

Greater Des Moines Watershed Program



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF
**AGRICULTURE &
LAND STEWARDSHIP**

Division of Soil Conservation and Water Quality

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National Association of State Conservation Agencies (NASCA) - Idea Sharing Session, October 5th, 2026

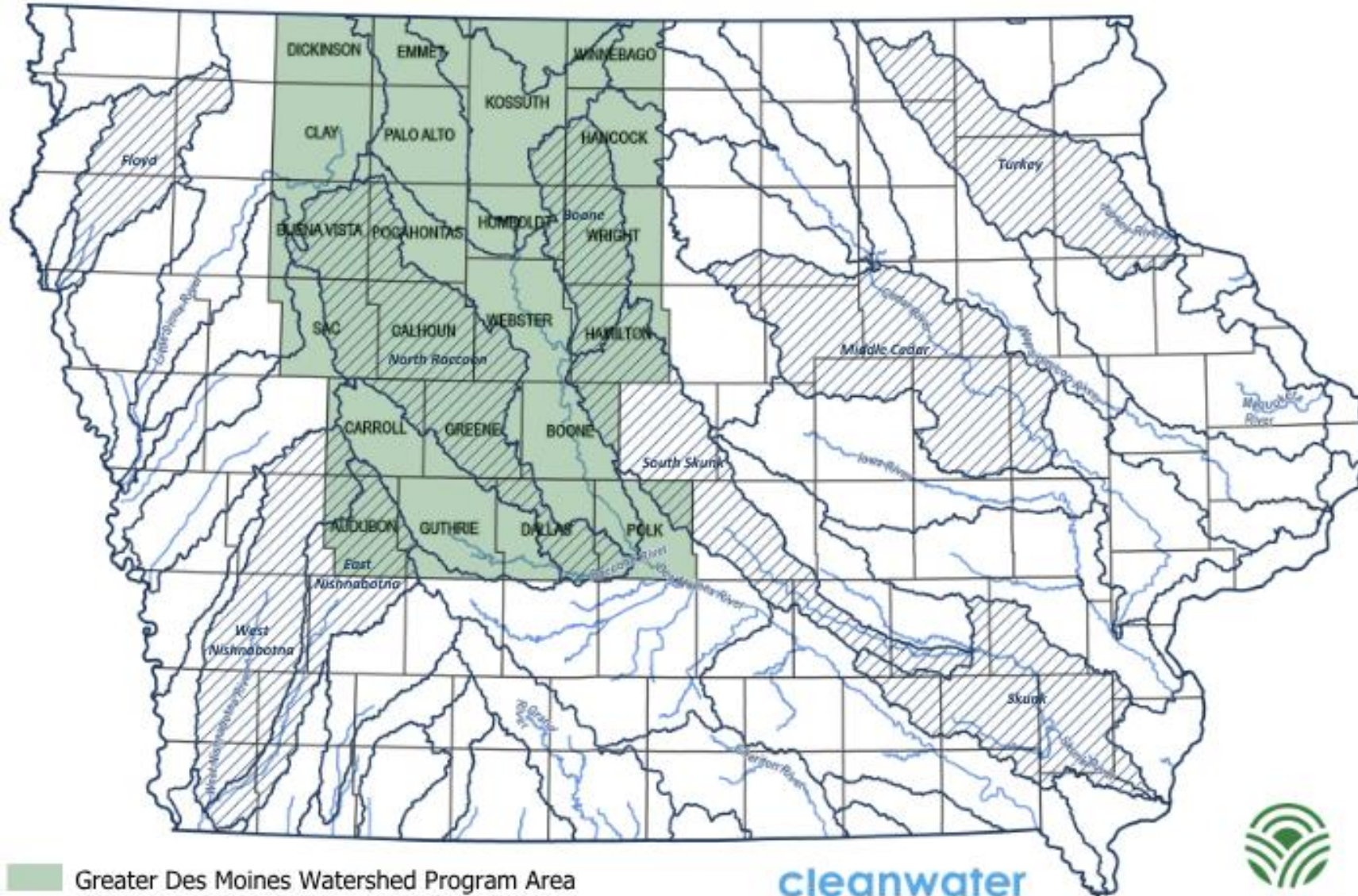
Background:

