

The Farm Bill and Wisconsin



Five major conservation programs in the federal Farm Bill provided over \$106 million in 2018 in conservation assistance through cost-share, rental payments, easement payments, or technical assistance provided in Wisconsin. That funding helps Wisconsin farmers be better stewards of the state's land, water, soil, woods, and wildlife, and it provides conservation and economic benefits throughout Wisconsin.

Working Lands – in 2018, the Conservation Stewardship Program provided nearly \$29 million in assistance to Wisconsin farmers, and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program provided over \$44 million in the state. The funds helped farmers put in place nutrient management strategies, adopt conservation practices like cover crops and conservation crop rotations, and put in place fence and water needed for rotational grazing systems for livestock. The 2018 funding helped put conservation measures in place on nearly 409,000 acres of land in Wisconsin.

Wetland and Grassland Easements – in 2018 the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program provided \$3 million that helped purchase conservation easements protecting 463 acres of land in Wisconsin. Over the past 5 years, ACEP easements have protected 50 properties, including 2,774 acres of wetlands and 1,262 acres of other farmland in Wisconsin.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program – some of the working lands and easement funds have been allocated through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program, which leverages state and other funds to target conservation practices in watersheds or other geographic areas. In Wisconsin, that includes RCPP projects addressing trout stream habitat in the Driftless Area, restoring pollinator plants for monarch butterflies, protecting water quality in several watersheds, and improving woodland health. The 2018 Farm Bill provided dedicated funding for RCPP, and future projects will have more flexibility to target practices to meet an area's conservation needs.

Conservation Reserve Program – over 8,770 Wisconsin farms have Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts, covering over 205,000 acres of land. They provide over \$30 million in annual rental payments to farmers. Over 116,500 acres of Wisconsin CRP are high-value 'continuous signup' contracts, including over 35,000 acres of Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program contracts that provide buffer strips and grassland habitat along streams and nearly 32,000 acres of SAFE contracts that provide habitat for Monarch butterflies and other pollinators as well as water quality benefits. Nation-wide, about one-third of CRP acres are in special initiatives, and with over 56% of CRP acres in special initiatives, Wisconsin is doing more to target CRP acres where they will do the most good.

Izaak Walton League and Wisconsin

The Izaak Walton League of America was founded in 1922 to conserve outdoor America for future generations. The League's 54 founders, who were avid anglers, named the organization after Izaak Walton, 17th century author of *The Compleat Angler*, a classic book about the art and spirit of fishing. We are one of the earliest of America's conservation organizations, setting a course to defend wild America by changing public policy. The Izaak Walton League has 8 local Chapters in Wisconsin with over 1,000 active member families in the state. Our organization has been involved in agricultural policy since at least 1937.