



## Advisory Committee on Research Agenda

**March 4, 2025**

The Advisory Committee on Research (Committee) to the Land and Water Conservation Board (LWCB) will meet on March 4, 2025 at 9:00 am via Microsoft Teams. To attend the meeting, join by telephone at 608-571-2209 with Conference ID 653 073 103# or click the following Teams [hyperlink](#). The agenda for the meeting is shown below.

### AGENDA ITEMS AND TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

- 9:00 AM    1    Meeting Called to Order – **Ron Grasshoff, Committee Chair**
- a.    Roll Call
  - b.    Open meeting notice
  - c.    Approval of meeting agenda
  - d.    Approval of January 7, 2025 meeting minutes
- 9:05 AM    2    Reflect on Previous Presentation, Wisconsin’s Green Fire - Farm Sustainability Rewards Project (slides provided)  
**Ron Grasshoff/Committee Members**
- 9:25 AM    3    Discuss preparation for the April LWCB Meeting, Jeff Hadachek, UW-Madison  
**Ron Grasshoff, Committee Chair**
- 9:45 AM    4    Discuss the Focus and Engagement Strategy for Future Presentations  
**Ron Grasshoff, Committee Chair**
- 10:10 AM    5    Review Workplan  
**Ron Grasshoff LWCB**
- 10:20 AM    6    Member Updates and Planning for the Next Advisory Committee Meeting  
**Ron Grasshoff /Committee Members**
- 10:25 AM    7    Adjourn

Ron Grasshoff, Committee Chair;  
Vice Chair - vacant;  
Members: Monte Osterman, Tim Anderson and Brian McGraw;  
Advisors: Dr. Francisco Arriaga and Amber Radatz

**LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION BOARD  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH  
MEETING MINUTES**

**January 7, 2025  
Microsoft Teams Meeting**

**Item #1      Call to Order – Roll call, open meeting notice, approval of agenda, approval of January 7, 2025 Committee meeting minutes.**

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**Call to Order**

The Advisory Committee on Research (“Committee”) to the Land and Water Conservation Board (“LWCB” or “Board”) met via videoconference on January 7, 2025. The meeting was preceded by public notice as required by Wis. Stat. § 19.84. The meeting was called to order by Committee Chair Ron Grasshoff at **9:02 am**.

**Committee Members Present**

**Members:** Ron Grasshoff, Brian McGraw, Monte Osterman, and Katy Smith (on behalf of Tim Anderson). A quorum was present.

**Committee Advisors Present**

**Advisors:** Dr. Francisco Arriaga and Amber Radatz.

**Approval of Agenda**

**Motion**

Osterman motioned to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by McGraw, and the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes**

**Motion**

Osterman motioned to approve the draft minutes of the September 3, 2024 meeting minutes as presented, seconded by McGraw, and the motion carried unanimously. The approved minutes shall be posted as the official meeting record for publication on the LWCB website.

**Item #2      Discuss Previous Educational Opportunity (Chelsea Zegler's Presentation)**

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Ron Grasshoff, Committee Chair, opened the discussion on reflection of the first committee-suggested educational opportunity to the Board. This educational opportunity had invited Chelsea Zegler to present to the Board on the topic of outreach education.

Ron Grasshoff had shared Zegler’s presentation with Jim Baumann, a water quality specialist with 35+ years of experience, who provided comments about the topic. In his comments, Jim discussed an ongoing debate that environmental standards are equally as important as agronomic standards in research projects. The discussion ultimately resulted in agreement that socio-economic perspectives

on Phosphorus management practices are equally important. The committee was provided a copy of Baumann's comments after the meeting.

It was noted that Chelsea Zegler had moved on to a new position, but that her research on outreach and educational opportunities associated with Phosphorus management would continue at UW-Extension. Grasshoff and Osterman discussed the potential for encouraging training for land conservation departments on the topic of Phosphorus management. It was determined that Grasshoff would write to Matthew Kreuger of the Wisconsin Land & Water Association to discuss potential training opportunities for Phosphorus mobility and management practices, whether existing or as a potential new training module, through the State Interagency Committee (SITCOM).

Overall, the Committee determined that Zegler's presentation was a valuable education topic and wanted further presentations on phosphorus capture and leaching issues in terms of socio-economic incentives for farmers to incorporate Phosphorus management practices on their farm, as well as learning more about cost-share programs available for these management practices, and potential training opportunities for land conservation staff across Wisconsin. Radatz suggested addressing soil erosion as well, as it is another approach to limiting phosphorus mobility.

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**Item #3      Review Workplan and Discuss how to Track Educational Opportunities to Form Recommendations**

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Ron Grasshoff, Committee Chair, opened the discussion to review the current workplan for future goals related to educational opportunities.

The committee also discussed the creation of a list of presentation opportunities that have occurred, including information such as who presented, their contact information, presentation notes, and future goals related to presentation reflection.

The committee plans to continue planning educational opportunities for the Board and updating the Board on educational opportunity planning progress during Board meetings. Katy Smith discussed that the Board meetings have the opportunity for up to 5 educational presentations per year.

