2022-23 Local Working Group Virtual Meeting
June 7, 2022

Introduction
Eric Allness, Moderator
Agenda

10:00-10:05: Welcome – Eric Allness

10:05 – 10:10: Wisconsin Overview – Acting State Conservationist Jeff Vander Wilt

10:10- 10:20: WI Program Updates - Melissa Bartz

10:20- 10:30: Natural Resource Concerns – Eric Hurley

10:30-10:40: Review Purpose of LWG and move to Breakout Meetings – Eric Allness

10:45-12:00: Area Breakout Discussions
NRCS Mission and Vision

Our Mission: We deliver conservation solutions so agricultural producers can protect natural resources and feed a growing world.

Our Vision: A world of clean and abundant water, healthy soils, resilient landscapes, and thriving agricultural communities through voluntary conservation.
Wisconsin Overview

Jeff Vander Wilt
Acting State Conservationist
Administrative Goals

• **Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry**
  - Focused on partnerships – with agriculture, with forestry, with tribes, with businesses, with communities;
  - Focused on creating new opportunities and markets for agriculture and forestry;
  - Focused on ensuring rural America plays a key role in our transition to cleaner sources of energy; and

• **Urban Agriculture**
  - USDA stood up new Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production
  - Plays an important role in:
    - growing fresh, healthy produce
    - access to fresh, healthy food in food deserts

• **Historically Underserved Participants**
  - Increasing outreach to Historically Underserved participants
  - Improve representation by Historically Underserved participants
Staffing additions since last LWG Meeting

- Overall - 39 additional positions (34 federal; 5 affiliate/contract):
  - 28 Field level positions
  - 4 Area level positions
  - 6 State level positions

- Positions by Area:
  - NW – 10
  - NE – 6
  - SW – 10
  - SE – 7
  - State Office - 6

- Positions by Type:
  - Soil Conservationist – 16
  - Program Assistant – 8
  - Engineer/Eng Tech – 4
  - Resource Conservationist – 4
  - Wetland/Wildlife Specialist – 3
  - Soil Scientist – 1
  - State Outreach Coordinator – 1
  - State Training Officer – 1
  - Admin Assistant - 1
Offices w/staff additions since last LWG Meeting (blue counties)
Understanding USDA Civil Rights

- Across USDA and NRCS, Civil Rights ensures equal employment opportunities and program access for all employees and customers.
- Civil Rights ensures that every employee, applicant and program participant is treated with dignity, equality and respect by enforcing Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity policies.
- These policies and emphasis on Civil Rights makes USDA an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender to customers.
- USDA is committed to equitable program delivery. By working with our partner groups, we will ensure these funds are equitably distributed to include historically underserved producers.
Civil Rights: The Historically Underserved

- Historically underserved (HU) customers are beginning farmers, limited resource farmers and socially disadvantaged farmers and Veterans
  - Beginning Farmer or Rancher – is new to farming or has operated a farm or ranch for less than 10 consecutive years.
  - Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher – is a member of a group whose members have been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudice because of their identity as members of that group without regard to their individual qualities.
  - Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher – has a household income at or below the national poverty level.
  - Veteran Farmer or Rancher – has served in the armed forces and has not operated a farm or ranch, has operated a farm or ranch for less than 10 consecutive years, or first obtained veteran status during the last 10 years.
Wisconsin Program Updates

Melissa Bartz
Assistant State Conservationist-FA Programs
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

EQIP provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers and non-industrial forest managers to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits.

- **Funding is available Statewide**
- **2022 Sign up 1**
  - 334 Contracts in State & National Initiatives
  - $10,709,511 in State & National Initiatives
  - 399 Contracts in Local Work Groups
  - $7,418,561 in Local Work Groups
- **2022 Sign up 2 (ongoing signup)**
  - ~$3 million available

Any Questions Contact: meagan.duberstein@usda.gov
Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

Most agriculture producers that participate in CSP have already implemented conservation practices on their land. CSP offers additional opportunities to expand on existing conservation efforts on their operation.

