

# WisDATCP: Fourth round of Producer-Led Watershed Protection funding awarded to 24 farmer groups

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Contact:

Donna Gilson, 608-224-5130, [donna.gilson@wi.gov](mailto:donna.gilson@wi.gov)

Bill Cosh, 608-224-5020, [William2.Cosh@wi.gov](mailto:William2.Cosh@wi.gov)

**MADISON** – Wisconsin’s latest round of Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grants has been awarded to 24 groups of farmers who will work with conservation agencies and organizations to address soil and water issues tailored to their local conditions.

Five of the groups are first-time grant recipients. Together the 24 groups will receive the full \$750,000 available for 2019. Grants range from just over \$7,500 to \$40,000, for activities that most often include incentives for farmers to plant cover crops and undertake other conservation practices and technologies. All include farmer-to-farmer education via field days, conferences and similar activities. Some projects include on-farm demonstration trials to gather local data for various practices.

This is the fourth round of grant awards since the funding was made available in the 2015-17 state budget. The 2017-19 budget increased the maximum amount that groups could receive to \$40,000, up from \$20,000 previously. In addition, the Legislature authorized an increase during this biennium from the original \$250,000 a year to \$750,000. Grant requests totaled nearly \$850,000 for 2019.

Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grants are intended to give financial support to farmers willing to lead conservation efforts tailored to their own watersheds. The emphasis is on innovation and practices not already covered by other state and

federal programs, and the intent is that participating farmers will reach out to other farmers to help them adopt conservation practices.

Producer groups must work with DATCP, the Department of Natural Resources, a county land conservation committee, the University of Wisconsin-Extension, or a nonprofit conservation organization. Grant funds cannot pay for real estate, loans, equipment purchases, 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.

First-time grant recipients:

- Eau Pleine Partnership for Integrated Conservation — \$32,000
- Producers of Lake Redstone — \$40,000
- Red Cedar Conservation Farmers — \$40,000
- Shell Lake-Yellow River Farmer-Led Watershed Council — \$15,600
- Western Wisconsin Conservation Council — \$22,000

Previously funded projects receiving new grants:

- Dodge County Farmers for Healthy Soil & Healthy Water — \$39,050
- Farmers for the Upper Sugar River — \$40,000
- Farmers for Tomorrow — \$40,000
- Farmers of Barron County — \$40,000
- Farmers of Mill Creek — \$36,535
- Farmers of the Sugar River — \$25,000
- Hay River Farmer-led Watershed Council — \$13,125
- Horse Creek Farmer-Led Watershed Council — \$18,750
- Lafayette Ag Stewardship Alliance — \$32,000
- Milwaukee River Watershed Clean Farm Families — \$40,000
- Pecatonica Pride — \$20,250
- Peninsula Pride Farms — \$40,000
- Sheboygan River Progressive Farmers — \$40,000
- South Kinni Farmer-Led Watershed Council — \$7,500
- Tainter Creek Farmer-Led Watershed Council — \$40,000
- Upland Watershed Group — \$29,120
- Watershed Protection Committee of Racine County — \$40,000
- Waumandee Watershed — \$19,080
- Yahara Pride Farms — \$40,000