



## **Rock County Land Conservation Department**

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# **YAHARA RIVER WATERSHED ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT ROCK COUNTY – 2024 ANNUAL REPORT**

## **2024 Planning and Design Activities:**

1. Several planning and design activities were completed in 2024. The majority of 2024 was spent learning the several aspects of budgeting, installing practices, Snap Plus modeling, potential project acquisitions, and planning for 2025. Contract WINS-1.24 for Zeb Demrow was signed in 2024 and includes a 3.2-acre harvestable buffer annually reducing 18.33 pounds.

## **2025 Planning and design activities:**

2. As 2024 was essentially a staff rebuilding year, our focuses have been on 2025 project acquisitions and full program implementation. Contract WINS-1.25 and WINS-2.25 have been signed for John Remley and Mel Shotliff respectively. WINS-1.25 consists of a 2.25-acre perennial vegetative area reducing 19.5 pounds of phosphorus annually. WINS-2.25 consists of a 2-acre perennial vegetative area reducing 15.33 pounds of phosphorus annually. Coordination between Zeb, Mel, and John has resulted in a combined planting schedule with all three contracts being installed simultaneously April 2025.
3. After the 2025 spring plantings have occurred our focus will shift towards the next phase which includes signing the remaining 2025 contracts and implementing fall plantings. We are currently creating contracts for Craig Danielson and Tom Bethke who have both displayed great interest in program enrollment. Danielson's project will include a 5.27-acre PVA annually reducing 183.6 pounds of phosphorus. Bethke's project will include a 9.5-acre PVA reducing 76.8 pounds of P annually.
4. As a summary, five projects totaling \$130,246 have been allocated for 2025 contract installations. This will result in 314 pounds of P being reduced at an average per pound cost of \$46. We are currently exploring options for including additional projects to utilize the entirety of our \$150,000 annual budget and will provide more information as necessary.
5. As identified in the first 2025 quarterly meeting, the Yahara WINS administration has been considering the implications of losing federal funding being allocated in conjunction with WINS projects. Additionally, the WINS administration expressed concerns about running out of eligible agricultural projects and

potentially focusing on continuing ag. producer developments. These issues do not directly impact Rock County currently as we are operating completely within our WINS budget and have not received any additional costs for WINS projects throughout any other programs or funding sources. Furthermore, there has not been a decrease in program enrollment considerations throughout Rock County. On the contrary, several agricultural producers have displayed interest in 2026 enrollment, and at this time we do not have concerns about allocating \$150,000 for 2026.

6. Moving forward, the Yahara WINS and Rock County Service Agreement is set to expire December 2025. We are currently reviewing our contract and plan to propose a revised agreement by this summer. We believe we are operating fully within the Service Agreement, for example our per pound cost goal is \$50 and our 2025 average per pound cost is \$46. Additionally, our 2025 new annual pounds of phosphorus reduction goal is 138 pounds, we currently have 314lbs. of planned P reduction with the potential for more as the year progresses. After Service Agreement revisions have been considered, we would desire a meeting to hear any further suggestions you may have for future WINS program administration.