

# 2024\* Water Quality Report

177,000 Constituents | 67% Rely on Private Wells for Drinking Water



## Drinking Water Quality Violations

Approximately 1% of public water systems reported contaminant violations between 2022 and 2024.



## Nitrate Exceedances

From 2022 to 2024, 38% of public and 32% of private wells sampled exceeded the Preventive Action Limit for nitrate in drinking water.



## PFAS Sources and Detects

There are 26 presumed PFAS sources, and 27% of state-tested wells had at least one of the chemicals in 2023.



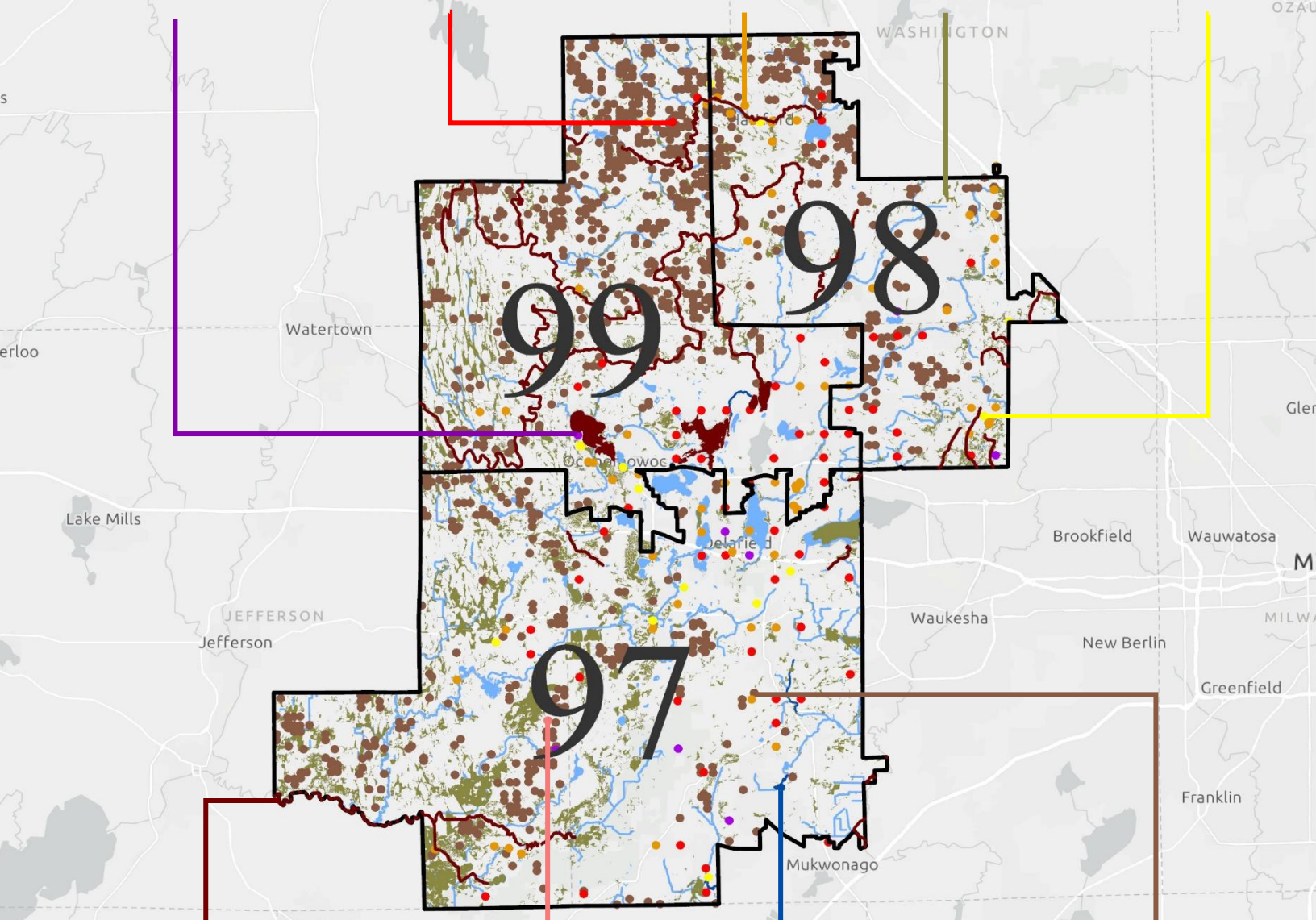
## Wetland Loss

More than 48,200 acres of wetlands are categorized as lost but potentially restorable.



