



Winnebago County

Land & Water Conservation Department

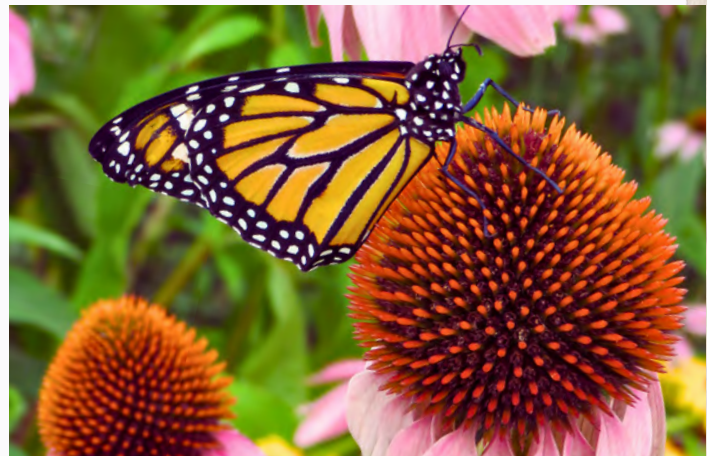
SOIL HEALTH



STRUCTURAL BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICE (BMP)



CONSERVATION BUFFER



**SUPPORTING
DOCUMENTS**

**Current
as of:
09/2023**

LWCD SPIRIT FUND PROGRAM

POLICY PLAN

**Working to PROTECT, RESTORE and SUSTAIN
the Natural Resources of Winnebago County.**

Spirit Fund Program Policy Plan

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WINNEBAGO COUNTY LWCD SPIRIT FUND PROGRAM

SUMMARY & GUIDELINES

The Winnebago County Land & Water Conservation Department (LWCD) Spirit Fund Program (SFP) was created with the approval of Resolution 202-032023: *Appropriating Funds in the Amount of \$3,030,300 for Land and Water Conservation Projects administered by the Land and Water Conservation Department (LWCD).*

A policy plan shall be established by the Land Conservation Committee (LCC) which shall contain or comply with the following:

- (1) A timeframe to expend the funds*
- (2) Conservation practices and the estimated amounts within each practice*
- (3) All practices shall consist of a cost-share of which the county share paid may not exceed 90%*
- (4) All practices shall be tracked for success and subsequently reported to the LCC*
- (5) These funds may be used as a local match to secure other grant funding*
- (6) The LWCD shall comply with all requests of county administration and Spirit Fund reporting requirements including a dashboard or other reporting mechanism on the county website*

The following are guidelines for administering the LWCD SFP:

- The SFP is under the jurisdiction of the LCC with administrative responsibilities assigned to the LWCD.
- Funds are to be used to support Best Management Practices (BMPs) and specific LCC approved programs that protect surface water and groundwater, reduce soil erosion, and educate and/or demonstrate the importance of resource protection.
- Allocation of funds to an individual project is determined by the LWCD and approved by the LCC.

- Upon final County Board approval, the timeline to expend the Spirit Funds on conservation projects in the LWCD will be no more than 15 years.
- The LCC shall receive an annual report from the LWCD Director and the LCC may amend the SFP Policy Plan if needed specific to conservation practices. Cost-share percentages can only be amended by the County Board.
- The SFP does not replace any of the existing cost-share programs in the LWCD.
- The LWCD Water Quality Improvement Program (WQIP) & Soil & Water Resource Management (SWRM) Grant Program will be the first priority when allocating funds for conservation projects.
- The SFP funds can be used to supplement other cost-share programs in the LWCD to achieve the SFP approved cost-share rates.
- No combination of County program funds can exceed 90% cost-sharing.
- Below are the estimated conservation practice amounts for implementation of the SFP:
 - Structural BMP Program: \$1,900,000
 - Soil Health Program: \$830,300
 - Conservation Buffer Program: \$300,000



WINNEBAGO COUNTY LAND & WATER CONSERVATION (LWCD)
SPIRIT FUND PROGRAM (SFP)
CONSERVATION PROJECT PROCEDURES

The following procedures are to be followed when it has been determined that a site is eligible for project cost-share assistance, according to the SFP criteria:

