



Advisory Committee on Research Agenda

May 2, 2023

The Advisory Committee on Research ("Committee") to the Land and Water Conservation Board ("LWCB") will meet on May 2, 2023 at 9:00 am via Microsoft Teams. To attend the meeting, join by telephone at 608-571-2209 with Conference ID 679 983 370# or click the following Teams [hyperlink](#). The agenda for the meeting is shown below.

AGENDA ITEMS AND TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

- 1 Meeting Called to Order – **Ron Grasshoff, Committee Chair**
 - a. Roll Call
 - b. Open meeting notice
 - c. Approval of meeting agenda
 - d. Approval of March 7, 2023 meeting minutes
- 2 Presentation of the Draft 2023 LWCB Survey Report
Zach Zopp, DATCP
- 3 Discussion and Recommendation for Approval of 2023 LWCB Survey Report
Ron Grasshoff, Committee Chair
- 4 Discussion and Recommendations to Implement, Distribute, and Conclude the 2023 LWCB Survey
Ron Grasshoff, Committee Chair
- 5 Discussion and Recommendations for a Potential 2023 LWCB Survey Public Event
Ron Grasshoff, Committee Chair
- 6 Member updates with possible discussion
- 7 Planning for the next Advisory Committee Meeting
Ron Grasshoff, Committee Chair
- 8 Adjourn

**LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION BOARD
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH
MEETING MINUTES**

**March 7, 2023
Microsoft Teams Meeting**

Item #1 Call to Order – Roll call, open meeting notice, approval of agenda, approval of January 12, 2023 Committee meeting minutes.

Call to Order

The Advisory Committee on Research (“Committee”) to the Land and Water Conservation Board (“LWCB” or “Board”) met via videoconference on March 7, 2023. The meeting was preceded by public notice as required by Wis. Stat. § 19.84. After a short delay, the meeting was called to order by Committee Vice Chair Bobbie Webster at **9:29 am**.

Committee Members Present

Members: Bobbie Webster, Monte Osterman, and Katy Smith (*designee for Tim Anderson*). A quorum was present.

Committee Advisors Present

Advisors: Dr. Francisco Arriaga.

Approval of Agenda

Motion

Osterman motioned to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Smith, and the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Motion

Osterman motioned to approve the draft minutes of the January 12, 2023 meeting minutes as presented, seconded by Smith, and the motion carried unanimously. The approved minutes shall be posted as the official meeting record for publication on the LWCB website.

Item #2 LWCB Survey Status Update

Department staff presented the Committee with a status update on the *2023 Soil & Water Conservation Research and Education Needs Survey* (“2023 Survey”). Updates included preliminary survey data, including number of surveys sent, response received, response rate, and response trends. Staff also reported the constructive feedback received from two survey respondents. The 2023 Survey remains open until March 26th, 2023.

Item #3 Discuss Committee Products: Recommendations, Web Content, and Messaging, to LWCB and the Public

Vice Chair Webster, opened the floor for general discussion on Committee work products for the 2023 Survey. The Committee began with a discussion on the potential for a survey bias favoring groups that self-identified their profession as “County or local Government” and “County Conservationist”. To address the potential bias, the Committee requested department staff to split the final survey data into the following two groups based on profession: Group 1) County or local Government & County Conservationist and group 2) all other professions. Staff will separately analyze the response of these two groups and provide a summary of findings at the May Committee meeting.

The Committee next discussed the format and contents of the final work products it will provide the LWCB. Upon conclusion of the discussion, the Committee requested department staff prepare a data summary – with necessary figures and tables – and a written executive summary documenting the survey, survey results, and conclusions based on survey data. Staff are to prepare a draft copy of these materials ahead of the May Committee meeting, so that the Committee may provide feedback, guidance, and potential approval of the executive summary.

Item #4 Discuss Committee Expectations for the LWCB in June and August

Vice Chair Webster, opened the floor for a general discussion on Committee expectations for LWCB actions & outcomes pertaining to the 2023 Survey. The Committee acknowledged the Board will provide direction on desired outcomes for the 2023 Survey at the April Board meeting, but also agreed the Committee should prepare to offer the Board guidance. Through discussion, the Committee determined to recommend a timeline of activities and responsibilities to the Board at the April LWCB meeting. At the June LWCB meeting, the Committee will prepare to deliver the executive summary and data summary to the Board for consideration and possible approval.

Item #5 Member Updates with Possible Discussion

Due to time constraints, Vice Chair Webster did not open the floor for member updates.