- **Funding is available Statewide**
- **2022 Renewal Sign up**
  - 218 Contracts
  - $6,429,023
- **2022 Classic Sign up**
  - 260 Applications have been preapproved for funding
  - $8,640,000

Any Questions Contact: meridith.williams@usda.gov
Wisconsin Water Quality Initiatives

- 27 of 72 Counties have GLRI, NWQI, or MRBI coverage
- ~19.2% of the state
Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative (MRBI)

MRBI emphasizes supporting nutrient loss reduction strategies through a targeted approach aided by watershed assessments to implement conservation systems composed of practices that avoid, control, and trap sediment and nutrients.

- **Funding is available in the Pierce/St. Croix Co. project**
- **2022 Sign up #1:**
  - 11 Contracts
  - $445,131
- **2022 Sign up #2 (ongoing signup)**
  - $182,169 available

For Questions Contact: david.gundlach@usda.gov
National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI)

Through NWQI, NRCS works with producers and landowners to implement voluntary conservation practices that address agricultural sources of water pollution as part of areawide efforts to improve water quality in priority watersheds throughout the country.

- **Funding is available in 3 active project areas in WI**
- **2022 Sign up #1**
  - 3 Contracts
  - $914,628
- **2022 Sign up #2 (ongoing signup)**
  - $234,476 available

For Questions Contact: david.gundlach@usda.gov
Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI)

With GLRI funding, NRCS works with farmers and landowners to combat invasive species, protect watersheds and shorelines from non-point source pollution and restore wetlands and other habitat areas.

- Funding is available in the Great Lakes Basin
- **2022 Nearshore Health Sign up #1**
  - 76 Contracts - $5,402,713
- **2022 Wildlife Habitat Sign up**
  - 11 Contracts - $139,495
- **2022 Invasives Species Sign up**
  - 3 Contracts - $28,031
- **2022 Nearshore Health Sign up #2 – Ongoing signup**

For Questions Contact: david.gundlach@usda.gov
Regional Conservation Partnership Projects

- 59 of 72 Counties have RCPP coverage
- ~82% of the state
Regional Conservation Partnership Program
Vision and Goals

RCPP offers new opportunities for NRCS to work with partners to encourage:

- Impact
- Partner Contributions
- Innovation
- Partnerships and Management

For Questions Contact: ryan.gerlich@usda.gov
Regional Conservation Partnership Program

2021 Results

- $1.3 Million, 88 contracts, 2,100 acres

2022-1 Signups Available -

- Baraboo River II *RCPP-EQIP
- Tall Pines (Oconomowoc Watershed) *RCPP-EQIP
- Milwaukee River Watershed Conservation Partnership II *LMR
- Oconomowoc River Watershed II *LM
- Trout Unlimited II (Driftless) *RCPP-EQIP
- American Bird Conservancy II (Northern WI) *LM
- $645,703, 42 Contracts to date (1 more signup this FY)

For Questions Contact: ryan.gerlich@usda.gov
Natural Resource Concern Classification

- Soil
- Water
- Air
- Plant
- Animal
- Energy
- + Human

- SWAPAE+H

Field Office Technical Guide. Section 3.
# Soil Resource Concerns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SWAPAE+H</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>CART Category</th>
<th>Resource Concern</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SOIL</td>
<td>SOIL EROSION</td>
<td><em>Wind and water erosion</em></td>
<td>Sheet and rill erosion</td>
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<td>Wind erosion</td>
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<td><em>Concentrated erosion</em></td>
<td>Ephemeral gully erosion</td>
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<td>Classic gully erosion</td>
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<td>Bank erosion from streams, shorelines or water conveyance channels</td>
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<td>SOIL HEALTH</td>
<td><em>Soil quality limitations</em></td>
<td>Subsidence</td>
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<td>Compaction</td>
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<td>Organic matter depletion</td>
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<td>Concentration of salts or other chemicals</td>
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<td>Soil organism habitat loss or degradation</td>
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<td>Aggregate instability</td>
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## Water Resource Concerns

