

Dear Farmer and/or Landowner,

The Dry Run Farmer-Led Watershed Council is pleased to announce our incentive program for 2026 practices. Due to its effectiveness and popularity, we are continuing our buffer and cover crop programs, while adding a no till and Haney soil testing incentive.

In 2025 our farmers and cooperating landowners made quite an impact. Our producer led group hosted a soil health luncheon, a managed rotational grazing pasture walk, and our coordinator presented to thousands of non-farmers at the St. Croix Farm-City day and other forums about how farmers in our watershed are stewarding the land and water for the community. **Farmers in the watershed received \$10,800 of payments in 2026** for planting over 1600 acres of cover crops and converting less profitable stream-adjacent cropland to perennial roots. These practices kept over 530,000 pounds of soil on local fields and out of local ditches and the Dry Run stream.

This year, farmers in the area have agreed to expand the incentive options:

- **Buffer initiative**

The buffer incentive is still there for any cropland adjacent to the Dry Run with payment for the 1st acre of **\$1,000 per acre for the first acre** and \$650 for every acre after that. If there is another sensitive area you'd like to buffer (e.g., adjacent to a sinkhole), apply and we will review the site.

- **Haney Soil Health Testing**

Producers can receive cost-share to complete Haney Soil Tests on their fields. The Haney Test measures soil health, including available nutrients and microbial activity, to help fine-tune fertilizer decisions. This means healthier soils, stronger crops, and fewer inputs wasted. It's a great tool for making the most of every acre while protecting water quality in the watershed.

- **No-Till Adoption**

Cost-share is available for producers who are interested in experimenting acres to no-till. No-till helps build soil structure, reduce erosion, and improve water infiltration — keeping both soil and nutrients where they belong. This incentive helps cover some of the costs and risk of trying no-till on new fields.

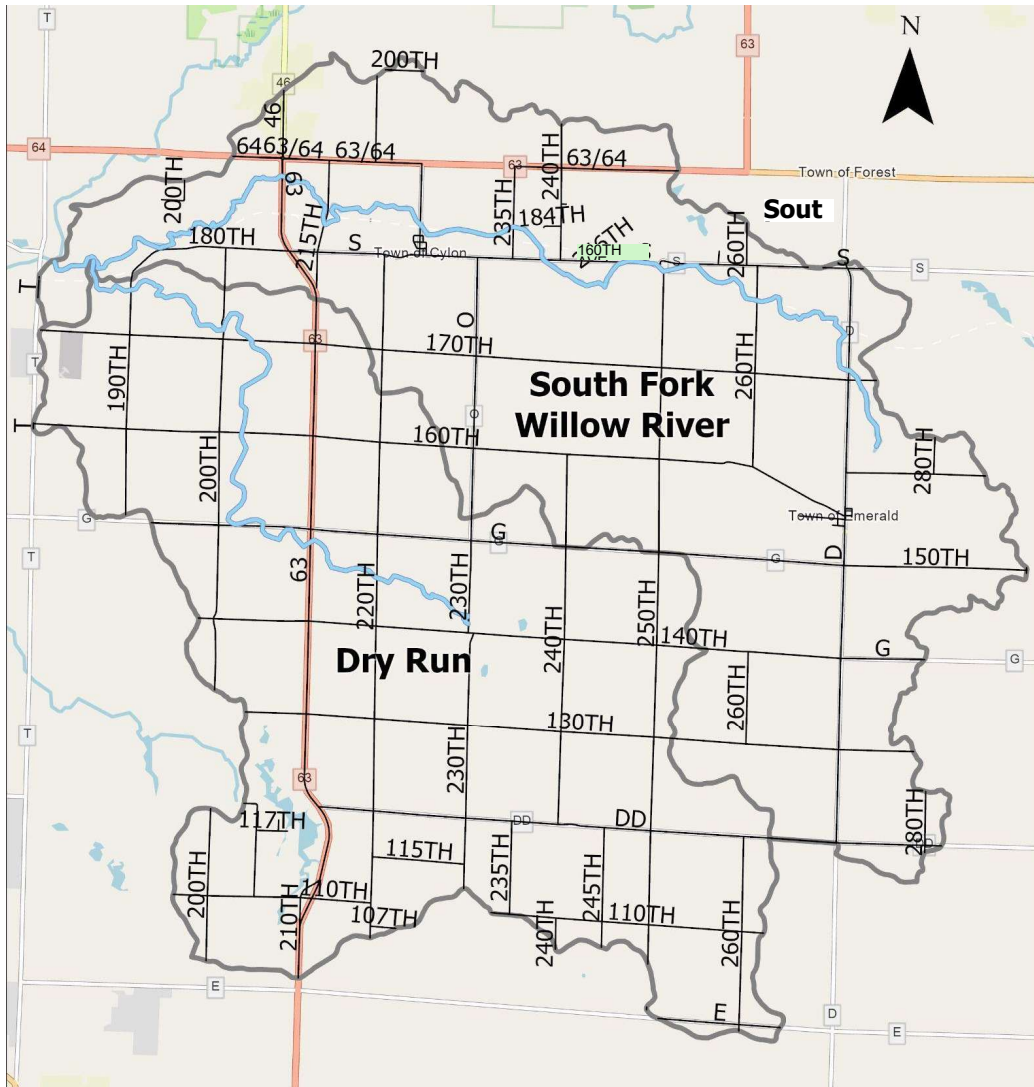
- **Grazing Assistance**

Cost-share is available for producers who are interested in management in a grazing system working towards managed grazing principles: rotation, residual, rest. Well-managed grazing provides a positive impact because it focuses on the long-term health of the land (soil, plants, water) simultaneous to the that of the livestock. This incentive requires a visit from Watershed Coordinator and/or St. Croix County Staff. \$500 flat rate.