Item #6 Planning for the next Advisory Committee meeting

Due to time constraints, Vice Chair Webster did not open the floor to discuss the next Advisory Committee meeting.

Item #7 Adjourn

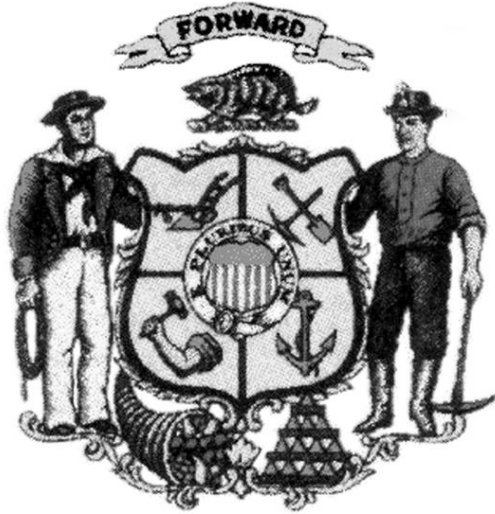
Motion

Webster motioned to adjourn, seconded by Osterman, and the motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 10:07am.

Respectfully submitted by,

Zach Zopp, Bureau of Land and Water Resources
Division of Agricultural Resource Management
WI Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

WISCONSIN
LAND & WATER CONSERVATION
BOARD



2023

**Soil & Water Conservation Research and
Educational Needs Survey Report**

Prepared by

LWCB Advisory Committee on Research

&

Zach Zopp

Bureau of Land and Water Resources

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

Published on **MONTH DD, YYYY**

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

P.O. Box 8911

Madison, WI 53708-8911

PREFACE

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) has the privilege and responsibility to acknowledge the Indigenous people who have called this land home for generations. This acknowledgement demonstrates our strong commitment to collaborate and partner with the sovereign Tribal nations located in Wisconsin. There are now 12 Tribal nations that call this land home, 11 of which are federally recognized. No matter where you are in the state, you are on the ancestral land of a Tribal nation. The Department reminds each of us to take the opportunity to learn about and appreciate the history of the land we are on and the great historical, present, and future contributions of Indigenous people.

TO THE READER

The Land and Water Conservation Board (LWCB or Board) connects local and state governments on conservation and farmland preservation issues. The Board has many duties under Wis. Stat. § 92.04(4) including, reviewing county land and water resource management plans, reviewing the allocation of state conservation funds, advising the University of Wisconsin System, etc. LWCB is comprised of 11 members who represent the Governor's Office, state agencies, county land conservation committees, urban communities, agricultural producers, river management, and natural resource interests. Chairperson Mark Cupp – Executive Director of the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Board, currently presides over LWCB.

The Board expresses its gratitude to the soil and water conservation stakeholders who have invested their time and resources to participate in the *2023 Soil & Water Conservation Research and Educational Needs Survey*. Our vision is for this survey to provide a new forum to discuss emerging soil and water conservation issues in Wisconsin. We look forward to continuing our partnerships with you and remain committed to bringing more voices into the conversation.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE

The Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Board supports healthy landscapes with stable soils, clean waters, and productive agriculture. LWCB believes in conservation research and promoting sound conservation practices across Wisconsin to achieve and sustain these healthy landscapes.

Achieving healthy landscapes requires input and support from Wisconsin communities and businesses, local/state/federal governments, and Tribal Nations. The Board actively engages with these stakeholders to understand their soil & water conservation needs, the factors that influence their needs including, land use practices, economy, populations, culture etc., and the broader needs across the state. These engagements provide LWCB with a continuous source of present-day information. The Board relies on this valuable information when it acts, each year, to advise the University of Wisconsin System on soil & water conservation research and educational program needs.

METHODOLOGY

Within LWCB, the Advisory Committee on Research (Committee) is charged with leading soil & water conservation stakeholder engagement. In 2023, the Committee launched an annual survey to engage with conservation stakeholders. The Committee prioritized inclusivity when it assembled the 2023 conservation stakeholder engagement list, which included federal & state government, tribal nations, county & local governments, county conservationists, businesses and non-profits related to agriculture & conservation, and the University of Wisconsin.

