



Agriculture Enterprise Areas - Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Program

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WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, TRADE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION (DATCP)

2025

AGENDA

1. Introduction to the Farmland Preservation Program
2. Farmland Preservation Plans and Landowner Mapping Activity
3. Agricultural Enterprise Area and Farmland Preservation Agreements
4. Farmland Preservation Tax Credits
5. Conservation Compliance for Farmland Preservation Participant
6. A farmer's perspective on the FP Program and AEAs
7. Overview of the AEA petition process and timeline



WHAT IS THE FARMLAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM?



- Originally created in 1970's. Updated in 2009 to current form
- Encourages long-term practical land use planning
- Provides a foundation for preserving agricultural lands
- Creates incentives for voluntary compliance with state soil and water conservation standards
- Provides additional tools to support farmers and the farm economy
- Tax relief for Wisconsin agricultural landowners
- Two main participation routes- 1) Certified FP zoning Districts; 2) **Agricultural Enterprise Areas**

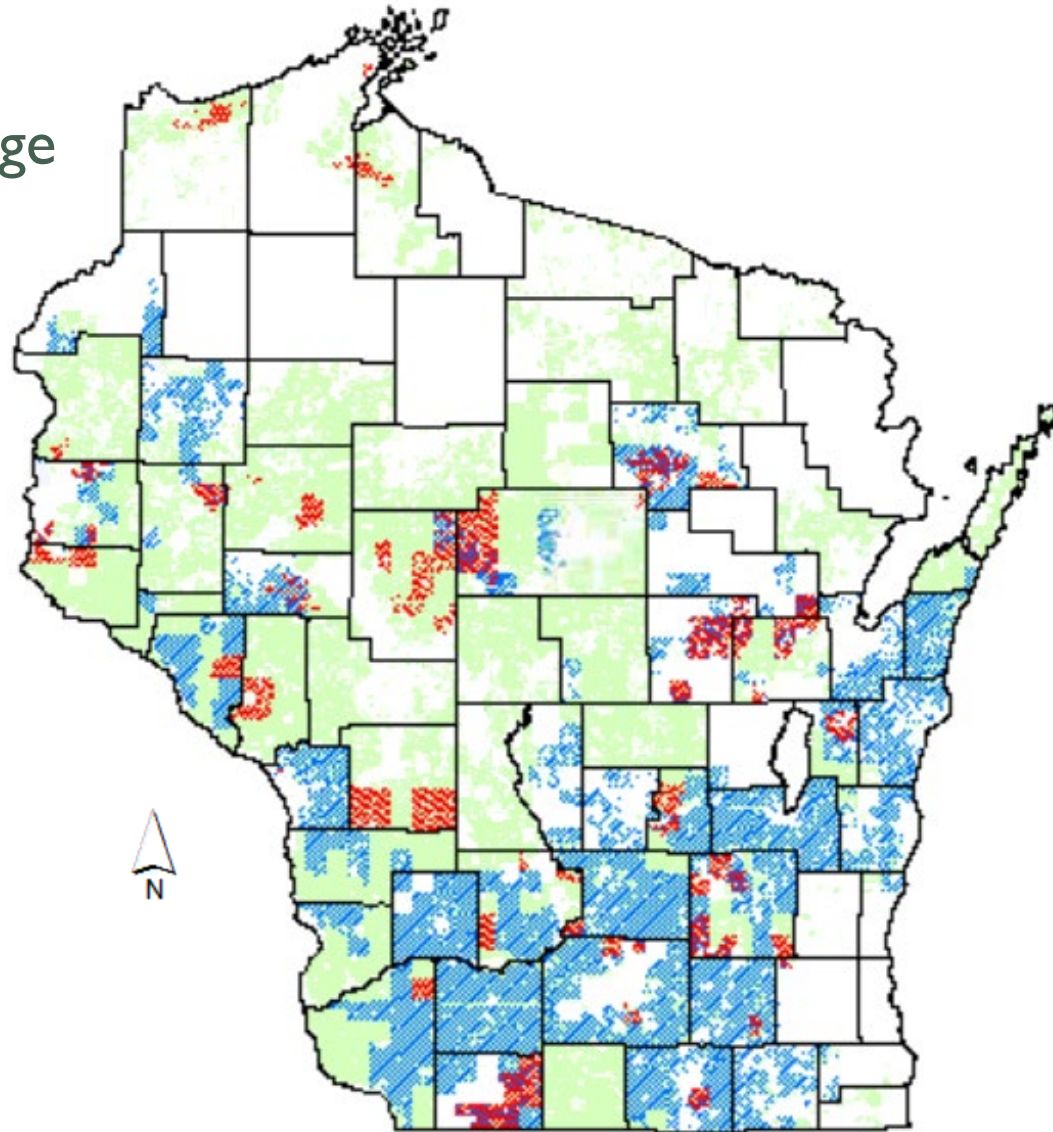


2024 Statewide Farmland Preservation Program Coverage

There were 10,006 tax credit claims on 2,027,007 acres in a FP eligible area in tax year 2023.

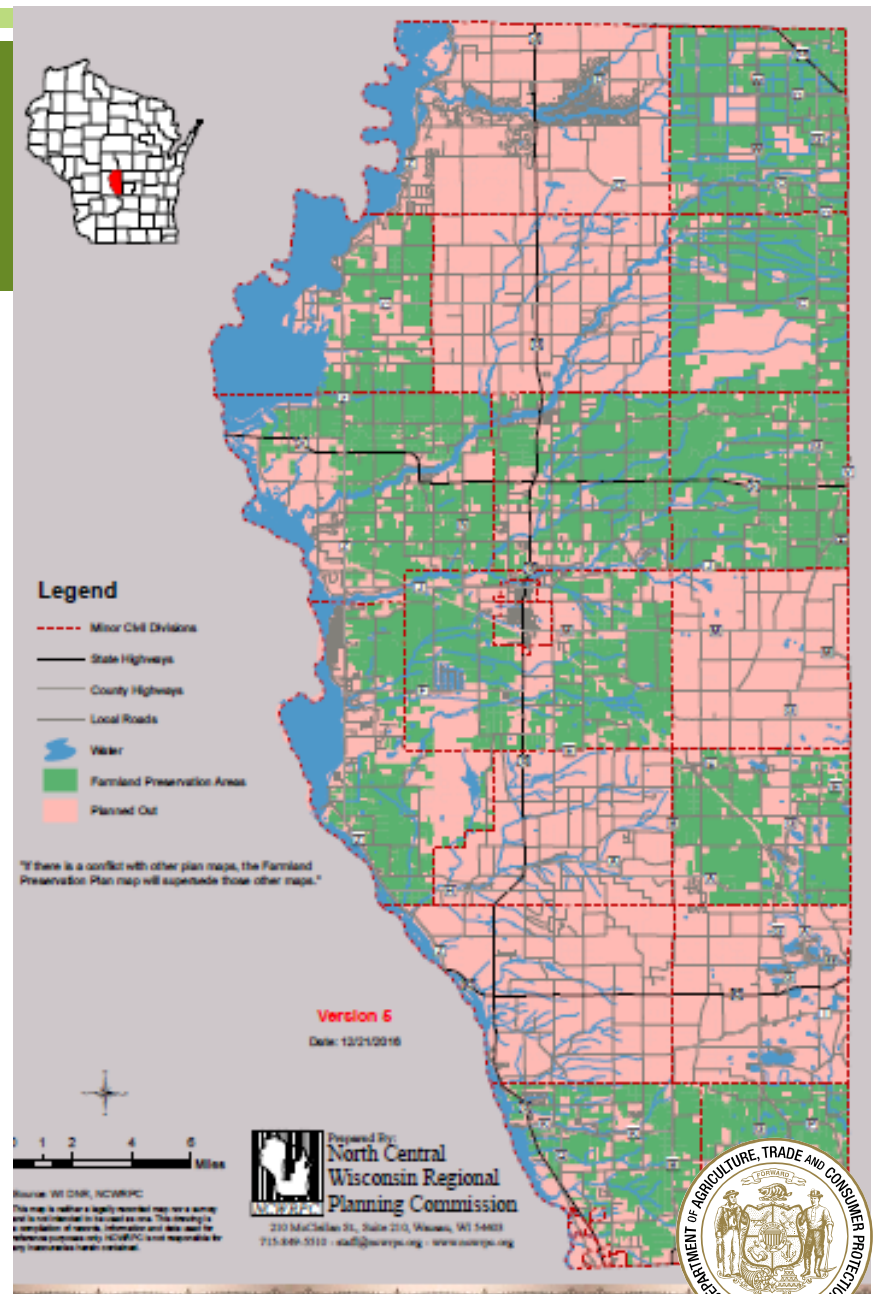
Legend

- County
- Designated Agricultural Enterprise Areas
- Certified Farmland Preservation Zoning District
- Certified County Farmland Preservation Plan Areas

