

**HORSE CREEK AREA WATERSHED COUNCIL
CONSERVATION INCENTIVES 2026**



Please check the incentive(s) you are interested in. Incentives only apply to land within the watershed. You may sign up for more than one. Funding is limited and will be first-come, first-served. We reserve the right to prorate payment amounts if requests exceed funding availability. **Deadline for sign-up is June 1st.** For soil sample incentives, a record of sampling and analysis must be submitted by December 1, 2026. Payments will be made by December 31, 2026. Payments for incentives will be administered by the Polk County Land and Water Resources Department staff.

Please return with the enclosed envelope or mail to:

**Horse Creek Area Watershed Council
c/o Polk County LWRD 100 Polk Co. Plaza – Ste 120, Balsam Lake, WI 54810**

___ **\$80 stipend to cover costs of well water testing.** This one-time stipend is made available to applicants looking to learn more about their well water quality by taking a recent well water test. Applicants will receive a well water test kit and following lab results will have access to information to help interpret their results. The test result data will NOT be made public. Applicants will be contacted by the Polk County Land and Water Resources Department staff for sample instructions and kits. Lab analysis must be presented as proof of payment to be eligible for the stipend listed.

___ **\$4/acre for new soil samples,** taken in 5-acre or 2.5-acre increments. You may take the samples yourself or use a consultant. You must provide proof of sampling and analysis to receive the incentive and must be willing to share your sample results with the Council. *Note - The data will not be made public, but you may be asked to complete a short survey quantifying any fertilizer reductions or nutrient management plan efforts implemented as a result of this incentive.*

Please indicate the number of acres you would like to sample for incentive payments - _____ acres

___ **\$1/acre payment for phosphorus indexing.** The phosphorus index is a number that indicates the potential for phosphorus loss from a field. It is calculated using soil sample results and other factors including distance to a water body, slope, soil type, tillage practices, etc. If you already have a nutrient management plan for your operation and you are actively updating this plan you would be eligible for this incentive.

Please indicate how many acres you have covered under a 590 approved nutrient management plan - _____ acres

\$25/acre for planting a fall seeded cover crop in a growing crop or following the crop harvest (**Maximum 100 ac**). Cover crops may include any species of small grain (winter rye is recommended). Multi-species mixes are eligible. Cover crop must be planted in a growing crop or after the harvest of the crop but no later than October 15th. Cover crop must be fall or spring terminated. Priority will be given to first-time participants. Non-highly erodible acres will only be available to new participants to the program. Incentives for cover crop planting may be prorated according to available funding. Watershed Council members can provide guidance in cover crop establishment. Council contact information can be found on the reverse side.

Please indicate how many acres you intend to plant in cover crops - _____ acres

___ **NEW \$2.50/acre for developing nutrient prescription maps and variable rate nutrient applications.** This incentive is intended to promote the implementation of precision agriculture through variable rate nutrient applications. Agricultural producers who are considering field specific fertilizer prescriptions and variable rate fertilizer applications are encouraged to apply. Incentive funding should be applied to the development of fertilizer prescriptions from precision farm software and fertilizer applications should be made according to prescription maps. **Producers are eligible for a maximum of 500 acres for this practice. The participant must submit as-applied maps for practice verification.**

Note: Soil testing on a 2.5 ac grid is recommended but not required for this incentive.

Please indicate how many acres you intend to fertilize with variable rate technology - _____ acres

Incentive Practice Write-In! (Please share your needs or ideas for additional conservation practices that could be incentivized through this program. Write-ins will be evaluated and possibly incentivized upon review by the Council in 2026).

INCENTIVE PROGRAM FUNDING APPLICANT INFORMATION AND ELIGIBILITY SELF-CERTIFICATION

Please provide the following information to be eligible for 2026 conservation incentives.

Name _____ Address _____ Phone _____

NEW DATCP REQUIRED PROVISION: I certify that I have not received incentives for the same practice or installed conservation practices on fields or acreage where I have received incentives for more than a total of three years. I understand that if I have received 3 years of incentive payments for the same practice on the same acreage, I may not be eligible for 2026 conservation incentives on those acres.

Signature of Participant

Date

CONTACT INFORMATION

1. Scott Carlson – 715.417.0785
2. Craig Gustafson – 715.690.5023
3. Timm Johnson – 715.248.3277
4. Rick Hofland – 715.417.2985
5. Neil Rondeau – 715.338.9205

OTHER RESOURCES

Farmer-Led Watershed Councils of the St. Croix and Red Cedar Rivers
<https://farmerledwatershed.org/>

Farmer-Led Watershed Councils of the St. Croix and Red Cedar Rivers Facebook Page
https://www.facebook.com/farmerledwatershed/?ref=page_internal

NRCS Soil Health
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/soils/health/>

Green Cover Seed – Smartmix Calculator
<https://greencoverseed.com/>

Midwest Cover Crops Council
<http://www.mccc.msu.edu/>

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education
<http://www.sare.org/Learning-Center/Topic-Rooms/Cover-Crops>

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Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). The views expressed in written materials, publications, speakers, and moderators do not necessarily reflect the official policies of DATCP; nor does any mention of trade names, commercial practices, or organization imply endorsement by the State of Wisconsin.*