The 2023 survey was conducted on the SurveyMonkey virtual platform. An estimated 1,110 persons received an invitation by email or mail to participate in the survey. The survey asked respondents a range of questions to assess their priorities for soil research, water research, and outreach & educational needs related to soil and water. When the survey closed, 143 respondents (13% response rate) completed the survey. Stakeholder responses and feedback will be used to refine future surveys. Appendix – Figure 1 provides a breakdown of the stakeholder sectors represented by the respondents.

FINDINGS

The Committee, in collaboration with DATCP staff, have analyzed responses to the 2023 survey and offer the following findings. The complete response dataset can be provided upon request.

- 1) Stakeholders overwhelmingly reported – by a 2/3 majority – that soil & water outreach and education is their top conservation priority of need. This finding is consistent across every sector surveyed. Appendix – Figure 2 shows the top priorities for each sector.

Within the realm of soil & water outreach and education, stakeholders are mainly concerned for the adoption of existing soil and water conservation practices. Specifically, respondents coalesced around a need for additional outreach and education to connect the economics of soil health practices & best management practices to leverage their adoption with producers at larger scales. Respondents also reported that producers would benefit from additional outreach

at the tribal, state, and county level; however stakeholders reported they lacked the resources (funding and staff) to increase their outreach efforts. Appendix – Figure 3 shows the other areas of concern respondents identified within the domain of soil & water outreach and education.

- 2) Stakeholders next conservation priority of need is water research, specifically ground water quality. The level of interest here is highest among federal, state, and county governments as well as non-profits. These respondents generally had similar concerns for chemical, biological and nutrient contamination in groundwater supplies. Research and monitoring into the presence of perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and nitrogen in groundwater were the stakeholder’s main areas of emphasis. Stakeholders are also concerned for surface water quality and the interactions of surface and ground water. Appendix – Figure 4 shows the other areas of concern respondents identified within the realm of water research.
- 3) Soil research was the lowest priority among respondents. Nevertheless, the private sector, tribal nations, and federal, state, and county governments all reported interest in soil research. Soil health – primarily soil health management systems and soil health assessments – received the highest level of support among these respondents. In this domain, respondents requested research that standardized soil health metrics/attributes/conditions that provide for healthy soils, good nutrient management, and carbon sequestration. Further research and development into successful agricultural management systems that prevent erosion, promote infiltration and increase soil health was also of interest to these stakeholders. Appendix – Figure 5 shows the other areas of concern respondents identified with respect to soil research.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the pursuit of promoting sound conservation practices that reinforce healthy landscapes in Wisconsin, LWCB offers the following recommendations to its stakeholders and the University of Wisconsin System. Stakeholders with the means to support these recommendations should consider acting in their capacity to prioritize, incentivize, research and/or fund work within these areas. These recommendations are ranked by their overall importance to soil & water conservation stakeholders.

- 1) Further soil & water conservation efforts in Wisconsin by supporting outreach and education efforts that focus on increasing implementation, adoption, and the effectiveness of Wisconsin’s existing soil and water conservation practices.
- 2) Support groundwater research focused on the presence of chemical, biological, and nutrient contamination – namely PFAS and nitrogen – in Wisconsin’s groundwater supplies.
- 3) Support research and the development of soil health management systems and soil health assessments focused on standardizing soil health metrics/attributes/conditions that achieve healthy soils, good nutrient management, and carbon sequestration. Likewise, support research and development into agricultural management systems with the potential to prevent erosion, promote infiltration, and increase soil health.

