



United States Department of Agriculture

Revision of WI High Priority Practices in FY24

Meagan Duberstein
WI EQIP Coordinator
7/2023



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What are High Priority Practices?

- **Select Practices determined by each state to earn a higher payment rate. Basis may consider:**
 - state priority resource concerns
 - practices with high conservation benefits
 - that may address specific environmental priorities
 - practices that are underutilized or support underutilized resource concerns
- **Each State may designate up to 10 Practices as High Priority**
 - CPM-440 530.403E
- **These Practices will have increased payments**
 - 90% payment rate instead of 75%



Current Priority Practices

- **Animal Mortality Facility (316)**
- **Compost Facility (317)**
- **Residue and Tillage Management, No Till (329)**
- **Critical Area Planting (342)**
- **Diversion (362)**
- **Field Border (386)**
- **Filter Strip (393)**
- **Pasture and Hay Planting (512)**
- **Sinkhole Treatment (527)**
- **Tree/Shrub Establishment (612)**



Suggested Changes in FY24

- **Current Priority Practices**
 - Animal Mortality Facility (316)
 - Compost Facility (317)
 - Residue and Tillage Management, No Till (329)
 - Critical Area Planting (342)
 - Diversion (362)
 - Field Border (386)
 - Filter Strip (393)
 - Pasture and Hay Planting (512)
 - Sinkhole Treatment (527)
 - Tree/Shrub Establishment (612)

- **Remove:**

- Animal Mortality Facility (316)
- Compost Facility (317)
- Critical Area Planting (342)
- Diversion (362)

- **Add:**

- Organic Management (823)
- Wildlife Habitat Planting (420)
- Grassed Waterway (412)
- Underground Outlet (620)





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Conservation Innovation Grants and
Regional Conservation Partnership Program
July 20, 2023 – Ryan Gerlich, RCPP Coordinator

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What is Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG):

- The purpose of CIG, including Classic and On-Farm Conservation Innovation Trials (OFT) is to stimulate the development and widespread adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies for private lands conservation that are not yet widely adopted.
 - Development of new technology or tool for use by ag producers or conservation professionals (e.g., software tools, smart phone apps, technical notes, field guides, and handbooks)
 - Testing of new or modified approaches to inform a modification or update of an existing conservation practice standard.
 - Development of environmental markets and conservation finance approaches to increase the total amount of funding available for private and working lands conservation.
 - More widespread adoption of innovative and effective conservation technologies and approaches.
- CIG is not to cost-share conservation practices we could otherwise fund through another FA Program (AMA, CSP, EQIP, RCPP, ACEP, Etc).



3 Types of Conservation Innovation Grants:



1 National CIG (2022 NFO Information used below)

- On-Farm Trials
 - 3-5 year projects
 - Floor \$250,000; Ceiling \$5 Million
 - \$25 Million Available
 - 25% Match
 - 10% set aside for HU
 - Individuals are not eligible

1

- Classic
 - 1-3 year projects
 - Floor \$300,000; Ceiling \$2 Million
 - \$15 Million Available
 - 50% Match, except HU Projects
 - 10% set aside for HU
 - Individual are eligible*

2

3 State CIG – Closed in May

- 1-3 year Projects
- Floor \$50,000, Ceiling \$500,000
- \$500,000 Available
- 50% Match
- 10% set aside for HU
- Individuals are eligible*

3

Anticipating an NFO for National CIGs in the next month on www.grants.gov

More program information found at this link:

[NRCS Conservation Innovation Grants | Natural Resources Conservation Service \(usda.gov\)](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/)

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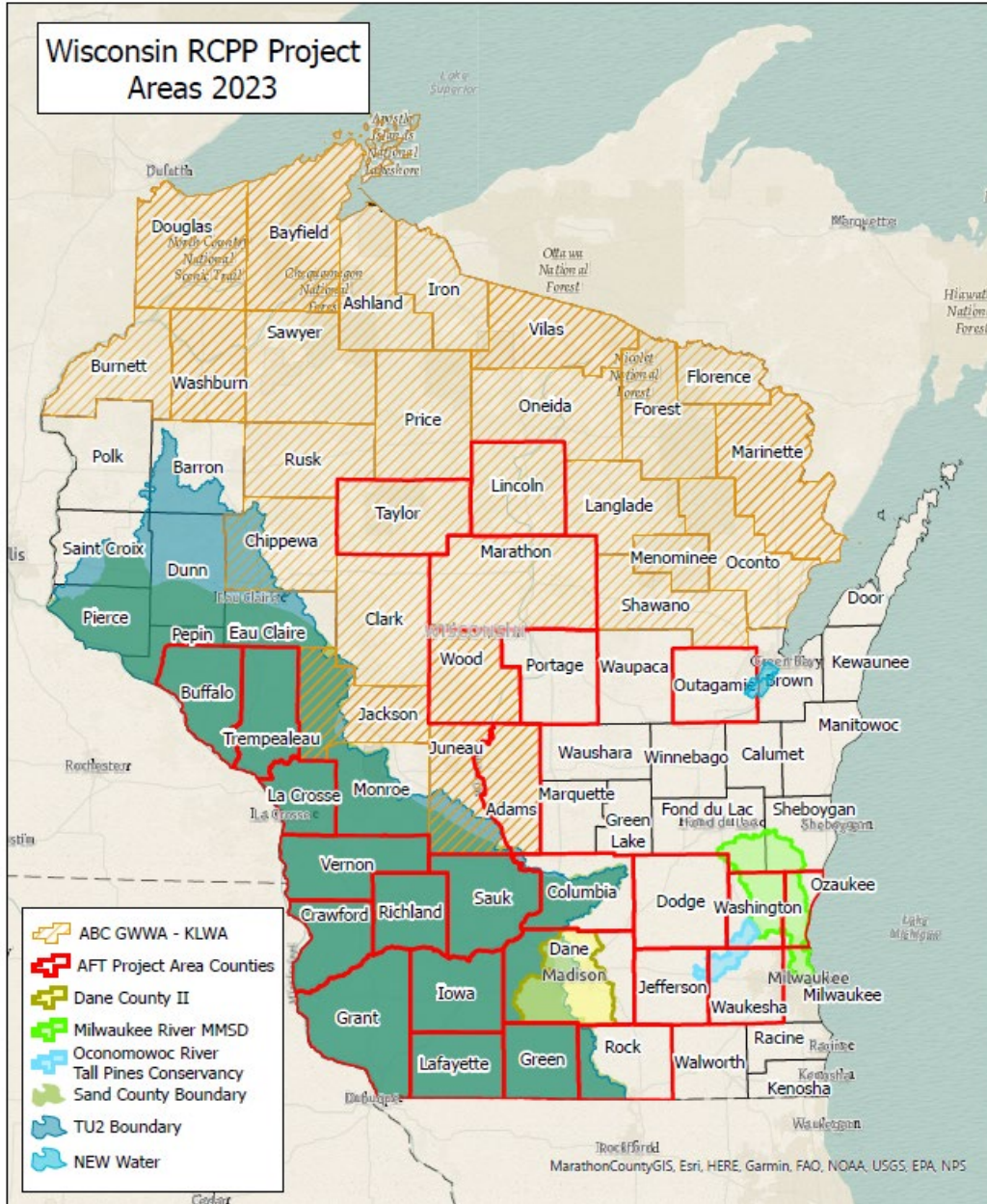
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Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP):

- 2023 Notice of Funding Opportunities is on www.grants.gov, August 18th Deadline
- 1 NFO for \$500 Million (Double the 2022 funding = IRA)
 - Classic
 - NRCS involvement negotiated (planning, design, inherent government duties, contract management)
 - Alternative Funding Arrangements
 - Limited NRCS involvement (inherent government duties)
 - \$50 Million in AFA specifically for tribes
 - 50/50 Match is not required, but is looked at favorably in ranking





WI RCPP Lead Partners

- American Bird Conservancy
- American Farmland Trust
- Dane County
- Milwaukee MSD
- NEW Water
- Oconomowoc
- Sand County Foundation
- Tall Pines
- Trout Unlimited

