



WI - USDA-NRCS State Technical Committee Meeting

Wednesday, September 2, 2026 – 5201 Fen Oak Drive, Madison, WI 53718 –

Room: 121 – Driftless

Wednesday, September 2, 2026		
Time	Topic	
9:30 a.m.	Welcome Regen Pilot Program	Nathan Fikkert – <i>State Conservationist</i>
10:15 a.m.	Break	
10:30 a.m.	Engineering Updates Watershed Operations Engineering CPS and NEH Updates	Steve Becker – <i>State Conservation Engineer</i> Jen Smith – <i>Acting State Resource Conservationist</i>
11:15 a.m.	Subcommittee Reports Forestry & Wildlife Soil Health Small Scale Urban Ag Source Water Protection Minimal Effect	Doug Gass – <i>State Biologist</i> Jen Smith – <i>Acting State Resource Conservationist</i> Jen Smith – <i>Acting State Resource Conservationist</i> Jen Smith – <i>Acting State Resource Conservationist</i> Derrick Klimesh – <i>ASTC – Compliance</i>
11:25 a.m.	Partner Updates	Round Robin
12:00 p.m.	Adjourn	

MEETING MINUTES

Madison Field Office / UW–Extension

Date: September 2, 2026

Meeting Start: 9:33 AM

Meeting End: 12:11 PM

Location: Madison FO / UW-Extension

Facilitator: Nathan Fikkert

Attendees: NRCS staff, partner organizations, committee members (various)

1. Opening Remarks – Nathan Fikkert

- FY 2026 was a big year with over 80 million dollars obligated.
- FY 2027 is focused on local control. Local Work Group meetings were held in June with feedback being used to make funding decisions. Each Local Work Group (four county group) will have their own fund pool to help with local management and prioritization, allowing local offices to plan workload accordingly.

2. Regen Pilot Program (RPP)

- RPP is a new variant for the existing CSP and EQIP programs. Offering a unique blend from both existing programs, RPP utilizes whole farm planning and soil testing before and after practices are implemented. Before implementation in WI, Jamie Patton worked with labs in the state so producers wouldn't have delays or difficulties finding soil testing resources.
- National Headquarters set the parameters for the program last year, and WI met all requirements and obligated the first two RPP contracts in the nation.



- This year, WI NRCS is seeking input for resource concern and practice prioritization for programming decision making.
 - STaC is an advisory committee, all final decisions are made by NRCS.
 - A survey was distributed for attendees to rank resource concerns by resource concern category as well as conservation practices.
 - The survey will be sent to the entire STaC to gather input from those unable to attend in person.
 - Responses and additional feedback may be sent to Ryan Gerlich: ryan.gerlich@usda.gov
- Important to remember, just because something isn't a specified priority doesn't mean NRCS can't or won't provide assistance or support for that type of project. Prioritization is simply for directing resources, not whether or not NRCS can or can't provide assistance. Example: Just because NRCS might not have an "energy" subaccount for EQIP doesn't mean we won't plan and provide financial assistance for energy related projects.

3. Engineering Updates – Watershed Operations – Steve Becker

- The watershed program has been around since 1954. At its peak, 12,000 dams were built over a 15 year period.
- There are three active projects in WI: Bear Creek Watershed (Outagamie Co), Coon Creek Watershed, and the West Fork Kickapoo Watershed. In August of 2018, 12 dams overtopped and 5 failed in the Coon Creek and West Fork Kickapoo watersheds. Currently, they are working to rebuild the Jersey Valley Co Park and decommission the remaining dams.
- Phase 1, planning, is complete. Phase 2, design, is underway, working with Baird-Stantec Joint Venture.
- Since 2017, the watershed program has taken a turn and now appeals to additional resource concerns.
- Those interested in stream restoration, contact Steve Becker to be part of the Standard Oversight Committee (SOC).

4. Engineering CPS and NEH Updates – Steve Becker and Jen Smith

- CPS update goals are to be both planner and producer friendly.
- Updates have been published on the FOTG. There were 39 updated in the last two years.

