



Land & Water Monthly Newsletter

BUREAU OF LAND AND WATER RESOURCES

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture,
Trade and Consumer Protection

November 2025

Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Program (NOPP)

- Intent to Apply forms and applications were posted on October 30, 2025, and applications are due on January 16, 2026. Visit our [website](#) to learn more.
- **NEW THIS YEAR:** there are options for research project scenarios.
- **REQUIRED:** UW pre-approval requires an Intent to Apply form to be submitted by December 16, 2025, to monica.schauer@wisc.edu.

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

- Any counties with farmland preservation plans or municipalities with farmland preservation zoning ordinances that are expiring this year should send application materials to DATCPWorkingLands@wisconsin.gov. If your final application is not ready, please still send the plan or ordinance so that we can conduct a preliminary review. Any applications received after November 14 may not be certified before the plan or ordinance expires.
- 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](#) or on our website farmlandpreservation.wi.gov. All agreement applications submitted after January 1, 2026 must use the new agreement form. Agreement applications submitted on the old form after this time will be asked to resubmit on the current form.
- We are currently accepting applications for farmland preservation agreements. Agreement applications that are submitted to the department by **Friday, November 7, 2025** will be prioritized for processing for 2025 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 November and December, but agreements submitted to us after November 7 may not be processed 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.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

- Agreement Submittal Deadline is November 14, 2025 for Payments in 2025.
Friday, November 14, 2025 is the deadline for submitting completed CREP agreements (LWR-283) to DATCP enrolled by FSA for FFY2025 (Sign-up 63) to ensure they make it through processing for state payments before the end of the calendar year. Agreements submitted to DATCP after that date may be processed and paid after January 1, 2025. If a landowner wants to claim their state CREP payment on 2025 taxes, it will need to be paid prior to December 31, 2025. FSA provides landowners copies of the needed federal paperwork for completing the State CREP agreements. If paperwork is missing, feel free to request it from the landowner if the FSA office is not accessible. Completed CREP agreements should be

submitted via the secure CREP SFTP site following the guidance on bottom of page 2 of the [LWR-283 instructions form](#).

- **Submitting Agreements to CREP Secure (SFTP) Website – Please Do Not Create County Folders**
When submitting CREP materials to the CREP SFTP website, do not create a folder for each county. Drag and drop the .pdf for the submittal into the large open “My Files” section in the center of the site. The .pdf file should show up in the “My Files” section after downloading. However, once you leave the SFTP site, the file will be automatically transferred off the SFTP and into a secure file storage location on DATCP servers. You will not see the file if you close and reopen the website. This is a security measure so that others submitting to SFTP will not be able to see the information on the submitted CREP documents. If the file made it to the “My Files” page before you exited, we should receive it.

Per the CREP agreement instructions for submittal, after submitting, email datcpcrep@wisconsin.gov that you submitted the documents (include the file names). We will check the submittal and send you a confirmation that those files were received. That way, we both know we received the correct documents.

- **County CREP Annual In-Kind Cost Reporting:**
Counties are asked to report their CREP administrative costs to DATCP by no later than December 5, 2025. The county contributions to administer CREP count toward Wisconsin’s overall match requirements for federal CREP funds and are important for meeting statewide CREP program requirements reported to FSA by the end of the year. The reporting form ([LWR-282](#)) is on the CREP website. Completed reports should be sent as a PDF via email to Brian Loeffelholz at Brian.Loeffelholz@wisconsin.gov.

Soil and Water Resources Management (SWRM) Grants

- The deadline for requesting transfers of cost-share grant funds is December 1. Learn more at [Cost-Share Fund Transfer Agreement](#).
- **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. Guidance documents have been reviewed and updated in [SWRM Grant Resources: Section 4](#).

Cover Crop Insurance Premium Rebate Program

- The web-based application will open December 1, 2025 on a first come, first served basis.
- The web-based rebate application, information about eligibility, and FAQs will be made available on covercroprebate.wi.gov. Applicants should have a copy of their FSA-578 form available to complete the application.

Nutrient Management Updates

- **NEW** – Are you hosting a Nutrient Management Farmer Education Class this winter or next spring? If the answer is yes, please fill out the following survey: <https://forms.office.com/g/aAJ8NYC213>. As an effort to share out more nutrient management (NM) training opportunities, DATCP will be taking survey responses and creating a calendar of NM training opportunities to share with farmers so that they can find classes near them if they can’t make their county class, and/or for new agronomists and conservation staff looking for NM educational opportunities! (Please note: you do not have to have a NMFE grant to enter your training information!)
- DATCP staff and the UW-Extension NPM team are hosting a live online Nutrient Management Farmer Education Class on March 13 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. This is a DATCP approved class that allows farmers to be eligible to write their own nutrient management plan. Registration is free. Register here: www.go.wisc.edu/OnlineNMTraining.