2023 Soil & Water Conservation Research and Educational Needs Survey

APPENDIX OF FIGURES

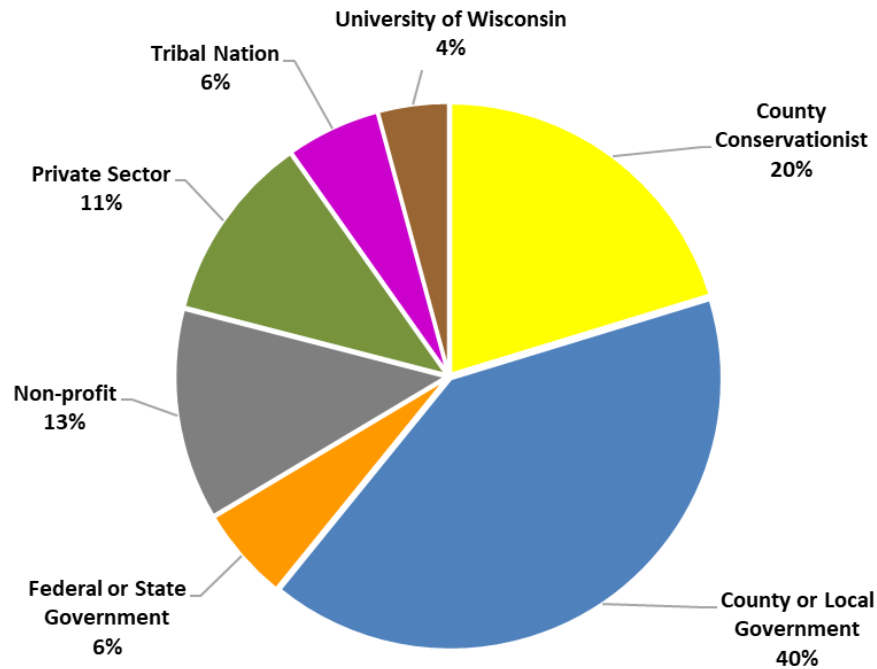


Figure 1: Distribution of soil and water conservation stakeholder employment sectors represented in the 143 responses to the 2023 Soil & Water Conservation Research and Educational Needs Survey.

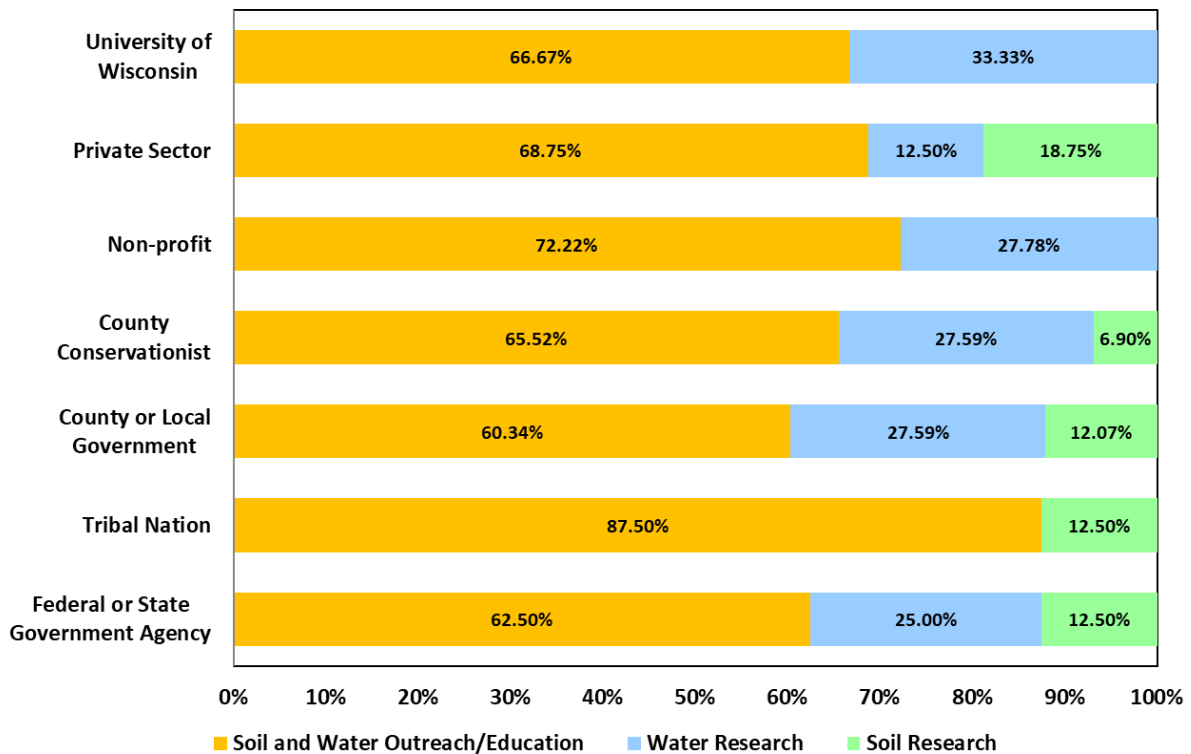


Figure 2: Distribution of respondents reported highest priority for soil & water conservation research or outreach and education, separated by stakeholder sector.