5. Subcommittee Reports

- **Forestry & Wildlife – Doug Gass**
 - A committee meeting was held in July where a lot of great input was gathered, information shared on CRP in the FOTG, and updating the FOTG for easier navigation.
 - A new grasslands job sheet was created to condense 5 job sheets into one.
 - Input gathered to prioritize resource concerns for ranking question creation.
- **Soil Health – Jen Smith**
 - The committee will be meeting soon.
- **Small Scale Urban Ag – Jen Smith**
 - No updates.
- **Source Water Protection – Jen Smith**
 - A committee meeting was held August 3 and discussed priority areas, amending HUC12s, groundwater nitrates and maintaining the priority practice list.
- **Minimal Effect – Derrick Klimesh**
 - The next committee meeting will share information on lateral effect.

6. Partner Updates

- **FSA – Ian Krause**
 - Reviewed drought programs. CRP has made emergency haying and grazing available to counties in D2 and D3 drought status or greater. LFP is for livestock producers experiencing pasture losses due to drought in 13 counties.



- The Working Families Tax Cut allows for payment limitations to potentially expand for producers. LLCs, SCorps, JVs, and GPs can qualify as a pass thru entity if they meet the criteria, resulting in more than one payment limitation. The NRCS business tools are being updated to read this information to be applicable for NRCS programs.
- **WI DNR – Mary Anderson**
 - The WI Drought Task Force is meeting weekly regarding the drought. There is significant drought in parts of WI – wells are running dry, lakes are down and rivers have reduced flow.
- **Grassworks – Rachel Bouressa**
 - The current GLCI grant will finish at the end of this year, and they have applied for the next grant opportunity.
 - The curriculum has impacted 200,000 acres of grazing lands, 11 mentorship pairs, and they've held 6 grazing schools with over 100 farmers in attendance.
 - The grazing plan writing agreement was very good in regards to getting plans out to producers and to catch up with workload from the decreased number of overall TSPs.
- **Sand County Foundation – Craig Ficene**
 - There will be a call for proposals for the Farmer Led Fund in RCPP at the end of the month.
 - RCPP funds this. SCF distributes the funds to producer led groups who then distribute the funds to their members/farmers accordingly.
- **WLWCA – Christina Anderson**
 - The SOC is working on 2 standards, and they're working on 2 outside of NRCS. The SOC is developing their workplan for next year.
- **DATCP – Mark Witecha**
 - The producer led program is open through September 15. They are currently assisting a few new groups come on-line and will then be up to 52 groups.
 - Nutrient management and conservation have developed a new conservation agronomy training to engage any conservation staff working with farmers early in their career (with little experience with farmers/farming) to introduce them to farming concepts and allow them to be comfortable with the workload. Three trainings were held with 20 participants.
- **Marbleseed – Tom Manley**
 - The national organic initiative and transition fund pools are no longer available to producers. Shoutout to NRCS Wisconsin leadership maintaining fund pools for organic producers.
 - OCCSP through FSA has been reinstated with a 12/31 deadline for producers to apply for 2025 and 2026.
 - Revisiting CPA 138, as it has been confusing since its inception. Hoping to introduce the realignment within the month.
 - Reminder given that all practice standards are available as organic, and they do not need to solely be in the organic fund pool.
 - Introduced Ben Wojan.
- **WI Wetlands Association – Tracy Hames**
 - Hiring a new Wetland Sciences Specialist to work on peetland restoration in ag and forests in Lake Michigan Basin. The announcement is on their website.
- **Climate Land Meters – Alanna Kosholek**
 - Land access meeting scheduled for November 18-19 at the Pyle Center. They're looking for conservation organizations and providers to attend.
- **Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewage District – Kristin Schultheis**
 - MMSD is in their 5th year of a soil health and economic study. A meeting was held last week with the farmer participants who were aware of what was going on, but wanted quantitative measurements. Various watershed groups are requesting MMSD to speak about what they're doing with the correlation between the data and its economic impacts. This is funded by RCPP and Funds for Lake Michigan.





- **MadAg – Dave Laufenburg**
 - This new entity's focus is in the Driftless Area transitioning acreage into a more perennial cover. They are looking at marginal row-crops to convert to perennial cover, yet keep it working lands.
- **Glacierland RC&D – Kristen J**
 - Provided an introduction.





