



Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection  
 Division of Agricultural Resource Management  
 P.O. Box 8911  
 Madison, WI 53708-8911  
 Phone: (608) 224-4611

## 2021 Agricultural Enterprise Area Petition

*The undersigned persons hereby petition the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP), pursuant to s. 91.86, Wis. Stats., to create an Agricultural Enterprise Area (AEA) under s. 91.84, Wis. Stats. We have read the guidance<sup>1</sup> provided and submit the following information in support of the petition.<sup>2</sup>*

### PETITION CHECK LIST

Petitions are due to DATCP by August 2, 2021. Submit an electronic copy to [DATCPWorkingLands@Wisconsin.gov](mailto:DATCPWorkingLands@Wisconsin.gov) of the following:

- This completed petition form (including any supporting pages and documentation)
- A map of the proposed AEA (PDF format)
- Spatial location/GIS shapefile data used to create map (emailed ZIP file)
- A signed signature page for each owner of an eligible farm who is signing the petition
- A political subdivision signature page signed by an authorized officer or representative of every political subdivision (county, town, city or village) in which any part of the proposed AEA is located
- A signature page for the county conservationist
- Non-petitioner cooperator signature pages or letters of support

### PETITION INSTRUCTIONS

#### Who Can Complete the Application:

A petition application can be completed by one or multiple individuals interested in creating an AEA for their community, however, we highly recommend that the petition is split up among multiple individuals and one person assigned as the petition lead contact. The lead contact will be in charge of putting together all the portions of the petition filled out by the other contributors and submitting the full application to DATCP. Contributors can include any combination of community members, petitioning landowners, local officials, community organizations, municipality staff, and county staff.

#### Proposed AEA Petition Interview Process:

In order to accurately capture the community voice of each petition, a recorded interview will be conducted during the petition process. This recorded interview will be between 15 and 20 minutes and will be shared with the petition evaluation committee during the petition review process. To schedule your interview, please contact DATCP staff at [DATCPWorkingLands@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DATCPWorkingLands@wisconsin.gov).

#### Filling out the Petition Application:

At the beginning of each section and subsection of the petition there will be instructions to follow when filling out the necessary information. If you have any questions about the instructions or the questions in any section, please contact DATCP staff at [DATCPWorkingLands@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DATCPWorkingLands@wisconsin.gov).

#### Petition Application Timeline:

The Petition application process includes public outreach, petitioner education, community involvement, map making process, and an evaluation. It can take a few months to fully complete a petition application. A sample timeline for submitting an AEA petition can be found in Appendix A at the back of this application.

Both DATCP and County staff may be able to offer support in the petition application process. If you are interested in petitioning for a new AEA for your community, please contact DATCP staff at [DATCPWorkingLands@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DATCPWorkingLands@wisconsin.gov) and your county Conservation Department (county contact information found within the [WI Land + Water Directory](#)).

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<sup>1</sup> Guidance available at: [https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs\\_Services/AEAPetitionInfo.aspx](https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/AEAPetitionInfo.aspx)

<sup>2</sup> Personal information you provide may be used for purposes other than that for which it was collected, s. 15.04(1)(m), Wis. Stats.

## 1. GENERAL INFORMATION

### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Choose a name for the AEA that is relevant to the petitioners or agricultural resources in the area.
2. Indicate where the proposed AEA will be located.
3. Record the number of acres in the proposed AEA boundary. There are no size restrictions for new AEAs, however DATCP must give preference to proposed AEAs 1,000 acres or more. DATCP may only designate 2 million AEA acres statewide, therefore DATCP may require the proposed boundary be adjusted for designation.
4. The petition must be jointly filed by at least 5 eligible farm owners within the boundaries of the proposed AEA, and by each county, town or municipality in which any part of the proposed AEA is located. They must sign a signature page attached to the back of this application. Digital signature pages are available at [Petitioning for Agricultural Enterprise Area \(AEA\) Designation](#).