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**Item #4      Discuss 2025 Educational Opportunities (Farm Sustainability Rewards and other Topics)**

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Ron Grasshoff, Committee Chair, opened the discussion to discuss Board educational opportunities during 2025.

The next educational opportunity for the Board is a presentation by Wisconsin's Greenfire organization on their Farm Sustainability Rewards project on February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Greenfire's pilot project works to develop financial reward payments for achieving environmental goals on a continuing, farm-wide basis for qualifying producers for issues such as nutrient loss, soil erosion and greenhouse gas emissions.

The committee prepared a list of questions for Greenfire's presentation:

- What's next for their research? Specifically, is there a plan for future implementation beyond the initial 2-year program, and is there plans for the project to be scaled up?
- How does the Farm Sustainability Rewards Project integrate with existing cost-share programs, if at all?

- How do they ensure enough participation in the program to create meaningful feedback? What’s the source of funding for the project? Is the project have enough incentive that it’s meaningful to the producer and can produce change?
- How does their project advance the needs of county conservation departments?
- How the Board can support their work?
- Discuss the economic and social impacts on producers of a rewards program specifically:
  - What are the **economic barriers** that need to be overcome to convince producers that participation in a rewards program will benefit them personally/financially?
  - What are some **social barriers** that limit change in Land and Water Programs that would otherwise contribute and improve the quality of life in local communities i.e. a Land Ethic for the “Greater Good.”

Beyond February 4<sup>th</sup> presentation, the committee discussed another presentation opportunity for the April 1<sup>st</sup> Board meeting. Amber Radatz and Dr. Francisco Arriaga suggested a presentation from Paul Mitchell, director of the Renk Agribusiness’ Institute at University of Wisconsin - Madison (UW Madison) and Jeff Hadachek, an assistant professor at UW Madison, to discuss socio-economic incentives and threshold to motivate change in behavior in agricultural and conservation. Mitchell has a background in agricultural economics and Hadachek researches economic strategies for nitrate management, as well as analyzing the effectiveness of producer-led watershed projects.

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**Item #5      Member Updates with Possible Discussion**

This item was not discussed.

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**Item #6      Planning for the next Advisory Committee meeting**

The Committee should expect the following at the next meeting:

- Reflect on the Greenfire presentation
- Update on outreach for the potential Mitchell and Hadachek presentation

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**Item #7      Adjourn**

**Motion**

Osterman motioned to adjourn, seconded by Smith, and the motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 10:18am.

Respectfully submitted by,

Kirsten Biefeld, Bureau of Land and Water Resources  
 Division of Agricultural Resource Management  
 WI Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection





**Farm  
Sustainability**  
REWARDS PROJECT



*A new model for farm  
conservation in Wisconsin*

# Land and Water Conservation Board

Feb. 4, 2025

Presented by  
Ben Becker  
bbecker@wigreenfire.org

*Project funding provided by a cooperative agreement with  
the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service*

