



Land & Water Monthly Newsletter

BUREAU OF LAND AND WATER RESOURCES

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture,
Trade and Consumer Protection

May 2026

Nutrient Management Updates

- **2026 Conservation Agronomy Training Program:** Applications are open now through midnight on May 15. This training is a great opportunity for conservation professionals wanting to strengthen their knowledge of agriculture, including how to effectively communicate and collaborate with farmers. For more information on this summer's trainings and locations, visit DATCP's [Conservation Agronomy Training](#) webpage.
- **Coming Soon:** Nutrient management regional meeting dates and locations. Registration will be open soon!
- **SnapPlus V3 Summer Webinar Series:** Join the UW SnapPlus Team, UW-Extension and DATCP NM Staff to learn about SnapPlus V3. The first 45 minutes of the webinar will be a demonstration within the program, and the remaining time will allow for one-on-one discussions with developers. Learn more about the [SnapPlus Version 3: Webinar Training Series – Crops and Soils](#).
- **Webinar Series – Incorporating Off Farm Waste into Nutrient Management Plans:** Hosted in partnership with DNR, UW-Extension. Find [more information](#) or [view flyer](#).

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

- **CREP Enrollment Open until 5/1/2026**

Wisconsin CREP is again open for enrollment under a second batching period in FFY2026 under signup 65 and will remain open until May 1, 2026. FSA is batching CRP and allowing enrollment under certain programs “to prioritize conservation practices with the highest potential for environmental outcomes and ensure enrollment does not exceed the statutory limitation.” CREP offers will continue to be approved by FSA on a first-come, first-served basis and both new and re-enrolls will be accepted. Landowners interested in CREP must begin the offer process with FSA by May 1 to ensure they can enroll. Please reach out to landowners to let them know the benefits of CREP on their farm and have them contact their local FSA office to get the offer process started.
- **Tools for Working with Landowners on CREP**

The [DATCP CREP](#) website has many tools for you to use when working with landowners on CREP, including printable brochures, video tutorials, payment estimators, practice descriptions, enrollment flow charts and more. The [CREP “For Counties”](#) webpage holds all the most recent forms and instructions for completing the County/State enrollment and administrative tasks. Refer to below for direct links to other useful tools:

- [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](#)

Land and Water Conservation Board – LWRM Plans

- The next meeting of the Land and Water Conservation Board will be June 2, 2026. Waushara and Waupaca counties will be presenting their 5-year Land and Water Management Plan reviews, and Brad Herrick, UW-Madison Lakeshore Nature Preserve Director, will have an educational presentation on jumping worms. You can register to attend the meeting virtually at https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/About_Us/LandWaterConservationBoard.aspx.

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

- The 2026 Agricultural Enterprise Area Petition Cycle is now open. Petitions will be accepted until **Friday, July 31, 2026**. Application materials for new and modifications to existing AEAs are available on the DATCP website's [Petitioning for Agricultural Enterprise Area \(AEA\) Designation](#) webpage. 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.
 - All petitions must complete a recorded interview with a local champion and Land Conservation Department personnel before the end of June.
 - A draft petition must be submitted to the Farmland Preservation Program for preliminary feedback by July 1, 2026.
- Farmland Preservation Agreement applications (new and re-enrollments) that are submitted to DATCP by **Thursday, 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 as early as possible. 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 2026. 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 located here. 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 current form.

Conservation Engineering

- The webinar on Cultural Resources that Sarah Hovis (DATCP) and Felipe Avila (Wisconsin Historical Society) hosted in early April is available on the [Wisconsin Land+Water](#) website.

- **Coming in May – DATCP Engineering Services Survey:** DATCP staff are gathering feedback on how we are meeting county staff needs and where we can make improvements. Please take some time to fill out this survey so we can adjust where needed, set goals during our strategic planning process, and continue to strengthen our relationship with county staff. We anticipate sharing the survey via email in mid- to late May.

DATCP Drainage Program

- 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, at richard@gumzfarmllc.com or Nancy Christensen, WACDB Administrative Assistant, at christnyc@hotmail.com.
- Please note that Wisconsin law requires that the board file a separate report, for the preceding fiscal year, on each drainage district under the board's jurisdiction, with DATCP; 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. 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, barton.chapman@wisconsin.gov or (608) 216-6433.

Soil Health

- **NEW: Soil Health Field Days/Training:** Randy Zogbaum can provide or help develop training at any length or format for the summer field season. Below are three suggested learning objectives for soil health trainings. Email Randy at randall.zogbaum@wisconsin.gov if you'd like to discuss soil health.
 - Learning objective 1 is to discuss what soil health is (and is not) by defining basic vocabulary and concepts.
 - Learning objective 2 is to demonstrate how to assess and monitor changes and improvements in soil health on Wisconsin Farms.
 - Learning objective 3 is to demonstrate how soil health systems can be implemented on Wisconsin farms.
- **NEW: Soil Health Community of Practice:** 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 Changes:** 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.

Soil and Water Resources Management (SWRM) Grants

- New program guidance was issued for utilizing [SEG funding for structural practices](#) and [Engineering Reserve Projects](#). Check out all the resources on [policies and procedures](#).

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 available 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.