NAME OF AEA <b>Montana Society for Responsible Land Use</b>	
COUNTY/COUNTIES IN WHICH PROPOSED AEA IS LOCATED <b>Buffalo County</b>	TOWNS, CITIES OR VILLAGES IN WHICH PROPOSED AEA IS LOCATED <b>Town of Montana</b>
TOTAL ACRES IN PROPOSED AEA <b>29,751</b>	TOTAL NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE PETITIONERS <b>29</b>

## 2. PETITION CONTACT INFORMATION

### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Fill out the County Staff contact information. This person will serve as DATCP's main county contact during the petition and evaluation process.
2. Fill out the Landowner Representative. This person should be one the petitioners and will serve as DATCP's main landowner contact during the petition and evaluation process. This person should be ready and willing to answer questions and provide additional information for the petition if needed.
3. Indicate the names and contact information of any individual, not already indicated above, who also contributed to the petition application process. If no other contributors, please leave blank.

COUNTY STAFF CONTACT <b>Timothy Wucherer</b>	EMAIL <b>timothy.wucherer@co.buffalo.wi.us</b>	PHONE NUMBER <b>(608) 685-6702</b>	
MAILING ADDRESS STREET <b>407 South 2<sup>nd</sup> Street</b>	CITY <b>Alma</b>	STATE <b>WI</b>	ZIP <b>54610</b>
LANDOWNER REPRESENTATIVE <b>Joe Bragger</b>	EMAIL <b>braggfam@trivest.net</b>	PHONE NUMBER <b>(715) 530-0466</b>	
MAILING ADDRESS STREET <b>W89 Pape Valley Road</b>	CITY <b>Independence</b>	STATE <b>WI</b>	ZIP <b>54747</b>
PETITION CONTRIBUTOR <b>Carl Duley</b>	EMAIL <b>carl.duley@wisc.edu</b>	PHONE NUMBER <b>(608) 685-6256</b>	
PETITION CONTRIBUTOR <b>Nels Anderson</b>	EMAIL <b>nels.anderson@co.buffalo.wi.us</b>	PHONE NUMBER <b>(608) 685-6285</b>	
PETITION CONTRIBUTOR	EMAIL	PHONE NUMBER	

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### 3. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

INSTRUCTIONS:

Answer the following questions. If “No” is selected for any question, this application is currently ineligible. Questions resulting in “No” should be addressed prior to submitting the application. DATCP is willing assist you in resolving any issues in order to facilitate an AEA petition.

- A. All parcels in the proposed AEA are located within a farmland preservation area designated in the certified county farmland preservation plan.  Yes  No
- B. All parcels in the proposed AEA are contiguous\*.  Yes  No
- C. The proposed AEA is primarily in agricultural use.  Yes  No
- D. At least 5 eligible farm owners signed the “Petitioning Landowner Signature Page(s)”  Yes  No

*\*Contiguous means “adjacent to or sharing a common boundary.” For the purpose of AEA designation under s. 91.84, Wis. Stats. Parcels that are only separated by a lake, stream, transportation or utility right-of-way are contiguous. Parcel boundaries that meet at a single point are not contiguous.*

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## 4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### INSTRUCTIONS:

Fill in the following background information of the proposed AEA. Provide as much detail as possible in order to create a clear picture of the area where the AEA is proposed. Assume everyone on the evaluation committee is unfamiliar with the community and local culture of your proposed AEA. You may include maps and photos to support your narrative. Additional instructions are included under each subsection.

### A. PROPOSED AEA AREA INTRODUCTION

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

Write a clear, detailed narrative describing the local agricultural community. As part of the narrative, discuss the local agricultural culture, history, and general importance of this area. You can also include challenges faced by the local agricultural community. Use this introduction to tell the evaluation committee the importance of the agricultural or rural identity within the proposed AEA boundaries.

The proposed AEA includes the entire Town of Montana. The Town is very rural and depends almost exclusively on agriculture for economic activity. A majority of the non-farm businesses are associated with agriculture. The Town is located on the eastern edge of Buffalo County and is part of the Driftless area of Wisconsin. The farmland is very productive, but a high percentage of the land is highly erodible. There is increasing interest throughout the Town to improve the quality of woodland as woodland makes up over 50% of the land area.

People in the Town of Montana are a true community that will study issues and alternatives, thus the name Montana Society for Responsible Land Use. A society is a group of people who study and debate new ways of doing things together to make their community better. This describes the people within the Town of Montana perfectly.

