

Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association: Appreciates the support of the Joint Finance Committee to secure funding for land and water conservation efforts

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“The Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association (WI Land+Water) applauds the decisions by the Wisconsin Joint Finance Committee to approve amendments to the Governor’s 2017-19 budget to increase funding to a number of key land and water conservation efforts”, said WI Land+Water Executive Director Jim VandenBrook.. They include: an ongoing \$900,000 increase in annual funding to support land and water conservation offices; an additional \$825,000 for additional soil and water resource management grants; an additional \$100,000 for Targeted Resource Management grants; \$500,000 for Aquatic Invasive Species Education and Control grants, and more.

Special thanks to Senator Harsdorf for authoring the amendment to restore land conservation staffing funds. WI Land+Water would also like to thank its partners in agriculture including the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation, Wisconsin Farmers Union, and the Dairy Business Association, and its many partners in the conservation community including Clean Wisconsin, River Alliance of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Lakes, The Nature Conservancy, and the Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters.

“Wisconsin’s Joint Finance Committee’s support of local land and water conservation programs reflects the importance of clean, safe water to the people of Wisconsin”, said Jim VandenBrook. The improved funding will allow more farmers to work with county Land Conservation Departments to improve nutrient management, stabilize stream and lake shorelines, handle manure safely, prevent erosion and manage invasive species. In addition to technical assistance, county Land Conservation Departments will help farmers access over \$40 million state and federal cost share dollars and about \$20 million in tax deductions as part of the farmland preservation program.

This critical funding means greater soil conservation, cleaner water flowing to streams and lakes, and less contaminated groundwater. “Improved assistance to farmers also reduces their risk for environmental problems,” said VandenBrook. “County conservationists know how to work with farmers and other landowners to conserve the land and improve our waters. Thanks once again to the members of the Joint Finance Committee for their commitment to conservation”