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State Technical Committee Updates

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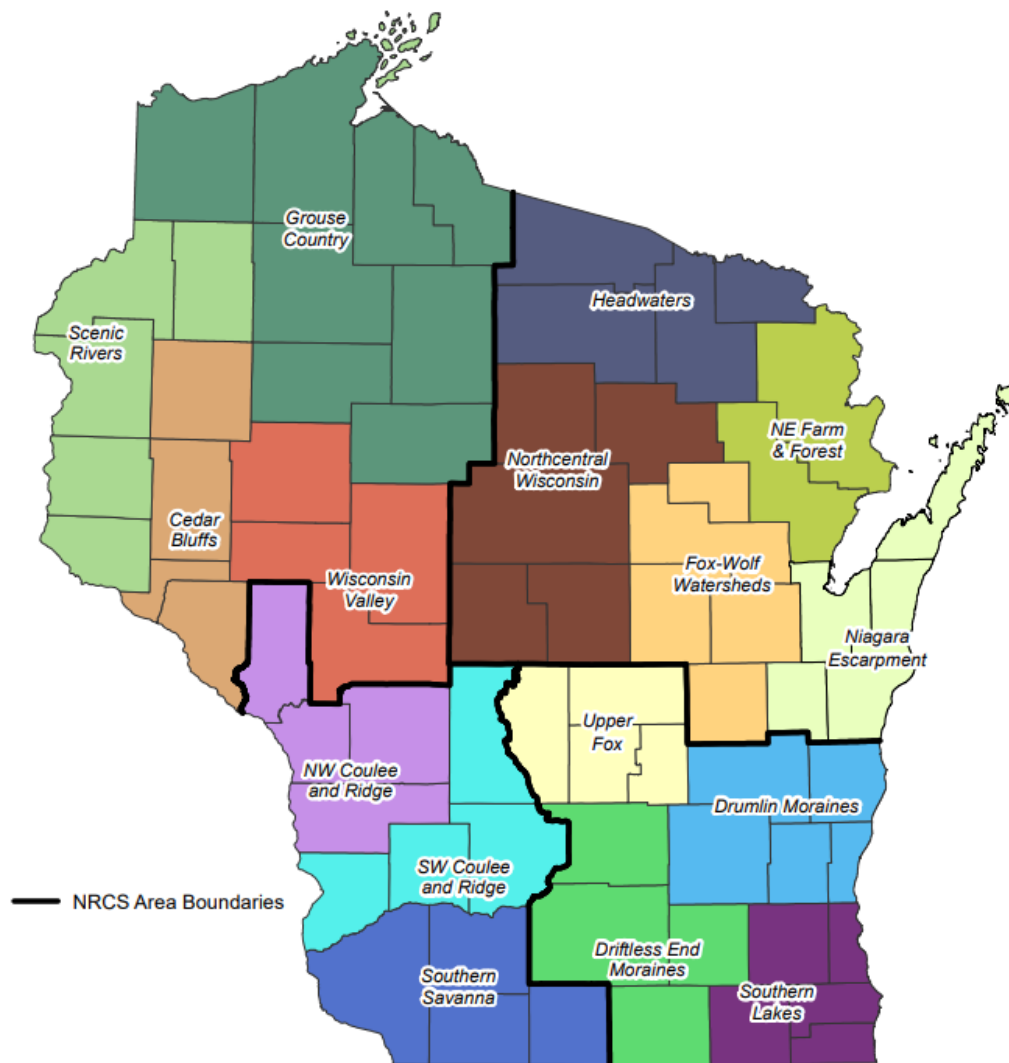
Wrapping up FY 2026

- Wisconsin NRCS obligated first EQIP Regen Pilot Program contract in the country
- EQIP
 - ~50 million
- CSP
 - ~22 million
- RCPP
 - ~1.7 million
- GLRI
 - ~10 million

FY 2027

- Continued focus on local control
 - Local work groups still exist but individual work units will have their own funding “pot” to ensure distribution of funds to local priorities
- Emphasizing decision making at Local Work Group level
- Feedback received via Local Work Group Meetings

Local Work Groups in WI



FY 2027 Regen Pilot Program

- Refresher from FY 2026
 - RPP available in both CSP and EQIP
 - National Headquarters set eligible practices and resource concern priorities.
 - Requirement to meet all soil and water resource concerns on all land units in operation by end of contract.
 - Assess all resource concerns on entire operation.
 - CEMA 216 required first and last year of contract.