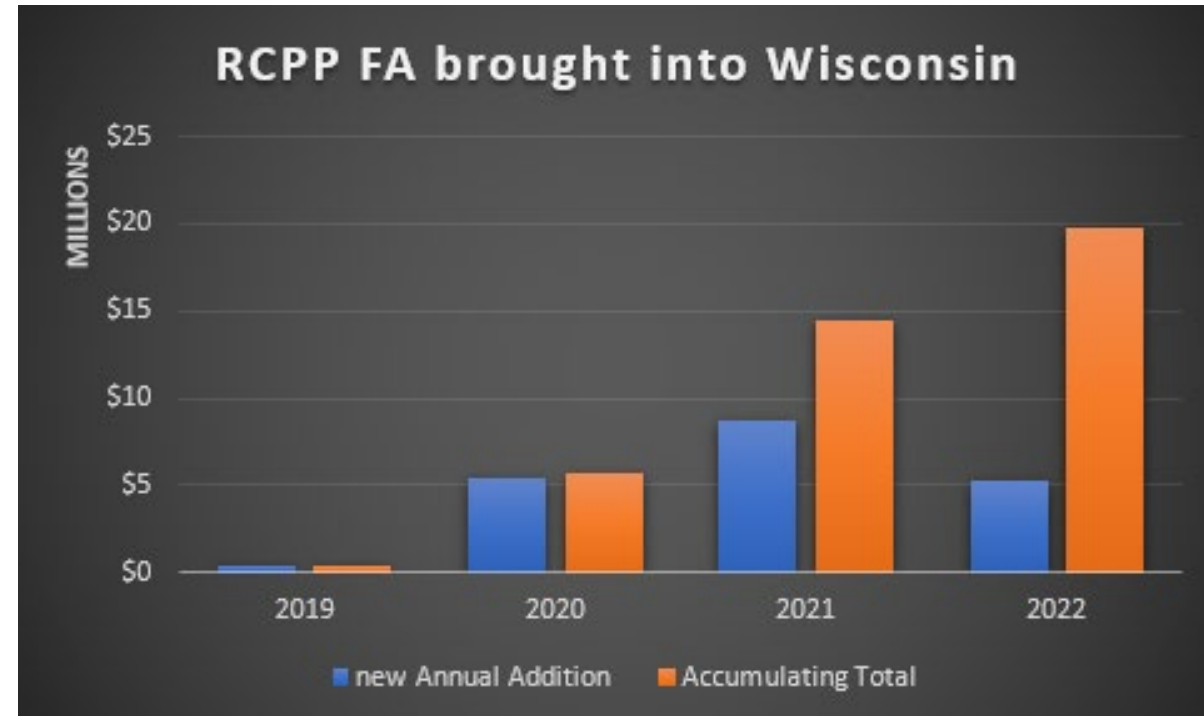


2018 Farm Bill RCPP

impact on additional Financial Assistance (FA) for Wisconsin



Fiscal Year	Lead Partner / Project	FA Amount
2019	City of Oconomowoc	\$350,000
2020	Milwaukee Metro Sewerage District	\$5,400,000
2021	American Bird Conservancy	\$1,472,000
2021	Sand County Foundation	\$1,050,000
2021	American Farmland Trust	\$4,900,000
2021	Dane County LWRC	\$1,302,488
2022	Green Bay Metro Sewerage District (NEW Water)	\$2,086,554
2022	Trout Unlimited (in development)	\$1,271,100
2022	American Bird Conservancy (in development)	\$1,891,018
	Total new FA for Wisconsin Producers	\$19,723,160



Note: Projects typically last 5 years, so the FA has 5 years to obligate into producer contracts or entity-held easements





If you have any interest in RCPP, PLEASE
call!

Questions?

Ryan Gerlich

State CIG and RCPP Coordinator

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608-662-4422 ext 227



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State Tech Easements Update

July 20, 2023 | Dave Gundlach, ASTC-Easements

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FY23 4th Quarter



FY23 Enrollment Monitoring Agreements FY24 IRA Targeting Easement Infrastructure



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FY23 Summary



General WRE

- 1 app funded – 36 ac. - \$340,275

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) WRE

- 7 apps funded – 549 ac. - \$3.68 M
- 1 app deferred to FY24 – moving forward with 6

Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) WRE

- 8 apps funded – 560 ac. - \$4.35 M
- 1 app ineligible – moving forward with 7

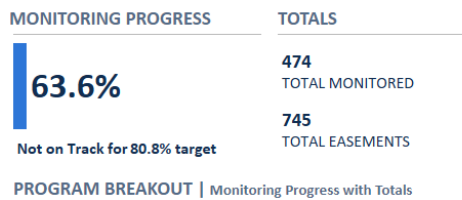
General ALE

- 1 app funded in Waupaca Co. – 288.5 ac. - \$350,000 (\$700K total)

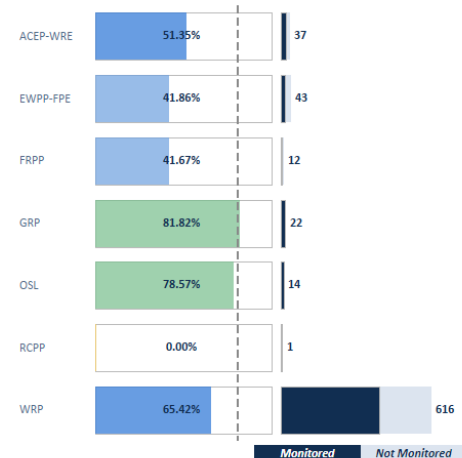


FY23 Monitoring

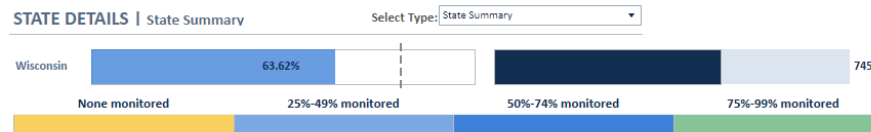
- 745 total sites to monitor
- 338 onsite
- 358 offsite



PROGRAM BREAKOUT | Monitoring Progress with Totals



Filters Applied: State: Wisconsin, Program: Wisconsin



- Met June 30th goal of 60% complete
- Had 448 entered in the system (60.0%)



Monitoring Agreements



- **Renewing monitoring agreements with UW-Madison**
- **Damschen Lab and Gratton Lab**
- **Post-doc, graduate, and undergrad assistance for monitoring and research**

- **New FY24 agreement with Wisconsin Waterfowl Association**
- **3 years**
- **3 (soon to be 4) ecologists providing 1.0 FTE**
- **Complete a combination of easement monitoring and CRP status reviews**



NB 300-23-42



- **EPD seeking proposals for IRA ACEP program priorities**
- **Requesting input on enrollment areas and land types**
- **Prioritizing those that would reduce, capture, avoid, or sequester**
 - Carbon dioxide, methane, or nitrous oxide emissions
- **Maximize easement acquisition to reduce GHG emission and C sequestration**
- **Submit proposal summaries to david.gundlach@usda.gov by August 4, 2023**
- **A summary of where ACEP IRA funds should be targeted and why**
- **Include any management requirements necessary to maximize climate benefit**
- **Map of proposed area(s)**
- **Scientific literature supporting the proposal is preferred**



Easements Infrastructure Project

- Started 8+ years ago
- Looked at all WRP, WRE, EWPP-FPE
- Involved State, Area, and Field Office staff
- Unique to Wisconsin



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Dam Project

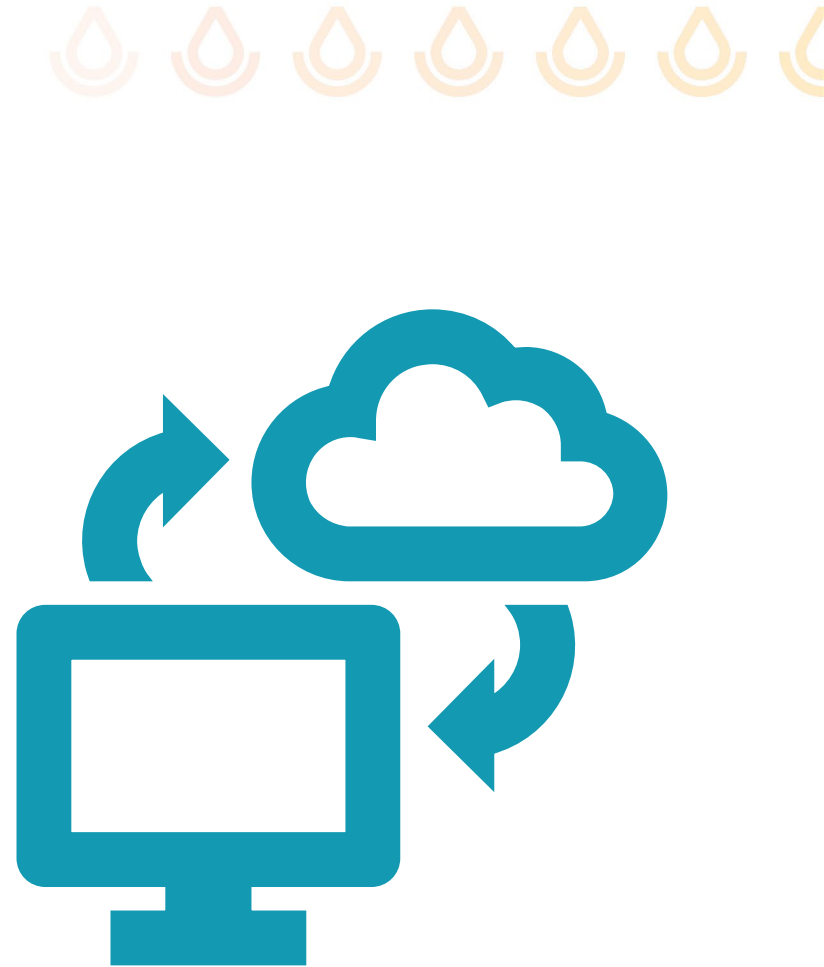
7/20/2023 | NRCS WI

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Purpose

- **Develop a project template and database that will represent data spatially, maintain the integrity of data, and aid personnel that perform monitoring and maintenance.**

