

## APPLICATION FOR 2026 CONSERVATION INCENTIVES

In order to improve water quality in our area, we are pleased to offer the following conservation incentives for 2026. Please check boxes if you are interested in participating and/or fill out contact information if you would just like to be notified of upcoming news and events from the council.

\_\_\_ **\$250 payment for signing up for a free, no-strings attached farm walkover, for operations of at least 20 cropland acres with a conservation planner from the Pierce County Land Conservation Department.** This is an opportunity to get suggestions about improving soil and water conservation as well as agricultural productivity on your land. This is a one-time incentive for either the owner or the operator.

\_\_\_ **\$50/acre for harvesting “Kernza” perennial wheatgrass for grain or forage.** Kernza is a new grain developed by The Land Institute that has significant environmental benefits. Please be aware that the market is insecure and there are many challenges with production. Please write the total number of acres to be planted (maximum of 30 acres) = \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ **\$200 per acre for converting marginal cropland to pasture.** The intent of this incentive is to support new or existing livestock production in the watershed by reducing the upfront costs of converting cropland to pasture. Ideally, this would be acreage that has a history of erosion due to slope or poor soils. This incentive does not apply to pasture for horses or land with recent history of being pastured. Please write the number of acres of new pasture (maximum of 10) = \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_ **\$1.00/ft for Grassed Waterway installation.** Waterways will be surveyed and designed by a technician from the LCD and installed by a contractor of your choosing. Additional cost-sharing may be available through the LCD. Please write the approximate length in feet of waterway to install or repair = \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_ **\$300 per acre for creating a grassed buffer strip.** Buffer strips slow down runoff, filter nutrients, and prevent erosion. Examples would include creating a field border around a farm or along a waterway. The width must be no less than 30’ and no more than 120’ wide. write the approximate number of acres to be seeded (maximum of 10 acres) = \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_ **\$400 per acre for planting a pollinator plot.** This incentive offers \$400 per acre to seed cropland with a pollinator mix. For previous applicants, this incentive will also pay \$25/ac to keep and maintain existing pollinator plots (burning or mowing). The seed mixes must be approved by NRCS and applied at recommended rates. Please write the number of acres to be seeded (maximum of 5 acres) and/or maintained (no limit) = \_\_\_\_\_ acres new and \_\_\_\_\_ acres maintained.

\_\_\_ **Up to \$1000 for any proposed Nitrogen use efficiency test plot approved by the council.** Please submit a written proposal no later than April 1, 2026 for the council to review. An example could include working with an agronomist to apply different rates of N fertilizer in strips on a field, comparing full application to split application, or comparing different nitrogen stabilizers.

\_\_\_ **\$40 per any soil test to improve nitrogen management. This could include a pre-plant nitrate test, pre-side dress nitrate test, Haney soil test, or fall stalk test).** The goal of this incentive is to increase fertilizer efficiency by reducing amount applied while maintaining yield. Samples must be taken by an agronomist. Applicant must also provide sufficient information regarding crop inputs in order to analyze results. Please indicate number of samples (maximum 10 samples) = \_\_\_\_\_. Below are a couple of agronomists familiar with these test:

- Pro Ag Consulting (Keith Gunderson) – 715-684-9241 – 920-261-0446

*Funding for cost-sharing practices has been generously provided by the WI Farmers Union and the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection.*

- Ailts Agronomy (Joe Ailts) – 715-607-1340

\_\_\_ **\$500.00 flat rate incentive for new construction, repair, or general maintenance of a grade stabilization structure (dam) that meets NRCS standards.** Examples of maintenance include clearing trees growing on the structure or replacing the pipe. This incentive requires an inspection and approval by a technician from the LCD prior to completed work. Additional cost-sharing may be available through the LCD.

\_\_\_ **\$20/acre payment for planting a cover crop into a growing crop or following the crop harvest in 2025.** Cover crops may include any species of small grain (winter rye is recommended), radishes, hairy vetch, buckwheat, or any clover planted after a growing crop and terminated before planting a new crop. Cover crop must be planted in a growing crop or after the harvest of the crop but no later than October 15<sup>th</sup>, or as recommended by the NRCS cover crop practice standard 340. Verification of seeding along with seed tags will be required before payment. Please indicate the number of acres to be planted = \_\_\_\_\_. These services can be offered by the following custom applicators:

- Daman Raebe (airplane) - 920-219-0459
- Kirby Zimmerman (Hi-Boy seeder) - 715-965-5230
- Rohl Custom Harvesting (drill) - 715-594-3140
- Andy Esterby (drill) - 651-764-1899

**The following conditions will apply to all conservation incentives:**

1. Applicants must own or operate at least 10 acres of agricultural land in the Rocky Branch or South Fork Watersheds. Applications from outside of this geographical area must meet the following conditions:
  - a. Located within the Kinnickinnic Watershed
  - b. Agree to attend at least one field day or meeting
  - c. Obtain approval from the Council
2. Applicants will be required to submit a W9 tax form if incentive payment exceeds \$600.00. The W9 form will be kept on record by the WI Farmer’s Union.
3. All conservation practices must meet NRCS standards in order to be cost shared.
4. This program is developed to assist in adoption of new conservation practices and reduce risk to farmers for the first three years of implementing a new practice on each field. By signing below, you agree that you will not apply for incentive funds to pay for the same practice on the same field for more than three years (starting in 2021).

Payments will be received by December 31, 2026. We reserve the right to pro-rate payment amounts if sign-up exceeds funding availability. **Deadline for sign-up is May 1, 2026.** To learn more, please contact Brad Peterson (715-307-3502) or Brian Bergseng (715-760-0505).

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please submit applications to:**

**Dan Sitz  
Pierce County Land Conservation Department  
412 W Kinne Street  
Ellsworth, WI 54011  
dan.sitz@co.pierce.wi.us**



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[farmerledwatershed.org](http://farmerledwatershed.org)

