



January 2024

Soil and Water Resources Management (SWRM) Grants

- Until ATCP 50 receives approval from the governor, legislature, and is published, the new practices are not available for cost-share.
- SWRM Innovation Grants – The report template and extension form were emailed out on October 26, 2023. The report is due February 15, 2024.
- Please submit reimbursement requests as projects are completed.
- The 2025 SWRM Grant Application will be available in late January. We will send an email when it's on the [SWRM webpage](#).

Annual Reports for 2023

- County submission of their responses to annual reporting questions for 2023 are due March 4, 2024. An email with a link to the report questions was sent to all county conservationists on Monday, December 18. If you did not receive the message, please reach out to Coreen Fallat at coreen.fallat@wisconsin.gov.

ATCP 50 Update

- ATCP 50 has been referred to the Assembly Committee on Agriculture and Tourism and the Senate Committee on Agriculture. A link to the webpage with all related documents is available [here](#).

Nutrient Management News

- Congratulations to Andrea Topper, Nutrient Management Outreach Specialist, for being accepted into the inaugural class of the Soil and Water Conservation Society's (SWCS) Emerging Leaders Program! Throughout this year-long program, Andrea and 127 other conservation professionals from 36 states, provinces, and territories will fine-tune and expand their skills and networks to further advance conservation in their careers and local communities. Participants will attend quarterly interactive learning modules to receive training and resources from SWCS staff and partners. The Emerging Leaders program will help Andrea in her current DATCP role, and throughout her career, by developing leadership, communication, event coordination, and other important skills. Please join us in congratulating Andrea on her acceptance to the SWCS Emerging Leaders Program!
- **UPCOMING:** Online Nutrient Management Farmer Education Trainings will be hosted in January, February, and March 2024. The target audience of these trainings is farmers who are wanting to become certified to write their own nutrient management plans, but anyone is able to attend! Registration is Free. Register Here: [Meeting Registration - Zoom](#).

- We will be hosting two SnapPlus training sessions at the Wisconsin Agribusiness Classic (WABA) at the Alliant Energy Center on January 10. These trainings are available to WABA registrants only. For more information or to register, visit the [Wisconsin Agri-Business Association](#) website.
 - SnapPlus 101 training for newer SnapPlus users from 8:30 a.m. - 10:20 a.m.
 - SnapPlus for Agronomists training from 10:30 a.m. - 10:55 a.m.
- 2024 NMFE Webinar and presentation slides are now available on the NMFE webpage, found here: [Nutrient Management Farmer Education Grants](#).
- Previous SnapPlus Trainings can be found here: [Nutrient Management Trainings](#).

Land and Water Conservation Board – LWRM Plans

- The LWCB Advisory Committee on Research will meet January 9, 2024, over Microsoft Teams. Contact kirstenk.biefeld@wisconsin.gov to request a link to the meeting or to make a public comment to the Committee.

Conservation Engineering

- DATCP was awarded two engineering project positions through a cooperative agreement with NRCS and will be hiring a Hydrologic & Hydraulic Engineer and an Environmental Specialist in the coming months. We are excited to add this capacity to our team to assist with both federal and state projects. Watch for more information and job postings in the next month.
- As we are entering training season, we'd like to pass along a reminder that the 30 PDHs for maintaining your DATCP Conservation Engineering Practitioner Certification and NRCS Job Approval Authority is coming due at the end of this year. The current three-year cycle started on January 1, 2022 and runs through December 31, 2024.
- Funding Opportunity: DATCP will again be offering Engineering Reserve Funds in 2024. These funds are intended for engineered conservation projects and prioritize projects that address farm discharge(s) that need additional funding to get completed. Deadline for project consideration is **March 29, 2024**. Details on the application process will be coming soon from your DATCP area engineering contacts.

DATCP Drainage Program

- The Drainage Program website is currently being updated to include an information page. The goal of the update is to provide our drainage community members easy access to the most recent information and give them the opportunity to provide feedback. The information page will also archive issues of *The Root Zone*, the forthcoming official e-newsletter of the DATCP Drainage Program. If you have any questions, please contact Barton T. Chapman, Drainage Program Manager, at Barton.Chapman@Wisconsin.gov.

Farmland Preservation (FP) Program and Agricultural Enterprise Areas (AEA)

- Counties that update or issue new CoCs for Tax Year 2023 should submit updates for their DOR Spreadsheet to DATCPWorkingLands@wisconsin.gov. Updates may be submitted as needed throughout the tax season.
 - **NEW:** Agreement holders with effective agreements signed prior to July 1, 2009 that have not been modified to meet current standards will be required to provide their agreement number on tax schedule FC.