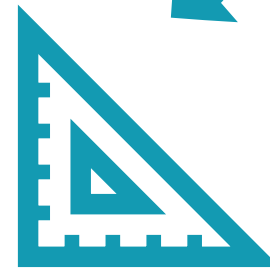




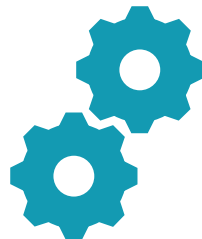
Plan



Design



Build



Operate

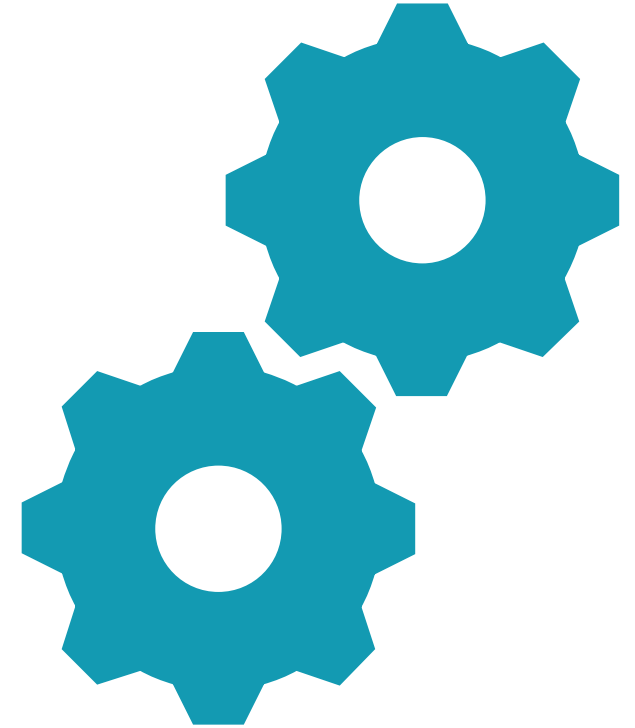


Maintain



Methods

- **ArcGIS Pro is used to create feature classes to display engineering practices and maintain organized data.**
- **Excel is another platform easement infrastructure data is organized and maintained.**



Data Collection



Important infrastructure collected:

- Embankments/Berms
- Water Control Structures
- Spillways
- Ditch Plugs

Attributes for each infrastructure are similar but can vary.



ArcGIS Pro Format



Agreement	Legacy	County	Program	Type	Sub-Type	Condition	Year Built	Restoration Year	Digitizing Type	Fish Barrier	Notes
665F48010077R	66-5F48-1-00313	Jefferson	WRP	Water Control Structure	Sheet piling, with stoplogs and catwalk	<Null>	2005	2005	Offsite	No	<Null>
665F48010077R	66-5F48-1-00313	Jefferson	WRP	Water Control Structure	Sheet piling, with stoplogs and catwalk	<Null>	2005	2005	Offsite	No	<Null>
665F4803007B8	66-5F48-3-058	Jefferson	WRP	Water Control Structure	In-line stoplog structure (Agri-Drain)	<Null>	2005	2005	Offsite	No	<Null>
665F4805007JL	66-5F48-5-033	Jefferson	WRP	Water Control Structure	In-line stoplog structure (Agri-Drain)	<Null>	2008	2008	Offsite	No	<Null>
665F4805007KG	66-5F48-5-087	Jefferson	WRP	Water Control Structure	In-line stoplog structure (Agri-Drain)	<Null>	2008	2008	Offsite	No	<Null>

Excel Format

Decision Maker	Agreement Start FY	Recorded FY	Restoration FY	Are there structures	Original Signed As-Built	Embankment	Water Control Structure (#)	Embankment + WCS	Spillway (#)	Scrape (#)	Ditch Fill (Yes/No)	Repair/ Enhancement
Tom Brady	2001	2002	2005	Yes	Yes	Yes	2	2	1	1	Yes	Yes
Michael Jordan	2003	2004	2005	Yes	Yes	Yes	1	0	0	8	Yes	Yes
Tiger Woods	2005	2005	2008	Yes	Yes	Yes	1	1	2	2	No	No
Lionel Messi	2005	2006	2008	Yes	Yes	Yes	1	1	0	6	Yes	No





Domain Name	Description	Field Type	Domain Type	Split Policy	Merge Policy	Code	Description
CON	Condition	Text	Coded Value Domain	Default	Default	MET	Metal pipe-full round, with stoplogs
FISH	Fish Barrier	Text	Coded Value Domain	Default	Default	METAL	Metal pipe-half round, with stoplogs
IMG	Image(s)	Text	Coded Value Domain	Default	Default	SHE	Sheet piling, no stoplogs
Method	source of boundary coordinates	Text	Coded Value Domain	Default	Default	SHEET	Sheet piling, with stoplogs
Method2021	source of boundary coordinates in 2021	Text	Coded Value Domain	Default	Default	SP	Sheet piling, with stoplogs and catwalk
MON	Monitoring Type	Text	Coded Value Domain	Default	Default	TT	Trickle Tube
PRO	Programs	Text	Coded Value Domain	Default	Default	NOT	Not Specified
SpillSub	Spillway Sub-Types	Text	Coded Value Domain	Default	Default	IN	In-line stoplog structure (Agri-Drain)
WCSSub	Water Control Structure Sub-Types	Text	Coded Value Domain	Default	Default	OT	Other
WI_CO	Wisconsin Counties	Text	Coded Value Domain	Default	Default		



Example of Easement Infrastructure

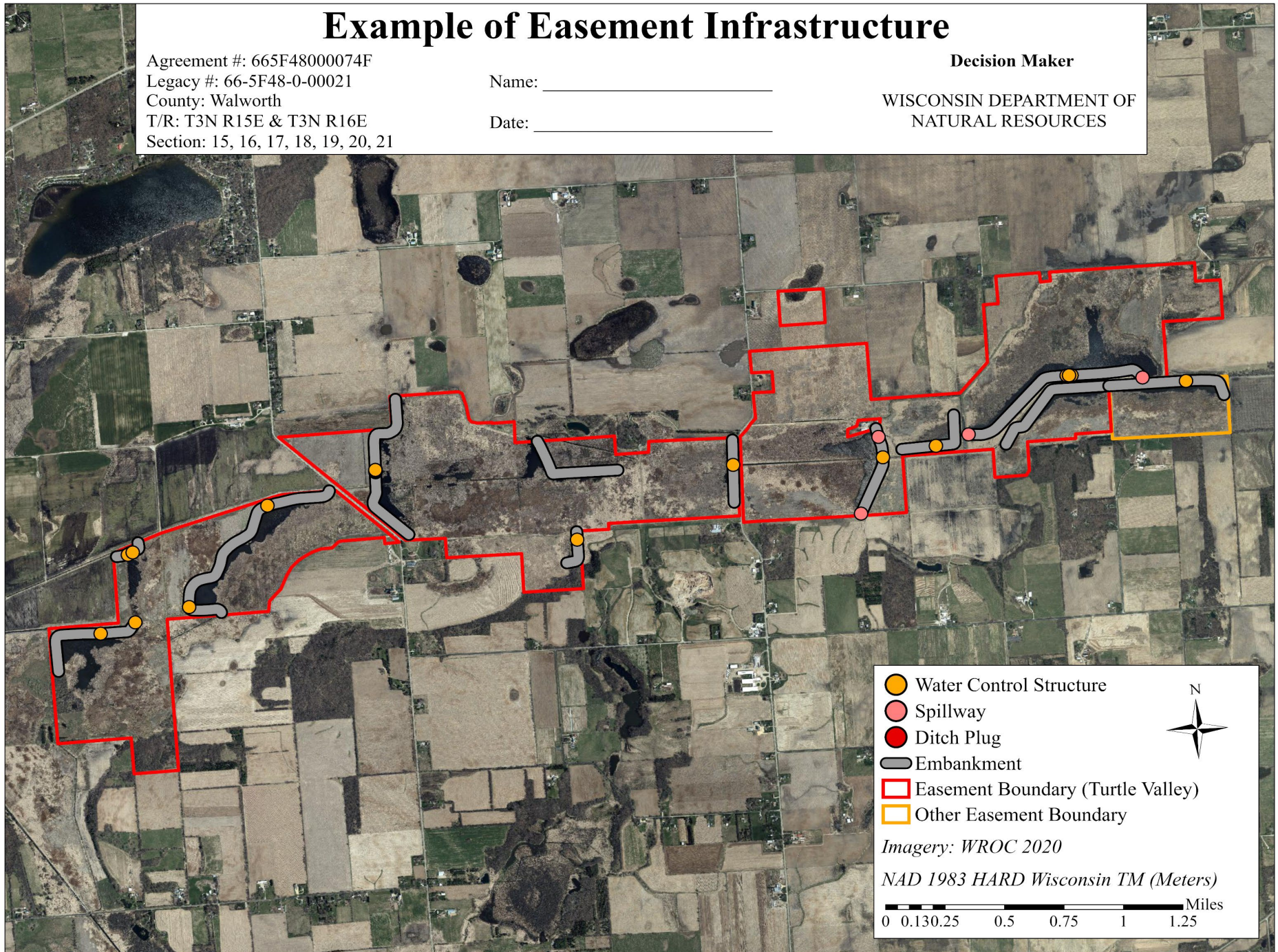
Agreement #: 665F48000074F
Legacy #: 66-5F48-0-00021
County: Walworth
T/R: T3N R15E & T3N R16E
Section: 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21