1. Applicant completes and signs a LWCD Cost-Share Application and returns it to the LWCD.
2. The lead staff person routes the completed application to the LWCD Director for review and signature.
3. Earnest Payment is collected if required.
4. Project goes through complete plan, design, and design approval procedures. Note: A “Cultural Resource Assessment” may be required in advance of project construction. The landowner must sign the cover page agreeing with the project design along with signing the Operation and Maintenance Agreement (O&M).
5. The LWCD coordinates all permit applications that are applicable to the project. This means submittal of standardized information components (see Request for Proposal [RFP] Procedures). **Note: it is the responsibility of the landowner, not the LWCD, to post any fees and/or any public notices related to the permits.**
6. Once all permits are secured, or waived, the LWCD lead staff person assures the project design is finalized and sends out the RFP to the contractors. (See the RFP Procedures). The RFP procedures apply only to structural practices.
7. The lead staff person prepares a project **Cost-Share Agreement (CSA)** and has it signed by all required parties. The CSA is submitted to the LCC for approval. The lead staff person also completes a CSA Amendment form as needed and submits it for LCC approval.
8. The project installation is to start only after all applicable permits have been secured and the CSA has been approved. Note: Project layout (staking) and pre-construction meeting with the contractor and the cost-share recipient/landowner must occur before construction/project installation begins.
9. Upon completion of the project, the lead staff person will route the original LCC approved CSA and additional documents to the Register of Deeds (ROD) for recording (conservation buffers and structural practices only). *Note: Recording of the CSA is to be done after the project is completed unless additional funding source requirements dictate pre-construction recording. CSAs for structural practices with a total cost less than \$1,000.00 do not require recording unless deemed necessary by staff based on the project’s significance. The original copy of the recorded CSA is placed in the main program file, one copy is placed in the Cost-Share Recipient’s/Landowner’s file folder and one copy is given to the Cost-Share Recipient/Landowner.*

10. After the lead staff person verifies and signs that project installation is completed in accordance with the approved design, staff then:
 - a) Complete a **Cost-Share Calculation and Practice Verification** form.
 - b) Complete an **Earnest Fee refund document**.
 - c) Provide a **Contractor/Supplier Payment Certification** form to the contractor for signature. The contractor signs this form and returns it to the LWCD. Cost-Share payments will not be processed until this form has been signed and returned by the contractor (for structural practices only).
11. Lead staff person submits the signed Cost-Share Calculation and Practice Verification and Contractor/Supplier Payment Certification sheets to the LWCD Director for approval and processing of a Cost-Share voucher for check payment to the recipient(s) named on the Cost-Share Agreement. Payment voucher is forwarded to County Finance Dept. Note: Should a CSA Amendment be necessary, it must be LCC approved in advance of submitting any payment documents.
12. Upon receipt of the voucher from the LWCD, the County Finance Dept. processes the cost-share payment and earnest fee checks and returns them to the LWCD for recording and delivery (by hand or mail) to the Cost-Share Recipient/Landowner.



WINNEBAGO COUNTY LAND & WATER CONSERVATION (LWCD) SPIRIT FUND PROGRAM (SFP)

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) PROCEDURES

The LWCD may base cost-sharing on typical or maximum acceptable costs for the conservation practice even if the actual costs are higher. The LWCD may estimate typical costs per completed practice or per unit of labor or materials. The LWCD may use its own experience or information obtained from other sources to estimate typical costs or to determine acceptable costs for the project.

Projects estimated by the LWCD to cost less than \$5,000:

- A minimum of one or more proposals from contractors are required.
- The LWCD may provide RFPs to selected contractors utilizing all available methods. RFPs will provide the project location, plans of the proposed project, the submittal deadline and specified information and location for return of the proposal.
- Contractors may return their proposals for the project to the LWCD by hand delivery, electronically, by FAX, by USPS or private courier. The contractor is responsible to verify that LWCD received their proposal. Any proposals received after the deadline will not be considered.
- Upon receipt of the proposal, LWCD personnel will write their name, the time and date received on the proposal and place it in the assigned project folder located in a designated secured cabinet. Proposals will be reviewed after the submittal deadline and a summary of the proposals will be provided to those that submitted.
- Proposals exceeding the estimated project cost by more than \$500 may not be considered, however if all proposals submitted exceed the estimated project cost by more than \$500, the lowest proposal may be considered following an LWCD review of the project. If only one proposal is submitted and it exceeds the estimated project cost by more than \$500, a second proposal is required.
- The amount of the cost-sharing is based on the lowest qualified proposal.