If you have questions about the DOR spreadsheet or have questions with respect to any element of the FP Program, contact DATCPWorkingLands@wi.gov.

- On December 6, 2023, Governor Evers signed Assembly Bill 133, now Wisconsin Act 42, which makes changes to farmland preservation agreements minimum term lengths and increasing farmland preservation tax credits for all current participants. These changes went into effect starting on December 8, 2023 and will affect tax credit claims beginning tax year 2023. Check out the [Legislative Updates to the Farmland](#)

[Preservation Program](#) handout for more information.

- The 2024 Agricultural Enterprise Area (AEA) petition cycle is in full swing. Petition materials for new designation and modification to existing AEAs are available on the [Petitioning for AEA Designation webpage](#). Petitions will be accepted until **August 2, 2024**. For additional information or to schedule a meeting to discuss an AEA petition in your county, contact Wednesday Coye at wednesday.coye@wisconsin.gov.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

- [Annual Summary Reports for Counties 2023](#): DATCP will be emailing out the annual summary reports for counties in early January 2024. Please review the records for your county to ensure that the state CREP records match the county CREP records. Please also share these summaries with your local FSA office to compare enrollment numbers for the year. If you find a discrepancy or have questions, please let DATCP CREP staff know.
- [Virtual CREP 101 Training](#) is offered by DATCP to all CREP counties. The training is offered per LCD request and reviews program requirements, landowner engagement, agency partnership coordination, and county administrative processes. All local agency partners are invited to attend, and the training is valuable to both new and seasoned local CREP staff. Please contact Brian Loeffelholz at Brian.Loeffelholz@wisconsin.gov to set up a time for training in your county.

Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grant (PLWPG) Program

- The 2024 Annual Workshop will be held on February 20, 2024 at NorthCentral Technical College in Wausau. Registration for groups and collaborators is open: <https://forms.office.com/g/TYws700vCD>.
- We have funding for groups to host regional winter workshops or spring field days in the range of \$500-\$1,500 per event through the Producer-Led Regional Network effort. Contact your regional coordinator or Randy Zogbaum at Randy.Zogbaum@Wisconsin.gov for more information or if you have ideas for a shared, collaborative event to host with other groups in your region.

Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Program (NOPP)

- The 2024 grant cycle opened November 13, 2024. All research study designs require UW approval prior to the submission of the grant application. Final applications are due to DATCPNOPP@wisconsin.gov by **January 31, 2024**. The application, RFP, and supporting documents are available on the [NOPP webpage](#).

Crop Insurance Rebates for Planting Cover Crops Program

- [Applications](#) for the Wisconsin Crop Insurance Premium Rebate for Planting Cover Crops Program are now open! Interested participants may enroll acres planted to cover crops in the fall of 2023, which will be planted to an insurable crop in 2024. The program has \$800,000, or 160,000 acres, of coverage to award on a first-come, first-served basis. Eligible applicants will receive a \$5 per acre rebate on their summer 2024 crop insurance premium for every acre enrolled and verified in the program. Applications will be open until January 31, 2024 or until program funding is exhausted.
- Frequently asked questions about the program can be found on the [Cover Crops webpage](#). Contact datcpcc@wisconsin.gov with any additional questions. Subscribe to program updates [here](#).

Legislation Updates

- [2023 Act 42](#) – Relating to: farmland preservation agreements and tax credits.
- [Senate Bill 468](#) and [Assembly Bill 480](#) – Relating to: eligibility for farmland preservation tax credits and photovoltaic solar energy systems.
- [Senate Bill 220](#) and [Assembly Bill 220](#) – Relating to: funding for the Fenwood Creek watershed pilot project.

- [Senate Bill 409](#) and [Assembly Bill 419](#) – Relating to: creating an online interactive carbon calculator for farmers
- [Senate Bill 619](#) and [Assembly Bill 655](#) – Relating to: a transition to grass pilot program

Tools, Resources, and Opportunities

- **Need Training?** Fill out the [Bureau of Land and Water Resources Training Request for County Staff and Local Governments Online Request Form](#).
- [Tips for Selecting a Practical Decision Support Tool to Achieve Watershed Conservation Goals](#) (from *The Confluence for Watershed Leaders*)