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<th>Category</th>
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<th>Resource Concern</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EXCESS WATER</td>
<td><em>Weather resilience</em></td>
<td>Ponding and flooding</td>
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<td>Seasonal high water table</td>
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<td>Seeps</td>
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<td>Drifted snow</td>
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<td>Naturally available moisture use</td>
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<td>INSUFFICIENT WATER</td>
<td><em>Source water depletion</em></td>
<td>Surface water depletion</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Groundwater depletion</td>
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<td>Inefficient irrigation water use</td>
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<td>WATER QUALITY</td>
<td><em>Field sediment, nutrient and pathogen loss</em></td>
<td>Nutrients transported to surface water</td>
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<td>Nutrients transported to groundwater</td>
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<td>Pathogens and chemicals from manure, biosolids or compost applications transported to surface water</td>
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<td>Sediment transported to surface water</td>
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<td><em>Field Pesticide loss</em></td>
<td>Pesticides transported to surface water</td>
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<td>Pesticides transported to groundwater</td>
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<td><em>Storage and handling of pollutants</em></td>
<td>Nutrients transported to surface water</td>
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<td>Nutrients transported to groundwater</td>
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<td>Petroleum, heavy metals and other pollutants transported to surface water</td>
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<td>Petroleum, heavy metals and other pollutants transported to groundwater</td>
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<td><em>Salt losses to water</em></td>
<td>Salts transported to surface water</td>
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<td>Salts transported to groundwater</td>
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## Air Resource Concerns

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AIR</td>
<td>AIR QUALITY</td>
<td>Air quality emissions</td>
<td>- Emissions of particulate matter (PM) and PM precursors</td>
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<td>- Emissions of greenhouse gases - GHGs</td>
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<td>- Emissions of ozone precursors</td>
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<td>- Objectionable odor</td>
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<td>- Emissions of airborne reactive nitrogen</td>
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# Plant & Animal Resource Concerns

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<th>CART Category</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PLANT</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pest pressure</strong></td>
<td>Plant pest pressure</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PLANT</strong></td>
<td><strong>Degraded plant condition</strong></td>
<td>Plant productivity and health</td>
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<td><strong>Fire management</strong></td>
<td>Wildfire hazard from biomass accumulation</td>
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<td><strong>ANIMAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>Livestock production limitation</strong></td>
<td>Feed and forage balance</td>
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<td>Inadequate livestock shelter</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>HABITAT FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE</strong></td>
<td><strong>Terrestrial habitat</strong></td>
<td>Terrestrial habitat for wildlife and invertebrates</td>
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<td>Aquatic habitat for fish and other organisms</td>
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<td>Elevated water temperature</td>
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## Energy & Human Resource Concerns

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENERGY</td>
<td>ENERGY EFFICIENCY</td>
<td><em>Inefficient energy use</em></td>
<td>Energy efficiency of equipment and facilities</td>
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<td>Energy efficiency of farming/ranching practices and field operations</td>
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### + Human

| HUMAN | LAND, LABOR, CAPITAL, MANAGEMENT, AND RISK |
Role of Local Work Groups

- Identify priority resource concerns
- Be specific

- Table is posted in the chat as a reference
Local Work Group Purpose

- **LWG’s – a subcommittee of the State Technical Committee**
  - Other subcommittees: Source Water Protection, Wildlife, Soil Health, Forestry, Urban Agriculture

- **Provides recommendations to NRCS**
  - Natural resource priorities
  - Conservation activities and practices
  - Technical and financial assistance
  - Needs assessments

- **Interested in joining a subcommittee?**
  - Contact Eric Allness
    eric.allness@usda.gov
  - Letter to STC
Local Working Group Details

- 16 LWG’s grouped by geographic region and resources
- Open to the public and meet once a year
- Members are a diverse group with agricultural and natural resource interests. Examples include:
  - agricultural producers representing diverse crops and livestock,
  - nonindustrial private forest landowners,
  - representatives of agricultural and environmental organizations and
  - representatives of governmental agencies carrying out conservation