# Who we are



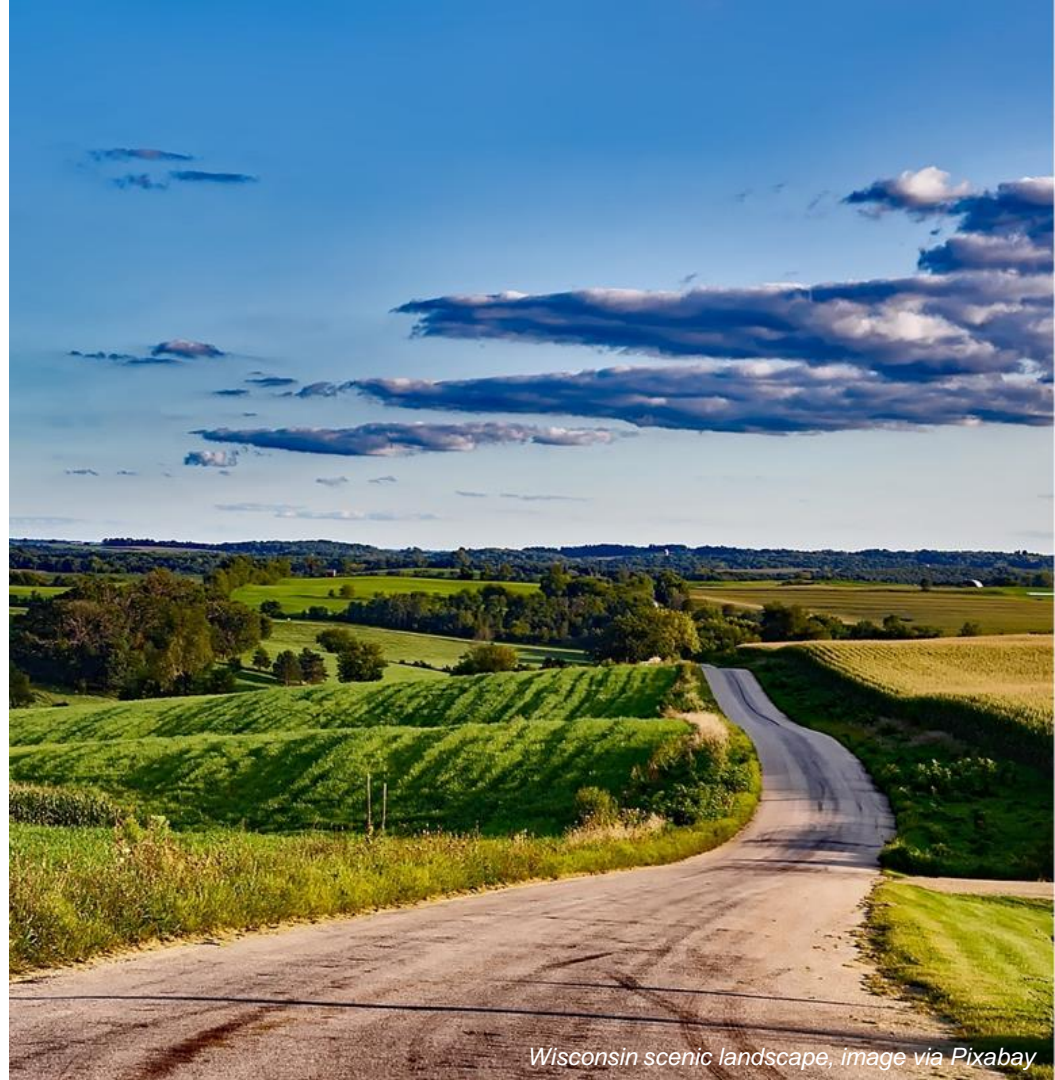
# Who FSR is for





**Farm  
Sustainability**  
REWARDS PROJECT

How does FSR  
advance the needs  
of county  
conservation  
departments?



*Wisconsin scenic landscape, image via Pixabay*



# Designed with input from prospective partners and participants

- FSR complements existing conservation programs
- FSR incentivizes producers to use nutrient management plans, implement conservation practices
- FSR aligns with long-term soil and water conservation goals



# What makes FSR different?

- Rewards based on performance outcomes
- Producers decide which practices to implement
- Modeled on real Wisconsin farms