The Town was settled by primarily German and Swiss farmers who immigrated to the area. The population of the Town in the 2010 Census was 206 people, changing very little over time, and predicted to change very little in the future. It is possible that the population could increase as several large employers are located close to the Town. Ashley Furniture and Pilgrim's Pride Poultry are both within 10 miles of the Town and employ thousands of people. Low-cost land for building could encourage people to construct homes in the Town.

### B. CURRENT LAND USE AND LAND USE TRENDS

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

While filling out the following information, consider citing existing information or maps from the county's farmland preservation plan or local comprehensive plans.

1. Describe ALL current land uses (both agricultural and non-agricultural) within the proposed AEA OR attach a current land use map with a table or short narrative that explains what the map depicts. For assistance in creating a land use map, please contact DATCP staff at (608) 224-4611 or [DATCPWorkingLands@Wisconsin.gov](mailto:DATCPWorkingLands@Wisconsin.gov).
2. Provide information about land use trends in and around the AEA. This can include, but not limited to, information about development trends, number of new septic systems, population growth, infrastructural changes, agricultural trends, local zoning, protected natural areas, and external pressures to agriculture.
3. Select ALL of the main types of agricultural production and agricultural activities within the proposed AEA. Provide a short description where applicable.

#### CURRENT LAND USE WITHIN THE AEA

Current land use in the Town of Montana is focused on agriculture. While the Town of Montana has seen declines in the number of dairy farms, that decline has been slower than other Towns within Buffalo County. There have been several recent dairy expansions and new partners joining the businesses. Dairy farms in the Town are modest size, with most being in the range of 100 - 300 cows. Most labor continues to be family labor. At the same time, there has been growth in poultry (large scale contract chickens and turkeys) and beef farm enterprises. The beef farm enterprises are mostly small cow-calf

herds and not full-time employment. Major crops grown are corn, soybeans, and hay. Minor crops would include wheat, oats, rye, barley, and numerous cover crops.

Farmers in the Town of Montana continue to be innovative in their approach to farm business. Examples of this innovation are direct market vegetable production, greenhouse - annuals, home bakery, and a group called "Buffalo County Barley Society," whose mission is focused on alternative crops and started with malting barley. They are currently supporting hemp, malting barley, and Kernza research. Most other businesses and land use within the Town are associated with agriculture, including a bakery, custom farm harvest, and construction.

Very little non-agriculture land use is currently occurring in the Town. There has been some housing development along Montana Ridge, but the major business outside of agriculture would be hunting outfitters. A recent trend among outfitters and landowners who are mainly concerned with whitetail deer hunting is the practice of planting two to five rows of trees along the roads. This practice presents three concerns to agricultural production and Town residents. First, farmland along the roads tends to have the gentlest slopes of the land in the Town and is the easiest to farm. This land is essentially removed from production. Second, farmland along the tree line is also marginal because of shading, limited water; therefore, reducing productivity on both sides of the field for approximately 25-50 feet. Finally, it is more difficult for motorists to see deer coming across the road, leading to more vehicle/deer collisions.

Population trends for the Town have not maintained the pace that was predicted at the 2010 US Census. Estimates for the population were predicted to be 323 people by 2020, but the actual population in 2019 was 278. Either way the population of the Town has remained stable with the high population for the Town being 445 in 1960. A more significant concern than population growth would be location of new homes on the landscape. Many new homes have been built on prime farmland in the middle of a farm field rather than on a fence row, property line or along the road, thus taking more farm acreage out of production than necessary.

Stream restoration and protection, stream fishing easements, pollinator habitat, and pheasant habitat development sites have all increased in the Town. Some of these projects are completed with government and private cost-sharing while others completed by the landowners at their own expense. There are several excellent trout streams located within the borders of the AEA. Landowners wish to protect these streams from sedimentation and nutrient runoff.

Finally, woodland improvement is also essential in the Town as approximately 50% of the landmass in the Town is woodland. Landowners are improving woodland for timber management and wildlife. A growing business in the Town is wildlife management for whitetail deer and other hunting opportunities. Landowner education efforts are occurring to reduce conflict between wildlife management and farmland management.