Greater Des Moines Watershed Program

- ▶ HF2771 (Farm to Faucet) water quality infrastructure improvement funding passed Iowa legislature in June and went into effect on July 1, 2026
- ▶ Funding from restructuring of the state's water excise tax distribution formula
- ▶ Provides IDALS approx. \$52 Million over 12 years (~4.3M/yr) to support targeted conservation improvements in the 22 counties upstream from the source waters that flow into the Central Iowa Water Works service area
- ▶ \$25M to Central Iowa Water Works to improve nitrate removal capacity
- ▶ \$500,000 to DNR for water quality monitoring and \$8M to IFA for additional water infrastructure upgrades plus additional low interest loan opportunities



Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy Priority Watersheds & Greater Des Moines Watershed Program Area



-  Greater Des Moines Watershed Program Area
-  HUC 8 boundaries
-  NRS Priority HUC8 Watersheds

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2026 Overview:

Greater Des Moines Watershed Program

1. New and existing **Cover Crop** users within these 22 counties can receive up to \$25/acre in cost share and enroll up to 500 acres
 - New funding in addition to existing cover crop program funding
2. Farmers and landowners within these 22 counties are eligible for the **Streamside Buffer Initiative**, which pays a one-time establishment cost and between \$1,500-3,000 per acre for foregone income to establish a vegetative buffer.
3. The **Cattle and Conservation Working Lands Program** expansion assists producers in converting low-yielding, flood-prone row-crop ground into permanent pasture and forage production.
4. **Precision nutrient management incentives**
 - Details coming this fall!



COVER CROP PROGRAMS

List of cover crop programs offered by the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship

PROGRAM	Greater Des Moines Watershed	Water Quality Initiative Statewide		Projects and Agreements	Iowa Financial Incentives Program (IFIP)	Crop Insurance Discount Program (CIDP)
ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS	Producers in program area*	Producers who have NEVER used cover crops	Producers who have used cover crops before	Producers in project area	Producer has never used IFIP for this practice	Any cover crops not enrolled in a state or federal program
INCENTIVE	\$25/acre	\$30/acre	\$20/acre	Varies \$8.75 - 45/acre	\$25/acre	Up to \$5/acre
INCENTIVE DURATION	No limit	1 year	No limit	Varies	1-4 year contract	No limit
ACREAGE CAP	500 acres	160 acres	160 acres	Varies	Limited by SWCD	No limit
PAYMENT	After proof of planting	After proof of planting	After proof of planting	Varies	After proof of planting, lump sum payment up front for multi-year agreement. Verified annually.	Discount for verified acres is applied to next year's crop insurance premium

*Farmers and landowners within the following counties are eligible to enroll in the Greater Des Moines Watershed Program: Audubon, Boone, Buena Vista, Calhoun, Carroll, Clay, Dallas, Dickinson, Emmet, Greene, Guthrie, Hamilton, Hancock, Humboldt, Kossuth, Palo Alto, Pocahontas, Polk, Sac, Webster, Winnebago and Wright

For other non-IDALS cover crop program options, visit <https://www.iaagwater.org/conservation-compass/>

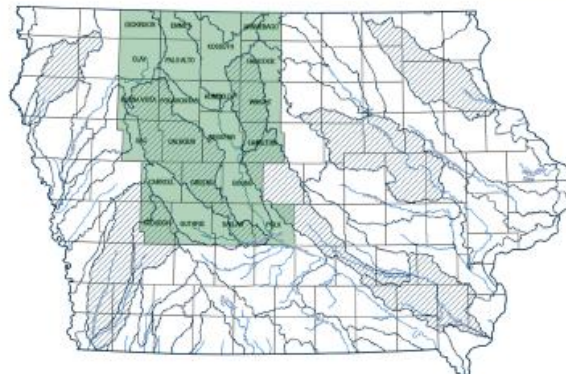
IDALES GREATER DES MOINES WATERSHED PROGRAM

From the farm to the faucet, everyone has a role to play in improving Iowa's water quality. It starts with using responsible farming practices upstream and making water treatment infrastructure improvements downstream.

The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship has launched the **Greater Des Moines watershed program**, a targeted initiative that provides dedicated cost-share incentives to farmers and landowners located in 22 counties upstream from Central Iowa.