Projects estimated by the LWCD to cost between \$5,000- \$24,999:

- The LWCD, to the best of its ability, will show the proposed project site to all prospective proposal submitters on the same day and at the same time.
- The LWCD will attempt to acquire a minimum of two or more proposals from contractors.
- The LWCD may provide RFPs to selected contractors utilizing all available methods. A minimum of eight RFPs shall be sent. RFPs will provide the project location, plans of the proposed project, the submittal deadline and specified information and location for return of the proposal.
- Contractors may return their proposals for the project to the LWCD by hand delivery, electronically, by FAX, by USPS or private courier. The contractor is responsible to verify that the LWCD received their proposal. Any proposals received after the deadline will not be considered.

- Upon receipt of the proposal, LWCD personnel will write their name, the time and date received on the proposal and place it in the assigned project folder located in a designated secured cabinet. Proposals will be reviewed after the submittal deadline and a summary of the proposals will be provided to those that submitted.
- The amount of the cost-sharing is based on the lowest qualified proposal.
- The landowner may select a higher contractor proposal only if the landowner agrees to pay the difference.
- The landowner may not select a contractor who did not submit a proposal.

Projects estimated by the LWCD to cost \$25,000 or more:

- The LWCD, to the best of its ability, will show the proposed project site to all prospective proposal submitters on the same day and at the same time.
- The LWCD will attempt to acquire a minimum of three or more proposals from contractors.
- The LWCD may provide RFPs to selected contractors utilizing all available methods. A minimum of eight RFPs shall be sent. RFPs will provide the project location, plans of the proposed project, the submittal deadline and specified information and location for return of the proposal.
- All proposals must be returned to the LWCD in a sealed envelope with the words “Sealed Proposal,” clearly printed on the front. The contractor is responsible to verify that the LWCD received their proposal. Any proposals received after the deadline will not be considered.
- Upon receipt of the proposal, LWCD personnel will write their name, the time and date received on the proposal and place it in the assigned project folder located in a designated secured cabinet. Proposals will be reviewed after the submittal deadline and a summary of the proposals will be provided to those that submitted.
- The amount of the cost-sharing is based on the lowest qualified proposal.
- The landowner may select a higher proposal contractor only if the landowner agrees to pay the difference.
- The landowner may not select a contractor who did not submit a proposal.



WINNEBAGO COUNTY LWCD
SPIRIT FUND PROGRAM

STRUCTURAL BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICE

*A **Structural BMP** is a conservation practice determined by the LWCD to prevent or reduce runoff pollutants to surface water and groundwater.*

The following are guidelines for cost-sharing structural BMP projects through the SFP:

- Structural BMP eligibility shall be determined by the LWCD staff.
- The Spirit Fund Program will cost-share eligible individual structural BMPs up to 90% of the actual project cost.
- Cost-sharing for each individual structural BMP will have a maximum cap of \$50,000 annually.
- The maximum cost-share cap may be exceeded with the preapproval of the LCC.
- The landowner/operator shall install and maintain the structural BMPs for a minimum of ten years in accordance with the associated Cost-Share Agreement and Operation & Maintenance Plan.
- All BMPs must follow the guidelines above except for the list below whose criteria is specified in the subsequent pages:
 - Rain Gardens
 - Shoreline Habitat Restoration for Developed Sites (SHRUB)
 - Well Abandonment
 - Wetland Scrapes
 - Livestock Waste Storage Facility
 - Demonstration Projects



*A **rain garden** is a topographic depression planted with native plants designed to capture and temporarily store stormwater runoff until it infiltrates into the soil.*

The following are guidelines for cost-sharing rain garden projects through the SFP:

- Rain garden site eligibility shall be determined by the LWCD staff.
- The SFP will provide up to 90% of the initial cost to establish one rain garden for any given landowner.
- Cost-sharing for each individual rain garden project will have a cap of \$1,000.
- The landowner shall install and maintain the rain garden for a minimum of ten years in accordance with the associated Cost-Share Agreement and Operation & Maintenance Plan.



Shoreline habitat restoration for developed areas (SHRUB) is the establishment in developed areas of a shoreline buffer zone of diverse native vegetation that extends inland and waterward from the ordinary high water mark. The shoreline habitat restoration design seeks to restore the functions provided by the original natural vegetation and includes a mixture of native trees, shrubs, ground cover and/or wetland species.