#### LAND USE TRENDS IN AND AROUND THE AEA

Land use trends in the Town of Montana are focused around agriculture, hunting/recreation, and scattered individual housing. Acres of farmland involved in dairy production has decreased whereas acres in poultry, beef, and cash crops has increased.

#### TYPES OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION *(Select all that apply)*

Row Crops *(specify)* Corn, Soybeans, Wheat, Rye, Oats, Annual forages

Specialty Crops *(specify)* Malting Barley, Hemp (research),

Vegetable *(specify)* Green house-annuals

Organic *(specify)*

Grazing

Dairy

Beef

Other Livestock *(specify)* Poultry (Chickens and Turkeys)

Federal Conservation Programs *(specify)* Conservation Reserve Program, Conservation Stewardship Program, EQIP

State Conservation Programs *(specify)* Producer-Led Watershed Groups, NMFE, CREP

Local Conservation Efforts *(specify)* CAPX2020 Trout Stream and Bluff Prairie Restoration, Local Conservation Clubs, Buffalo County Conservation Alliance

Other *(specify)* Trout restocking ponds, Pheasants Forever, Trout Unlimited

### C. LAND USE CONTROLS AND PLANS IN PROPOSED AEA

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

Select ALL of the land use controls and plans in the proposed AEA. Provide a short description, map or additional information where applicable.

- Farmland preservation zoning ordinance
- Subdivision ordinances
- Other zoning ordinances (Manure Storage, Livestock Facility Siting, Wellhead protection, etc.) (*specify*)
- Purchase of development rights and/or easements (donated or purchased)
- Transfer of development rights
- Farmland preservation agreements
- Cooperative boundary agreements/inter-municipal agreements
- Natural area protections or conservation program activities (state and/or federal) (*specify*) CRP, CSP, EQIP, CREP, LCD Cost-Share Programs
- Comprehensive plan (*specify*) Latest Town of Montana Land Use Plan was completed in 2013.
- Other programs or activities showing a commitment to water quality and/or soil health (*specify*) Trout Stream Restoration, Buffalo County Conservation Farmers Producer-Led Group, Buffalo County Conservation Alliance

### E. CONSERVATION COMPLIANCE

Agricultural performance standards used help to reduce agricultural non-point source pollution of surface water resources, to protect agricultural resources including farmland soils, surface waters, and groundwater, protect air quality, and keep applied nutrients in the soil for plant growth. Conservation compliance is monitored by the county conservation department. Your local county conservation department should be your main point of contact when filling out this section.

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Indicate the approximate level of petitioner conservation compliance within the proposed AEA.
2. Provide a brief rationale describing the factors contributing to this level of conservation compliance (or lack thereof).

#### LEVEL OF PETITIONER CONSERVATION COMPLIANCE

- Nearly all petitioners are in compliance
- More than half of the petitioners are in compliance
- Half or less than half of the petitioners are in compliance
- Few or no petitioners are in compliance
- Compliance status of petitioners is unknown

#### FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO LEVEL OF CONSERVATION COMPLIANCE

There is a long history of conservation in the Town of Montana. Most of the Town was included in the Waumandee Watershed Project (Wisconsin DNR and administered by the Buffalo County Land Conservation Department) a major project in the 1980's and 1990's. The project cost-shared barnyard runoff systems, conservation structures, conservation tillage, and other practices.

Farmland in the Town is extremely productive but is difficult to farm. Much of the farmland has greater than 20% slopes and requires extra power and management to farm with minimal erosion. The first producer-led watershed project in Buffalo County was started by farmers in the Town of Montana and Belvidere.

Farmers in the Town have implemented numerous conservation practices putting their conservation ethic into practice. Hundreds of conservation practices have been put into place, including dams, waterways, barnyard runoff systems, stream buffers, prairie planting, prairie restoration, and conservation tillage. Some practices have been cost-shared, others have been at landowner expense.

Most farmers in the Town on Montana implement no-till and conservation tillage. Several farms are 100% no-till, and most are now using cover crops when weather conditions permit. As farmers have moved from dairy into row crop production, conservation tillage has taken on increased importance.

Manure storage systems are found on almost all dairy farms in the Town. Poultry producers are beginning to add constructed storage facilities to control nutrient runoff while poultry litter is stored waiting for spreading. Storage allows farmers to utilize manure through more accurate nutrient planning and efficient crop production.