Farmers can use a variety of conservation practices to improve soil health, reduce nutrient loss, optimize fertilizer rates and improve water quality.

The Greater Des Moines watershed program prioritizes cover crops, edge-of-field practices and buffers, water quality wetlands, and the Cattle and Conservation Working Lands Program.



- Greater Des Moines Watershed Program Area
- HUC 8 boundaries
- NRS Priority HUC8 Watersheds

Farmers and landowners within the following counties are eligible to enroll in the Greater Des Moines Watershed Program: Audubon, Boone, Buena Vista, Calhoun, Carroll, Clay, Dallas, Dickinson, Emmet, Green, Guthrie, Hamilton, Hancock, Humboldt, Kossuth, Palo Alto, Pocahontas, Polk, Sac, Webster, Winnebago and Wright

Program Details

- New and existing cover crop users within these 22 counties can receive up to \$25/acre in cost share and enroll up to 500 acres.
- Farmers and landowners within these 22 counties are eligible for the streamside buffer pilot project, which pays a one-time establishment cost and between \$1,500-3,000 per acre for foregone income to establish a vegetative buffer.
- Cattle and Conservation working lands program - additional counties are being added. Details coming soon.
- Precision nutrient management incentives - details coming this fall.
- Visit your local service center or CleanWaterIowa.org for more information.

CATTLE AND CONSERVATION WORKING LANDS PROGRAM

Connecting cattle producers with conservation practices that improve water quality and keep land productive

The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) is expanding its popular Cattle and Conservation Working Lands program to support farmers and landowners in more Iowa counties. The program provides cost-share to help cattle producers convert underperforming or highly erodible acres into pasture and hay ground. This provides land and forage to support the growth of the U.S. beef herd while reducing soil erosion and improving Iowa's water quality. The program began as a pilot project in Taylor County in 2016, and is now serving cattle producers in 28 Iowa counties.



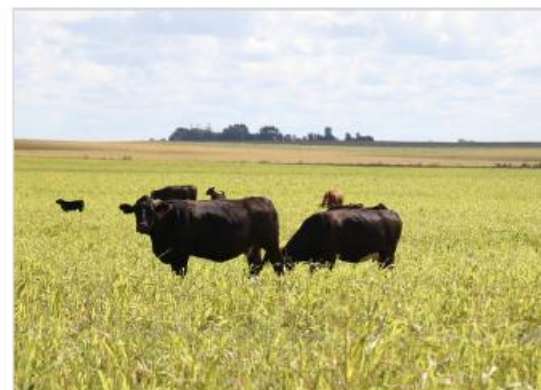
Working Lands Partnership Area
Greater Des Moines Watershed Program Area

Eligible Cost-Share Practices

- \$290/acre for converting cropped acres to hay
- \$1,000/acre for converting cropped acres to pasture

How to Apply

Contact your local **USDA service center** or visit costshare.iowaagriculture.gov for more information. Applications are currently funded on a first-come, first-served basis depending upon funding availability.



Eligible Counties as of August 2026

- | | |
|---------------|--------------|
| • Adams | • Humboldt |
| • Audubon | • Ida |
| • Boone | • Kossuth |
| • Buena Vista | • Page |
| • Calhoun | • Palo Alto |
| • Carroll | • Pocahontas |
| • Cherokee | • Polk |
| • Clay | • Sac |
| • Dallas | • Taylor |
| • Dickinson | • Webster |
| • Emmet | • Winnebago |
| • Greene | • Woodbury |
| • Guthrie | • Wright |
| • Hamilton | |
| • Hancock | |



Initial Results and Looking Forward: Greater Des Moines Watershed Program

- ▶ **Cover Crop Program** -109,000 obligated acres in 2025 expanded to more than 300,000 acres obligated this summer
 - Overall IDALS statewide cover crop obligations exceeded 1 million acres this summer, up from approximately 700,000 acres last year
- ▶ **Streamside Buffer Initiative** - Working to develop partnerships to assist with promotion with local technical assistance
- ▶ **Cattle and Conservation Working Lands Program**- Exhausted the initial \$500,000 allocated for the program within 10 days after the program was announced.
- ▶ Assessing and allocating an additional funding from different sources to meet growing demands
- ▶ Looking forward - Continual development and assessment in alignment with staffing and resources



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