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February 2025

### Soil and Water Resources Management (SWRM) Grants

- Reimbursement requests for 2024 SWRM funds are due February 15, 2025. This includes SWRM cost-share, staffing, NMFE, and cooperator grants.
- The 2026 SWRM Grant Application is available on the [SWRM webpage](#).
- **NEW FORMS REQUIRED!** Many of the SWRM forms have been updated with new content and new numbers. Please refer to [Section 3 of the SWRM Grant Resources](#) webpage to access these forms.
- **\*\*SWRM Master Contract NOTICE\*\*** The SWRM master contracts will be updated this year. These five-year contracts will require an authorized county signature this spring. **IF THE COUNTY CONSERVATIONIST IS NOT AN AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY FOR THE COUNTY**, please contact Kim or Hailey with the correct name and email address. This master contract will update the 2017 master contract and will be updated every five years. In the intervening years, you will need to acknowledge approval of the Schedule of Awards as in past years.

### Nutrient Management News

- 2026 Nutrient Management Farmer Education Grant Application open January 31-April 15. Request for Applications and the application can be found on the NMFE webpage here: [DATCP Home Nutrient Management Farmer Education Grants](#). Please direct any questions to Andrea Topper at [Andrea.Topper@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Andrea.Topper@wisconsin.gov).
- **On February 11 at 10 a.m.**, DATCP staff will be hosting a NMFE webinar focusing on the application process and will answer any grant related questions. Register here: <https://events.gcc.teams.microsoft.com/event/7b5dafb1-f1b5-43cd-9ad7-a96bf8b1c6f0@f4e2d11c-fae4-453b-b6c0-2964663779aa>.
- [2025 Virtual Nutrient Management Training for Farmers](#) - This training provides both the basics of nutrient management and an introduction to SnapPlus. The same training will be offered on two dates. Participants only need to attend one training date to be certified as an eligible farmer plan writer.
  - Dates: March 14. Times: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
  - [Register here](#)
- Counties that would like some assistance on Nutrient Management Quality Assurance Reviews should email Cody Calkins at [cody.calkins@wisconsin.gov](mailto:cody.calkins@wisconsin.gov). We are looking at providing assistance this year to at least three counties.

## **Conservation Engineering**

- After almost 25 years with DATCP, Stacy Dehne is leaving for an engineering position with DOA. Her dedication to the counties and conservation, and vast knowledge and willingness to share it with others has been greatly appreciated. She will be missed! We will be working to backfill her position as quickly as possible, so watch for a job posting coming this month.
- Engineering Reserve Fund: DATCP will once again be offering funds in 2025 for projects that address a resource concern. Projects that address a farm discharge will be prioritized, but other conservation practices that address nutrients and/or soil erosion will be considered as well. If you have a project that needs funds, or needs additional funding to complete, watch for more information coming soon from your DATCP area engineering contact. Deadline to submit applications is **Friday, March 28**.
- Cultural Resources checks for State-funded projects (e.g. SWRM grants) are now submitted through DATCP. An informational email was sent last month containing information on the new submittal process.

NOTE: Federally funded projects should continue to be submitted through NRCS as before. Your DATCP Cultural Resources contacts by area are below:

- North Area – Sarah Hovis ([sarah.hovis@wisconsin.gov](mailto:sarah.hovis@wisconsin.gov))
- Northwest Area – Dennis Marquardt, Jr. ([dennis.marquardtjr@wisconsin.gov](mailto:dennis.marquardtjr@wisconsin.gov))
- Northeast Area – Peter Wurzer ([peter.wurzer@wisconsin.gov](mailto:peter.wurzer@wisconsin.gov))
- Southwest Area – Taylor Smagacz ([taylor.smagacz@wisconsin.gov](mailto:taylor.smagacz@wisconsin.gov))
- Southeast Area – Jon Lisowe ([jon.lisowe@wisconsin.gov](mailto:jon.lisowe@wisconsin.gov))

## **Land and Water Conservation Board-LWRM Plans**

- At the February 4, 2025, LWCB meeting Columbia, Ozaukee, and Washington counties will be presenting LWRM plan five-year reviews to the board.

## **DATCP Drainage Program**

- The DATCP Drainage Program is developing the Winter 2025 quarterly newsletter. The intent of the newsletter will be to highlight successes and challenges facing drainage districts and County Drainage Boards throughout the State. The newsletter is part of the Department's overall effort to improve the effectiveness and efficiencies for all stakeholders involved with Wisconsin Drainage Law. The Department is seeking input for the quarterly newsletter. If you have a project or information that you would like to highlight, please send your ideas to Barton T. Chapman, P.E., Drainage Program Manager at [Barton.Chapman@Wisconsin.gov](mailto:Barton.Chapman@Wisconsin.gov).
- The Wisconsin Association of Drainage Boards (WADB), in cooperation with DATCP, will be holding regional educational outreach meetings throughout the state in 2025. Meeting logistics will be shared as they become available.
- All activities within drainage districts are managed and administered by a county drainage board. Contact information can be found on the [Drainage Program website](#) or by contacting Barton T. Chapman, Drainage Program Manager, at [Barton.Chapman@Wisconsin.gov](mailto:Barton.Chapman@Wisconsin.gov).

## **Agricultural Impact Statement (AIS) Program**

- The AIS program published [AIS 4600](#) for the Grid Forward – Central Wisconsin Transmission Line Project in Chippewa, Clark, Eau Claire, and Trempealeau counties.
- You can find more information about the AIS program at [agimpact.wi.gov](http://agimpact.wi.gov). You can also contact [DATCPAgImpactStatements@wi.gov](mailto:DATCPAgImpactStatements@wi.gov) with questions regarding any active AIS statement or the AIS program.

