

# Dept. of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection: Greenville Greenbelt AEA prioritizes land preservation and conservation practices

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MADISON, Wis. – Established in 2015, the Greenville Greenbelt Agricultural Enterprise Area (AEA) was designated in response to growing residential and commercial development pressures from the nearby greater Fox Cities metropolitan area and the community's continued commitment to protecting productive farmland. The AEA covers more than 6,100 acres in Outagamie County, spanning portions of the Village of Greenville. Its name is an ode to the village's greenbelt, reinforcing local commitments to land preservation and long-term conservation.

The village's Land Stewardship Committee is using the AEA and greenbelt as the foundation to develop their conservation goals for at-risk agricultural lands. These goals focus on intergovernmental collaboration, farmland preservation promotion, and youth engagement. Most recently, the committee worked with the Village of Greenville to create a farmland preservation zoning district within the AEA boundary to further the financial benefits of the program to local landowners and deepen their dedication to farmland protection.

In addition to working with new farmland preservation participants, the county aims to help grow conservation practices after landowners sign an agreement. The county is currently working with operators to slowly introduce cover crops into their rotation through a variety of grants, including one opportunity referred to as "the Back 40 Challenge." Cover crops provide multiple benefits including mitigating

erosion and building soil organic matter. Available to producers in the AEA and county, the program cost shares cover crops for a field so farmers can experiment with the new practice in a low risk, controlled setting. By starting small, farmers can learn about these practices and slowly build their efforts rather than investing large amounts of capital up front.

Greenville continues to work to preserve their natural resources and farmland, with many layers of protection including the greenbelt, AEA, and farmland preservation zoning. From AEA signs marking and promoting the area to increasing agritourism, subdivision restrictions, and the development of a Purchase of Devolvement Rights (PDR) program, the Greenville AEA committee has a wealth of future plans, ideas, and passion. Ultimately, their hard work affords protection from the surrounding devolvement pressure, helping farmers continue to farm and helping Greenville stay green.

To find out if your land is located in the Greenville Greenbelt AEA, sign a farmland preservation agreement, or learn more, contact Outagamie County Conservationist Greg Baneck at (920) 832-5074 or [greg.baneck@outagamie.org](mailto:greg.baneck@outagamie.org).

### **About Agricultural Enterprise Areas (AEAs)**

AEAs are community-led efforts to establish designated areas important to Wisconsin's agricultural future. As a part of the state's Farmland Preservation Program, AEAs strive to support local farmland protection goals. Through this designation, communities can encourage continued agricultural production and investment in the local agricultural economy.

Eligible landowners within an AEA can sign a 15-year farmland preservation agreement committing all or a portion of their farm to agricultural use and maintaining state soil and water conservation standards. In return, they may be eligible to claim the farmland preservation tax credit.

To learn more about AEAs and the Farmland Preservation Program, visit [https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs\\_Services/AgriculturalEnterpriseAreas.aspx](https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/AgriculturalEnterpriseAreas.aspx). To start or join a current AEA, contact the county land conservation department in the county where your land is located.