Name: _____

Date: _____

Decision Maker

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES



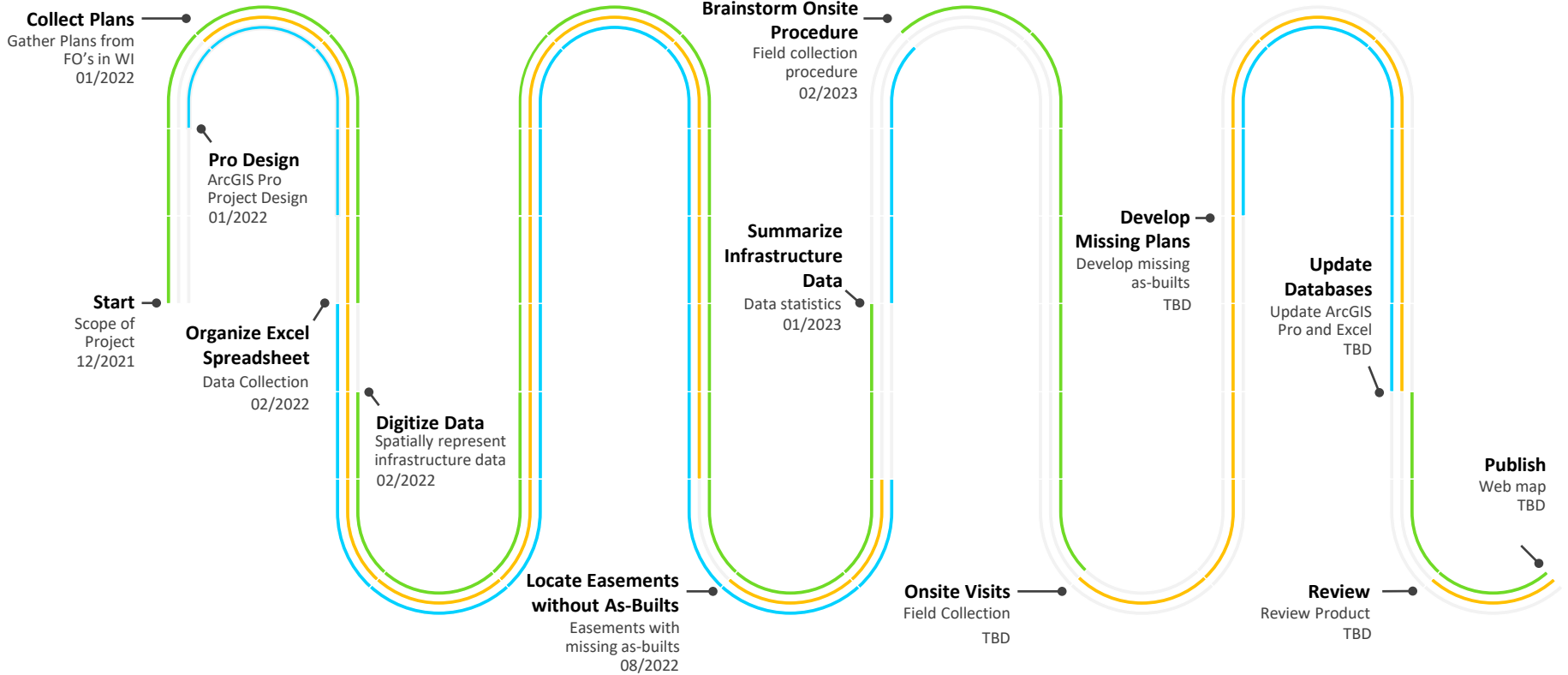
Statistics of Infrastructure

- **Embankment/Berms: 108 mi**
- **Water Level Control Structures: N=232**
- **Spillways: N=445**
- **Ditch Plug: N=411**
- **Scrapes: N=2103**



Dam Project Timeline

WE ARE
HERE



Field Maps

- **ArcGIS Field Maps is a field collection app that streamlines critical workflows to aid field staff in capturing and editing data, find assets and information.**



Condition of Infrastructure

- Field Maps will help with field assessment and identifying condition of infrastructure serving as a risk management tool.

Domain Name	Description	Field Type	Domain Type	Split Policy	Merge Policy	Code	Description
CON	Condition	Text	Coded Value Domain	Default	Default	GOOD	Good
FISH	Fish Barrier	Text	Coded Value Domain	Default	Default	FAIR	Fair
IMG	Image(s)	Text	Coded Value Domain	Default	Default	NR	Needs Repair
Method	source of boundary coordinates	Text	Coded Value Domain	Default	Default		
Method2021	source of boundary coordinates in 2021	Text	Coded Value Domain	Default	Default		
MON	Monitoring Type	Text	Coded Value Domain	Default	Default		
PRO	Programs	Text	Coded Value Domain	Default	Default		
SPILL	Spillway Sub-Types	Text	Coded Value Domain	Default	Default		
WCSub	Water Control Structure Sub-Types	Text	Coded Value Domain	Default	Default		
WI_CO	Wisconsin Counties	Text	Coded Value Domain	Default	Default		



Benefits



- **Inventory of engineering assets**
- **Filing the complete set of as-built plans so staff doing the status reviews-in-perpetuity know what to look for**
- **Budget and staff planning for maintenance activities**
- **Assist with stewardship prioritization.**





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Questions?



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NRCS Agricultural Wetland Mitigation Banking Program



Nathan Dhuey, DNR Ag Wetland Mitigation Specialist

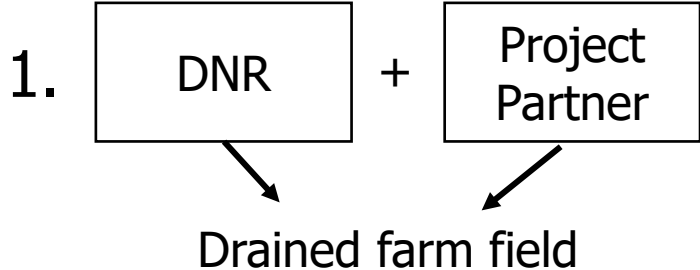
July 20, 2023

A New Tool for Wisconsin Farmers

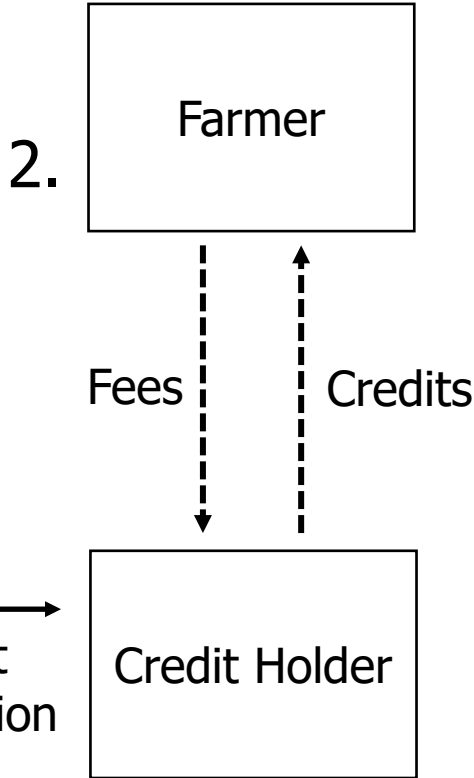
- Will be used to assist farmers with Swampbuster compliance provisions.
- Farmers can purchase credits from established mitigation sites to offset NRCS wetland impacts on their own property.



