

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN
THE SAUK COUNTY LAND RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT
AND
THE SAUK SOIL & WATER IMPROVEMENT GROUP**

BACKGROUND

To improve water quality in Wisconsin, the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) will provide grants to producer led groups that implement non-point source pollution abatement activities. As part of this grant, the Sauk County Land Resources and Environment (LRE) Department will collaborate with The Sauk Soil & Water Improvement Group (SSWIG) to help support, facilitate, document and communicate soil health and water quality improvements that have occurred because of their effort.

PURPOSE

This **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** establishes a partnership between the LRE Department (collaborating entity) and SSWIG (Group) as required under s. 93.59, Stats., and Ch. ATCP 52 Wis. Adm. Code for this Producer Led Watershed Protection Grant. This MOU identifies the roles and responsibilities of the County and the Group related to implementation of the producer led watershed protection grant.

MISSION

The County and the Group enter into this MOU to work collaboratively on producer led water quality protection projects in Narrows Creek, Honey Creek, Devil's Lake – Baraboo River, Bear Creek, Spring Green – Wisconsin River, and Otter Creek watersheds to achieve improved soil health and water quality.

The group and County agree as follows:

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The County entity and the Group will work collaboratively to improve soil and water quality within the Narrows Creek, Honey Creek, Devil's Lake – Baraboo River, Bear Creek, Spring Green-Wisconsin River, and Otter Creek watersheds, located in south central Wisconsin. Honey Creek, Otter Creek, Bear Creek, and Narrows Creek are included in the 2024 EPA Impaired Waters list. Impairments include total phosphorus, sediment/total suspended solids, degraded habitat. Lake Wisconsin is also listed due to upstream pollution with possible eutrophication from total phosphorus, according to the DNR. The primary objectives of the grant implementation are to:

- 1) Increase the number of acres that incorporate comprehensive practices that will reduce runoff to surface waters, improve soil health, and improve infiltration on the land.
- 2) Increase knowledge among individuals (farmers, landowners, and residents) within the watersheds about the importance of soil health through on-farm field days, workshops, and events.

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DATCP Producer Led Watershed Protection Grant Program**

- 4) Create and promote economically sound practices that will reduce the amount of nutrient and sediment runoff and improve the soil health.
- 5) Conduct and provide incentive programs for on-farm research and trials for innovative practices and solutions to the complex issues that we are working to address. Farmers completing on-farm research trials will work with UW-Extension, LRE, and Madison Area Technical College (MATC) staff to record the data, create budgets, and share the information with others on field days and other events.
- 6) Provide program assistance and guidance that is not currently available to all Sauk County farmers through existing programs such as EQIP.

These objectives fall in line with objectives identified in the Sauk County Land and Water Resource Management Plan that was approved in 2018.

The County and the group are each responsible for its own expenses related to this MOU except as otherwise provided herein.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The County shall:

- 1) Partner with the group to identify conservation projects and locations within the watersheds.
- 2) Promote DATCP approved conservation practices as well as encourage new/innovative projects that can be evaluated for effectiveness.
- 3) Act as the financial administrator of the grant funding with payments only to those approved by the group.
- 4) Assist the group in fulfilling the reporting requirement of the grant.
- 5) Partner with the group to develop educational programs each year for producers and non-agricultural collaborators.
- 6) Facilitate discussion and partnerships between potential stakeholders and SSWIG to meet their common goals.

The group shall:

- 1) Reach out to other producers in and around the selected watersheds to participate in the conservation efforts.
- 2) Develop the cost share structure and funding distribution for any grant dollars received; including the identification of who, what, and how much funding will be used to meet the goals of the project.
- 3) Partner with the County to develop educational programs each year for producers and non-agricultural collaborators.
- 4) Collaborate with agri-businesses to develop methods to achieve project goals.
- 5) Allow the sharing of information from evaluated practices.
- 6) Maintain Comprehensive General Liability Insurance with the following limits:
\$1,000,000 for bodily injury and \$1,000,000 for property damage.

The official contact listed below who will coordinate the activities of each organization in carrying out this MOU will be as follows:

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DATCP Producer Led Watershed Protection Grant Program

LRE: Mitchell McCarthy, Watershed Coordinator. (608) 355-4836
Melissa Schlupp, Deputy Director (608) 355-4838
Jacqui Peyer, Conservation Educator (608) 355-4842

SSWIG: Roger Bindl, Farmer RB Farms, (608) 588-5031
Gale Shea (608) 852-2305

SHARING OF GRANT FUNDS



The funds obtained through this grant will be administered by the Sauk County Land Resources and Environment Department. Payments will be made through vouchers that are approved by the Land Resources and Extension Committee. Funding distribution will be determined by the Sauk Soil & Water Improvement Group.

TERM OF UNDERSTANDING

Unless terminated earlier, as provided below, the term of this MOU is for a period of 3 years from the execution of the MOU and may be extended upon written mutual agreement. It shall be reviewed annually to ensure that it is fulfilling its purpose and to make any necessary revisions.

TERMINATION

Either party may request termination by giving 60 days written notice to the other party.

SSWIG	Sauk County
BY <u></u>	BY <u></u>
Roger Bindl, Lead Farmer	Lisa Wilson, Administrator
DATE <u>7-17-25</u>	DATE <u>7-21-2025</u>