Environmental  
Quality  
Incentives  
Program -  
Wisconsin

Regional  
Conservation  
Partnership  
Program -  
Wisconsin

Conservation  
Stewardship  
Program -  
Wisconsin

Joint Chiefs'  
Partnership -  
Wisconsin

Conservation  
Innovation  
Grants -  
Wisconsin

Agricultural  
Conservation  
Easement  
Program -  
Wisconsin

# How will the FSR Project work?

## AT A GLANCE



Tiered model  
of \$ rewards



Improved  
water quality



Voluntary  
participation

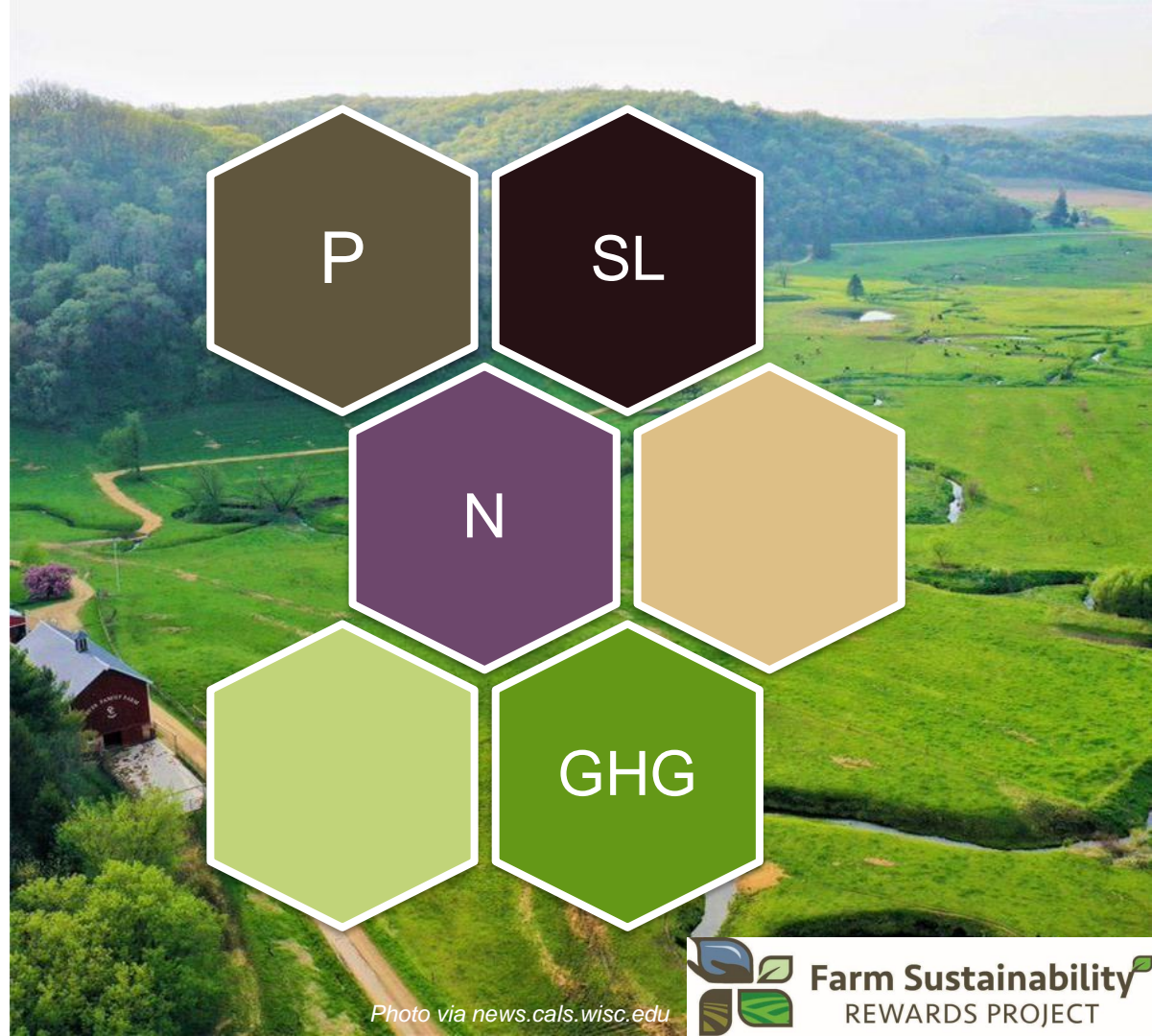


Photo via [news.cals.wisc.edu](https://news.cals.wisc.edu)



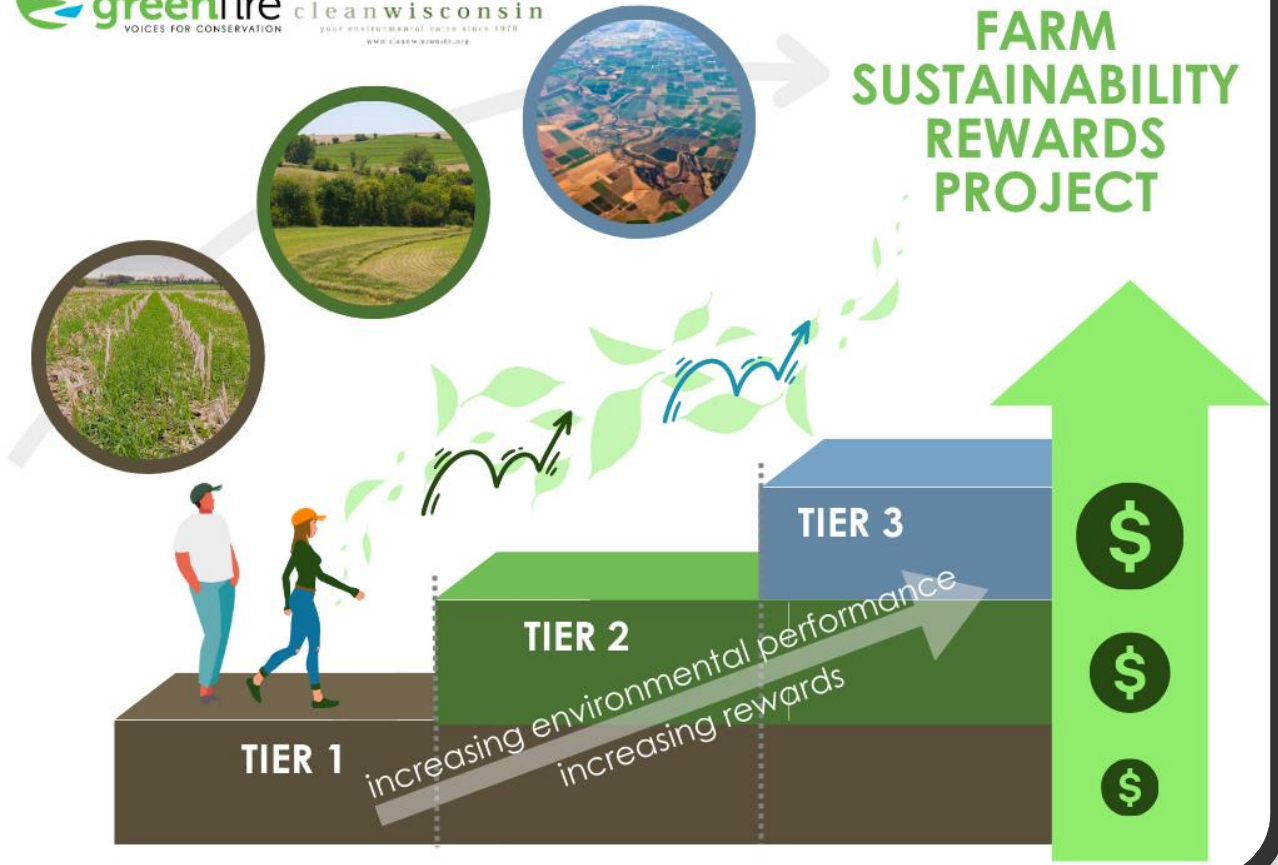
Farm Sustainability  
REWARDS PROJECT



By increasing environmental performance, producers earn higher tiers of financial rewards.



