

Proposed Changes to Soil and Water Resource Management Program (ATCP 50)

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection is proposing changes to state administrative rule ATCP 50 to implement the Silurian bedrock agricultural performance standards promulgated in 2018 by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in Wis. Admin. Code NR 151.075. Changes will increase flexibility to achieve soil and water conservation goals and provide options for landowners and farmers to meet state soil and water standards while improving the administration and clarity of existing programs. More information about the rulemaking process can be found on our [website](#).

What is new?	What is the outcome?	Who may be affected?	What might be the effect?
Establish Silurian bedrock as a farm conservation practice	Provide farmers with conservation practices and tools to meet the agricultural performance standards established by DNR.	Landowners and farmers in select areas of the state ^{1, 2}	Require updates to existing nutrient management plans to account for the Silurian bedrock performance standard, or development of a new plan if no plan exists. Implementation is delayed until April 1, 2027. When applicable, farmland preservation participants must meet the Silurian bedrock performance standard by April 1, 2027 to maintain eligibility for tax credits.
Allow use of grant funds for financial assistance	Financial assistance available to landowners as cost-share, incentives or outcome-based payments.	Landowners and farmers County Conservation Departments	Increases the type of financial assistance available to landowners and farmers from county conservation departments.
Update conservation practices to reflect current practice	Conservation practices designed and implemented to achieve conservation goals. Design and implementation of conservation practices will be consistent across federal, state, and local agencies.	County Conservation Departments Landowners and farmers	Requires training to understand design and implementation requirements of the revised conservation practice standard. Revisions may require additional financial contribution than required by a prior conservation practice standard.
Add new conservation practices	Additional conservation practices will be available to achieve conservation goals.	Landowners and farmers County Conservation Departments	Landowners and farmers will have access to financial assistance from county conservation departments for more conservation practices.
Update existing maximum cost-share rates and add cost-share rates for new conservation practices	Rates for conservation practices will be more consistent across federal, state, and local agencies.	Landowners and farmers	Increased financial assistance may be available as costs for conservation practice increase over time.

¹The Silurian bedrock performance standard does not apply to all farmers statewide. It applies to some farmers located in portions of Brown, Calumet, Dodge, Door, Fond du Lac, Kenosha, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Milwaukee, Outagamie, Ozaukee, Racine, Sheboygan, Walworth, Washington, and Waukesha Counties.

²Affected farmers permitted under WPDES program are already required to meet the Silurian bedrock performance standard as part of the permit.



Establish Silurian bedrock as a farm conservation practice

To meet the Silurian bedrock farm conservation practice, producers can develop and implement a nutrient management plan in accordance with ATCP 50.04 (3) that accounts for the Silurian bedrock performance standard.

To accomplish this:

- Determine which, if any, restrictions and prohibitions in the Silurian bedrock area apply. See Figure below.
- Update an existing nutrient management plan, or develop a nutrient management plan, to account for the Silurian bedrock performance standard.
- Follow the nutrient management plan written to the account for the Silurian bedrock performance standard and consult a tool to predict weather and precipitation prior to manure application.

Updated conservation practices and cost-share rates and add new practices

Changes to the rule ensure that conservation practices implemented will follow current standards and practice. In addition, eight new conservation practices are added to the rule and maximum cost-share rates are adjusted.

- Updated the reference for 90 conservation practice standards to reference the most recent standard in the NRCS field office technical guide.
- Added eight conservation practices and set maximum cost-share rates where applicable.
- Updated maximum cost-share rates for other cropping practices.

Tools to Meet the Silurian Bedrock Performance Standard

- Farmers have until April 1, 2027 to update nutrient management plans to meet the Silurian bedrock performance standard and to ensure eligibility for farmland preservation tax credits.
- DATCP established a voluntary technical standard for farmers to verify depth of bedrock to confirm which restrictions and prohibitions apply.
- Cost-sharing available to update an existing nutrient management plan and to use the Verification of Depth to Bedrock technical

Figure: Determining Applicability of the Silurian Bedrock Performance Standard

