1
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

2024* Water Quality Report

729,000 Constituents | 24% Rely on Private Wells for Drinking Water

Wetland Loss

Almost 197,000 acres of wetlands are categorized as lost but potentially restorable.

PFAS Sources and Detects

There are 185 presumed PFAS sources, and 30% of state-tested wells had at least one of the chemicals in 2023.

Nitrate Exceedances

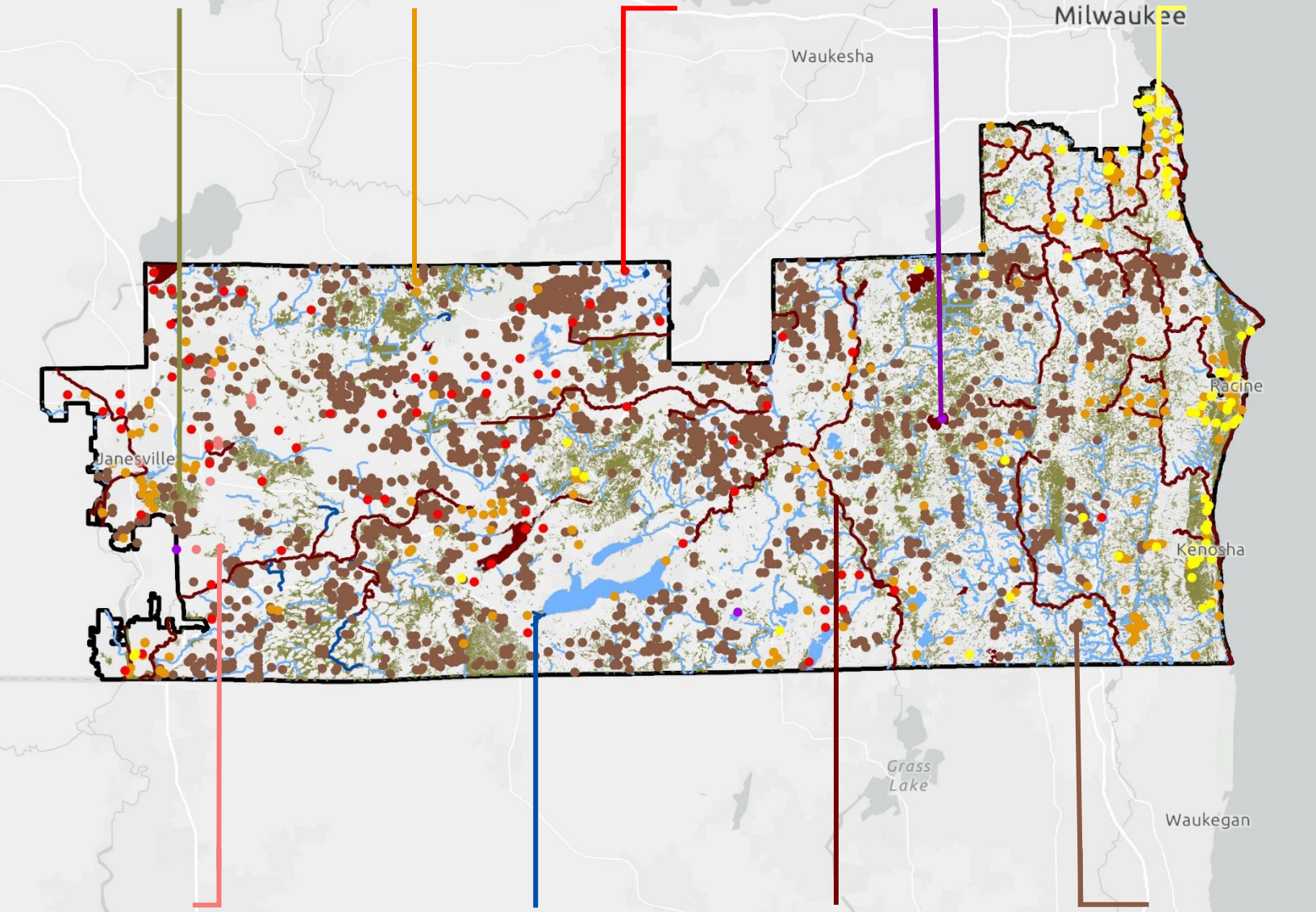
From 2022 to 2024, 43% of public and 8% of private wells sampled exceeded the Preventive Action Limit for nitrate in drinking water.