The following are guidelines for cost-sharing SHRUB projects through the SFP:

- Site eligibility shall be determined by the LWCD staff in accordance with established criteria and applicable technical standards.
- The SHRUB must have a minimum width of 20 to 35 feet landward, as determined by the LWCD, to be eligible for the cost-sharing. A landowner can establish the SHRUB wider than 35 feet but the additional area is not eligible for cost-sharing.
- The SFP will provide up to 90% of the initial cost to establish the SHRUB.
- Cost-sharing for each individual SHRUB will have a cap of \$5,400.
- The maximum cost-share cap may be exceeded with the preapproval of the LCC.
- The landowner shall maintain the SHRUB for a minimum of ten years in accordance with the associated Cost-Share Agreement and Operation & Maintenance Plan.



STRUCTURAL BMP • WELL ABANDONMENT

*A **well abandonment** is the proper closing of abandoned or unused wells to address the risk of having contaminants entering into them and polluting the groundwater.*

The following are guidelines for cost-sharing well abandonment projects through the SFP:

- The well must be privately owned and cannot be a municipal, public or commercial property well.
- The private well must be located in Winnebago County.
- This is a voluntary program for well owners to receive either 50% or 90% of the cost to properly abandon a well depending on the resource concern.
- Well abandonment projects will be ranked as a high or low resource concern and cost-shared as follows:
 - **High resource concern** - A well located in an area with a high to moderate potential to allow pollutant loading into the groundwater as determined by LWCD staff shall be deemed a high resource concern well.

High resource concern wells are eligible for up to 90% cost-sharing.

- **Low resource concern** - A well located in an area with a low potential to allow pollutant loading into the groundwater as determined by LWCD staff shall be deemed a low resource concern well.

Low resource concern wells are eligible for up to 50% cost-sharing up to a maximum of \$1,000.

Well Abandonment Cost-Share Process

- The well owner applies for cost-sharing from the LWCD.
- The well owner submits a cost estimate from a Licensed Well Driller or Pump Installer for their well abandonment project. (**Note: If the first estimate exceeds \$500.00, a second estimate is required.**)
- The LWCD reviews the project and determines cost-share eligibility.

Note: LWCD staff will prioritize and rank projects based on the resource concern using established criteria, pollutant loading models and return on investment.

- A cost-share agreement (CSA) must be signed by all necessary parties and receive approval **before** any work is done on the well abandonment project. **Well owners that do not have a signed and approved CSA prior to beginning their project will be denied cost-sharing.**
- A Licensed Well Driller or Pump Installer must complete the well abandonment and provide the well owner/LWCD a copy of a properly completed and signed WDNR Well Abandonment Form 3300-005.
- Upon completion of the project, the well owner must submit proof of full payment to the service provider, a properly completed Form 3300-005 and any other required documentation to the LWCD to receive reimbursement in accordance with the CSA.



Wetland Scrapes are isolated shallow excavated depressions with gradual sideslopes that fill with water for all or part of the year, especially in the spring. These wetland scrapes are constructed to slow down and filter runoff from adjacent agricultural land. These wetland areas also provide habitat for wildlife.

The following are guidelines for cost-sharing wetland scrape projects through the SFP:

- Site eligibility shall be determined by the LWCD staff in accordance with established criteria and applicable technical standards.
- The wetland scrape must be receiving runoff from an agricultural field, as determined by the LWCD, to be eligible for cost-sharing.
- A 35' – 50' permanent vegetated buffer, as determined by LWCD staff, must be planted around the wetland scrape after construction is complete to assist in filtration and to protect the wetland from agricultural practices.
- The SFP will provide up to 70% of the cost of construction and seeding.
- The landowner shall maintain the wetland scrape for a minimum of ten years in accordance with the associated Cost-Share Agreement and Operation & Maintenance Plan.



Livestock waste storage facility is an impoundment made by constructing an embankment, excavating a pit or dugout, or by fabricating a structure to temporarily contain manure and other livestock or agricultural wastes. These systems protect water quality by preventing runoff from livestock lots, cutting fertilizer costs, preventing nutrient losses in agricultural fields, and allowing for manure to be safely stored until conditions are environmentally safe for spreading.

The following are guidelines for cost-sharing livestock waste storage facility projects through the SFP:

- Site eligibility shall be determined by the LWCD staff in accordance with established criteria and applicable technical standards.
- Landowner/operator must not have any other livestock waste storage facilities, this does not include waste transfer systems.
- Landowner/operator must have an approved Nutrient Management Plan.
- Landowner/operator must have at least 140 animal units of dairy, beef, goats, chickens, or pigs.
- Livestock waste storage facility must be designed to hold a minimum of 180 days of livestock waste.
- The SFP will provide up to 50% cost-sharing for the construction of eligible livestock waste storage facility projects.
- Cost-sharing for a livestock waste storage facility project will have a maximum cap of \$25,000.
- The landowner/operator shall maintain the livestock waste storage facility for a minimum of ten years in accordance with the associated Cost-Share Agreement and Operation & Maintenance Plan.
- The landowner/operator must follow the requirements of the Winnebago County Livestock Waste Management Ordinance and maintain a Nutrient Management Plan.



