropland. Farmers involved represent a wide variety of operation types, crop rotations, and management techniques. Due to the diversity of farming operations and practices represented within the program, DATCP is using models to quantify water quality outcomes, mainly SnapPlus, Wisconsin's nutrient management planning software. It is important to note that these outcomes are projected water quality impacts and not measured water quality improvements through water quality sampling or edge of field monitoring.

Conservation Systems Analysis

A conservation systems analysis was conducted on 13 of the 33 Producer-Led groups (click the Wisconsin map to enlarge). This analysis compares different conservation systems that are common to these particular watersheds. These analyses provide a snapshot of the variation of conservation outcomes that may be realized depending on the unique landscapes and conservation farming practices being implemented throughout the state.

More information on each analysis can be found within each group's individual report:

- Buffalo-Trempealeau Farmer Network
- Dodge County Farmers for Healthy Soil Healthy Water
- Horse Creek Area Farmer-led Watershed Council
- Producers of Lake Redstone
- Watershed Protection Committee of Racine County
- Farmers of the Sugar River



Soil Quality Benefits Report

ESTIMATING SOIL & WATER QUALITY BENEFITS | Model Inputs

Dominant soil types of watershed + corresponding organic matter percentages (NRCS Web Soil Survey)



1

County average yields



3

Average plant and harvest dates of crops for Wisconsin (NASS)



5



The lower quartile, median and upper quartile soil test P levels for the appropriate county as provided by DATCP soil laboratory results summaries.



Farm operation type representative of watershed and conservation crop rotation scenarios

NO-TILL AND COVER CROP ANALYSIS

Model Assumptions

- Dominant soil types for each watershed
- County average soil test P-levels (dominant county within watershed project boundary)
- No-till and cover crop acres reported by each group
- Baseline, cover crop, and no-till rotation scenarios



Analysis of Practice Changes

No Till Practice Change

- Baseline: Corn- soybean rotation, chisel + disk, no cover crop
- Practice change: No-till soybean crop

Cover Crop Practice Change

- Baseline: Corn- soybean rotation, chisel + disk, no cover crop
- Practice change: Rye cover crop after soybeans

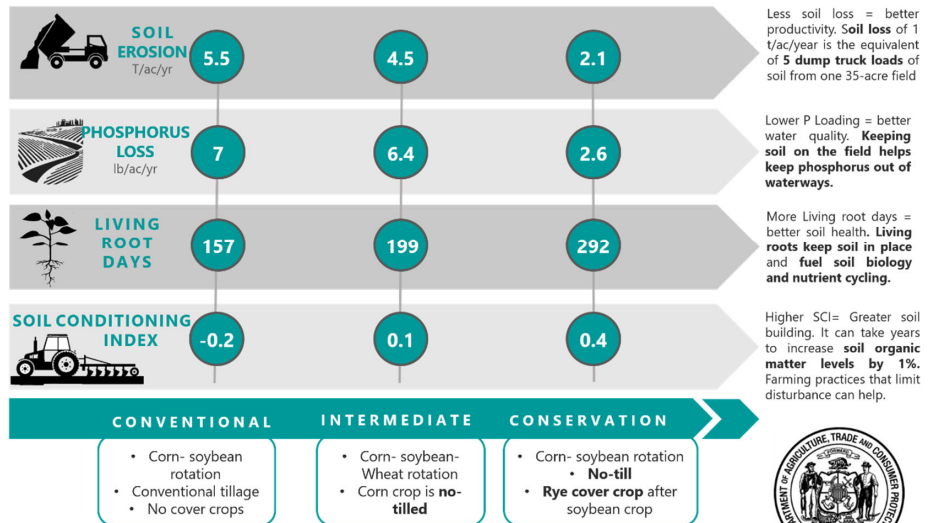
Conservation Systems Analysis Example:

Farmers of the Sugar River



SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION IMPACT

Farmers of the Sugar River | Grain Operations



NO TILL AND COVER CROP ANALYSIS



NO-TILL ACRES

62,587 acres (+19% from 2019) across **211 farms**

Estimated reduction:

84,860 tons of soil erosion and **54,072 pounds of phosphorus**

COVER CROP ACRES

83,843 acres (+19% from 2019) across **423 farms**

Estimated reduction:

75,364 tons of soil erosion and **41,492 pounds of phosphorus**

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- Webpage: www.datcp.wi.gov/
Search: Producer-led

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Thank you!



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WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, TRADE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION (DATCP)