



March 2024

Soil and Water Resources Management (SWRM) Grants

- The [2025 SWRM application](#) is available on the SWRM webpage and is due April 15, 2024.
- Until proposed ATCP 50 receives approval from the governor, legislature, and is published, the new practices are not available for cost-share.

Annual Reports for 2023

- Reminder: submit your county's responses to annual reporting questions for 2023 by **March 4, 2024**. An email with a link to the report questions was sent to all county conservationists on December 18, 2023. If you did not receive the message, please reach out to Coreen Fallat at coreen.fallat@wisconsin.gov.

ATCP 50 Update

- ATCP 50 has been referred to the Joint Committee for Review of Administrative Rules. A link to the webpage with all related documents is available [here](#).
- Look for opportunities to learn more about what will change in ATCP 50 when the rule is finalized. The Bureau will be providing information through our website and through upcoming events.

Nutrient Management News

- **UPCOMING:** One more online Nutrient Management Farmer Education Training will be hosted in March:
 - Wednesday, March 6, 2024
10 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.
 - The target audience of this training is farmers who want to become certified to write their own nutrient management plans, but anyone is able to attend! Registration is free. Register here: [Meeting Registration - Zoom](#).
- **A recording of the 2025 NMFE Office Hour** is now available on the NMFE webpage, found here: [Nutrient Management Farmer Education Grants](#).
- Previous SnapPlus trainings can be found here: [Nutrient Management Trainings](#).
- Annual NM reporting: If you have any last-minute adjustments to acres/numbers for 2023, please email Cody Calkins at cody.calkins@wisconsin.gov so that we have the most accurate numbers.

Land and Water Conservation Board – LWRM Plans

- Ashland, Barron, and Clark counties will be presenting five-year LWRM plan reviews to the LWCB at their April 2, 2024 meeting.
- The LWCB Advisory Committee on Research will meet March 5 at 9:00 a.m. Visit the [agenda](#) for instructions to join the meeting over Microsoft Teams.
- Reminder: the 2024 annual workplans are due back **April 15, 2024**.

Conservation Engineering

- Funding opportunity: One last reminder that DATCP is currently accepting applications for our Engineering Reserve Funds. These funds are intended for engineered conservation practices and prioritize projects that address farm discharge(s) that need additional funding to get completed. Deadline for project consideration is **Friday, March 29, 2024**. Questions and applications should be directed to your DATCP area engineering contact.
- The Wisconsin Standards Oversight Council (SOC) and Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) are currently seeking public comment on a revised draft of the NRCS Conservation Practice Standard 635 Vegetated Treatment Area (VTA). If you are interested in reviewing the draft standard, it can be found here: [CPS 635 VTA](#). Comments should be submitted via email to soc@wisconsinlandwater.org by the end of day on **Thursday, March 14, 2024**. The full published notice and instructions can be found here: [Available for Public Review - VTA standard | Standards Oversight Council \(socwisconsin.org\)](#).

DATCP Drainage Program

- As a reminder, annual reports for 2023 were due in December. If you haven't already, please submit those reports to Barton T. Chapman, Drainage Program Manager, at Barton.Chapman@wisconsin.gov.

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

- Counties that update or issue new CoCs for Tax Year 2023 should submit updates for their DOR spreadsheet to DATCPWorkingLands@wisconsin.gov. Updates may be submitted as needed throughout the tax season.
- **NEW:** Agreement holders with effective agreements signed prior to July 1, 2009 that have not been modified to meet current standards will be required to provide their agreement number when filing a claim on tax schedule FC.
- If you have questions about the DOR spreadsheet or have questions with respect to any element of the FP Program, contact DATCPWorkingLands@wi.gov.
- The 2024 Agricultural Enterprise Area (AEA) petition cycle is in full swing. Petition materials for new designation and modification to existing AEAs are available on the [Petitioning for AEA Designation webpage](#). Petitions will be accepted until **August 2, 2024**. If you are planning on petitioning for an AEA this year, please contact Wednesday Coye at wednesday.coye@wisconsin.gov.
- 2024 AEA Petition Process Office Hour: Tuesday, March 12 from 11 a.m.-12 p.m. Join us to discuss the petition drafting process, requirements, and tips and tricks to drafting a successful petition. This is a great opportunity to learn more about the program and to explore if an AEA is right for your community, especially with the 2023 tax credit increases for Farmland Preservation program participants. If you have specific questions, you may submit them in advance to Wednesday Coye at wednesday.coye@wisconsin.gov or ask them during the session. [To join the meeting, click the link below.](#)
- On December 6, 2023, Governor Evers signed Assembly Bill 133, now Wisconsin Act 42, which makes changes to farmland preservation agreements minimum term lengths and increasing farmland preservation tax credits for all current participants. These changes went into effect on December 8, 2023 and will affect