FY 2027 Regen Pilot Program

- To promote the locally led process for RPP states have been directed to:
 - Refine the list of soil and water resource concerns and components to align with critical needs in the state
 - Identify land uses with the greatest need within the state
 - Identify additional conservation practices that will address critical soil and water resource concerns
 - NOTE: supporting practices are still fully eligible for RPP as long as at least one primary practice is contracted

FY 2027 Regen Pilot Program

- Using the State Tech Advisory Committee to help NRCS make these decisions
 - Survey for your review and completion. Can also send responses later via email.
 - Data will be compiled and evaluated to advise State Conservationist in making these decisions
 - Input during today's meeting is also encouraged.
 - If providing input via email please send to:
 - Ryan.Gerlich@usda.gov



Thoughts and Questions?



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Engineering Updates

State Technical Committee Meeting, Sept 2, 2026

Steve Becker, SCE

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Watershed Program Updates

auth. Public Law 566 (1954)

Bear Creek Watershed – Outagamie Co.

- ✓ **Coon Creek Watershed – LaCrosse, Monroe, Vernon Co.**
- ✓ **West Fork Kickapoo Watershed – Vernon Co.**

Watershed Response to the August 2018 Flood in SW WI

- 12 Dams Overtopped
- 5 Dams Failed



CC 29 Korn Dam – Monroe County



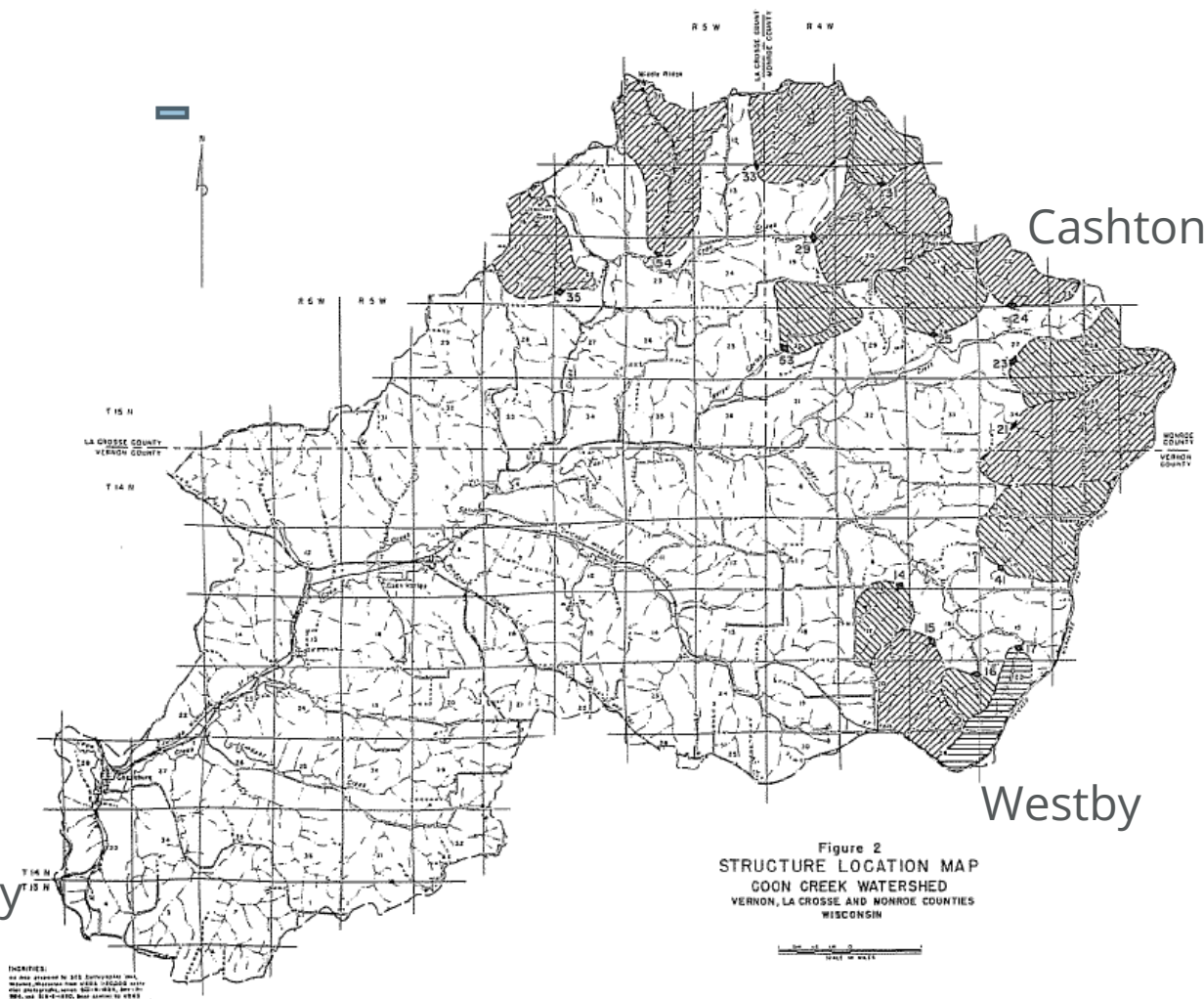
Coon Creek Watershed

69,000-acre

14 Flood Control Dams

Constructed 1960-1963

Coon Valley





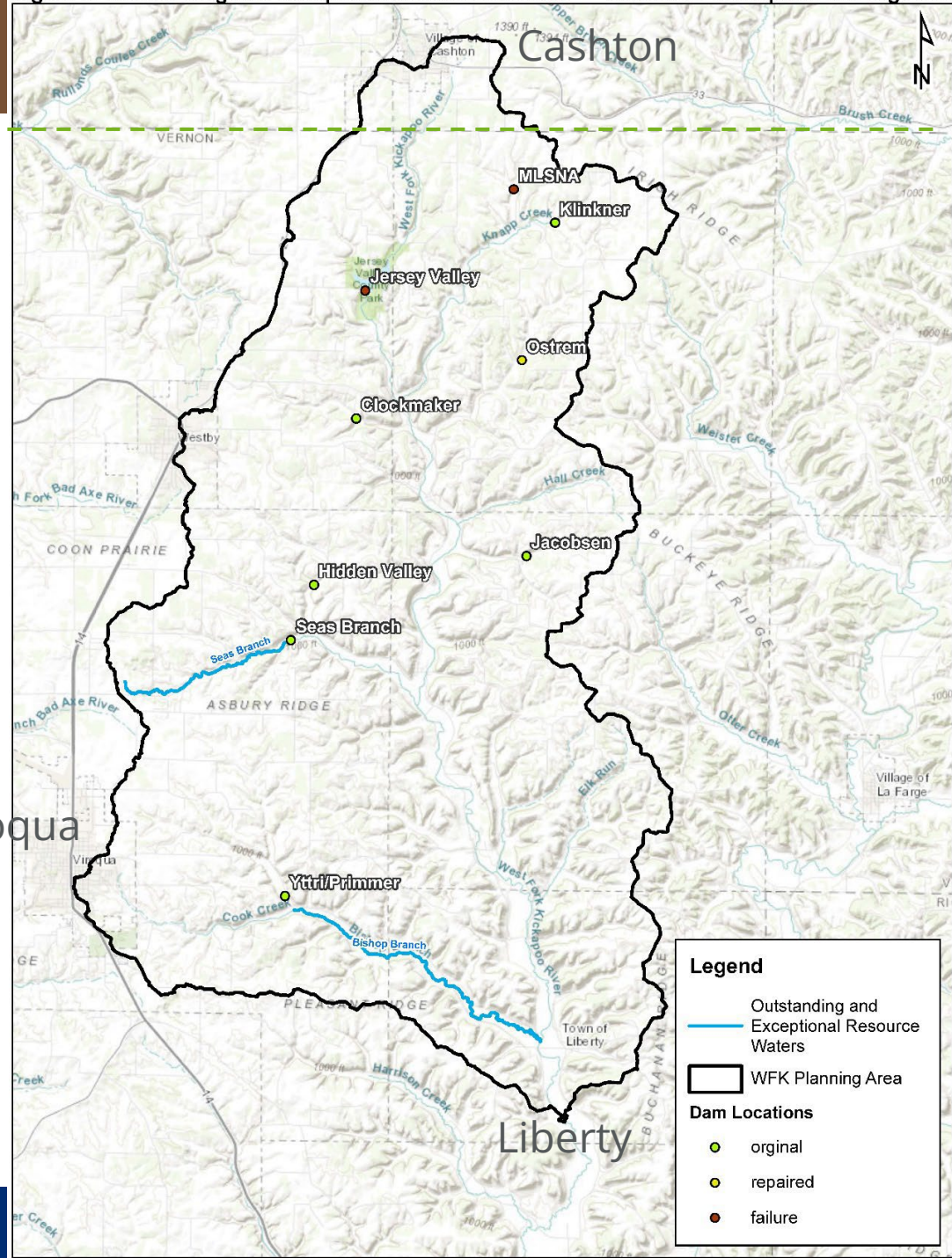
West Fork Kickapoo Watershed

64,000-acre

9 Flood Control Dams

Dams Constructed 1956 - 1971

Viroqua





Phase I: Planning *completed*

Coon Creek Watershed Plan - PEIS

\$979,000 PEIS Record-of-Decision >> 8/11/2024

West Fork Kickapoo Watershed Plan - PEIS

\$872,000 PEIS Record of Decision >> 10/28/2024

Phase II: Design

(Aug 20, 2026 – February 18, 2028)

Coon Creek Watershed

(14) Dam Removals, \$1,429,000

West Fork Kickapoo Watershed

(8) Dam Removals, \$998,000

WFK-1R Dam Replacement (30% Design), \$1,225,000

Engineering Firm

Baird - Stantec Joint Venture

- W.F. Baird & Associates (est. 1981, 12 offices, water resources)
Madison, WI
- Stantec (est. 1954, 450 offices world-wide, full service)
Madison, WI



MLSNA DAM REMOVED 2023-2025

Construction = \$450K

Design = \$53K

Admin = \$9K

Const. Inspection = \$60K



WFK 1 Jersey Valley Dam Failure – Vernon County



Fractured sandstone abutments
exposed at WFK 1 after dam failure





Bad Axe Dam No. 11, Springville Branch of Bad Axe River, Vernon Co. near Newton, WI

Engineering Practice Updated FY 26

319 – On-Farm Secondary Containment Facility

- ✓ Updated EPA threshold requirements for an SPCC Plan

