



Land & Water Monthly Newsletter

BUREAU OF LAND AND WATER RESOURCES

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture,
Trade and Consumer Protection

April 2026

Joint Allocation Grants and Reporting

1. Soil and Water Resources Management Grants
[Application Guidance](#)
[Staffing, Cost-Share, and Innovation Application](#)
Due 4/15/2026 to datcpswrm@wisconsin.gov
2. Nutrient Management Farmer Education Grants
[Application Guidance](#)
[Application](#)
Due 4/15/2026 to datcpsoilandwatershedmanagement@wisconsin.gov
3. Reporting
[2026 Annual Workplan template](#)
Due 4/15/2026 to Jennifer.Chakravorty@wisconsin.gov

Soil and Water Resources Management (SWRM) Grants

- New program guidance issued for utilizing [SEG funding for structural practices](#) and [Engineering Reserve Projects](#). Check out all the resources on policies and procedures on the [SWRM Grant Resources: Section 2](#) webpage.

Nutrient Management Updates

- Previously recorded webinars and trainings can be found on DATCP's [Nutrient Management Trainings](#) webpage. Scroll to the bottom of the page to find trainings.
- Please don't forget to submit your survey response with your SnapPlus V3 User Group Name and associated email. You can fill out the survey at <https://forms.office.com/g/4gu52qyGth>.
- **NEW!** - Webinar series: Incorporating Off Farm Waste into Nutrient Management Plans. Hosted in partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and UW-Extension. For more information, visit the [event registration webpage](#). Or, access the flyer on [DATCP's website](#).

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

- [Tools for Working with Landowners on CREP](#)
DATCP's [CREP webpage](#) has many tools for you to use when working with landowners on CREP, such as printable brochures, video tutorials, payment estimators, practice descriptions, enrollment flow charts, and more. Also, the [CREP For Counties](#) page holds all the most recent forms and instructions for completing the county/state enrollment and administrative tasks. Direct links to a few of these tools are listed below:
 - [Tutorial for Landowners](#) (7 min.)
 - [Tutorial for County Staff](#) (15 min.)

- [Brochure](#)
- [Payment Estimator](#)
- [Eligible Area Map](#)
- [Agreement Establishment Flowchart](#)
- [Easement Provisions Guide](#)
- [Easement Monitoring Forms for LCDs](#)

DATCP Drainage Program

- About a third of Wisconsin farms depend on constructed drains to remove excess water from their land. Most of these are operated by a single landowner or by voluntary cooperation among neighbors. However, about 10 percent of these drains are organized as drainage districts, which are special purpose districts formed as separate units of government and named according to the county in which it functions. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection regulates drainage districts under Wisconsin law.
- The Wisconsin Association of County Drainage Boards (WACDB), in cooperation with DATCP, will be scheduling a series of educational outreach meetings in the coming months. If you have a topic that you would like to discuss or would like to be included on the WACDB contact list, please contact Richard Gumz, WACDB Chair, richard@gumzfarmllc.com; or Nancy Christensen, WACDB Administrative Assistant, christnyc@hotmail.com.
- Please note that Wisconsin law requires that the board file with the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection; the town board or town zoning committee; the city council, plan commission, or plan committee; and the county zoning administrator, in which district territory is located, a separate report, for the preceding fiscal year, on each drainage district under the board's jurisdiction. Unless the board selects a different fiscal year and notifies DATCP of the selection, the board's fiscal year begins on September 1 and ends the following year on August 31. If you have any questions please contact Bart Chapman, State Drainage Program Manager, at barton.chapman@wisconsin.gov or (608) 216-6433.

Farmland Preservation (FP) Program and Agricultural Enterprise Areas (AEAs)

- The 2026 Agricultural Enterprise Area Petition Cycle is now open. Petitions will be accepted until July 31, 2026. Application materials for new and modifications to existing AEAs are available on our website, [Petitioning for Agricultural Enterprise Area \(AEA\) Designation](#). If you are interested in petitioning for an AEA during the 2026 cycle, please email DATCPWorkingLands@wisconsin.gov to discuss your petition proposal and to schedule your petitioner interview.
- Farmland Preservation Agreement applications (new and re-enrollments) that are submitted to the department by October 1, 2026 will be prioritized for processing for 2026 tax credit eligibility. Landowners who are interested in applying for a Farmland Preservation Agreement are encouraged to apply early. We will continue to process agreements throughout the end of the year, but agreements submitted to us after October 1 may not be processed (drafted and sent to the landowner for signature) before the end of the taxable year.

As you work with landowners this field season, encourage them to apply early so they can claim the tax credit for 2025. Completed agreement applications should be submitted to DATCPWorkingLands@wisconsin.gov.

- The Farmland Preservation Agreement application has been updated. The new application now includes an area on the form to indicate that the application is to re-enroll lands under an expiring agreement. The new form can be accessed at <https://datep.wi.gov/Documents2/FPAGreementApplication.docx>. All agreement applications submitted after January 1, 2026, must use the new agreement form. Any applicants who submit agreement applications on the old form after this date will be asked to resubmit using the

current form.

Soil Health Program

- **NEW: RESULT Soil Health Workshop at Wisconsin Land+Water Conference** – During the Soil Health Workshop, “*What is Soil Health Anyway?*,” the concept of developing a Soil Health Community of Practice was discussed. We will be trying this out soon! Contact Randy Zogbaum at randall.zogbaum@wisconsin.gov if you have any feedback to share and/or would be interested in participating in a Soil Health Community of Practice.
- **NEW: Measuring Soil Health.** How do we know our conservation efforts are improving soil health? The Soil Health Assessment kit developed by Kevin Erb with UW Extension combines portions of the NRCS [Cropland In-Field Soil Health Assessment Guide](#) (Tech Note No. 450-06) and their [Soil Quality Test Kit Guide](#) to provide a tool for in-field assessment of changes in soil health. NRCS has also developed [CEMA 216](#) Soil Health Testing. Both of these tools provide methods to evaluate changes in soil health as we implement conservation practices. Please contact Randy Zogbaum at randall.zogbaum@wisconsin.gov if you have any questions about either method.

Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grant (PLWPG) Program

- Annual reports are being analyzed, and the conservation progress report will be shared later this year. If you have questions or want to learn more, please email randall.zogbaum@wisconsin.gov.

Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Program (NOPP)

- Reports from the first cycle of NOPP projects are posted on the [NOPP webpage](#).

Cover Crop Insurance Premium Rebate Program

- 2025-2026 verified land units and eligible applicants will be credited by USDA-RMA on their 2026 crop insurance bill. Further program information is available at covercroprebate.wi.gov.

Administrative Rule Updates

- ATCP 52’s permanent rule update related to Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grants, the Commercial Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Program, and the Crop Insurance Premium Rebates for Planting Cover Crops was approved by the Governor and sent to the Legislature. Final rule language was filed with the Legislative Review Bureau for publication in early February, and the rules went into effect on April 1, 2026. Updates include general rule cleanup and the incorporation of the two newer programs. Final rule language can be viewed accessed on the [Wisconsin State Legislature website](#).
- **Emergency Rule 2515 (EmR2515)** for [Providing Crop Insurance Premium Rebates for Planting Cover Crops](#) and **Emergency Rule 2516 (EmR2516)** for [Commercial Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Program](#) ended on March 28, 2026.