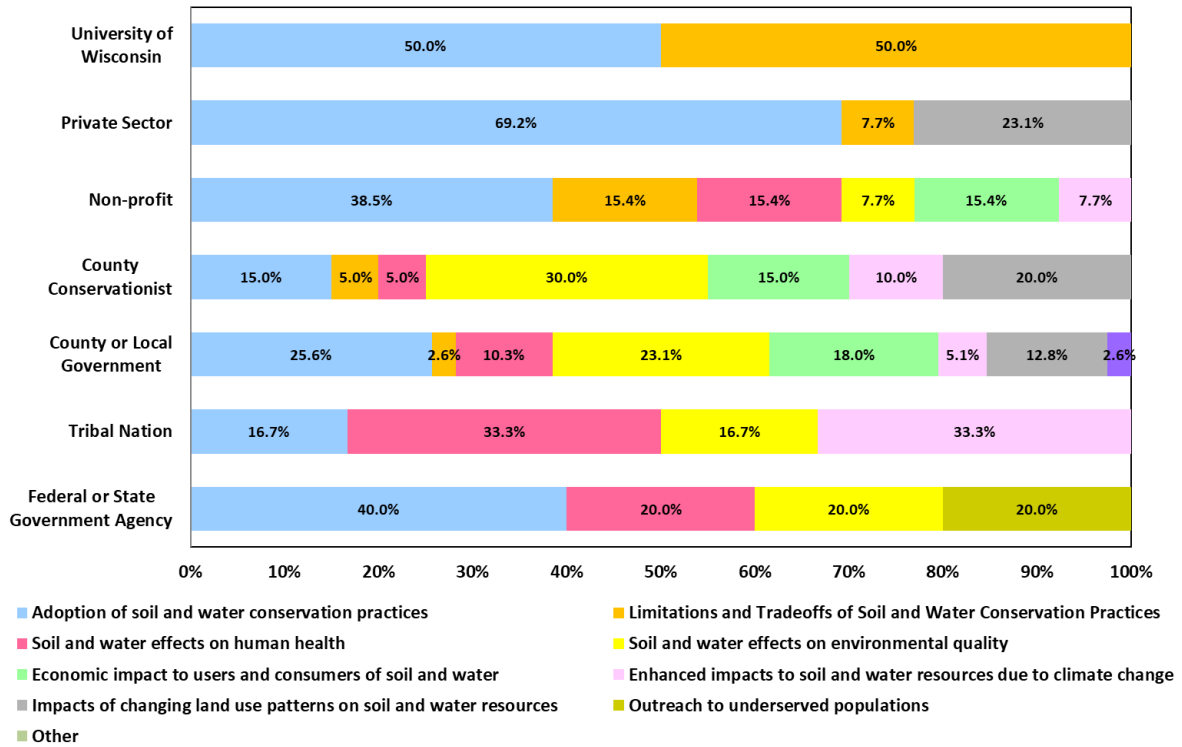


Figure 3: Distribution of respondents concerns for outreach and educational needs related to soil & water conservation, separated by stakeholder sector.