- SnapPlus V3 can be utilized to write NMPs for the 2026 growing season. A letter will be sent to county land conservation staff and agronomist/planners soon. Along with that letter will be a step-by-step video tutorial on how to submit a plan in V3. That video can be viewed here: [County Staff: Options for NMP submittal and review](#).
- Updates have been made to the 590 checklist to include the addition of the Targeted Silurian Bedrock Performance Standard. There are two checklists available: one for operations in Silurian and one for all other operations. SnapPlus will automatically choose which checklist is needed based on where the fields are located. New versions of the checklist can be found here:
 - Regular Checklist- <https://datcp.wi.gov/Documents/DARM-BLWR-033.docx>
 - Silurian Checklist- <https://datcp.wi.gov/Documents/DARM-BLWR-034.docx>

Take note: these versions of the checklist are only built into Version 3 of SnapPlus and will not be available in Version 2.

- SnapPlus V3 YouTube tutorials are live and available here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BW-aXyCheQI&list=PLhFkw4rJA7C-J5PgpeJUrjMz42MZ_6PkQ.

Conservation Engineering

- NRCS Conservation Practice Standards and Design Tools
With the ongoing Federal government shutdown, the eFOTG website that houses NRCS standards, specs, manuals, and design tools has been unavailable. DATCP has many of the items saved. Reach out to your engineering contact if you are in need of one of these, if you need technical assistance with a federal project, or with any other services you would normally receive from NRCS.

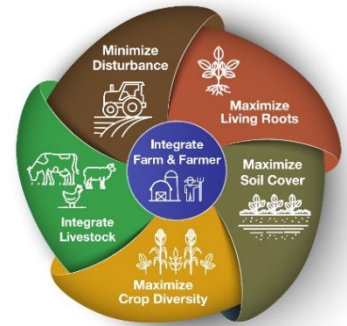
DATCP Drainage Program

- The Wisconsin Association of County Drainage Boards will be holding their annual meeting on Monday, November 3 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The meeting will be held at the Best Western, located at 2701 County Road CX, Portage, Wisconsin.
- 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, P.E., Drainage Program Manager, at Barton.Chapman@Wisconsin.gov.

Agricultural Impact Statement (AIS) Program

- The AIS Program published [AIS 4632](#) for the North Central Wisconsin Reliability Project in Lincoln and Marathon counties.
- You can find more information about the AIS program at agimpact.wi.gov. You can also contact DATCPAgImpactStatements@wisconsin.gov with questions regarding any active AIS statement or the AIS program.

Soil Health Program



- The Soil Health Graphic and our Soil Health Website was recently updated to recognize the importance of integrating the farm and the farmer in the soil health system. Soil Health is accomplished by implementing the Principles of Soil Health and providing the functions of a healthy soil; regulating water, cycling nutrients, sustaining plant and animal life, providing physical stability and support, and filtering and buffering potential pollutants. Check out the DATCP Soil Health website [here](#).
- **REMINDER: Soil Health User Group** – Whether it's questions about using or building your soil health assessment kit or implementing ATCP 50 practices with soil health as a resource concern, DATCP is looking for feedback on how we can better support soil health initiatives. Please 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 User Group.
- 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. The kit includes 6-inch metal rings to measure water infiltration; a penetrometer to measure compaction; small screens and 16-ounce cups for the slake/slump test to measure aggregate stability; a digital soil thermometer to measure soil temperature; and a square foot of PVC pipe to measure plant counts and earthworm counts for the field assessments. It also has the SARE book [Building Soils for Better Crops: Ecological Management for Healthy Soils](#) as a resource. Utilizing these assessments provides a method for monitoring improvements in soil health as we follow the soil health principles for our systems approach to conservation planning.

Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grant (PLWPG) Program

- 2026 was another competitive year for the Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grant Program. We received applications from 49 producer-led groups, for a total funding request of over \$1.6 million. The review process is complete and award decision letters will go out in early November. If you have any questions, please contact Dani Heisler at dani.heisler@wisconsin.gov.

Administrative Rule Updates

- DATCP is revising ATCP 52's Permanent Rule related to Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grants. Updates include general rule cleanup and the incorporation of the Commercial Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Program and Crop Insurance Premium Rebates for Planting Cover Crops Program. Documents relating to this rule can be found here: [CR 25-057](#).
- **Emergency Rulemaking** is also underway for providing [Crop Insurance Premium Rebates for Planting Cover Crops](#) and [Commercial Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Program](#) to administer the programs until a permanent rule is in effect.

Staffing Updates

- Cody Overgard joined DATCP as the Environmental Specialist in the Northwest on October 20! Cody's main service area will encompass the Northwestern area where he will provide conservation engineering assistance. He has been working in the conservation engineering field for almost 20 years and is excited to return to DATCP to continue to promote conservation work within his service area. Outside of work Cody enjoys spending time with his wife of 15 years and two kids that are 14 and 4-years-old. His hobbies include farming, trapping, hunting, fishing, and coaching basketball in Chippewa County, where he was born, raised, and still resides today.