



## DATCP Awards \$1 Million in Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grants to 43 Groups

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MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) has awarded \$1 million in producer-led watershed protection grants (PLWPG) to 43 farmer-led groups for 2023. Grants support producer-led conservation solutions by encouraging innovation and farmer participation in on-the-ground efforts to improve Wisconsin's soil health and water quality.

“With 14.3 million acres dedicated to agriculture in Wisconsin, our farmers are some of the most ardent supporters of protecting our land and water because they know firsthand the value of clean water and fruitful land for the success of their businesses,” said Gov. Evers. “These grants provide the support needed for farmers to stay innovative and lead the way on improving water quality across our state while protecting their bottom lines, helping us build a healthier, more sustainable Wisconsin for everyone.”

“This grant program has provided an innovative and successful model to encourage conservation efforts in our state,” said DATCP Secretary Randy Romanski. “With the additional funding provided by Gov. Evers and the state legislature for these grants, additional farmers are able to encourage their neighbors to engage in conservation efforts through educational activities, on-farm research and demonstration, and incentives that help minimize financial risk.”

This is the eighth round of grant awards since funding was first made available in the 2015-17 state budget. Annual interest in DATCP’s PLWPG program continues to exceed the program budget. This funding cycle received the highest amount of requests in the history of the program, with 45 applicants for a total funding request of over \$1.5 million.

“The producer-led watershed program has brought farmers together who are willing to learn and demonstrate that improving soil health leads to cleaner water and less inputs, which can lead to higher profits per acre,” said Matt Winker, owner of Redline Dairy and member of Milwaukee River Watershed Clean Farm Families.

A map of recipients can be found on [DATCP’s website](#). The recipients and award amounts include:

- Bad-Axe Farmer-Led Watershed Council – \$20,000
- Biological Farming Friends – \$21,166
- Buffalo Trempealeau Farmer Network – \$30,800
- Calumet County Ag Stewardship Alliance – \$18,300
- Cedar Creek Farmers – \$4,500
- Central Wisconsin Farmers' Collaborative – \$20,000
- \*Chippewa Valley Producer Led Watershed – \$10,000
- Coon Creek Community Watershed Council – \$30,800
- Dodge County Farmers for Healthy Soil & Healthy Water – \$37,960
- Dry Run Farmer-Led Watershed Council – \$10,000
- Eau Pleine Partnership for Integrated Conservation – \$37,960
- Farmers for Lake Country – \$17,000

- Farmers for the Upper Sugar River – \$30,800
- Farmers for Tomorrow River Watershed Council – \$24,400
- Farmers of Mill Creek Watershed Council – \$30,800
- Farmers of the Barron County Watersheds – \$19,775
- Farmers of the Lemonweir Valley – \$30,800
- Farmers of the Roche-A-Cri – \$14,600
- Farmers of the Sugar River – \$23,960
- Farmers on the Rock – \$30,800
- FARMERS4HEALTH / Bear Creek Chippewa River – \$17,250
- \*Flambeau Valley Watershed Group – \$10,000
- \*Green County Clean Waters – \$21,606
- Hay River Farmer-Led Watershed Council – \$20,000
- Horse Creek Area Farmer Led Watershed Council – \$10,000
- Iowa County Uplands Watershed Group – \$24,396
- Jefferson County Soil Builders – \$30,800
- \*Kenosha County Regenerative Producers – \$10,000
- Lafayette Ag Stewardship Alliance – \$30,800
- Lake Wisconsin Farmer Watershed Council – \$30,800
- Milwaukee River Watershed Clean Farm Families – \$37,960
- Peninsula Pride Farms – \$37,960
- Producers of Lake Redstone – \$24,400
- Red Cedar Conservation Farmers – \$24,400
- Rock River Regenerative Graziers – \$30,757
- Sauk Soil & Water Improvement Group – \$25,000
- Sheboygan River Progressive Farmers – \$30,800
- Shell Lake, Yellow River Watershed Council – \$13,200
- South Kinni Farmer Led Watershed Council – \$10,250
- Tainter Creek Farmer-led Watershed Council – \$24,400
- Watershed Protection Committee of Racine County – \$30,800
- Western Wisconsin Conservation Council – \$20,000
- Yahara Pride Farms, Inc. – \$20,000

Note: New groups marked with an asterisk \*.

### **About the Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grants**

In 2021, groups in the program provided conservation practices on 978,881 acres, an increase from 798,221 acres in 2020. These farmer-led conservation efforts prevented 219,638 pounds of phosphorus and 342,163 tons of soil from leaving farm fields.

Including this recent round of funding, DATCP has [awarded](#) more than \$5.2 million to 45 different groups across the state since the program started in 2015. Grant projects have focused on providing conservation education to farmers, conducting on-farm demonstrations and research, issuing incentive

payments for implementing conservation practices, organizing field days, and gathering data on soil health and water quality.

Producer-led groups must work with a county land conservation department, University of Wisconsin-Division of Extension, non-profit conservation organization, or the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Funds cannot pay for real estate, loans, equipment, or lobbying, and the program places caps on the amount of funding that can be used for staff support to the groups. Each group must start with at least five farmers in the watershed.

For more information on producer-led watershed protection grants, visit [DATCP's website](#).

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