Demonstration projects would be considered new and innovative practices that are being introduced to address sediment and nutrient loading.

The following are guidelines for cost-sharing demonstration projects through the SFP:

- Site eligibility shall be determined by the LWCD staff.
- The SFP will provide up to 90% cost-sharing for the construction of eligible demonstration projects.
- Cost-sharing for demonstration projects will have a maximum cap of \$50,000.
- The maximum cost-share cap may be exceeded with the preapproval of the LCC.
- Landowner/operator must be willing to work with the LWCD to allow access to the demonstration project for educational purposes.
- The landowner/operator shall maintain the demonstration project for a minimum of ten years in accordance with the associated Cost-Share Agreement and Operation & Maintenance Plan.



WINNEBAGO COUNTY LWCD SPIRIT FUND PROGRAM

SOIL HEALTH

Soil Health is the continued capacity of soil to function as a vital living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals, and humans.

Applicants must meet the Cost-Share Agreement (CSA) requirements to receive soil health practice cost-share payments. To qualify for the cost-share payment, the applicant must commit to a **three-year contract** for:

- **No-Till (Strip-Till)**
- **No-Till (Strip-Till) & Cover Crops**
- **OR Cover Crops (No-Till already a practice)**

The following are guidelines for cost-sharing Soil Health Practices through the SFP:

- Farmer and Operator are used interchangeably and include all the land they run.
- No cost-share funding is available if currently using the practice in the selected fields. (i.e., will not pay cost-share for no-till if it is a current practice.)
- Operators receiving funding from another cost-share program (i.e. NRCS, DNR) for soil health practices are not eligible to enroll in this program at the same time on the same fields. (not including Cover Crop Insurance Payment)
- Soil Health cost-share eligibility shall be determined by LWCD staff and priority will be given to farmers new to cover crops and/or no-till, farmers currently using some no-till and/or cover crops, farmers using no-till and cover crops but would like to try an Add-on Practice.
- A CSA must be signed by all necessary parties and LWCD staff approval must be received before any work is to be done. No payment will be made on any practices done before the cost-share agreement is approved.

- A **maximum of 100 acres** for both No-Till and Cover-Crops is eligible to be signed up per farmer unless stated otherwise in an Add-on Practice.
- A Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) is required on cost-shared fields only. The Soil Nutrient Application Planner (SnapPlus) database must be provided to the LWCD each year by March 31st. NMP funding is not provided.
- A NMP written for the whole farm may receive possible NMP funding if available. The SnapPlus database must be provided to the LWCD each year by March 31st.
- The operator must have current, or obtain in the first year of the contract, basic soil samples (3 years old maximum) for all fields that are cost-shared.
- Ensure all practices are managed and compatible with crop insurance.
- Ensure all previous herbicide use is compatible with the cover crop to be planted.
- The LWCD will calculate the estimated environmental benefits of phosphorus and sediment reductions from the Soil Health Program using any available model.
- Eligible Soil Health Practices:
 - No-Till (Strip-Till)
 - Cover Crops
 - Add-on Practices



SOIL HEALTH • NO-TILL (STRIP-TILL)

No-till is limiting soil disturbance to manage the amount, orientation, and disruption of crop and plant residue on the soil surface year-round.

The NRCS Residue and Tillage Management, No-Till (Code 329) and guidelines below are to be followed for cost-sharing no-till in a three-year contract through the SFP:

- The SFP will provide a cost-share rate of **\$22/ac.** for the practice of no-till (strip-till).
- No-till (strip-till) involves only in-row soil disturbance. There cannot be full-width disturbance during the grant period. Moving residue from directly within the row prior to planting is acceptable.
Exception: 5% of the field may be tilled to level off ruts at any one time
- The soil tillage intensity rating (STIR) value shall include all field operations and shall be no greater than 20. The STIR value is created in the Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation (RUSLE) and used in SnapPlus.
- The residue shall not be burned, grazed, or removed. Crop residue may be chopped and left in the field. Wheat straw may be removed.
Exception: If signed up for high phosphorus field biomass removal
- If the "T" value (tolerable soil loss) is reached in a given field over a 5-year rotation in SnapPlus, that field will be considered disqualified.