## **Farmland Preservation (FP) Program and Agricultural Enterprise Areas (AEA)**

- For information about the AEA petition process, including application materials, visit the [Petitioning for AEA Designation webpage](#). Please contact Wednesday Coye at [wednesday.coye@wisconsin.gov](mailto:wednesday.coye@wisconsin.gov) with any questions you have about the AEA program.
- The [DATCP Home Farmland Preservation Tax Credits](#) webpage has been updated with additional information to help landowners and tax preparers choose the correct tax schedule when filing for an FP tax credit. If you receive any questions from landowners or tax preparers regarding questions related to tax credit claims or tax credit denials, please contact Wednesday Coye at [wednesday.coye@wisconsin.gov](mailto:wednesday.coye@wisconsin.gov). Landowners who have received a denial letter have a limited amount of time to file an appeal with Department of Revenue; timely action is critical.

## **Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)**

- **Farm Bill Extended to 9/30/2025:** On December 21, 2024, the federal government passed another extension of the 2018 Farm Bill on that runs until September 30, 2025. DATCP is waiting to hear from our FSA partners for details when CREP will be opened again for enrollment. Hopeful it will be in early 2025. DATCP will provide updates as soon as we receive more details.
- **Submit Outstanding Items to DATCP for Completion:** If you submitted a request to DATCP for processing but were contacted by State CREP staff requesting additional items for processing, please submit those items as soon as possible. Also, continue to submit any CREP agreements from last year that DATCP has not year received.

## **Soil Health Program**

- The ATCP 50 office hours touch on how the soil health principles can guide our conservation planning by looking at the whole farm with systems approach. See the ATCP 50 update below for the recorded ATCP 50 office hours and contact Randy Zogbaum at [randall.zogbaum@wisconsin.gov](mailto:randall.zogbaum@wisconsin.gov) if you have any questions.
- A new soil health module has been added to the NMFE curriculum if you are looking for resources on soil health.
- Reminder that the new online Soil Health curriculum is live and available on our [soilhealthtraining.wi.gov](http://soilhealthtraining.wi.gov) website. The purpose of this curriculum is to develop a common definition and understanding of Soil Health and develop some guideposts of how to implement soil health systems on Wisconsin Farms. Modules 1-3 establish a common language of Soil Health in Wisconsin agriculture. For questions regarding this training or the soil health program contact Randy Zogbaum at [randall.zogbaum@wisconsin.gov](mailto:randall.zogbaum@wisconsin.gov).
  - **2025 Soil Health Trainings and initiatives**
    - In 2025, we will work on completing module 4 of the online Soil Health Training focusing on applying soil health principles in Wisconsin cropping systems. Stay tuned for opportunities to be involved in this training.
    - As we implement these practices knowing that this work is improving soil health can be demonstrated using [NRCS Soil Health Assessment Techniques](#). Stay tuned in 2025 for more on this initiative.

## **Cover Crop Insurance Rebate Program – Apply Now!**

- [The 2024-2025 Crop Insurance Rebate for Planting Cover Crops application](#) is now closed and acres are being reviewed.
- To qualify, cover crops must be planted in the fall of 2024 on fields to be insured with a cash crop in the spring of 2025. The acres cannot receive state or federal cover crop funding support during this same time.
- Program information and answers to frequently asked questions are available on the [department website](#).

## Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Program (NOPP)

- Cycle 3 of the NOPP grants closed on January 17, 2025. The NOPP team will be reviewed and scored by the NOPP Review Team. Awards should be announced in late February.
- UW will be hosting regional meetings to discuss Insights from on-farm research on February 19 in Eau Claire, February 21 in Arlington, and February 24 in Appleton. You can register here to attend: <https://cropsandsoils.extension.wisc.edu/nitrogen-optimization-pilot-program/#Events>.

## Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grant (PLWPG) Program

- 2025 was the most competitive year yet for the Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grant. We received applications from **49 producer-led groups**, for a total funding request of over **\$1.6 million**. With a program budget of \$1 million, the grants review committee had to make extremely difficult decisions. Priorities were to fund new viable groups while also providing the highest level of funding merited to as many existing groups as possible.

## ATCP 50 Update

- ATCP 50 updates went into effect June 1, 2024. Final rule language can be reviewed on the Wisconsin Legislature's [website](#). The Bureau has rule information on our [website](#). **This fall, DATCP hosted ATCP 50 Office Hours** related to non-structural practice updates. Each Office Hour included a technical primer of the practice, a short discussion of the soil health benefits and applicable SWRM cost-share requirements. All [office hours](#) were recorded and available for future viewing [here](#). If you have any questions, email [dateplandwater@wisconsin.gov](mailto:dateplandwater@wisconsin.gov).
- **NEW PRACTICE INTRODUCTION:** Conservation Cover (ATCP 50.663). This SEG-funded conservation practice allows for the establishment and maintenance of permanent vegetative cover in an agricultural setting to reduce erosion, improve water quality, and better soil health. Available for lands covered with a nutrient management plan. It requires the county to commit to 10-year minimum planning and monitoring period for this practice. SWRM cost-share will cover the initial installation and the creation of the monitoring plan.

## Staffing Updates

- The Land & Water Resource Management Planner position (formerly held by Lisa Trumble) has been posted with an application deadline of February 17. Go to [wisc.jobs](http://wisc.jobs) and search for job "16837" to learn more about the position and apply. If you have any questions, contact Katy Smith at [Katy.Smith@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Katy.Smith@wisconsin.gov).
- The Land and Water Resources Bureau Director position has been posted with an application deadline of February 17. Go to [wisc.jobs](http://wisc.jobs) and search for job "16855" to learn more about the position and apply. If you have any questions, contact Tim Anderson at [Timothy1.Anderson@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Timothy1.Anderson@wisconsin.gov).