## Groundwater Contamination Cleanup Sites

Fourteen groundwater sites are listed as contaminated.



## Impaired Surface Waters

Over 26% of total lake acres and 30% of river and stream miles are listed as impaired.



## Neonicotinoid Detects

Between 2019 and 2023, 1% of state-tested wells contained one of three neonicotinoids.



## Outstanding/Exceptional Surface Waters

Almost 1% of river and stream miles and <1% of lake acres are classified as quality surface water.



## Biosolids/Waste Landspreading Sites

Septage, municipal, and industrial wastes are applied to over 22,600 acres.

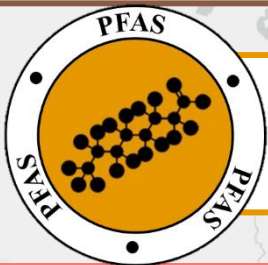




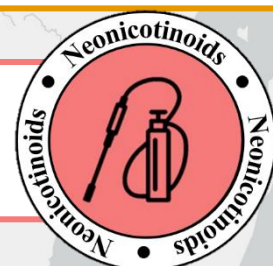
- **Twenty-six private and 81 public wells sampled exceeded the Preventative Action Limit from 2022-2024.<sup>1</sup>**
- Elevated levels of nitrate are generally due to agricultural runoff and industrial discharges.
- Nitrate has been linked to blue baby syndrome, colon cancer, thyroid disease, and neural tube defects.



- **Current permit holders have applied over 208 million gallons of waste to over 1,650 separate fields.<sup>2</sup>**
- The liquid and solid waste is generated from paper mills, septage operations, and food processing plants.
- Landspreading waste can transport contaminants by contaminating groundwater and food and feed crops in the area.



- **Five private and 37 municipal wells tested by the state had detectable levels of PFAS in 2023.<sup>3</sup>**
- The 26 presumed sources include facilities that manufacture, manage, and/or discharge PFAS materials.<sup>4</sup>
- PFAS consumption can cause developmental effects in children, decreased fertility, and some cancers.



- **From 2019-2023, one monitoring well contained one or more neonicotinoids.<sup>5</sup>**
- Neonicotinoid insecticides are applied to agricultural crops, lawns and gardens, golf courses, and more.
- Negative impacts to non-target insect species cause food chain issues in fish, birds, and potentially other taxa.



- **Arsenic, bacteria, lead, and DEHP violations occurred in eight public water systems from 2022-2024.<sup>6</sup>**
- These contaminants often enter drinking water from natural sources and agricultural and industrial operations.
- Sustained ingestion at high levels can cause cancer, gastrointestinal ailments, and developmental and reproductive issues.



- **Fourteen groundwater sites are contaminated with solvents, gasoline, heavy metals, PAHs, and/or VOCs.<sup>7</sup>**
- These chemical mixtures enter water through industrial discharges, storage tank leaks, and landfill leachate.
- If ingested through drinking water, the pollutants pose serious cancer and organ damage health risks.



- **Of the thousands of wetland acres lost, 11% of the total land acreage has the potential for restoration.<sup>3</sup>**
- Degradation and loss of Wisconsin wetlands is primarily due to invasives, development, and conversion to cropland.
- Wetlands absorb pollutants before they enter water, including drinking water; without them, we lose natural filters.



- **More than 6,000 acres and 145 miles of surface waters are listed as impaired under the Clean Water Act.<sup>3</sup>**
- The mercury, phosphorus, lead, and/or PCBs throughout are often from agricultural and industrial discharges.
- Ingestion of these pollutants can lead to organ damage, cardiovascular and reproductive issues, cancer, and more.



- **Over six miles and 100 acres of surface waters are classified as Outstanding or Exceptional by the state.<sup>3</sup>**
- These waterbodies support fisheries and wildlife and have high water quality from effective management and protection.
- As some drinking water is sourced from surface water, these are essential public health resources, too.