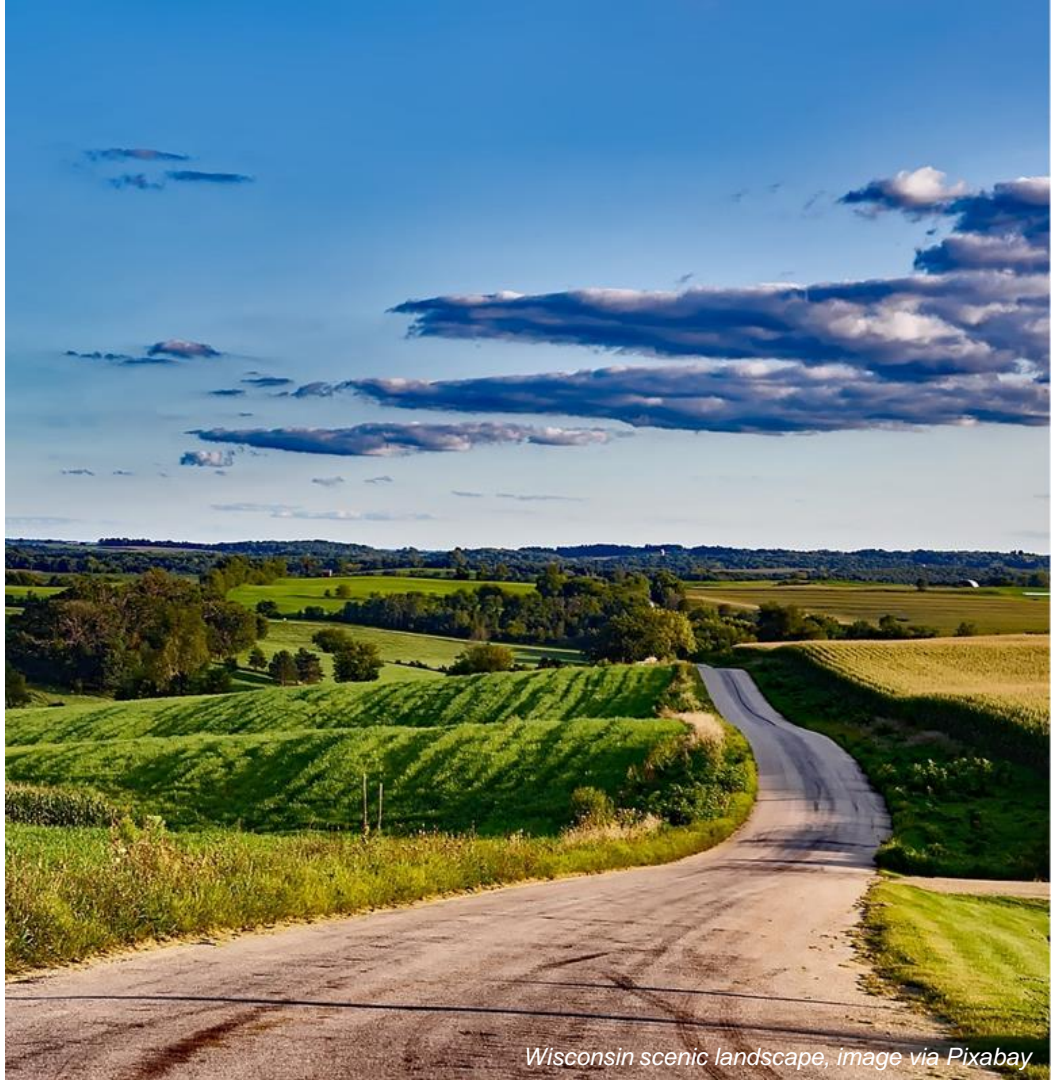
# FARM SUSTAINABILITY REWARDS PROJECT





**Farm  
Sustainability**  
REWARDS PROJECT

What's next for  
the FSR Project?