WAMB Process



Restoration



DNR will facilitate, track, review, and broker credit sales

3. Wetland Impact



Successful Farm

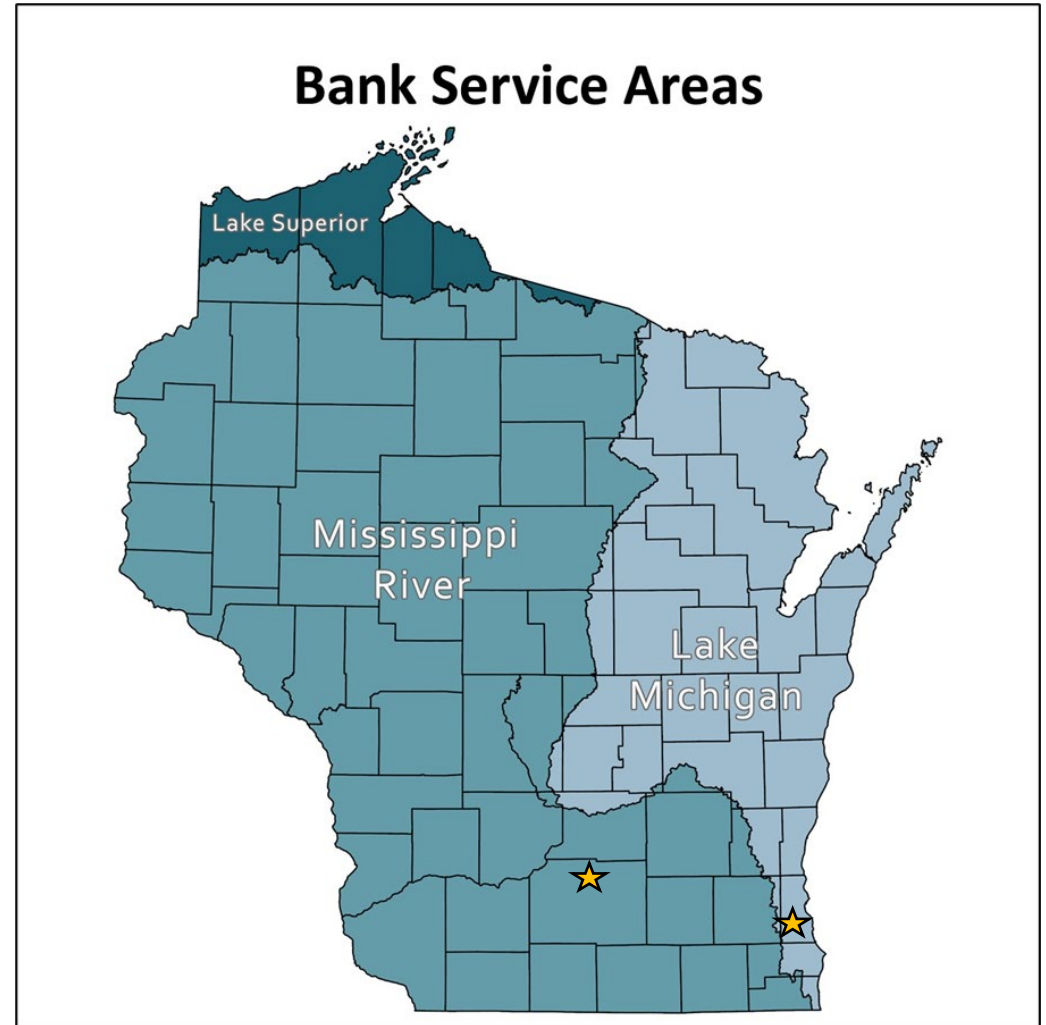
WAMB Specifics

- Ag activities must increase production
- Only available to mitigate for Food Security Act wetland protections
- Can be used for proactive and retroactive wetland impacts
- Cheaper than Clean Water Act or Ch. 281.36 compensatory mitigation credits



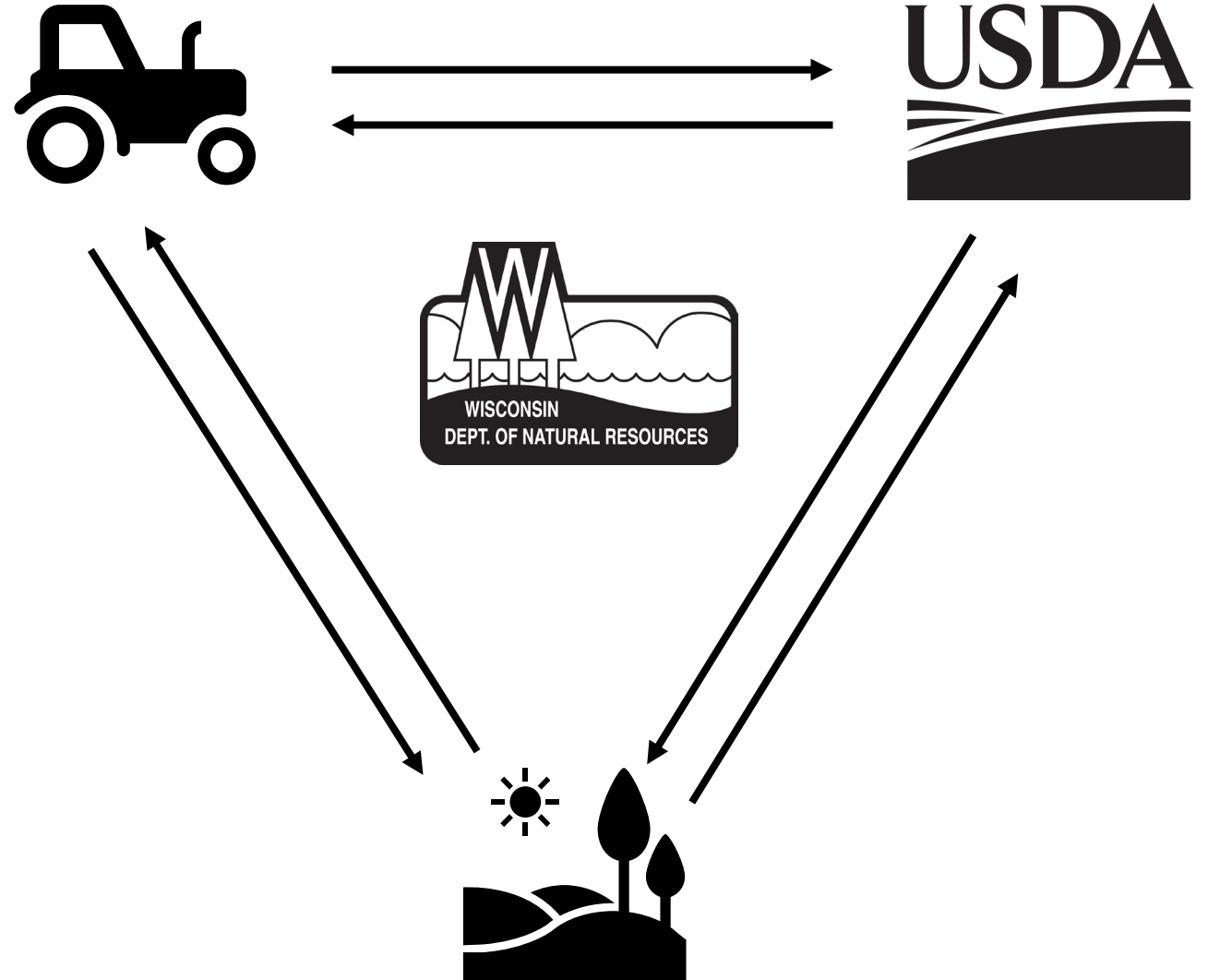
Proposed Bank Service Areas

- Watershed approach, HUC4 basins.
- Producers generally will not be allowed to jump service areas
- No current plans for a Lake Superior mitigation site



Credit Sales

- Use of program is completely optional for producers
- Producer works with NRCS to determine credit need
- DNR will facilitate the sale of credits between credit holders and producers to ensure process is quick and seamless.



Timelines

- Summer 2023: Program marketing and outreach, project planning
- Fall 2023: Initial mitigation site construction, first credits become available for sale.
- 2024: Continue outreach. More credits available. Maintenance & Monitoring of initial sites. Identification of two new sites for the future.



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Program Expectations

- Will be used to mitigate for small wetland impacts <5 acres
- Credit sales likely low to start. Outreach critical
- Not all wetland impacts eligible



Dane County: River Rd

- Actively cropped, drained, ag lease ending fall 2023
- Neighbors Cherokee Marsh
- 13 acres historic wetlands, 5 acres upland buffer



Milwaukee County: Puetz Rd

- Actively cropped, drained, ag lease ending fall 2023
- Part of a mosaic of wetland restorations in the area
- 20 acres, exclusively hydric soils



CONNECT WITH US

Nathan Dhuey

nathan.dhuey@wisconsin.gov

Ag Wetland Mitigation Specialist

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wetland-mitigation-banking-program>



/WIDNR



@WIDNR



@WI_DNR



/WIDNRTV



"WILD WISCONSIN:
OFF THE RECORD"