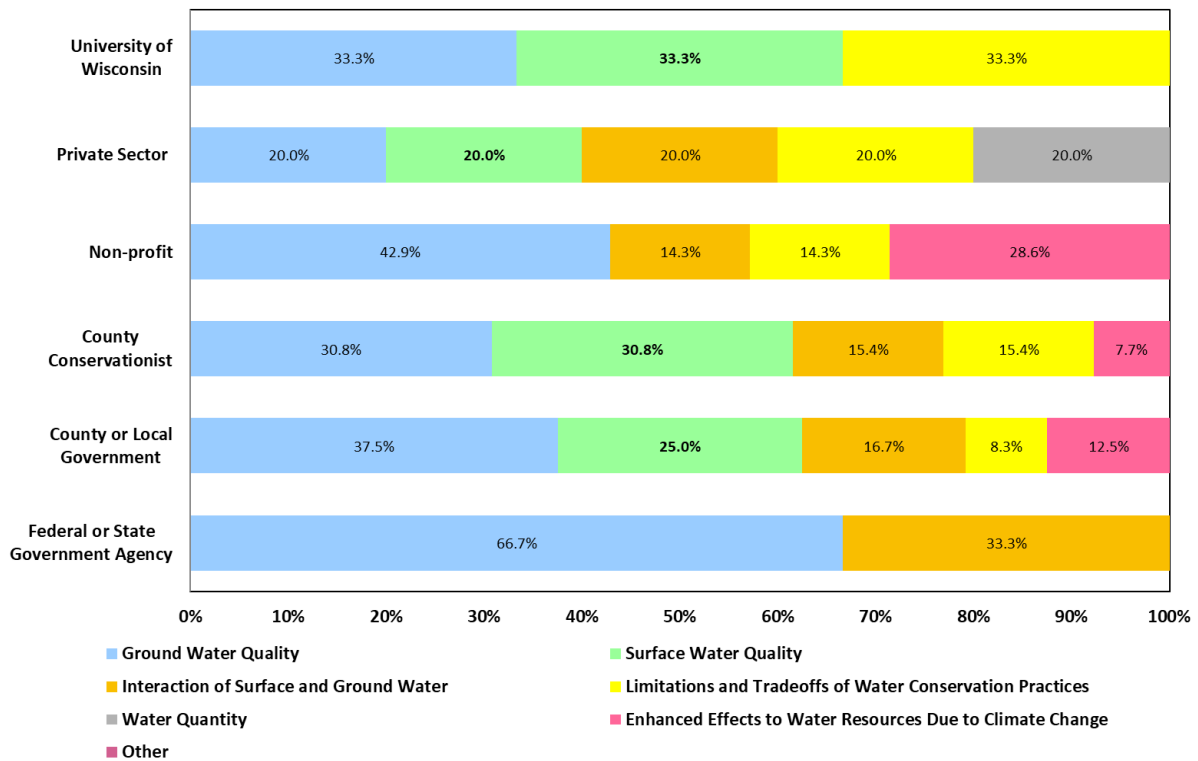


Figure 4: Distribution of respondents concerns for water research related to soil & water conservation, separated by stakeholder sector.

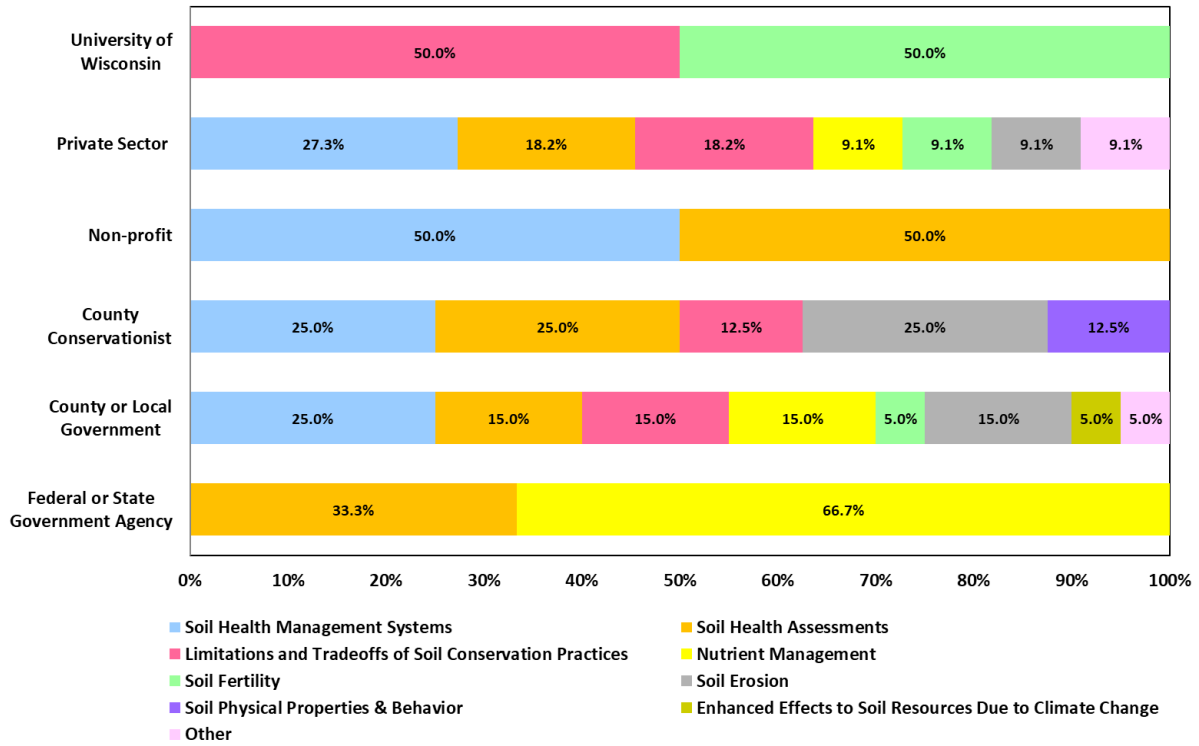


Figure 5: Distribution of respondents concerns for soil research related to soil & water conservation, separated by stakeholder sector.