If you want to get signed up or have logistical questions, contact our coordinator, Becky Brathal cell (715) 492-8967 or email bbrathal@wisconsinfarmersunion.com

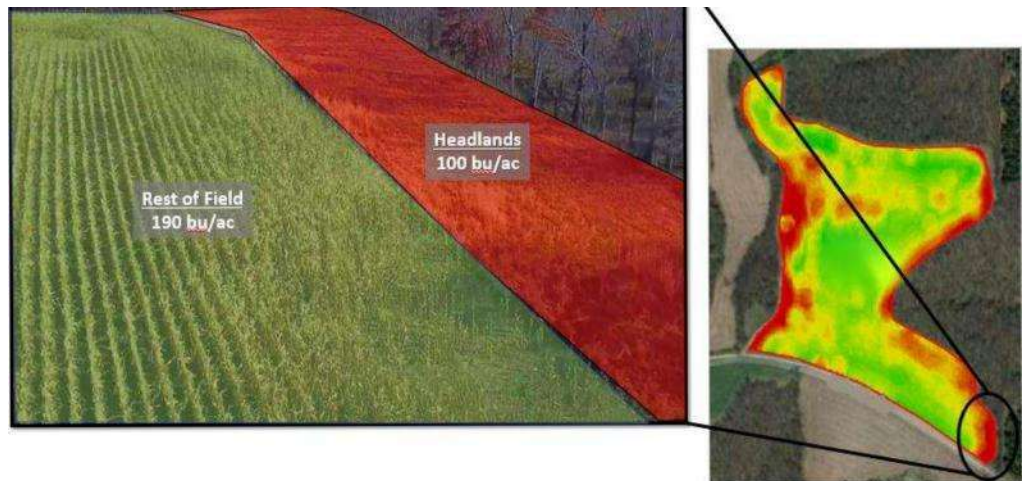
If you'd like to participate in the decision-making process of the Dry Run Farmer-Led Council, any farmers in or adjacent to the Dry Run watershed are welcome to come to meetings and have an equal say at the table as all farmers present. To learn about our next meeting, contact our coordinator, Becky Brathal, (715) 492-8967 or email bbrathal@wisconsinfarmersunion.com.

Thank you for your time.



"Corn is not a good plan for brush control" — Local Farmer

Assuming \$550/acre in production costs before rent and \$4.60/bu of corn, these headlands lost the farmer \$90/acre last year. Putting them into a grass strip instead of corn reduces those losses and increases total farm profitability.



Incentives 2026

Edge of Field/Stream Adjacent Cropland Buffer (\$1,000 for the first acre per applicant, \$650 for every acre after that)

Location of proposed buffer: _____ (please provide address or Township, Range, Section)

Estimated Area: X _____ Feet Wide= _____ square feet

By receiving funds from this program, you are agreeing to maintain the area for which you are receiving payment in perennial cover after establishment in 2026 through the harvest season of 2027. If you till the site or plant a non-perennial crop before January 1st of 2028 you will be asked to reimburse the Farmer-Led Watershed Council, all of the funds received for this buffer. No payments are guaranteed until the site is approved by the council or approved representative.

Cover Crops (\$10/acre): Number of acres for fall-seeded cover crops: _____

Cover crop(s) species planted _____ rate _____ method of planting _____

No till (\$25/ac for up to 40 acres): Acres _____ (extra acres can be used for match for grant funding)

Haney Soil Testing (1 per producer): _____ tests (extra tests can be used for match for grant funding)

Grazing Assistance _____ (this requires a visit from Watershed Coordinator and/or St. Croix County Staff)

Applicant Signature: _____ **DATE:** _____

By applying for incentive payment for these activities you are agreeing that you are not receiving incentive payments for the same activity on the same acres from another program (e.g., NRCS). This program is developed to assist in adoption of new conservation practices and reduce risk to farmers for the first three years of implementing the practice on each field. It is not meant to subsidize responsible management indefinitely. By signing below, you agree that you will not apply for incentive funds to pay for the same practice on the same acres for a fourth year.

A picture of this form filled out can be emailed to Becky Brathal, Dry Run Watershed Coordinator, bbrathal@wisconsinfarmersunion.com or texted to 715-492-8967

or mailed back to:

St. Croix County Land & Water Conservation Department
1960 8th Avenue, Suite 140
Baldwin, WI 54002



www.farmerledwatershed.org
facebook.com/farmerledwatershed