367 – Roofs and Covers

- ✓ Updated the code for wind & snow loads ASCE 7-2016

372 – Combustion System Improvement

- ✓ Adopted this standard to support energy efficiency upgrades for grain dryers and maple syrup reduction.

412 – Grassed Waterway

- ✓ Added an out-of-bank flow procedure for waterway grades < 1%

634 – Waste Transfer

- ✓ Raised allowable pressure rating for PE 4710 pipe
- ✓ Clarified when a hydrotest is required for practice certification
- ✓ Added specific safety & performance criteria for buried hard set pipelines from storage ponds to fields.

Proposed CPS Updates in FY 27 (44)

State Technical Committee Action thru State Oversight Committee (SOC) – Modified Process

580 – Streambank & Shoreline Protection

582 – Open Channel

584 – Channel Bed Stabilization

395 – Stream Habitat Improvement & Management

Stream
Restoration
Practices

634 – Wastewater Treatment, Milk House

- ✓ Small dairies < 300 AU (200 cows) with solid manure storage & handling facilities (i.e., no waste storage ponds/tanks)



Fancy Creek Restoration
Richland County 2026



Open Channel, CPS 582
(earthwork)





Channel Bed Stabilization, CPS 584
(artificial riffles)



Streambank Protection, CPS 580





Stream Habitat Improvement, CPS 395
(large woody treatments)





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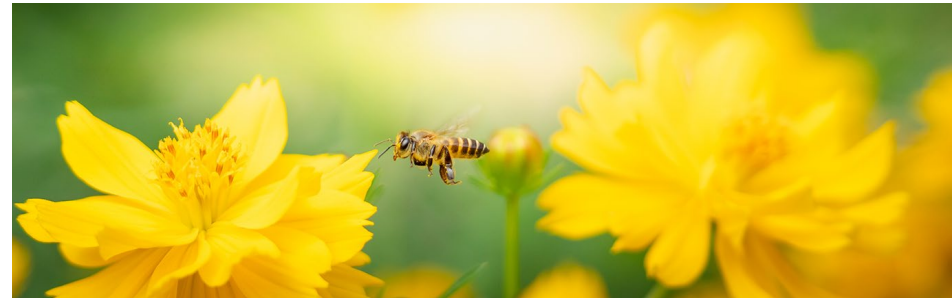
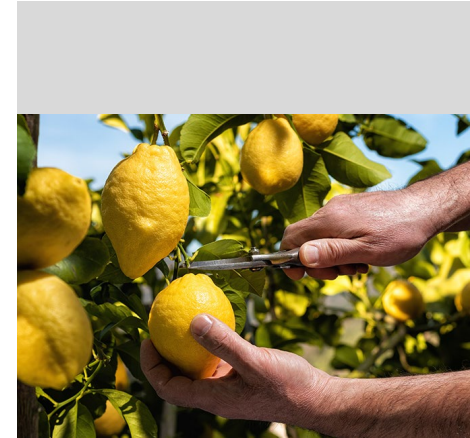


QUESTIONS ??