# Currently in Phase 1: Designing the FSR Project

2023-2025



*In the Vortex of Climate Change,  
Photo by Curt Meine*



**Farm Sustainability**  
REWARDS PROJECT

# Criteria for FSR Project Tiers\*

## Tier 1

1. Meet eligibility
2. Nutrient Management Plan (NMP)
3. Nitrate Leaching Calculator Assessment
4. Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Assessment using Comet

**\$10/ac/yr**

## Tier 2

1. Meet Tier 1
2. PI: Weighted avg. of 3 or less\*\*
3. SL: Weighted avg. of 2 tons/acre or less
4. NL: *Meet a Nitrate-N concentration of 10 mg/L or less*

**\$50/ac/yr**

## Tier 3

1. Meet Tier 1
2. PI: TMDL or PI of 1 or less\*
3. SL: Weighted avg. of 1 ton/acre or less
4. NL: *Meet a Nitrate-N concentration of 5 mg/L or less*

**\$100/ac/yr**

*\*Preliminary criteria as of January 2025, subject to change*

# Where do our models fit in?

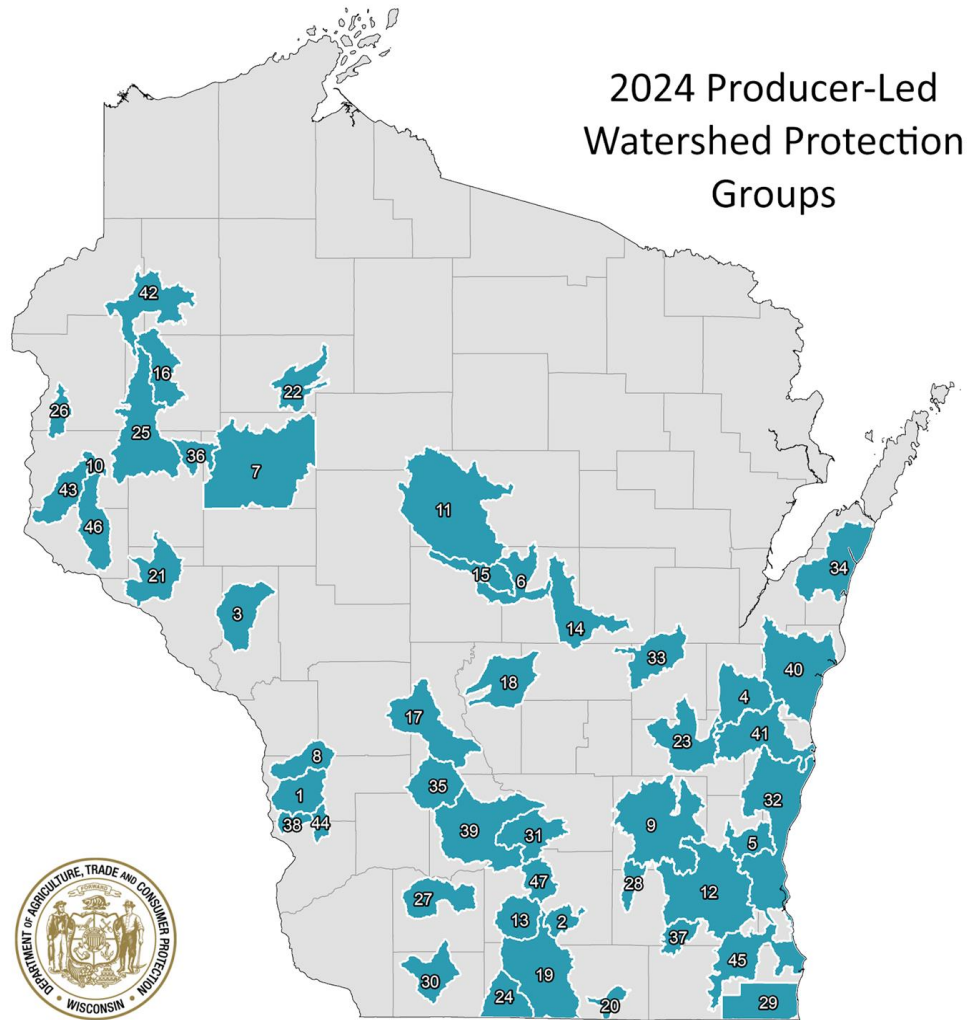
All information depicted here is preliminary analysis as of January 2025.