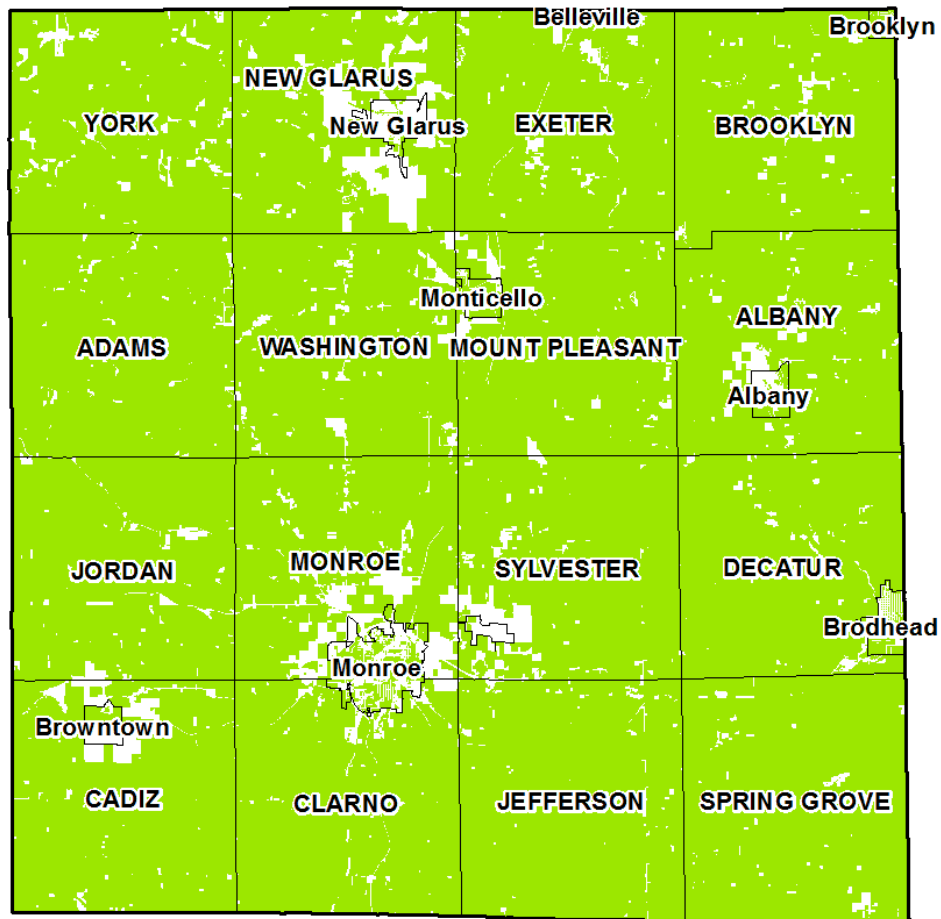


FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLANNING

- This is the foundational step to participate in other aspects of the Farmland Preservation Program
- Set the tone for ag land use policy at the county level;
Nonbinding guidance for future land use decisions
- Identifies land will continue to be in agricultural use for the foreseeable future
- Plan area must be based primarily on objective criteria
- Prepared at the county level with local input.



GREEN COUNTY FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN



Please mark your farm on the map Green County has provided



WHAT IS AN AGRICULTURAL ENTERPRISE AREA?

- Designated by the state after a local community drafts and submits a petition to the department
- Petitions are collaborative and help landowners build relationships with local governments, businesses, and ag partners
- Collaboration allows communities to make local ag preservation and conservation goal



WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF AN AEA?



- Allows landowners in the AEA to claim the Tax Credit without any changes to the local zoning through FP Agreement
- Clusters voluntarily protected farms which creates a stronger local economy and commitment conservation efforts
- Protects local heritage and agricultural community
- Fosters future collaboration with other conservation groups and programs (Producer Led, Nutrient Management, etc.)