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Ecological Sciences Conservation Practice Standards

FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION
FSA | NRCS | RMA | Business Center

Conservation Practice Standard Updates FY25

- 315 – Herbaceous Weed Treatment
- 327 – Conservation Cover
- 328 – Conservation Crop Rotation
- 338 – Prescribed Burning
- 340 – Cover Crop
- 342 – Critical Area Planting
- 382 – Fence
- 384 – Woody Residue Treatment
- 394 - Firebreak
- 420 – Wildlife Habitat Planting
- 512 – Pasture and Hayland Planting
- 612 – Tree-Shrub Establishment
- 643 – Restoration of Rare or Declining Natural Habitat
- 644 – Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management
- 645 – Upland Wildlife Habitat Management
- 647 – Early Successional Habitat Development and Management
- 657 – Wetland Restoration
- 658 – Wetland Creation



Conservation Practice Standard Updates FY26

- 314-Brush Management
- 325-High Tunnel System
- 330-Contour Farming
- 332-Contour Buffer Strips
- 334-Controlled Traffic Farming
- 336-Soil Carbon Amendment
- 328-Conservation Crop Rotation
- 329-Residue and Tillage Management, No-Till
- 340-Cover Crops
- 345-Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced Till
- 420-Wildlife Habitat Planting
- 484-Mulching
- 511-Forage Harvest Management
- 528-Grazing Management
- 585-Stripcropping
- 590-Nutrient Management
- 595-Pest Management Conservation System
- 646-Seasonal Water Management for Wildlife
- 649-Structures for Wildlife
- 659-Wetland Enhancement
- 666-Forest Stand Improvement



Revised National Conservation Practice Standards

National Release Date: December 31, 2026

**State Release Date: Up to one year after
National Release**

Conservation Practice Standard Updates FY27

National Handbook of Conservation Practices Notice 179

- 328 – Conservation Crop Rotation
- 329 – Residue and Tillage Management, No Till
- 332 – Contour Buffer Strips
- 345 – Residue Tillage Management, Reduced Till
- 384 – Woody Residue Treatment
- 386 – Field Boarder
- 393 – Filter Strip
- 472 - Access Control
- 484 – Mulching
- 585 – Stripcropping
- 644 – Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management
- 645 – Wildlife Habitat Management
- 658 – Wetland Creation

Conservation Practice Standard Updates FY27

Federal Register

- 311 – Alley Cropping
- 315 – Herbaceous Weed Treatment
- 317 – Compost Facility*
- 338 – Prescribed Burning
- 372 – Combustion System Improvement
- 381 – Silvopasture
- 395 – Stream Habitat Improvement and Management
- 490 – Vegetative Site Preparation
- 516 – Livestock Pipeline
- 575 – Trails and Walkways*
- 595 – Pest Management Conservation System
- 654 – Road, Trail, and Landing Closure or Treatment



Conservation Practice Standard Updates FY27

Not on Federal Register Yet

- 314 – Brush Management
- 325 – High Tunnel
- 330 – Contour Farming
- 336 – Soil Carbon Amendment
- 342 – Critical Area Planting
- 380 – Windbreak – Shelterbelt Establishment & Renovation
- 382 – Fence
- 391 – Riparian Forest Buffer
- 397 – Aquaculture Pond*
- 420 – Wildlife Habitat Planting
- 511 – Forage Harvest Management
- 512 – Pasture and Hay Planting
- 590 – Nutrient Management
- 643 – Restoration of Rare and Declining Natural Communities
- 647 – Early Successional Habitat Development
- 649 – Structures for Wildlife
- 659 – Wetland Enhancement



Questions?



