

# WI Land+Water: Applauds Governor Evers' Prioritizing Conservation in 2021-23 Executive Budget

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Contact: Kristin Teston, [kristin@wisconsinlandwater.org](mailto:kristin@wisconsinlandwater.org)

MADISON – The Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association (WI Land+Water) applauds Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers' 2021-23 Executive Budget, which prioritizes investments in conservation, agriculture, and water quality. Budget initiatives such as increased funding for county conservation department staffing, and conservation cost-sharing funding for farmers and landowners will allow the state to better respond to the dual agricultural and water quality crises Wisconsin currently faces.

“We are pleased to see Governor Evers' recognizing the critical role that boots-on-the-ground conservation professionals play in our state, and prioritizing that investment,” said WI Land+Water Executive Director Matt Krueger. “If we are to move the needle forward on water quality improvement, climate change adaptation, helping farmers build soil health, combating invasive species and much more, technical assistance provided by county conservation professionals is essential, and must be adequately supported.”

The Executive Budget recommends a variety of conservation initiatives, notably allocating an additional \$7,308,000 for county conservation staffing and support grants over the biennium, as well as \$3,600,000 over the biennium for additional county conservation staff support of climate change resiliency efforts. It also recommends providing \$7 million in bonding for implementation of land and water resource management plans, including cost-share grants to landowners.

“This Budget is a great first step on conservation, and we are appreciative of Governor Evers for advancing it. We look forward to continuing to work with the Legislature to further advance sustained, consistent conservation funding that will ensure Wisconsin remains a great place to recreate, farm, and raise a family,” Krueger stated. “These are bipartisan issues that the Legislature has shown leadership on in the past, and we are optimistic that they will once again, going forward.”

Additionally, the budget recommends investments to curb polluted runoff, mitigate flooding impacts, provide clean drinking water, optimize nitrogen reductions via a pilot program, support increased implementation of the Farmland Preservation Program, and support agricultural producers through county agricultural extension agents, grazing technical support, and producer-led watershed grant funding.