Pecatonica AEA












Lafayette County, WI

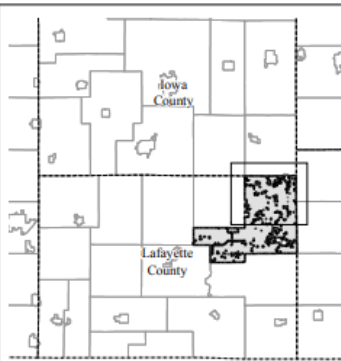
AEA 12 - 03 - M - 2020

43,785 acres

Map 3 of 3

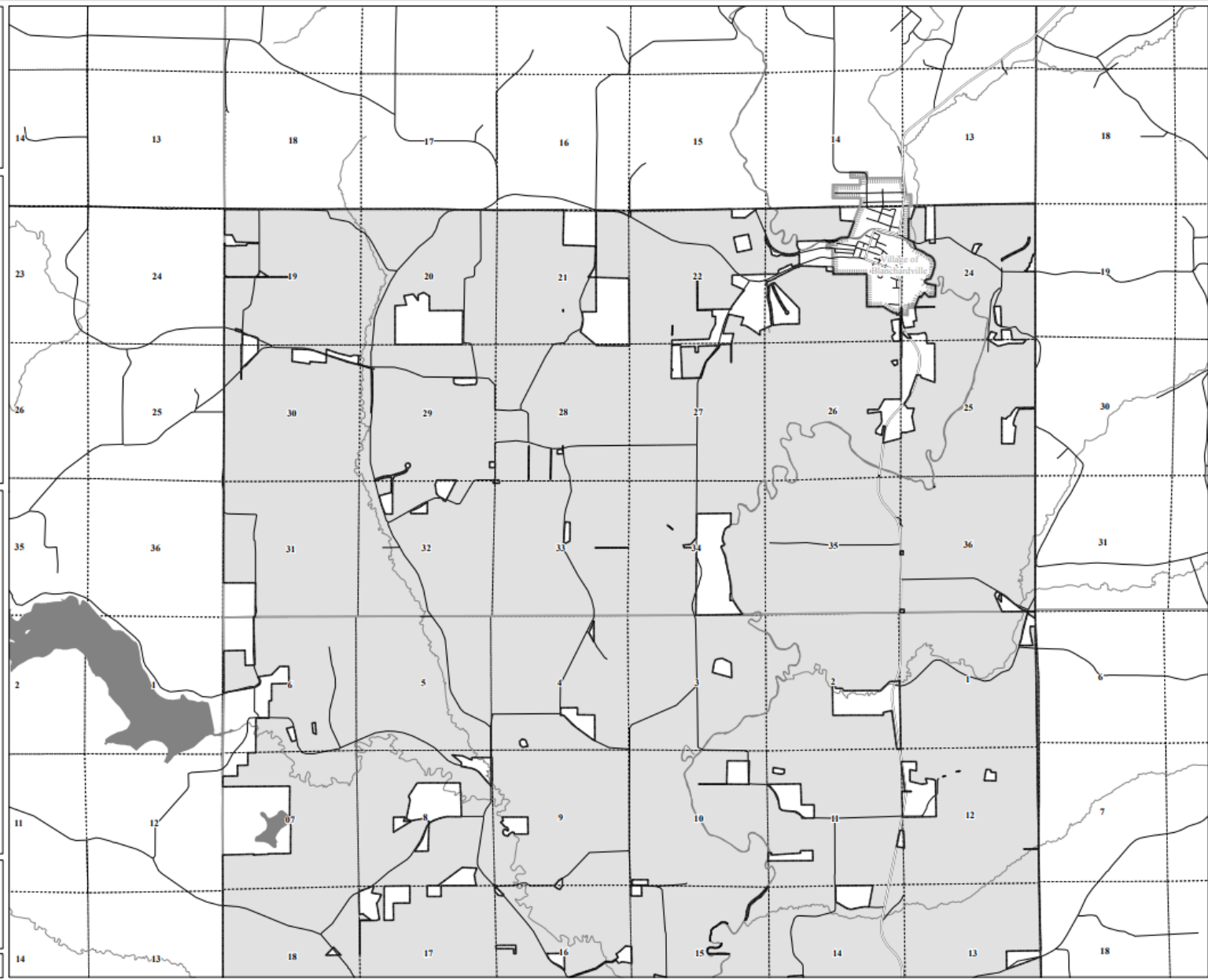



Blanchard Subset

-  Agricultural Enterprise Area
-  County Boundary
-  City/Village Boundary
-  Town Boundary
-  Section Line
-  Lake/Stream
-  Interstate
-  US Highway
-  State Highway
-  County Rd
-  Municipal Rd



This map has been prepared by the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection for use in administering the Agricultural Enterprise Area Program and does not constitute a survey plan, nor is it intended to be the same. Data shown on this map were obtained from various sources.