Conservation and nutrient management plan may not be formally in place for all farms, but most farmers in the Town follow nutrient management plans and farm their land to meet at least "T" rates for soil loss.

Stream protection, setbacks, and easements are held by four farmers in the Town following stream improvement and trout habitat restoration projects.

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## 5. PURPOSE AND RATIONALE

### INSTRUCTIONS:

Fill in the following information for the purpose and rationale for the proposed AEA. Provide as much detail as possible to justify the creation of this proposed AEA. Since DATCP may only designate 2 million AEA acres statewide, use this section to justify to the evaluation committee why this proposed AEA should be a part of this 2 million AEA acres. You may include maps and photos to support your narrative. Additional instructions are included under each subsection.

### A. MAIN JUSTIFICATION FOR PROPOSED AEA

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

State the main justification for creating the proposed AEA and preserving the agricultural land use in the area. Consider including information about land use conflicts, development pressures, promotion of conservation practices, interest in preserving farmland or rural character of proposed AEA, interest in tax credit and conservation compliance, and other external pressures contributing to the desire to preserve farmland.

The best resource to justify creating the Town of Montana AEA is their Town Comprehensive Land Use Plan adopted in 2013. The following is an excerpt from the plan:

“The biggest threats to farmland and current farms are homes being built in a manner that takes considerable farmland out of production (i.e. in the middle of a field), traffic from neighboring cities having businesses that employ a large number of people, the commercialization of hunting which tends to increase the number of deer and damage caused by deer, and absentee landowners imposing limits on farming best management practices that at times conflict with conservation.”

(From a landowner survey conducted in 2012 as part of the Town of Montana Comprehensive Land Use Process) 86% of respondents to the Town of Montana Land use planning survey indicated they strongly agreed (73%) or agreed (13%) that the Town should preserve as much farmland as possible.

Goals from the Town of Montana Comprehensive Land Use Plan show the commitment the Town of Montana has made to preserving farmland and the environment:

- \* To support the preservation of the family farm and cooperate with other government agencies to assist farms when possible.
- \* To manage development in such a way that large blocks of farmland can be protected.
- \* Protect existing farm operations from restrictions on noise, odor, and accepted animal husbandry practices associated with farm operations.
- \* Landowners within the town will be encouraged to follow soil conservation plans that meet the minimal tolerable soil loss ("T").
- \* All farms meet a reasonable nutrient management plan for their farm and keep it updated as farm size increases. These plans should be in place for both livestock and non-livestock farms.

### B. GOALS FOR AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. State the specific goals for agricultural preservation, development, and/or innovation. Include goals, plans, and agreements planned to promote economic sustainability, resilience and/or growth within the proposed AEA.
2. Explain how you plan to enact the goals identified for the proposed AEA. Briefly described ALL activities including in person or virtual meetings with landowners, planned investments, grants, development incentives, cooperative



agreements, land or easement purchases, public outreach activities, and any other activity that supports the proposed AEA's goals.

#### GOALS FOR AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

1. Preserve farmland and the right to farm in an environmentally sustainable and regenerative manner. This includes enrolling 50% of the farmland acres in the Town of Montana in Farmland Preservation within five years.
2. Promote soil conservation and nutrient management among all farmers in the Town of Montana through education, demonstrations, and research.
3. 75% of all livestock farmers in the Town will have a Nutrient Management Plan within five years and 40% of all non-livestock farms will have a nutrient management plan within five years.
4. Reduce the number of restrictions on farms that prohibit farmers from profitably and do not aid in meeting conservation goals.
5. Promote a farm business environment that encourages farmers to develop new crops, livestock, and marketing ventures. For example, the first industrial hemp research trials in Wisconsin were in the Town of Montana.
6. Protect agricultural land from runoff and sedimentation into streams by adding conservation practices in areas or normal concentrated flow from fields into streams.

#### PLANS TO MEET AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Producer led education (neighbors working with neighbors) will be utilized using all available resources, including Buffalo County Land Conservation and Resource Management Department, Natural Resources Conservation Service, UW-Extension, WI DATCP and other agencies and organizations.

\* Field Days will be held, and agendas will be based on demonstrations of current and new conservation practices. Farmers in the Town of Montana will help coordinate and implement field demonstrations each year.

