



## Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grants

# Second Round of Funding Awarded to 11 Farmer Groups

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Note: A higher-resolution version of the map is available by contacting Donna Gilson.

MADISON – Wisconsin's second round of Producer Led Watershed Protection Grants have been awarded to 11 groups of farmers who will work with resource conservation agencies and organizations to address soil and water issues tailored to their local conditions.

All but one of the groups already existed, many of them having started with the help of funding from the first round of grants. Together they will receive just over \$197,000 in this second round of awards.

The grant program was included in the 2015-17 state budget, designed to 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. Each group is eligible for up to \$20,000 a year.

Producer groups must work with DATCP, the Department of Natural Resources, a county land conservation committee, the University of Wisconsin-Extension, or a nonprofit conservation organization. Grant funds cannot pay for real estate, loans, equipment purchases, or lobbying, and the program places caps on the amount of funding that can be used for staff support to the groups.

The second-round grant recipients are:

### **Buffalo-Trempealeau Farmer Network – Elk Creek Watershed: \$13,440**

*Understanding and improving nitrogen application in the Elk Creek Watershed*

Continuing work with Discovery Farms on a nutrient use efficiency project, the group will also host a field day and winter meeting, and help producers test new technologies, evaluate management practices that improve nitrogen management, and research nitrogen cycling on farm.

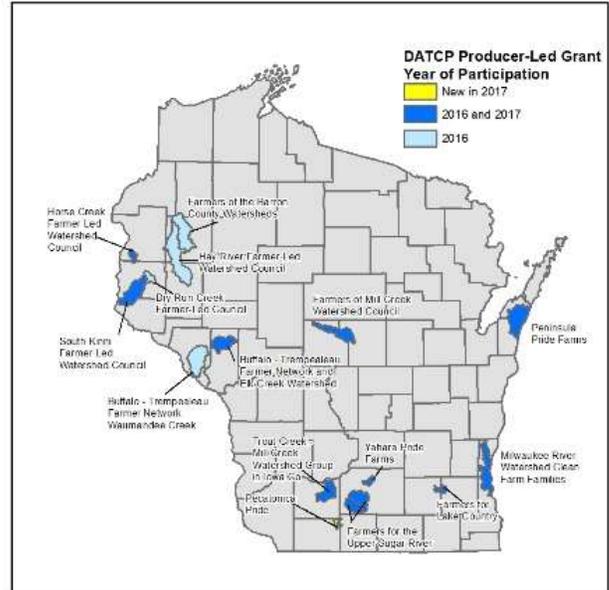
Contact: Brian Maliszewski, 715-530-1107

### **Farmers for Lake Country – Oconomowoc River Watershed: \$20,000**

*Improving water quality in the Oconomowoc River watershed*

Again collaborating with Tall Pines Conservancy, this group will host a winter conservation conference and nutrient management training, provide a fall field technology day, and partially reimburse farmers to try no-till planting of cash and cover crops, no-till fertilizing, and cover crops in full-season cash crops.

Contact: Don Heilman, 608-279-2732



## GRANTS – ADD ONE

### **Farmers for the Upper Sugar River: \$20,000**

*Making best management practices accessible to the Upper Sugar River Producer Coalition*

Collaborating with the UW-Extension, the coalition plans to create a larger scale program to reduce the risks for farmers trying new conservation practices by providing incentives to plant cover crops and renting equipment for low-disturbance manure injection and vertical tillage. The group will also use citizen water quality monitoring to develop baseline phosphorus data.

Contact: Wade Moder, 608-437-7707

### **Farmers of Mill Creek Watershed Council: \$19,975**

*Water quality improvement and public outreach in Mill Creek*

Working with Portage County UW-Extension, this group will continue research on cover crop effects on soil moisture and temperature, and agricultural drains to improve water management. The group will also offer incentives for planting cover crops and trying no-till planting and host three field days.

Contact: John Eron, 715-498-5222

### **Horse Creek Farmer-Led Watershed Council: \$15,450**

*Improving water quality and building soil health in the Horse Creek Watershed*

Collaborating with Polk County Land and Water Resources Department, the group will use funding for soil sampling, phosphorus indexing, cover crop planting, manure spreader calibration, corn stalk nitrate testing and stream sampling, and provide outreach about these practices to other farmers.

Contact: Eric Wojchik, 715-485-8699

### **Milwaukee River Watershed Clean Farm Families: \$20,000**

*Improving soil health and water quality in the Milwaukee River watershed*

Collaborating with Ozaukee County Land Conservation Department and the Milwaukee River Watershed Conservation Partnership, the group sought funding to add financial incentives to farmers for nutrient management planning, conservation tillage and low-disturbance manure injection to its existing cover crop, harvestable buffer and tillage demonstrations. The group will also host field days, workshops and trainings.

Contact: Jim Melichar, 262-206-1731

### **Pecatonica Pride: \$20,000**

*Community watershed project*

Working with Southwest Wisconsin Regional Planning Council, Lafayette County Land Conservation Department and Southwest Badger Resource Conservation and Development, Pecatonica Pride will use its funding for production of maps, assessments, signage and a manual, with the goal of creating a team of farmers, landowner, and community groups to improve and restore the Pecatonica River.

Contact: Kriss Marion, 608-558-0501

### **Peninsula Pride Farms: \$20,000**

*Implementing practices that reduce nutrient and sediment loads in the Kewaunee River Watershed*

Collaborating with Wisconsin Center for Agriculture and Environmental Resources, this group will use funding for incentive payments for farmers to try new conservation practices, nutrient management assessments, and demonstrations and field days to help farmers see the environmental and economic benefits of conservation practices best suited for the karst topography in their region.

Contact: Rick Paye, 920-304-0300

### **South Kinni Farmer-Led Watershed Council: \$10,000**

*Improving water quality and building soil health in the South Kinni Watershed*

Working with the Pierce County Land Conservation Committee, this group will provide incentives to farmers to plant cover crops, develop filter strips, conduct farm walkovers to identify conservation needs, and install grassed waterways and grade stabilization structures.

Contact: Dan Sitz, 608-273-6763

GRANTS – ADD TWO

**Trout Creek-Mill Creek Watershed Group: \$18,200**

*Reducing nutrient and sediment loss in the Trout Creek-Mill Creek watershed*

Collaborating with Michael Fields Institute, this previously funded group will provide incentives for no-till cover crop planting, pasture renovation and for new farmer signups to the group, with the provision that members either have or develop nutrient management plans. They also plan to bring in expert speakers, and hold another farm tour and a field day, featuring rotational grazing, no-till, cover crops and other practices.

*Contact: Michael Dolan, 608-444-9759*

**Yahara Pride Farms: \$20,000**

*Reducing agricultural phosphorus loss to surface waters in the Yahara watershed*

Working with UW Discovery Farms, this ongoing group will use its funding to expand its assessment, verification and certification program, which helps farmers identify conservation practices already installed or that could be installed and to find assistance in making the improvements; and to develop a paid-for-performance program for farms that have experimented with new practices and want to continue and improve them. The group also works with many partners for on-farm research including headland stacking and composting of manure, nitrogen use efficiency and cover crops.

*Contact: Jeff Endres, 608-279-8991*

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