Documentation Requirements:

- After planting photos
- Fuel cost compared to previous years
- The SnapPlus database must be provided



SOIL HEALTH • COVER CROPS

Cover crops are grasses, legumes, and broadleaf species planted after harvest to provide vegetative cover year-round.

The NRCS Cover Crops (Code 340) and guidelines below are to be followed for cost-sharing cover crops in a three-year contract through the SFP:

No cover crop cost-share agreement unless no-till is implemented.

- The SFP will provide a cost-share rate of **\$72/acre** for the practice of cover crop plantings. (One year – single species, Two years – multi-species)
- All years must have a cover crop. Aerial seeding or late interseeding may be needed.
Exception: In a very early freeze year, late October to November 15th, farmers must frost seed in early spring (rye or rye and red clover).
- The rye cover crop must be established by freeze-up or by December 15th, whichever is first. Rye is the best option for a cover crop after grain corn. Follow NRCS Tech Note 7.
- Crop rotation must be annual crops for three years. Wheat is acceptable and considered a cover crop.
- There must be a minimum of 8 live plants per square foot in fall representing the majority of the cover crop mix species.
- Multi-species years must have two or more species of cover crops from different families. Wheat years must have 4 plus species from different families.
Exception: when Red Clover is planned after wheat.
- Non-certified seed is acceptable if it has 85% germination.
- The selected cover crop species must be compatible with previously applied herbicides.
- The residue shall not be burned, grazed, or removed unless signed up for high phosphorus field biomass removal. Wheat straw may be removed.

- The operator must complete a soil health test in the contracted fields before the cover crop is planted the first year and at the end of the three-year period. If manure is applied, no test is needed.

Documentation Requirements:

- Crop and cover crop
- Cover crop population
- Planting date
- Equipment used for planting or other use
- Row spacing or drilled
- Seed cost
- Fertilizer type, and rate used on crop
- Fuel cost compared to previous years
- The SnapPlus database must be provided



SOIL HEALTH • ADD-ON PRACTICES

*Add-on Practices are only available with no-till and cover crops and only for one year per practice per farmer. More than one practice may be signed up and used once in the three-year period. Add-on Practices have **a maximum of 50 acres/practice**.*

Practices:

- Spring interseeding
- Planting green
- Adding tillage radish to wheat
- Frost seeding red clover into winter wheat
- Harvesting and/or grazing cover crops on high phosphorus fields ($P_2O_5 \geq 50$ ppm)
- Low disturbance manure application

The following are guidelines for cost-sharing (in addition to the regular cover crop and no-till cost-share amount) through the SFP:

- **Spring interseeding** is a technique to incorporate cover crops into a cropping system during the spring growing period.
 - The SFP will provide a cost-share of **\$15/ac** for the practice of interseeding.
 - Interseeding must take place before V6 of the corn stage, and V3 in soybeans.
 - Maximum 50 ac/yr. One year only.
- **Planting green** is a technique where an agricultural crop is planted into a living cover crop with the cover crop being terminated immediately before or after planting the agricultural crop.
 - The SFP will provide a cost-share of **\$15/ac** for the practice of planting green.
 - Maximum 50 ac/yr. One year only.
- **Adding tillage radish to wheat** requires planting 2 lb./acre of tillage radishes with the wheat crop in the fall.
 - The SFP will provide a cost-share of **\$5/ac** for the practice of adding tillage radish to wheat.
 - Follow NRCS Tech Note 7 for planting date.
 - Maximum 50 ac/yr. One year only.

- **Frost seeding red clover into winter wheat** *is typically “frost seeded” in mid-March, after snowmelt, when cracks form on the soil surface. Seed can be broadcast until mid-April if cracks are present, and the traditional frost seeding window is missed. Broadcast inoculated seed of medium red clover at a rate of 10-12 lb./ac.*
 - The SFP will provide a cost-share of **\$5/ac** for the practice of frost seeding red clover.
 - Maximum 50 ac/yr. One year only.
 - No herbicide use to kill broadleaves.

- **Harvesting and/or Grazing Cover Crops on High Phosphorus Fields ($P_2O_5 \geq 50$ ppm)** *planted with a high biomass cover crop. Only after wheat or other small grain, must leave 5-inch stubble to over winter.*
 - The SFP will provide a cost-share of **\$5/ac** for the practice of harvesting and/or grazing.
 - Maximum 50 ac/yr. One year only.