Drinking Water Quality Violations

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

Groundwater Contamination Cleanup Sites

Ninety-one groundwater sites are listed as contaminated.



Neonicotinoid Detects

Between 2019 and 2023, 29% of state-tested wells contained one of three neonicotinoids.

Outstanding/ Exceptional Surface Waters

Almost 4% of total river and stream miles and 1% of lake acres are classified as high-quality surface water.

Impaired Surface Waters

Over 25% of total lake acres and 28% of river and stream miles are listed as impaired.

Biosolids/Waste Landspreading Sites

Septage, municipal, and industrial wastes are applied to over 66,000 acres.

For policy questions, contact Water and Agriculture Program Director Sara Walling at swalling@cleanwisconsin.org.
For data questions, contact Clean Water Manager Hannah Richerson at hricherson@cleanwisconsin.org.

**Data available as of December 31, 2024.*

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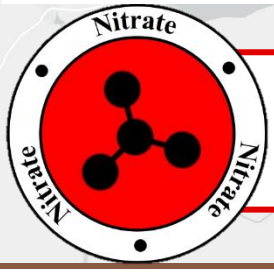
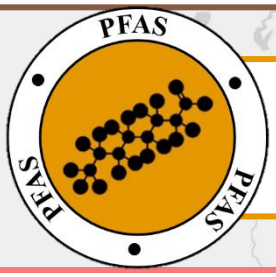


- **Eight private and 80 public* wells sampled exceeded the Preventative Action Limit from 2022-2024.[1]**
- Elevated levels of nitrate are generally due to agricultural runoff and industrial discharges.
- Nitrate has been linked to blue baby syndrome, colon cancer, thyroid disease, and neural tube defects.

- **Current permit holders have applied approximately 405 million gallons of waste to over 2,200 separate fields.[2]**
- 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.



- **Twelve private and 46 municipal wells tested by the state had detectable levels of PFAS in 2023.[3]**
- The 185 presumed sources include facilities that manufacture, manage, and/or discharge PFAS materials.[4]
- PFAS consumption can cause developmental effects in children, decreased fertility, and some cancers.

- **From 2019-2023, nine private and monitoring well samples contained one or more neonicotinoids.[5]**
- 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.

- **Lead, radium, bacteria, and/or nitrate at federal violation levels were found in three public* water systems.[6]**
- These contaminants often enter drinking water from natural sources, septic systems, and agricultural operations.
- Sustained ingestion at high levels can cause cancer, gastrointestinal issues, and/or numerous other health impacts.

- **Ninety-one groundwater sites are contaminated with solvents, gasoline, and/or volatile organic compounds.[7]**
- These chemical mixtures enter water through industrial discharges, underground 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, over 19% of the total land acreage has the potential for restoration.[3]**
- 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 10,300 acres and 320 miles of surface waters are listed as impaired under the Clean Water Act.[3]**
- The mercury, phosphorus, metal, bacteria, 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 40 miles and 95 acres of surface waters are classified as Outstanding or Exceptional Waters by the state.[3]**
- 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.

*Public wells include municipal, other than municipal, non-transient non-community, and transient non-community systems. [1]Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) Groundwater Retrieval Network; [2]WDNR data request; [3]WDNR GIS Open Data Portal; [4]Adapted from Salvatore et al. (2022); [5]Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection data request; [6]Environmental Protection Agency Enforcement and Compliance History Online; [7]WDNR Bureau for Remediation and Redevelopment Tracking System

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