\* Hold two Town meetings in year one and at least one town meeting each year after promoting the AEA, its goals and the Farmland Preservation program.

For farmers and landowners who need help writing their own nutrient management Plans, Buffalo County Land Conservation and Resource Management Department and University of Wisconsin Madison, Division of Extension will host Nutrient Management Training Classes in the winter.

#### C. PROPOSED AEA BOUNDARY

##### INSTRUCTIONS:

Describe the decision making process and the information used to draw the boundary of the proposed AEA. Factors used to determine the proposed AEA Boundary should not be limited to subjective criteria (i.e. landowner personal interests). You should consider and include objective criteria such as watershed boundary, soil types, historical land use, future land use plans, and proximity to agricultural infrastructure. Please note that the AEA boundary MUST follow parcel lines and be contiguous. This means that the boundary contains parcels that are connected and are not otherwise separated except by roads, utility right-of-ways or bodies of water.

*See Appendix B for additional information on creating an AEA boundary.*

Town of Montana (See Map) - The township of Montana is an area that is almost entirely composed of farm and woodland property and is uniform in this composition across the township. There are a few parcels that are planned out for the farmland preservation plan area and these are mainly gravel pits and the very small unincorporated community of Montana. Considering the uniformity of the land in the township it seems a natural fit to delineate the entire township an AEA.

The Township is also one of just a few that is outside of County Zoning and is therefore ineligible for Farmland Preservation agreements without a designated AEA. Should the discussions that are happening around village powers continue the Township could have Farmland Preservation Zoning with the township being the unit of government and having the township the boundaries of the AEA also works well into future possibilities.

***Application continued on the next page.***

## 6. PETITION PUBLIC PROCESS AND OUTREACH

### INTRODUCTION:

Provide information about the public outreach strategy that was used during the petition development process as well as the future process to encourage landowner participation within the AEA if designated. You may include any flyers, advertisements, informational/educational materials or photos from your public process to support the narrative. Additional instructions are included under each subsection.

### A. AEA PETITION PUBLIC PROCESS

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

Describe the process used to involve the public within the petition process and publicly share information about the proposed AEA, establish the boundary, identify farm owner petitioners, identify non-petitioning co-operators, and notify non-petitioners within the proposed boundary. Provide details on the number and dates of public meetings held (both virtual and in person), number of mailings, door-to-door outreach efforts, newspaper advertisements or articles, and/or any other efforts made to connect with the community.

Two Town meetings were held to promote the AEA and notify residents of this opportunity.

Numerous informal conversations were held throughout the Town between neighbors.

The AEA idea was promoted at community events such as church services and school events.

Farm Bureau (the largest farm organization in the Town and in Buffalo County) discussed the AEA and supported the petition with a formal motion at their July meeting.

On July 12, 2021, the Town of Montana AEA petition was presented to the Buffalo County Land Conservation Committee and received a unanimous decision to recommend approval of the Montana Society for Responsible Land Use petition by the Buffalo County Board at their August meeting.

On July 13, 2021, the Town Board of Montana adopted a resolution promoting the establishment of an Agriculture Enterprise Area within the Town Montana.

### B. FUTURE OUTREACH STRATEGY

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Describe a future outreach strategy to encourage landowners to participate in the proposed AEA, sign Farmland Preservation Agreements, and achieve conservation compliance. Include details about any virtual or in person future informational meetings, mailings, one-on-one meetings, nutrient management planning classes, and/or any other future efforts made to promote the proposed AEA.
2. Establish a reasonable Farmland Preservation Agreement sign-up goal for the AEA if designated. This could be a number of agreements or a percentage of AEA covered by agreements.

#### OUTREACH PLANS TO MEET AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT GOALS

On-Farm Demonstrations to highlight practices that meet the AEA and conservation goals.

On-farm customer-ready research to study new possibilities relevant to AEA.

Field days for landowners and others to help landowners understand the goals of the AEA and practices to meet the goals stated in this petition.

Virtual field days and informational meetings with Town landowners conducted by landowners and agency personnel.

Conservation tours

Nutrient Management Planning classes held each year, led by the Buffalo County Land Conservation and Resource Management Department.