grassLAND 2.0

Adena Rissman
Ana Fochesatto
Rachel Bouressa
Regina Hirsch
Randy Jackson



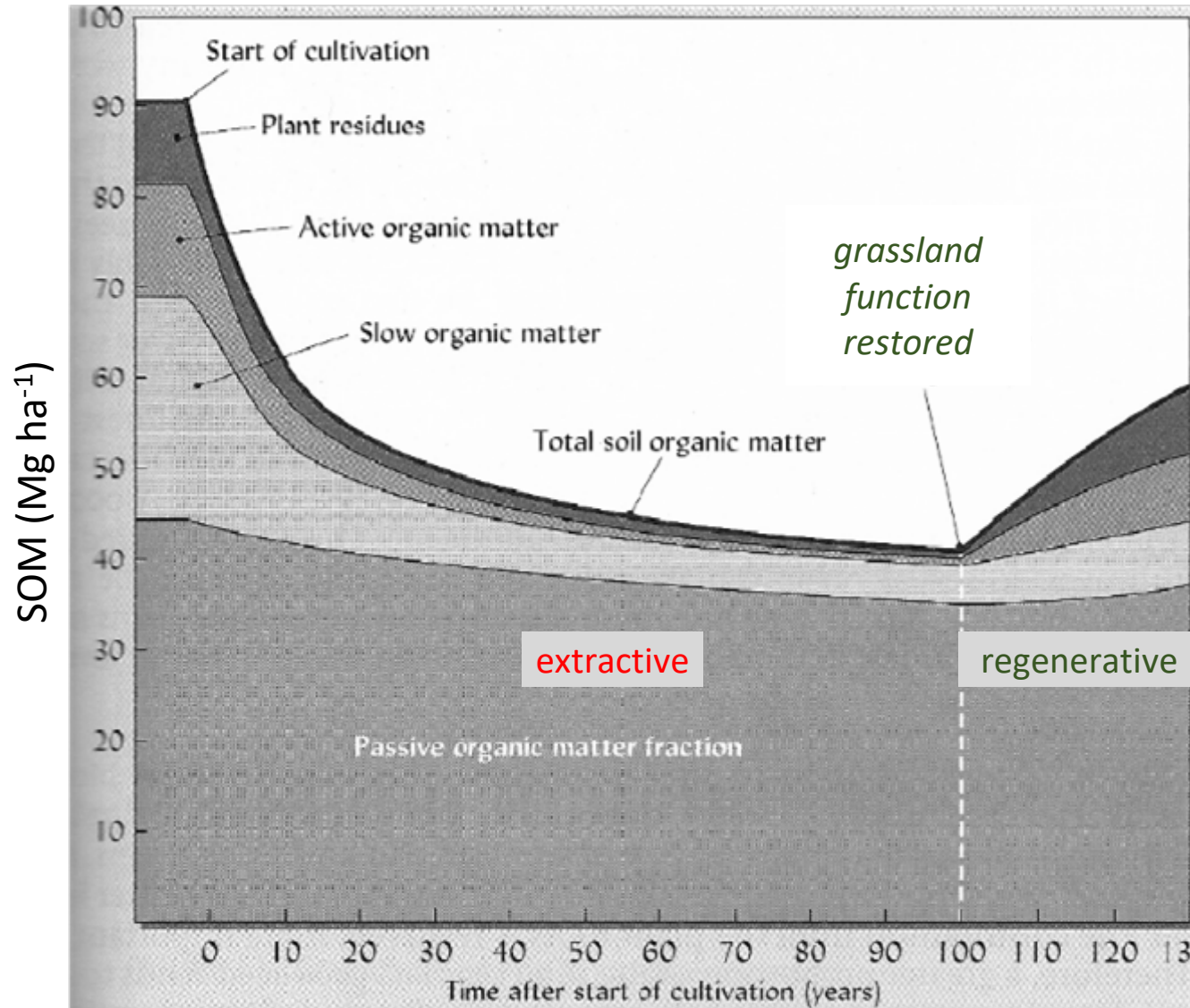
Project structure

1. *Agroecological Transformation Plan*
2. Supply chains & markets
3. Farm-level engagement
 - ***Grassland 2.0 Academy (Rachel Bouressa)***
4. Models & data
5. Outreach/engagement
 - ***Learning Hubs --> Collaborative Landscape Design (Randy Jackson)***
6. Policy
 - ***Policy analysis (Adena Rissman)***
 - ***Just Transitions (Ana Fochesatto)***
7. Education
8. Evaluation (Greta Landis)

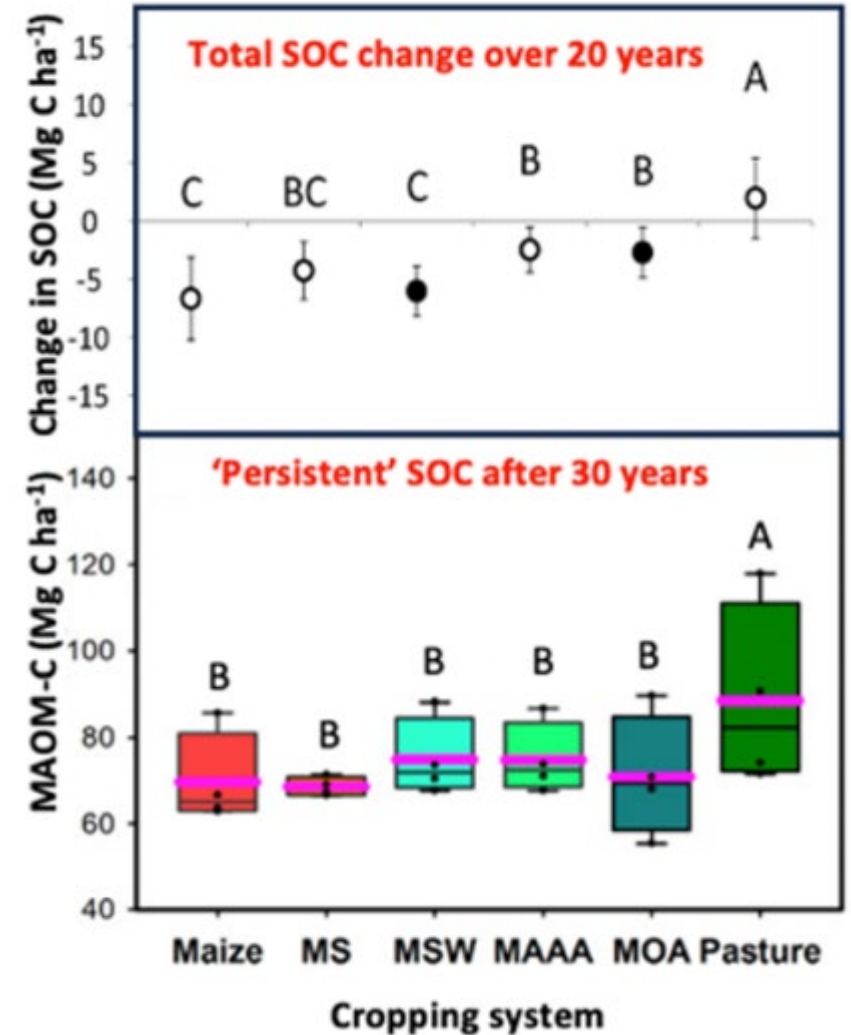


grassLAND 2.0

Perennial grasslands key to climate mitigation and adaptation



modified from Brady & Weil , *Nature and Properties of Soils*



modified from Sanford et al. 2012 and Rui et al. 2022

Perennial grasslands key to water quality

Ecosystems
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10021-021-00668-y>

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Agricultural Landscape Transformation Needed to Meet Water Quality Goals in the Yahara River Watershed of Southern Wisconsin

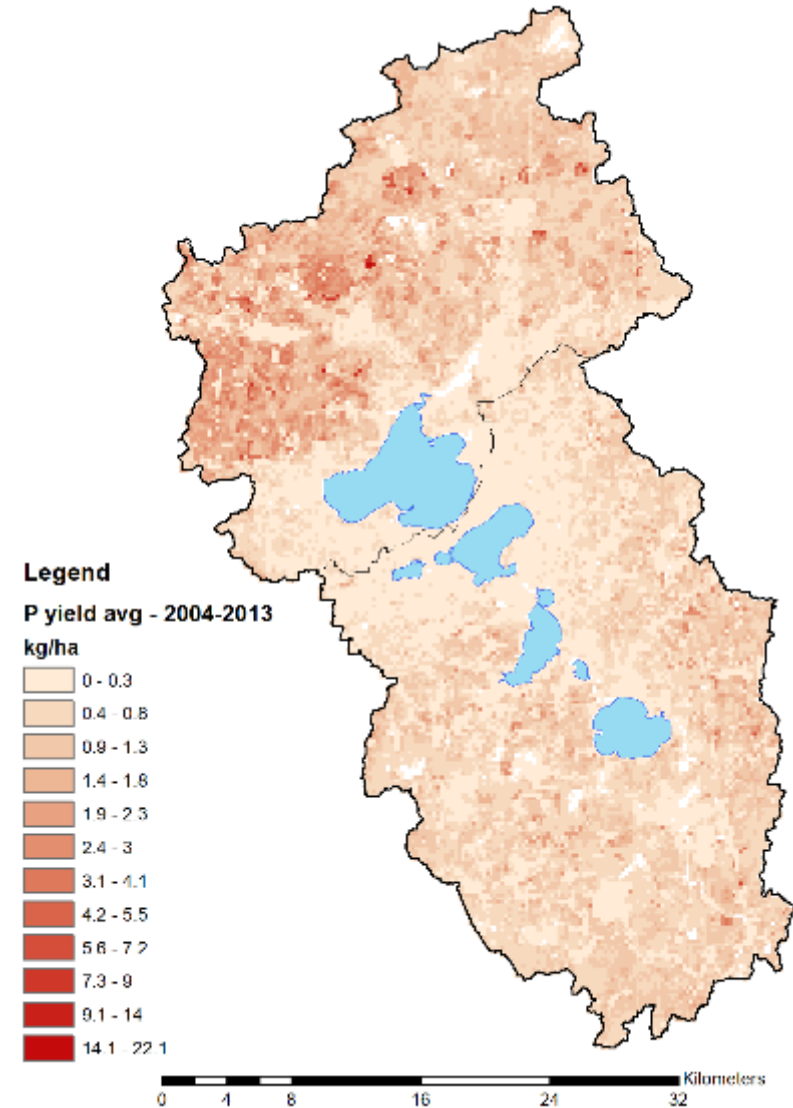
Tracy A. Campbell,^{1*} Eric G. Booth,^{1,2} Claudio Gratton,^{3,4}
Randall D. Jackson,^{1,4,5} and Christopher J. Kucharik^{1,4,5,6}

To meet Yahara River watershed EPA-mandated TMDL goals by **2070**, we must have both:

50% reduction in animal units

AND

50% of the ag land in perennial grass



Perennial grasslands key to farm profitability and community vitality

Table 1. Annual estimated true cost value of a 300-acre southern WI farm in corn-soybean rotation or grass-finished dairy heifer production over a 10-year period (2010-2020). Table modified from Gibson 2022.

