



Fifth Round of Producer-Led Watershed Grant Funding Awarded to 27 Farmer Groups

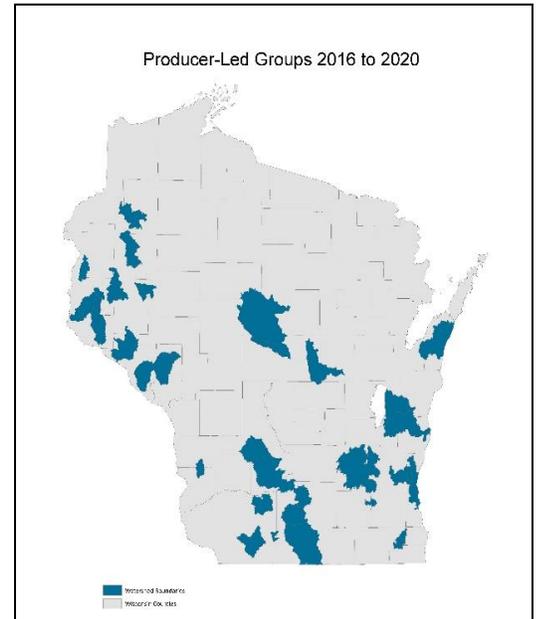
Release date: November 21, 2019

Media Contact: [Rick Hummell](#), Communications Specialist, (608) 224-5041

Note: Local contacts are available on the producer-led grants [webpage](#). For a higher-resolution version of the map, contact Rick Hummell.

MADISON – Wisconsin’s latest round of Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grants has been awarded to 27 groups of farmers by the state’s Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). Farmers will work with conservation agencies and organizations to address soil and water issues specific to their local conditions.

Three of the groups are first-time recipients. Together, the 27 groups will receive the full \$750,000 included in Governor Evers’ budget for 2020. Grants range from just over \$7,500 to \$40,000 for conservation practice incentives, education and outreach, and water quality testing and monitoring efforts. All projects are led by farmers in collaboration with local partner agencies and organizations to increase conservation activities in their watersheds.



In the Year of Clean Drinking Water, farmers continue to find value in the program and the opportunity to connect with other farmers on conservation issues. “Without DATCP’s support, we wouldn’t be able to accomplish all that we have to get the word out about the importance of cover crops and regenerative agriculture,” said Tony Peirick, farm leader of the Dodge County Healthy Soils-Healthy Waters Group. “We really appreciate the consistent support we receive from this grant to continue promoting our message.”

This is the fifth round of grant awards since funding was made available in the 2015-17 state budget. The 2019-21 budget authorized annual program funding totaling \$750,000, which now will be included in future state budgets. Grant requests for 2020 totaled just over \$1,000,000.

Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grants give financial support to farmers willing to lead conservation efforts in their own watersheds. The emphasis is on innovation and practices not already covered by other state and federal programs, and the intent is that participating farmers will reach out to other farmers to help them adopt conservation practices by offering incentives and through education and outreach activities.

“As a collaborator on several projects, it has been a tremendous opportunity for Discovery Farms to assist farmers in addressing water quality challenges locally,” said Amber Radatz, co-director of UW-Discovery Farms. “For us, it has been a great two-way partnership: providing resources and water quality data, and then allowing farmers to innovate and adapt practices to fit local conditions. This has an excellent value for everyone involved and is a true testament to the power of farmer leadership.”

Producer groups must work with the Department of Natural Resources, a county land conservation committee, UW-Extension, or a nonprofit conservation organization. Funds cannot pay for real estate,

loans, equipment, or lobbying, and the program places caps on the amount of funding that can be used for staff support to the groups. Each group must start with at least five farmers in the watershed.

First-time grant recipients:

- Sauk Soil and Water Improvement Group, \$40,000
- Bear Creek/Chippewa Farmer Groundwater Group, \$39,815
- Calumet County Agricultural Stewardship Alliance, \$7,500

Previously funded projects receiving new grants:

- Buffalo-Trempealeau Farmer Network: \$25,000
- Cedar Creek Farmers - Improving Land for Cleaner Waters: \$25,000
- Dodge County Farmers for Healthy Soil & Healthy Water: \$39,705
- Farmers for Lake Country: \$19,630
- Farmers for the Upper Sugar River: \$38,800
- Farmers for Tomorrow: \$40,000
- Farmers of Barron County: \$20,000
- Farmers of Mill Creek: \$40,000
- Farmers of the Sugar River: \$35,000
- Hay River Farmer-Led Watershed Council: \$10,000
- Horse Creek Farmer-Led Watershed Council: \$15,000
- Lafayette Ag Stewardship Alliance (LASA): \$20,000
- Milwaukee River Watershed Clean Farm Families (CFF): \$40,000
- Peninsula Pride Farms (PPF): \$10,000
- Producers of Lake Redstone: \$20,000
- Red Cedar Conservation Farmers: \$40,000
- Sheboygan River Progressive Farmers: \$35,000
- South Kinni Farmer-Led Watershed Council: \$10,000
- Tainter Creek Farmer-Led Watershed Council: \$40,000
- The Shell Lake - Yellow River Farmer-Led Watershed Council: \$17,500
- Uplands Watershed Group: \$17,000
- Watershed Protection Committee of Racine County: \$40,000
- Western Wisconsin Conservation Council: \$40,000
- Yahara Pride Farms: \$25,000

###