tax credit claims beginning tax year 2023. Check out the [Legislative Updates to the Farmland Preservation Program](#) handout for more information.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

- Virtual CREP 101 Training is offered by DATCP to all CREP counties. The training is offered per LCD request and reviews program requirements, landowner engagement, agency partnership coordination, and county administrative processes. All local agency partners are invited to attend, and the training is valuable to both new and seasoned local CREP staff. Please contact Brian Loeffelholz at Brian.Loeffelholz@wisconsin.gov to set up a time for training in your county.
- A new [Relinquishment of Lands Under CREP Conservation Easements Guide](#) is available on the [CREP – For Counties webpage](#). As landowners work to keep the conservation practices in compliance on their CREP perpetual easement, we sometimes get the question of whether DATCP would relinquish the easement? This guide helps landowners and LCDs determine if they meet the relinquishment criteria and the process for making a relinquishment request.

Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grant (PLWPG) Program

- The 2024 Annual Workshop was held on February 20, 2024 at Northcentral Technical College in Wausau.
- We have funding for groups to host regional winter workshops or spring field days in the range of \$500-\$1,500 per event through the Producer-Led Regional Network effort. Contact your regional coordinator or Randy Zogbaum at <mailto:randall.zogbaum@wisconsin.gov> for more information or if you have ideas for a shared, collaborative event to host with other groups in your region.

Soil Health Program

- The new online soil health curriculum is now live and available on our 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. The curriculum consists of four modules. Modules 1-3 assist in developing a common language of soil health in Wisconsin agriculture while module 4 focuses on applying soil health in Wisconsin cropping systems. The curriculum incorporates both traditional and citizen science to demonstrate the mindset necessary to be successful as a soil health farmer.

The primary audiences are LCD staff, other agriculture professionals in Wisconsin, and Wisconsin farmers. Community members may also find it useful and informative. This training was developed by DATCP, with support from the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Natural Resource Conservation Service.

The first objective is to discuss what soil health is (and isn't) by defining some basic vocabulary and concepts. The second objective is to demonstrate how soil health systems can be implemented on Wisconsin farms.

For questions regarding this training or the Soil Health program, contact Randy Zogbaum at randall.zogbaum@wisconsin.gov.

Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Program (NOPP)

- The 2024 grant cycle closed January 31, 2024. The program has \$1 million for 2024 awards. Awards will be announced in March.

Cover Crop Insurance Rebate Program

- The 2023 cover crop insurance rebate program closed January 31, 2024. Program applications exceeded 160,000 acres. The enrollment information has been shared with USDA/Risk Management Agency for verification.

Legislation Updates

- [2023 Act 42](#) – Relating to: farmland preservation agreements and tax credits.
- [Senate Bill 468](#) and [Assembly Bill 480](#) – Relating to: eligibility for farmland preservation tax credits and photovoltaic solar energy systems.
- [Senate Bill 220](#) and [Assembly Bill 220](#) – Relating to: funding for the Fenwood Creek watershed pilot project.
- [Senate Bill 409](#) and [Assembly Bill 419](#) – Relating to: creating an online interactive carbon calculator for farmers.
- [Senate Bill 619](#) and [Assembly Bill 655](#) – Relating to: a transition to grass pilot program.