



## Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grants Now Open for 2021

**Release Date: July 21, 2020**

**Media Contact: Leeann Duwe, Public Information Officer, (608) 224-5130, [leeannm.duwe@wi.gov](mailto:leeannm.duwe@wi.gov)**

MADISON – The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) is accepting applications for the Producer-Led Watershed Protection grant program. Applications are due by September 21. These grants are awarded to producer-led groups whose projects help support and advance conservation initiatives by bringing farmers together with their local communities. Each group is eligible for up to \$40,000 each year in matching funds.

“Producer-led groups continue to build strong communities that work to protect our state’s water quality and soil health,” said Governor Tony Evers. “Supporting connections between farmers and neighbors at the local level helps to address environmental challenges in rural areas across the state. As climate change continues to affect our state in many ways, producer-led groups are a critical part of ensuring the strength of Wisconsin’s agriculture industry for generations to come.”

Producer-led grants help farmers develop solutions for the water and soil quality issues in their area. Farmers and community members work together to identify strategies that are best suited for their specific watershed based on land surface, soil type, types of operations, resource concerns, and other factors that differ among regions of the state.

“With the increased funding provided in the 2019-2021 biennial state budget, more producer-led groups have the opportunity to build their current network or start a new one,” added DATCP Secretary-designee Randy Romanski. “With greater opportunity for more groups to receive grant funding, Wisconsin’s agricultural producers can continue to help lead conservation innovation in their own industry and their own communities.”

### **Application Requirements**

Applicants must be groups of at least five farmers whose farms are in the same watershed. A watershed is an area of land where precipitation collects and drains into a body of water. Each farm must have produced at least \$6,000 in gross farm revenue last year, or \$18,000 over the past three years. Each group must partner with either a county land conservation committee, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension, or a nonprofit conservation organization. Both newly formed and established groups may apply. Grant funds cannot pay for real estate, loans, equipment purchases, or lobbying.

### **How to Apply**

DATCP will only accept applications by email in Microsoft Word format. Application materials are available at [https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs\\_Services/ProducerLedProjects.aspx](https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/ProducerLedProjects.aspx). For questions, contact Rachel Rushmann by email at [rachel.rushmann@wi.gov](mailto:rachel.rushmann@wi.gov) or by phone at (608) 224-4622.

### **Background**

Since 2015, DATCP has awarded about \$2 million to 31 producer-led watershed groups across the state. Groups have focused on education, field trials, incentive payments for implementing conservation practices, conferences and field days, and gathering baseline data on soil health and water quality.

###

Find more DATCP news in our [newsroom](#), and on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).