- **Low-Disturbance Manure Application (LDMA)** *is the implementation of manure application using a specific piece of equipment that injects the manure several inches under the surface of the soil while maintaining the least amount of disturbance.*
 - The SFP will provide a cost-share of **\$35/ac.** for the practice of low-disturbance manure application.
 - This practice may include spring application, fall application, or side-dress manure.
 - No more than 30% of the row width shall be disturbed by the LDMA equipment.
(example: 30-inch row x 0.3 = 9 inches of disturbance)
 - LDMA will be included in the soil tillage intensity rating (STIR) value for no-till. The STIR value will be 10 for up to 20% soil disturbance and 15 for up to 30% soil disturbance.
 - Full-width row soil disturbance will disqualify the field.
 - Maximum 50 ac/yr. One year only.

LDMA Documentation Requirements:

- Before and after application photos
- Machine type used
- Type of injector
- Depth of injection
- Width of injection
- Row spacing
- Type of press wheels
- The SnapPlus database must be provided



WINNEBAGO COUNTY LWCD SPIRIT FUND PROGRAM

CONSERVATION BUFFER

Conservation buffers are areas or strips of land in permanent vegetation, designed to intercept pollutants and manage other environmental concerns.

Applicants will be required to meet the cost-share agreement (CSA) requirements to receive conservation buffer program cost-share payments. To qualify for the cost-share payment, the applicant must implement one of the following buffers:

Field-Road Buffer

- **10-Year Field-Road Buffer:** Harvest one time
\$150.00/acre/year Cool Season 35'-60'
- **10-Year Field-Road Buffer:** No Harvest
\$150.00/acre/year Warm Season 35'-60'

Streamside Harvestable Buffer

- **10-Year Streamside Harvestable Buffer:** Harvest multiple times
\$175.00/acre/year Cool Season 35'-60'
\$200.00/acre/year Cool Season 61'-150'
- **15-Year Streamside Harvestable Buffer:** Harvest multiple times
\$175.00/acre/year Cool Season 35'-60'
\$200.00/acre/year Cool Season 61'-150'

Streamside Vegetative Out-of-Production Buffer

- **10-Year Streamside Vegetative Out-of-Production Buffer:**
\$300.00/acre/year Cool or Warm Season 35'-60'
- **15-Year Streamside Vegetative Out-of-Production Buffer:**
\$300.00/acre/year Cool or Warm Season 35'-60'

ALL conservation buffers will receive 90% cost-sharing on the initial cost of establishment.

The following are guidelines for cost-sharing conservation buffers through the SFP:

- Conservation buffer cost-share eligibility shall be determined by the LWCD on a first come first serve basis.
- The proposed buffer area must have a water resource concern identified by the LWCD.
- The land bordering the proposed buffer must have a row crop history of at least 4 of the last 6 years at the time of signup. Permanent pasture or CRP/CREP is not eligible.
- Conservation buffers and CRP/CREP may be reenrolled at the end of the current contract agreement subject to the availability of program funds and approval by the LWCD.
- All CSA's will be paid in full once the practice has been installed and verified growth has been established. The cost-share practice must stay in for the full CSA period or the landowner will be responsible for reimbursing the entire cost-share payment to the LWCD.
- Operators receiving funding from another cost-share program (i.e., NRCS, DNR) for conservation buffers are not eligible to enroll in this program at the same time on the same fields.
- A CSA must be signed by all necessary parties and LWCD staff approval must be received before any work is to be done. No payment will be made on any practices implemented before the CSA is approved.
- The landowner shall install and maintain the buffer in accordance with the CSA and the Operation and Maintenance Agreement that is recorded on the property deed.
- The landowner is willing to install other practices determined to be necessary to make the conservation buffer function as designed. (Example: Install a waterway that delivers to the buffer area if needed. Additional practices would be cost-shared.)
- The buffer area cannot be used as a travel lane or equipment storage.
- Manure and fertilizer are not permitted in the buffer area for the duration of the CSA.
- The conservation buffer shall be maintained at a minimum of 70% vegetated ground cover. Vegetated ground cover means perennial or permanent grasses, legumes, and forbs.
- The buffer should have at least 12-16 plants per square foot when established.