Town Board support through outreach and education

FARMLAND PRESERVATION AGREEMENT SIGN-UP GOAL  
50% of the Landowners covering 50% of the land

**C. CURRENT AND FUTURE OUTREACH ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE PROPOSED AEA**

INSTRUCTIONS:

Provide specific examples of current and future outreach activities within the proposed AEA that will be used to promote the proposed AEA, promote investment, economic development, partner collaboration, conservation education, and farmland preservation. Include activities conducted by any key collaborators (such as UW Extension, NRCS, local land trusts, citizen groups, and producer-led groups), dates and locations associated with each activity. Attach an additional page if more room is required.

<b>Current Activities:</b>	
<u>Type of Activity</u>	<u>Brief Description of Activity</u>
<i>Ex: Joint community marketing</i>	<i>Ex: Producers in the area have formed a producer cooperative to market their products directly to consumers.</i>
<i>Buffalo County Balrey Society</i>	Producers in the AEA have formed an informal society to study and encourage alternative crops and crop rotations to the traditional corn-soybean rotation. These rotations will be less erosive and more sustainable than traditional rotations.
<i>Customer Ready Research Plots</i>	Landowners in the Town support crop and conservation research on or close to their land. They value replicated research trials that support farming practices that promote conservation, preserve farmland, and improve the economic outlook for farmers. Field days are held at plot locations each year.
<i>Nutrient Management Planning</i>	Each winter, the Buffalo County Land Conservation and UW-Extension offers in-person and virtual nutrient planning classes for farmers to develop and update nutrient management plans for their farms.
<i>Conservation Tour</i>	Farmers in the AEA in cooperation with LCD, NRCS, and UW-Extension, will hold a conservation tour of new and existing conservation practices. This tour will be two or three locations to show variation in practices.
<i>Trout Day</i>	Town Landowners in cooperation with the Buffalo County Conservation Alliance, Buffalo County Land Conservation Department and Trout Unlimited hold an educational and fun day of fishing and stream restoration education for families at one of the restoration sites in the Town.
<b>Future Activities:</b>	
<u>Type of Activity</u>	<u>Brief Description of Activity</u>
<i>Ex: Field Day - Summer 2022</i>	<i>Ex: Farmer Bob is planning to host a field day with the local LCD at his farm for eligible AEA farms to showcase conservation on the farm and talk about the value of Farmland Preservation Program.</i>
<i>Winter 2022</i>	A meeting at Montana Town Hall to discuss the benefits of the AEA and Farmland Preservation
<i>Winter 2022</i>	Nutrient Management Planning classes in cooperation with Buffalo County Land Conservation and UW-Extension

<i>Spring 2022</i>	Joe Bragger will hold a prescribed burn day to teach landowners and emergency response personnel the value of burning for prairie restoration and development and proper burn techniques.
<i>Customer Ready Research Trials Spring, 2022</i>	Research trials will be established on fiber hemp production and small grain production.

**D. DATCP SUPPORT FOR ACTIVITIES AND OUTREACH**

INSTRUCTIONS:

Describe any type of assistance DATCP can provide to aid future activity and outreach efforts within the proposed AEA if designated. DATCP can assist with informational mailers, educational materials, speaking presentations, innovative projects, grant proposals and many other activities done to promote the AEA or provide educational opportunities.

Promotional materials will be developed in cooperation with the Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection.

SEG Innovation Grants - Hold a facilitated brainstorming session with all eligible petitioners on new/innovative ideas for meeting the conservation goals outlined in this petition. These ideas can be production changes, construction ideas, education ideas, etc. Compile ideas, develop a matrix to evaluate them for originality, resource protection potential, financial feasibility, and other criterion. Select the best ideas and implement on a demonstration basis and collect as much data to see if they are successful. Do as many projects as possible with available funds.

SEG Innovation Grants - Develop and implement a plan to establish perennials crops. Establish one or two demonstrations on farms within the Montana Society for Responsible Land Use AEA. This could include silviculture, silvopasture, fruit crops, perennial crops, etc.

DATCP will keep the Town notified of other opportunities for funding to meet the goals of this petition.

DATCP employees will serve as a resource at public meetings to promote Farmland Preservation and other programs offered under this petition.

***Application continued on the next page.***