Capital & Metrics	Corn-soybeans	Pasture-raised dairy heifers
<i>Produced capital</i>		
Total produced capital	\$ 61,200 ^a	\$ 74,100 ^b
<i>Natural capital</i>		
Soil N ₂ O emissions	\$ (285)	\$ (114)
NO ₃ leaching	\$ (386)	\$ (111)
P loading	\$ (17,387)	\$ (1,738)
Soil erosion	\$ (1,959)	\$ 0
Enteric CH ₄	\$ 0 ^c	\$ (11,980)
Soil C change	\$ (15,759)	\$ 81,091 ^d
Storm runoff	negative	positive
Biodiversity	negative	positive
Total natural capital	\$ (35,779)	\$ 67,147
<i>Social capital</i>		
Air pollution	\$ (4,697)	\$ 0
Pesticide exposure	\$ (219)	\$ 0
Antimicrobial resistance	\$ (937)	\$ 0
Herbicide resistance	negative	\$0
Total social capital	\$ (5,854)	\$ 0
True-cost value	\$ 19,567	\$ 141,247

^aActual average profit of >1000 SE MN corn-bean farms

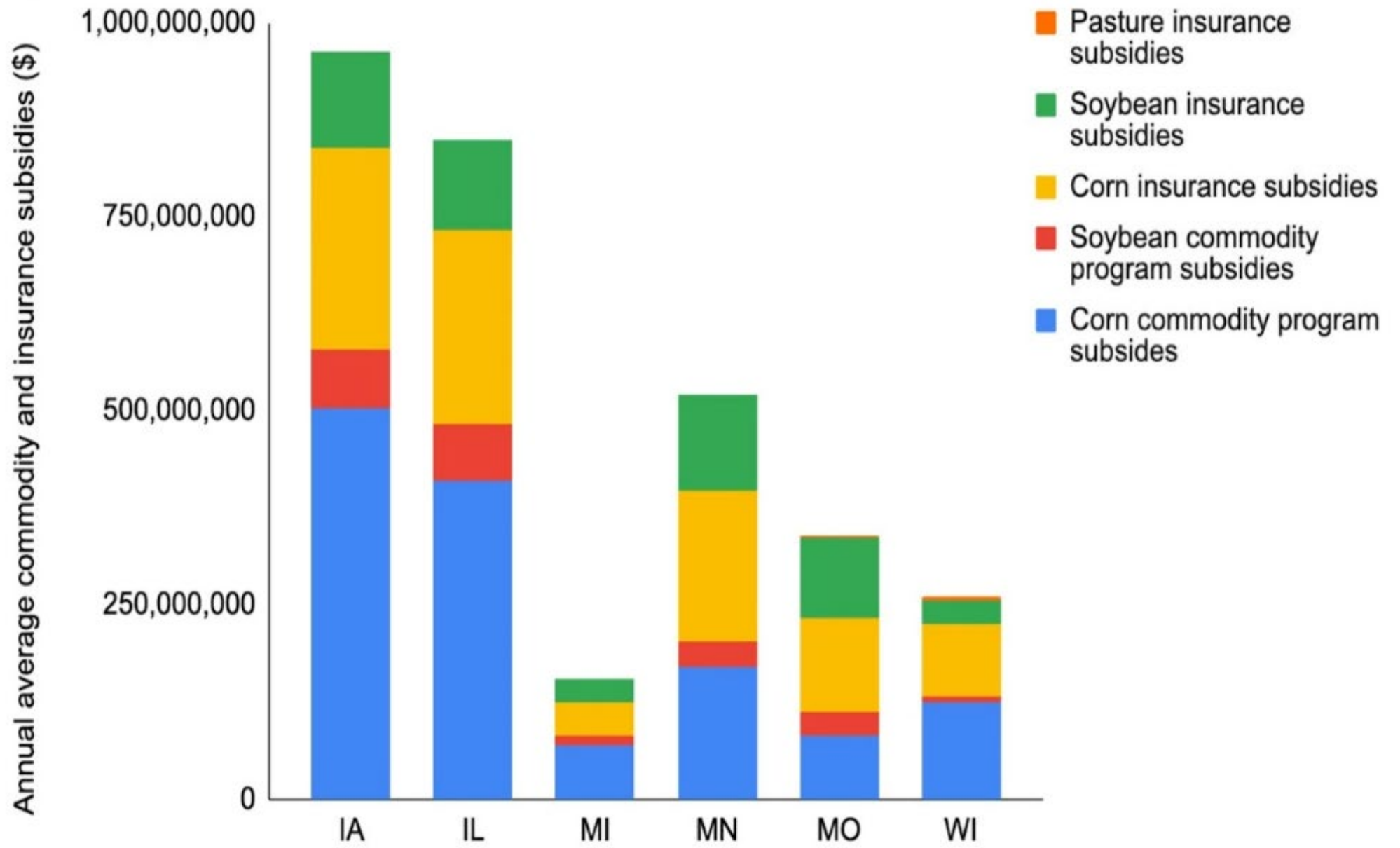
^bPredicted average profit of a grass-fed dairy heifer operation ⁴.

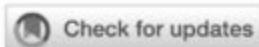
^cDoes not account for CH₄ from livestock fed corn and soybeans in feedlot/confinement or fossil fuel combusted in production of synthetic N fertilizers and pesticides.

^dUsing SOC increase estimated in surface soils by ⁸.

So, why aren't perennial grasslands our dominant ag system?

1. **productivism** → policies and programs reifying the notion that we must always produce more to “feed the world”
2. **social stigma** → social narratives rewarding people for remaining part of the productivist culture while marginalizing those seeking alternatives
3. **unfair supply chains and markets** → supply chains controlled by corporate entities who squeeze the system for profit with little return to farmers and consolidating the industry
4. **technical and transition support lacking** → local-level experts and agencies who help farmers plan and transition to climate-smart agriculture






Grassland and managed grazing policy review

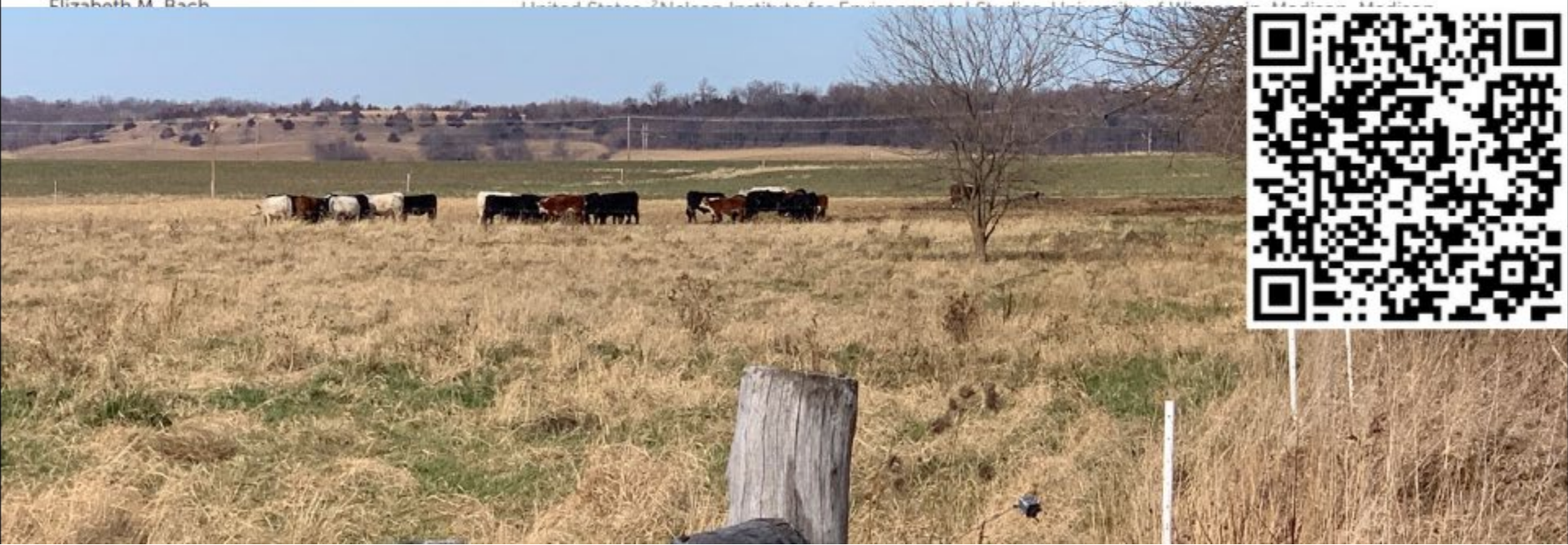
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Christopher J. Whelan,
Moffitt Cancer Center, United States