- Installation of a buffer must provide a water quality benefit. The LWCD will calculate the estimated environmental benefits of the enrolled buffers.
- Monitoring will be completed by the LWCD every 3 years to ensure the Operation & Maintenance Agreement is being followed.
- Eligible Conservation Buffer Practices:
 - Field-Road Buffer
 - Streamside Harvestable Buffer
 - Streamside Vegetated Out-of-Production Buffer



FIELD-ROAD BUFFER

Field-road buffers are designed to serve as a buffer between a field and the road to reduce wind erosion and filter agricultural runoff before it gets to the road ditch.

The *NRCS Codes* and guidelines below are to be followed for cost-sharing:

- Filter Strip Conservation Practice Standard 393 (WI NRCS, 2017)
- WI Agronomy Technical Note 10, Companion Document to Practice Standard 393 (WI NRCS, 2017)
- WI Agronomy Technical Note 6, Establishing and Maintaining Introduced Grasses and Legumes (WI NRCS, 2013) Note: Seed mixes begin on page 18

The following are guidelines for cost-sharing field-road buffers through the SFP:

- Buffer area must be along a public road ditch and approved by LWCD.
- The buffer program contract is for 10 years starting at the time of plant establishment.
- Minimum buffer width is 35' and the maximum width is 60'. If 60% or more of a field is enrolled, then the entire field can be enrolled.
- For cool-season buffers, the seed mix must contain at least 50% cool-season grasses, of which 25% will be sod forming (not bunchgrass).

Harvesting & Maintenance

- Mechanical harvesting of a cool season buffer is permitted once annually between August 1st and September 1st. **Harvesting of warm-season buffers is prohibited.**
- Cut buffer to a minimum of 6".
- Control undesired, woody, and noxious weed species.



STREAMSIDE HARVESTABLE BUFFER

Streamside harvestable buffers are designed to serve as a cool season buffer between a field and an environmentally sensitive area, such as perennial or intermittent streams or lakes, to filter agricultural runoff but allow producers to harvest the perennial cover.

The NRCS Codes and guidelines below are to be followed for cost-sharing:

- Filter Strip Conservation Practice Standard 393 (WI NRCS, 2017)
- WI Agronomy Technical Note 10, Companion Document to Practice Standard 393 (WI NRCS, 2017)
- WI Agronomy Technical Note 6, Establishing and Maintaining Introduced Grasses and Legumes (WI NRCS, 2013) Note: Seed mixes begin on page 18

The following are guidelines for cost-sharing streamside harvestable buffers through the SFP:

- Must be within 150' of an eligible waterbody determined by LWCD.
- The buffer program contract is for 10 or 15 years starting at the time of plant establishment.
- Minimum buffer width is 35' and the maximum width is 150'. If 60% or more of a field is enrolled, then the entire field can be enrolled.
- Must be a cool-season buffer and the seed mix must contain at least 50% cool-season grasses, of which 25% will be sod forming (not bunchgrass).

Harvesting & Maintenance

- Mechanical harvesting of a cool season buffer is permitted any time before Sept. 1st.
- Cut buffer to a minimum of 6".
- Control undesired, woody, and noxious weed species.



Streamside vegetative out-of-production buffers are designed to serve as a buffer between a field and an environmentally sensitive area, such as perennial or intermittent streams or lakes to filter agricultural runoff.

The NRCS Codes and guidelines below are to be followed for cost-sharing:

- Filter Strip Conservation Practice Standard 393 (WI NRCS, 2017)
- WI Agronomy Technical Note 10, Companion Document to Practice Standard 393 (WI NRCS, 2017)
- WI Agronomy Technical Note 6, Establishing and Maintaining Introduced Grasses and Legumes (WI NRCS, 2013) Note: Seed mixes begin on page 18

The following are guidelines for cost-sharing Streamside Vegetative Out-of-Production Buffers through the SFP:

- Be within 60' of an eligible waterbody as determined by the LWCD.
- The buffer program contract is for 10 or 15 years starting at the time of plant establishment.
- Minimum buffer width is 35' and the maximum width is 60'. If 60% or more of a field is enrolled, then the entire field can be enrolled.
- A cool-season buffer seed mix must contain at least 50% cool-season grasses, of which 25% will be sod forming (not bunchgrass).

Harvesting & Maintenance

- Mechanical harvesting of a cool season buffer may be permitted between August 1st and September 1st with previous approval from the LWCD. **Harvesting of warm-season buffers is prohibited.**
- Control undesired, woody, and noxious weed species.



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