Farm Site	County	Baseline conservation practices incorporated	Baseline PI	Baseline PI Reward	Baseline Soil Loss	Baseline Soil Loss Reward	Baseline N-NO3 (lbs/acre)	Baseline N-NO3 (mg/L)
<a href="#">A1</a>	<a href="#">Buffalo County</a>	Cover Crops + No till	0.88	Tier 3	0.52	Tier 3	10.6	5.79
<a href="#">A2</a>	<a href="#">Chippewa County</a>	Cover Crops + No till	3.38	Tier 1	3.21	Tier 1	10.82	4.79
<a href="#">A3</a>	<a href="#">Pierce County</a>	No Till	1.44	Tier 2	1.75	Tier 2	2.97	1.48
<a href="#">B1</a>	<a href="#">Kewaunee County</a>	Cover Crops + No till	1.6	Tier 2	1.3	Tier 2	2.39	1.32
<a href="#">B2</a>	<a href="#">Kewaunee County</a>	Cover Crops + No till	2.27	Tier 2	1.84	Tier 2	18.51	7.44
<a href="#">B3</a>	<a href="#">Kewaunee County</a>	Cover Crops + No till	2.1	Tier 2	2	Tier 2	3.05	1.36
<a href="#">B4</a>	<a href="#">Kewaunee County</a>	Cover Crops + No till	1.5	Tier 2	1.2	Tier 2	4.2	1.83
<a href="#">C1</a>	<a href="#">Sauk County</a>	Cover Crops + No till	0.43	Tier 3	0.37	Tier 3	4.9	2.17
<a href="#">C2</a>	<a href="#">Green County</a>	Cover Crops	2.2	Tier 2	0.97	Tier 3	3.98	1.76
<a href="#">C3</a>	<a href="#">Green Lake County</a>	Cover Crops + No till	0.2	Tier 3	0.17	Tier 3	0.39	0.17
<a href="#">P1</a>	<a href="#">Waushara</a>	Cover Crops	0.16	Tier 3	0.18	Tier 3	73.75	27.2
<a href="#">O1</a>	<a href="#">Calumet County</a>	CREP Acres	2.58	Tier 2	1.99	Tier 2	10.54	4.68
<a href="#">O2</a>	<a href="#">Brown County</a>	Alfalfa Rotation	1.67	Tier 2	1.18	Tier 2	5.55	2.46
<a href="#">O3</a>	<a href="#">Calumet County</a>	No Till	2.48	Tier 2	1.99	Tier 2	23.81	10.53
<a href="#">O4</a>	<a href="#">Calumet County</a>	Alfalfa Rotation	2.91	Tier 2	1.8	Tier 2	34.98	15.47
<a href="#">O5</a>	<a href="#">Outagamie County</a>	Alfalfa & Oatage Rotation	2.8	Tier 2	2.14	Tier 1	7.57	3.8
<a href="#">O6</a>	<a href="#">Outagamie County</a>	Cover Crops + No till	1.85	Tier 2	0.72	Tier 3	0	0
<a href="#">O7</a>	<a href="#">Outagamie County</a>	Cover Crops + No till	2.08	Tier 2	0.83	Tier 3	9.42	4.26

Next is  
Phase 2:  
Pilot projects  
around  
Wisconsin

2026-2030?

## 2024 Producer-Led Watershed Protection Groups







**Farm  
Sustainability**  
REWARDS PROJECT

What are the  
economic and  
social impacts?



*Looking back toward the Treinen Farm and the corn maze photo by Chris Rycroft via Flickr*

# Economic impact of FSR

- Provides a carrot
- Picks up where cost-share leaves off
- Assigns value to ecosystem services

## Some reference statistics:

\$200/lb/year  
P removal cost  
through wastewater  
treatment

\$6.3  
Billion  
USDA Spending  
Nationwide on  
Conservation in  
2024

\$116.3  
Billion  
Agricultural Sector  
in Wisconsin in 2024

# Social impact of FSR

- Recognizes benefits of conservation farming
- Neighbor effect
- Increasing resilience
- Healthier watersheds







**How can the  
LWCB help the FSR  
Project succeed?**

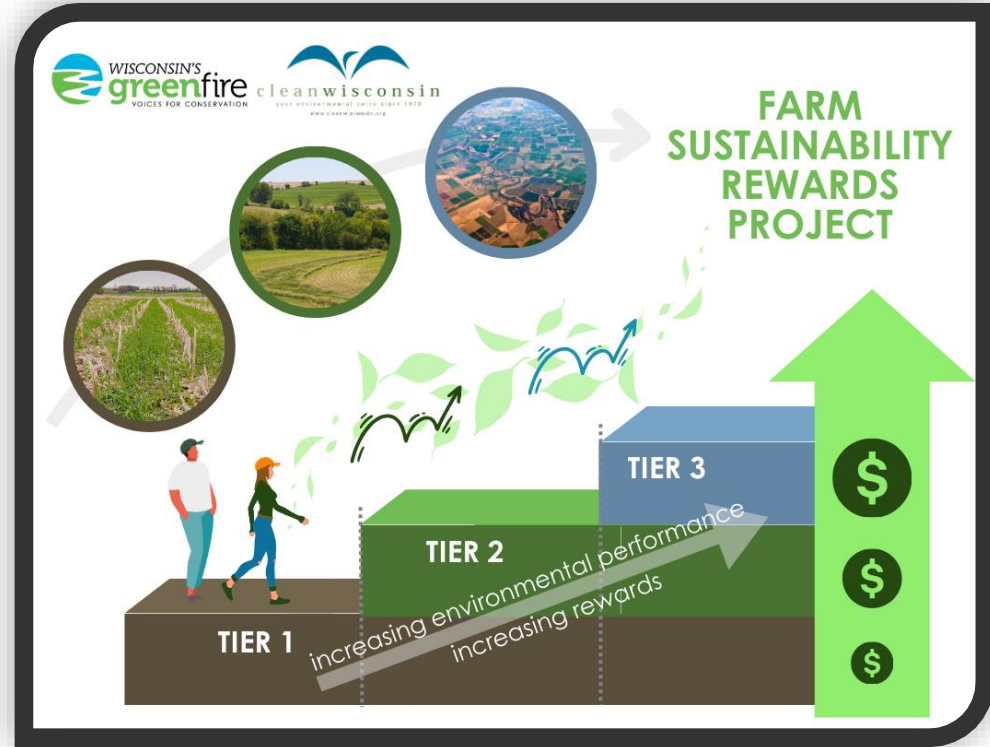


*Small steel girder bridge, near Slateford, WI photo by Aaron Volkening via Flickr*