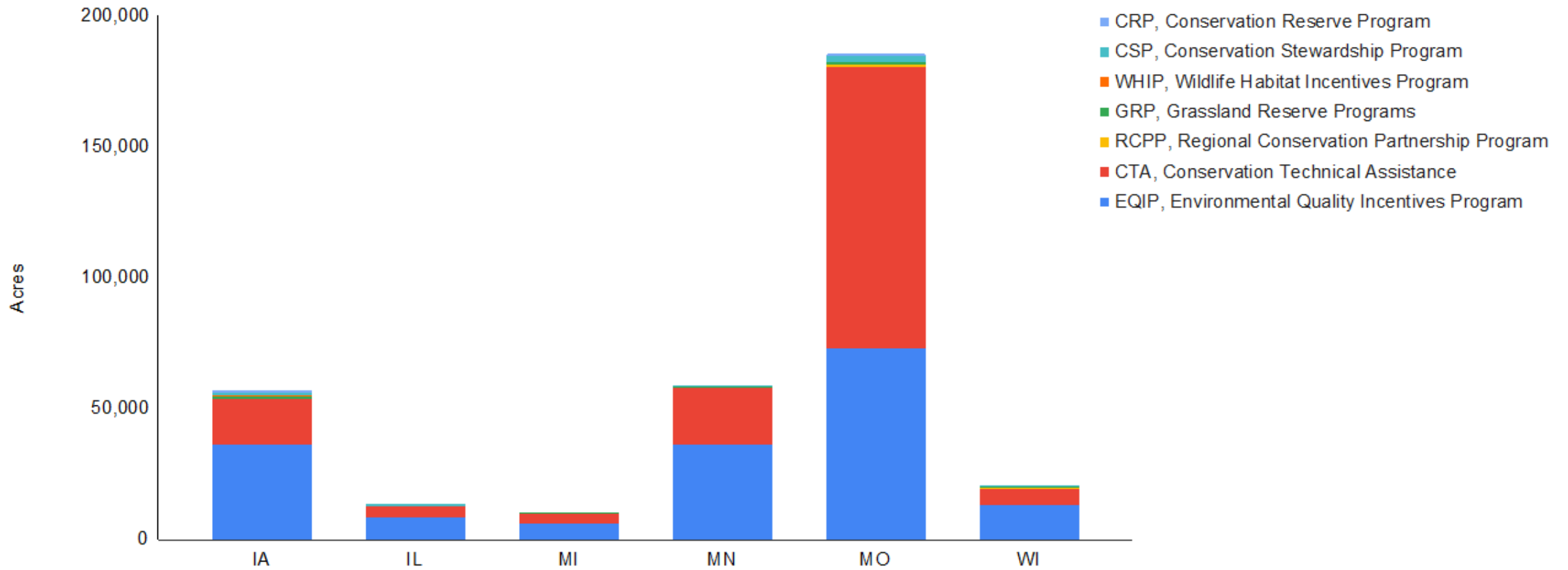
REVIEWED BY
Lisa Schulte Moore,
Iowa State University, United States
Elizabeth M. Bach

Adena R. Rissman^{1*}, Ana Fochesatto², Erin B. Lowe¹, Yu Lu¹,
Regina M. Hirsch³ and Randall D. Jackson ⁴

¹Department of Forest and Wildlife Ecology, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI,
United States; ²Melroe Institute for Environmental Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison,



Annual average area receiving Grazing Land Conservation Practices, 2005-2020

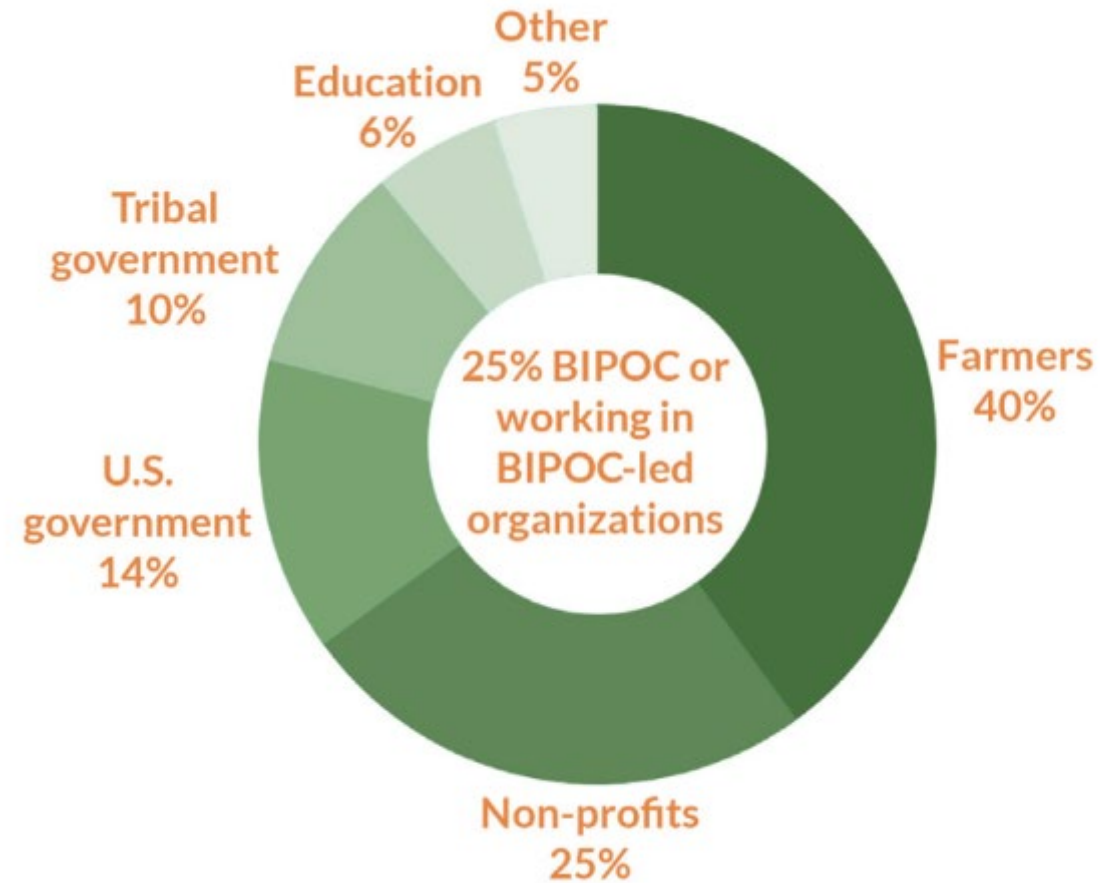


- Reform **crop insurance**
- Improve **financial and technical assistance**
- Enhance **labels, certification, processing**
- Prioritize **perennials in water quality** programs
- Enhance **animal & plant diversity**
- Ensure **carbon** markets benefit perennials
- Consider **public land** grazing
- Support **tribal** grasslands and grazing
- Coordinate state-level **planning, taxes**
- Improve access to **land, capital, fair labor**



How do midwestern farmers, advocates, and government employees envision just transitions in the animal agriculture sector?

What policies and programs are needed to achieve them?



From 2020-2022, we conducted 128 interviews and 3 participatory workshops with participants from across the Midwest (WI, IL, MI, MN, IA, MO).

Report & Briefs



"There are plenty of things that we can do, we just really need the narrative to be changed so that more people can understand it better. So they're not so scared to say, 'let's imagine something different.'"

Bonnie Haugen
Dairy Grazier, Springside Farm, MN



Just Transitions to Managed Livestock Grazing
Needs and Opportunities for Change in the Midwestern United States



Erin Lowe & Ana Fochesatto
January 2023



Recommendations
for Universities



Recommendations
for Extension
Professionals



Recommendations
for Agricultural
Educators



Recommendations
for Policy Advocates



Recommendations
for NRCS Staff



Recommendations
for CSP and EQIP

Download at: grasslandag.org/justtransitions



Recommendations
for NRCS Staff

- More technical support for grazing, especially for animals other than cattle
- Improve technical support for “socially disadvantaged farmers” and engage communities of color in program development
- Collaborate with the Department of Interior Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)



Recommendations
for CSP and EQIP

- Reduce wait times and up-front capital requirements
- Reduce infrastructure requirements for fencing
- Allow EQIP funds to be used for pasture-raising non-ruminant animals

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Rachel Bouressa

- 5th generation in farming in Wisconsin
- Attended UW Madison
 - BS in Agronomy/Environmental Science
 - Agroecology Masters Program
- Beef Grazier
 - 60+ mixed herd, mostly British White Park cattle
 - 100+ ac pasture
- TSP - Writing grazing plans and working with new graziers
- Other Affiliations
 - GrassWorks, Inc.
 - National Farmers Union - National Climate Change Policy Advisory Panel
 - Wisconsin Farmers Union - State Board
 - Central WI Graziers Network - Co-Coordinator
 - FSA County Committee - Minority Advisor
 - Wisconsin Farm Bureau - Member
 - Wisconsin FFA Alumni - Member
- My Farm
 - Direct market
 - Host pasture walks, events, farm tours



Key Aspects of the Grassland 2.0 Project that benefit the Grazing Community

- Train the Trainer

We NEED educated, PASSIONATE, and confident staff in local agency offices to provide Technical Assistance and SUPPORT for new (and experienced) graziers/farmers

- Be able to provide innovative ideas, troubleshoot, and resources**
- Grazing is successful in the counties with these folks helping.**

- Share the message and engage ALL audiences

- MOMENTUM and non-agency staff**
- Connecting and sharing the UW Research and all the resources with producers**

- Supply Chain work

- POLICY

NRCS and its Mission

- **Working with land owners to address resource concerns (soil and water)**
 - **Servicing its “Customers” - new producers and existing farmers**
 - **Program knowledge and implementation**
 - **Funding and flexibility**
 - **Frustration**



WE NEED HELP!

- Agency can't do it alone
- Farmers can't do it alone
- Without HELP there won't be any of us left
- We are up against a mountain!

We NEED people to care for us. We NEED the Grassland 2.0 Project.

