

Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grants

Program Basics

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) will award grants to producer-led groups that focus on ways to prevent and reduce runoff from farm fields and farmsteads through its new **Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grant Program**.

GOAL: Improve Wisconsin's soil and water quality by encouraging producer-led conservation decision making and solutions

GRANT AWARDS?

- \$250,000 is available each fiscal year.
- Grants cannot exceed \$20,000 per group per year.

WHO CAN APPLY?

- A group of at least 5 eligible producers working to improve water quality through conservation activities. An "eligible producer" means the operator of a farm that produced at least \$6,000 in gross farm revenues during the taxable year or a total of at least \$18,000 in gross farm revenues during 3 taxable years.

WHEN?

- Applications will be accepted at least annually. Check the DATCP producer-led webpage for Request for Proposals (RFP) announcements and application deadlines.

REQUIREMENTS?

- Assist other agricultural producers in a watershed to voluntarily conduct water quality improvement efforts.
- Group must work with and form a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with a collaborator listed on the right.
- Grant funding must be accepted and administered by a producer-led group that is a legal entity, or has a legal entity acting on behalf of the group. The definition of a legal entity is provided in the RFP.
- Group must provide matching funds at least equal to their grant request.

COLLABORATORS

The following collaborating entities may provide technical or other assistance to producer-led groups:

- DATCP
- DNR
- COUNTY LAND CONSERVATION COMMITTEES
- UW EXTENSION
- DISCOVERY FARMS
- NONPROFIT CONSERVATION ORGANIZATIONS

WEBPAGE RESOURCES & ALL GRANT INFORMATION

https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/ProducerLedProjects.aspx



QUESTIONS?

608-224-4622, rachel.rushmann@wisconsin.gov

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

PROJECT COSTS THAT MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING

Please note: These are not exhaustive lists. We encourage innovative ideas and highly recommend reaching out to the program manager to discuss the suitability of your project.

START-UP COSTS

- Work planning
- Mission statement development
- Goal setting



IMPLEMENTATION & OUTREACH

- Learning/field days
- Bringing in experts to discuss relevant topics such as soil health, nutrient management and existing water quality monitoring data
- Measuring and promoting the economic and environmental benefits of conservation practices
- Developing innovative approaches to manure storage/stacking or sharing conservation equipment to increase or identify economic and environmental benefits of these practices
- Outreach activities such as conferences, workshops or field days to increase voluntary producer and agribusiness participation in your watershed project
- On-farm research with your collaborator to identify economic and environmental benefits and opportunities for conservation practices
- Cost-effective edge-of-field and/or in-stream water quality monitoring
- Farm assessments to evaluate farm, erosion control, manure and nutrient management practices and identify solutions to resource concerns

INCENTIVE PAYMENTS TO PRODUCERS

- Soil testing
- Cover crops
- Nutrient and manure management planning
- No-till
- Buffer strips
- Grassed waterways
- Manure composting
- Low-disturbance manure injection
- Other non-traditional conservation practices



STEPS TO SUCCESS

These steps have been critical to the success of existing producer-led groups:

1. Identify your watershed's specific resource concerns.
2. Identify potential changes or improvements your group would like to make in your watershed to address those resource concerns.
3. Organize a leadership structure within your producer-led group.
4. Develop a vision, goals and work/watershed plan for your project.
5. Execute your plan through education, outreach, and conservation practices.
6. Track and reward progress, participation, and success.

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