# Support from the LWCB

- Support County Outreach
  - Connection w/ Stakeholder groups & agencies
  - Scientific / technical expertise
  - Be an FSR Champion
- ◆ **Contact Us!**



**Farm Sustainability**  
REWARDS PROJECT

Let's innovate  
together!

With your help, the  
FSR Project can  
grow, and  
sustainable  
agriculture can  
thrive in Wisconsin.



*Rainbow over the Cattle on the Grasslands.,  
Photo by Richard Cates*



**Farm  
Sustainability**  
REWARDS PROJECT



WISCONSIN'S  
**greenfire**  
VOICES FOR CONSERVATION



**cleanwisconsin**  
your environmental voice since 1970  
[www.cleanwisconsin.org](http://www.cleanwisconsin.org)

**Thank you!**  
**Questions?**

**Contact Ben:**

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715-203-0384 ext. 5

<https://wigreenfire.org>



# Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grant Program

2022-2023 Impact Report



Wisconsin Department of Agriculture,  
Trade and Consumer Protection





## Notes of Success: Expanding the Social importance of the Program

As the PLWPG Program continues to grow, the social aspects of the program are being recognized for their importance in seeing conservation expand. Farmers teaching farmers is an important aspect of the program that helps build confidence in trying new practices. Farmers are also developing public speaking skills as they lead the groups and host field days on their farm or give presentations on their experience at workshops in their community, around the state, regionally, and nationally.

Farmer mentorship continues to be an important aspect of the groups. Many of the groups are working to help develop networks of local farmers willing to provide mentorship as people are changing their cropping systems. Many groups have also realized the importance of reaching audiences outside the farming community. There are several groups that have formed formal partnerships with lake and river groups, provide educational opportunities for school and youth groups, and opening their events to the non-farming community.

“The public pasture walks and on-farm dinners that the Stock Family Farm began hosting in 2022 became such a hit that they were continued, and more were added in 2023. These successful events educated over 225 individual attendees over the course of the 2023 grazing season. Having a first-hand experience walking through rotationally grazed pastures at sunset and enjoying the delicious smells and flavors of the nutritious proteins raised in such a regenerative manner changed the buying habits of many consumers. A few of the attendees indicated that they are absentee landowners and are now seeking tenants to steward their farms regeneratively. A few others are indicated they were farmers and have already sought technical assistance to begin converting their farms to rotational grazing. “ **-Rock River Regenerative Graziers 2023 annual report**





## Notes of Success: Expanding the Social importance of the Program

“The group came together to hold an event called ‘Conservation Night by the Lake’. They invited predominately lake homeowners out to see what local farmers are doing to help protect the lake. Around 100 participants attended. A key to the night was that group members were the ones to give the tour of the farm, which included four stops, rainfall simulator, soil pit, grazing, and general farming-cover crop tour stops. The success of this event created a good start communicating about conservation between farmers and their urban neighbors. They hope to continue and grow this event in 2023.” -**Lake Wisconsin Farmer Watershed Council 2022 annual report**

“In September, we were able to organize and host both a Youth Fall Field Day and a Farmer/Agronomic Professional Fall Field Day. It was a huge accomplishment to make a connection with the West Bend High Schools, inviting the AP Environmental Students (grades 11 and 12) to the farm. Their advisors stated that this information would be taught throughout the year, and what a great opportunity it was for them to see soil/conservation/agriculture/cover crops/drones/careers firsthand.” -**Cedar Creek Farmers 2023 annual report**



# Looking Ahead

As the PLWPG program grows, DATCP will continue to look for ways to best support the development and success of producer-led groups. Specifically, the program will:

- Continue to encourage flexibility and farmer innovation in conservation practice offerings
- Coordinate statewide demonstration and research efforts to better analyze practices and systems and compare results across soils, geography, and crops
- Support groups in tracking and communicating successes
- Strengthen the program's existing Regional Teams to foster continued collaboration and idea sharing across groups in different regions of the state
- Encourage PL groups to continue refining and promoting perennial-based systems and practices that help provide continuous living cover
- Continue to build partnerships vital to success and growth of the program and individual groups
- Provide outreach and assistance on topics such as developing farmer leaders, organizational development strategies, and other topics key to addressing challenges like farmer burnout, stifled growth, and limited administrative capacity
- Continue to provide learning and relationship-building opportunities for PL groups in the network, including the annual workshop and more regional trainings