Jennifer Smith

Acting State Resource
Conservationist



Holly Giombi

Resource Conservationist
Conservation Planning Policy
Ecological Sciences Job Approval
Authority
Environmental Evaluation (NRCS-CPA-52)

Cultural Resource Reviews
Technical Service Provider Coordinator



Adam Abel

State Grazing Lands
Specialist



Jamie Patton

State Agronomist



Allan Braun

State Forester
Burn Plan Reviews



Doug Gass

State Biologist
Conservation Reserve Program
T&E Reviews

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WI NRCS Source Water Protection Subcommittee – 08/03/2026

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Source Water Protection Subcommittee

■ Purpose

- Recommend priority source water protection areas (HUC 12-level) and priority conservation practices to the State Conservationist
 - Priority conservation practices implemented in Source Water Protection areas receive increased incentive payments

■ Subcommittee composed of volunteer experts from:

- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
- Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection
- University of Wisconsin Systems
- Wisconsin Rural Water Association
- Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Districts
- Wisconsin water utilities
- US Environmental Protection Agency
- US Geology Survey
- USDA – Ag Research Service
- USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service

FY27 Recommendations

- Subcommittee met on August 3rd via Teams
- Resulting recommendations:
 - Maintain groundwater nitrate contamination as primary focus area
 - Maintain priority conservation practices from FY26 (at maximum # practices allowed)

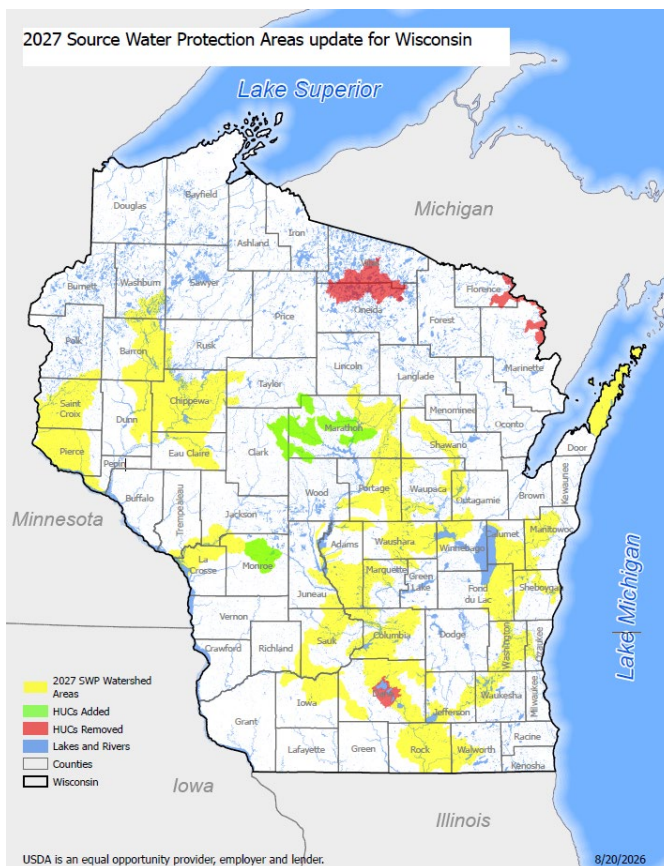
	Practice Code
Nutrient Management	590
Well Decommissioning	351
Conservation Cover	327
Conservation Crop Rotation	328
Sinkhole Treatment	527
Irrigation Water Management	449
Tree/Shrub Establishment	612
Denitrifying Bioreactor	605

	Practice Code
Grazing Management	528
Pasture and Hay Planting	512
Diversion	362
Cover Crop	340
Saturated Buffer	604
Waste Facility Closure	360
Residue and Tillage Mgmt, No Till	329

FY27 Recommendations

Resulting recommendations:

- Amend priority HUC-12s to focus on:
 - Predominately agricultural areas
 - Documented nitrate concerns
 - Synergism with local and state efforts
- Source Water Protection areas must comprise 20% or less of the state's land area
- HUC-12 changes recommended for FY27:
 - Removed HUCs in Oneida, Vilas, Florence, and Marinette Counties and metropolitan Madison
 - Added HUCs in Clark, Marathon and Monroe Counties
 - Reached maximum 20% state's land area





FY27 Recommendations

- **Recommendations approved by State Conservationist**
- **Next steps –**
 - Update information in NRCS systems
 - Disseminate update to NRCS staff for FY27 planning
 - Information to impacted counties



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Questions?

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