Prepared by: Land & Water Resources Section
March, 2020



WHAT ARE FARMLAND PRESERVATION AGREEMENTS

- 10-year voluntary agreement between landowner and the state
- Implements land use controls to keep lands in production ag and whole farms protected
 - Agreements are recorded with local ROD and stay with the land during land transfers
- Requires landowners to keep ag lands in compliance with state soil and water conservation standards
- Agreement holders are eligible to claim the FP Tax Credit



FARMLAND PRESERVATION TAX CREDIT

- Refundable state income tax credit
 - Paid from appropriations from state general fund
- Flat rate based on type of participation
 - \$10/ac for lands in FP Agreement OR FP Zoning
 - \$12.50/ac for lands in both
- No minimum or maximum cap for claims
- Claimants must also meet a Gross Farm Revenue requirement



FARMLAND PRESERVATION TAX CREDIT ELIGIBILITY

In addition to being in an AEA with an effective agreement, landowners must also meet the following criteria to claim the FP tax credit:



MEET SOIL AND
WATER
CONSERVATION
STANDARDS



WI RESIDENT &
LAND OWNER



PRODUCED \$6K
LAST YEAR IN
GROSS FARM
REVENUE OR
\$18K WITHIN
THE LAST 3
YEARS



DID NOT CLAIM
HOMESTEAD OR
VETERANS AND
SURVIVING
SPOUSE'S
PROPERTY TAX
CREDIT



SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION STANDARDS FOR FARMLAND PRESERVATION AGREEMENT HOLDERS

If you currently meet all of the NR 151 standards and are writing a Nutrient Management Plan, you are meeting conservation compliance for the farmland preservation program!

All Operations are required to create and implement a Nutrient Management Plan that meets NRCS 590 Standards

Crop and Pasture Operations

- Prevent soil loss by ensuring activities on fields do not exceed tolerable soil loss (“T”)
- No tillage is conducted within a minimum of 5 feet of the bank of surface waters
- Maintain an average phosphorus index of 6 or less and do not exceed a phosphorus index of 12 for the life for their nutrient management plan

Livestock Operations

- Limit agricultural runoff by preventing significant discharge of wastewater from livestock related building and structures from entering bodies of water and clean water runoff is diverted from all livestock related building or structures
- Limit or manage livestock access to open bodies of water to maintain vegetative cover and prevent erosion
- All new manure facilities are built to code, all facilities are maintained to prevent the overflow of manure, and unused manure storage facilities are properly closed. No stacked manure in unconfined piles within 300 feet of streams or 1,000 feet of lakes



What is it like to participate in the farmland preservation program from a farmers perspective?



DRAFTING AN AEA PETITION

New AEA Petition

- Creates a new AEA
- Develop new goals and plans to protect agriculture within proposed area – Blank Slate
- Longer petition application narrative

Modification AEA Petition

- Petition to expand an existing AEA into a new area
- Building upon existing goals and community plans
- Existing communities must sign onto the petition



All AEA petitions require the following to be accepted for review:

1. A completed petition application which includes all of the required petition narrative
2. At least 5 petitioning landowners
 - The more petitioners = the stronger the petition
 - For modification petitions, you can ask existing participants in the AEA to sign on as petitioners
3. A map of the proposed AEA and GIS Shapefile
 - Map must be contiguous, contain all petitioners and only include lands in the County Farmland Preservation Plan area
4. Signature pages from:
 - The County Land Conservation Department
 - Each Town the AEA Covers
 - Each County the AEA Covers
 - Non-petitioning Cooperators (3 to 5 per petition is best)
5. A recorded Petition Interview with a petitioner and the County Land Conservation Department



AEA PETITION TIMELINE

Spring 2025

- ✓ Hold public meeting to discuss AEA
- Meet with town officials and gather signature pages from petitioners

Summer 2025:

- Finalize map, petition content and schedule Petitioner Interview
- Gather any additional signature pages from town and county officials
- Submit petition for evaluation

Fall/Winter 2025:

- Final petition applications due to DATCP August 1, 2025
- Petitions are evaluated for recommendation to be designated. If selected, the AEA will be designated and active on January 1, 2026. Agreement enrollment would begin in 2026.





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