

Changes to Soil and Water Resource Management Program (ATCP 50)

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection is implementing changes to state administrative rule ATCP 50 to implement the Silurian bedrock agricultural performance standards promulgated in 2018 by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in Wis. Admin. Code NR 151.075. Changes will increase flexibility to achieve soil and water conservation goals and provide options for landowners and farmers to meet state soil and water standards while improving the administration and clarity of existing programs. More information about the rulemaking process can be found on our [website](#). A summary of changes presented at county partner meetings in April 2024, including considerations for new practices, can be reviewed [here](#). This summary reflects changes within ATCP 50; it does not reflect the existing authorities granted by rule in its entirety, which have not been updated. Conservation practitioners are encouraged to review the rule in its entirety and or consult a program expert with any questions.

What is new?	What is the outcome?	Who may be affected?	What is the effect of the change?
Establish Silurian bedrock as a farm conservation practice	Provide farmers with conservation practices and tools to meet the agricultural performance standards established by DNR	Landowners and farmers in select areas of the state ^{1, 2}	Require updates to existing nutrient management plans to account for the Silurian bedrock performance standard, or development of a new plan, if no plan exists. Implementation is delayed until April 1, 2027. When applicable, farmland preservation participants must meet the Silurian bedrock performance standard by April 1, 2027 to maintain eligibility for tax credits.
Allow use of grant funds for financial assistance	Financial assistance available to landowners as cost-share, incentives, or outcome-based payments	Landowners and farmers County conservation departments	Clarifies the types of financial assistance available to landowners and farmers from county conservation departments to include cost-share, incentives, and performance payments.
Update conservation practices to reflect current practice	Conservation practices designed and implemented to achieve conservation goals; design and implementation of conservation practices will be consistent across federal, state, and local agencies	County conservation departments Landowners and farmers	Standards for cost-shared practices have been updated. Please review ATCP practice standards to ensure all practices are designed and implemented to meet applicable standards and requirements. Revisions may require additional financial contribution than required by a prior conservation practice standard.
Add new conservation practices	Additional conservation practices will be available to achieve conservation goals	Landowners and farmers County conservation departments	Landowners and farmers will have access to financial assistance from county conservation departments for more conservation practices, including conservation crop rotation, conservation cover, habitat diversification, harvestable buffers, hydrologic restoration, nutrient treatment system, stream restoration, and verification of depth to bedrock.
Update existing maximum cost-share rates and add cost-share rates for new conservation practices	Rates for conservation practices will be more consistent across federal, state, and local agencies	Landowners and farmers	Increased financial assistance may be available as costs for conservation practice increase over time.

¹The Silurian bedrock performance standard does not apply to all farmers statewide. It applies to some farmers located in portions of Brown, Calumet, Dodge, Door, Fond du Lac, Kenosha, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Milwaukee, Outagamie, Ozaukee, Racine, Sheboygan, Walworth, Washington, and Waukesha counties.

²Affected farmers permitted under WPDES program are already required to meet the Silurian bedrock performance standard as part of the permit.



Establish Silurian Bedrock as a Farm Conservation Practice

To meet the Silurian bedrock farm conservation practice, producers can develop and implement a nutrient management plan in accordance with ATCP 50.04 (3) that accounts for the Silurian bedrock performance standard.

To accomplish this:

- Determine which, if any, restrictions and prohibitions in the Silurian bedrock area apply. Refer to Figure 1 below.
- Update an existing nutrient management plan, or develop a nutrient management plan, to account for the Silurian bedrock performance standard.
- Follow the nutrient management plan written to the account for the Silurian bedrock performance standard and consult a tool to predict weather and precipitation prior to manure application.

Updated Conservation Practices and Cost-share Rates and Add New Practices

Changes to the rule ensure that conservation practices implemented will follow current standards and practice. In addition, eight new conservation practices are added to the rule and maximum cost-share rates are adjusted.

- Updated the reference for 90 conservation practice standards to reference the most recent standard in the NRCS field office technical guide.
- Added eight conservation practices and set maximum cost-share rates where applicable.
- Updated maximum cost-share rates for other cropping practices.

Tools to Meet the Silurian Bedrock Performance Standard

- Farmers have until April 1, 2027 to update nutrient management plans to meet the Silurian bedrock performance standard and to ensure eligibility for farmland preservation tax credits.
- DATCP established a voluntary technical standard for farmers to verify depth of bedrock to confirm which restrictions and prohibitions apply.
- Cost-sharing available to update an existing nutrient management plan and to use the Verification of Depth to Bedrock technical standard.

Figure 1: Determining Applicability of the Silurian Bedrock Performance Standard

