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SENATE DISTRICT

2024* Water Quality Report

177,000 Constituents | 65% Rely on Private Wells for Drinking Water

PFAS Sources and Detects

There are 28 presumed PFAS sources, and 38% of state-tested wells had at least one of the chemicals in 2023.

Nitrate Exceedances

From 2022 to 2024, 25% of public and 75% of private wells sampled exceeded the Preventive Action Limit for nitrate in drinking water.

Impaired Surface Waters

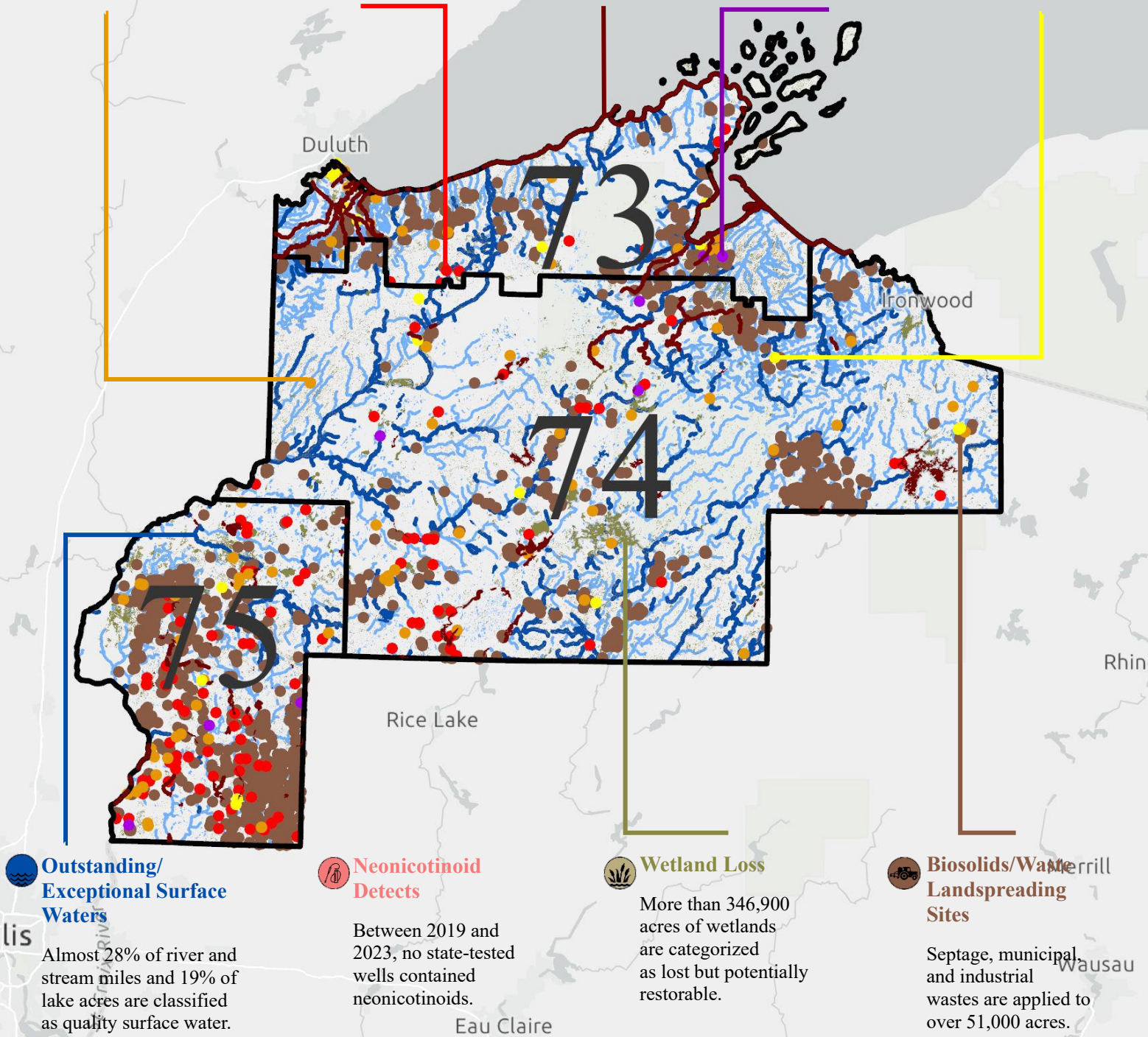
Over 26% of total lake acres and 6% of river and stream miles are listed as impaired.

Drinking Water Quality Violations

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

Groundwater Contamination Cleanup Sites

Twenty-five groundwater sites are listed as contaminated.



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.

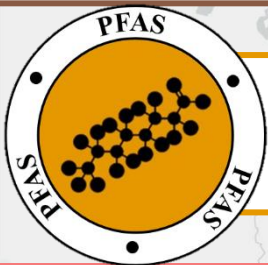




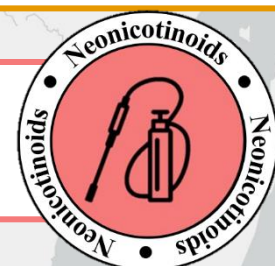
- **Three private and 128 public* wells sampled exceeded the Preventative Action Limit from 2022-2024.¹**
- Elevated levels of nitrate are generally due to agricultural runoff and industrial discharges.
- Nitrate has been linked to blue baby syndrome, colon cancer, thyroid disease, and neural tube defects.



- **Current permit holders have applied approximately 1.3 billion gallons of waste to over 2,100 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.



- **Thirty-one private and 22 municipal wells tested by the state had detectable levels of PFAS in 2023.³**
- The 28 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, no private nor monitoring wells sampled contained 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.



- **Radium and arsenic violations occurred in eight public* water systems from 2022-2024.⁶**
- These contaminants often enter drinking water from natural sources and industrial operations.
- Sustained ingestion at high levels can cause cancer and cardiovascular disease, respectively.



- **Twenty-five groundwater sites are contaminated with lead, bacteria, nitrate, TTHM, and/or haloacetic acids.⁷**
- These chemical mixtures enter water through industrial discharges, storage tank leaks, and landfill leachate.
- If ingested through drinking water, the pollutants pose cancer, organ damage, and/or other serious health risks.



- **Of the thousands of wetland acres lost, 6% 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 105,400 acres and 350 miles of surface waters are listed as impaired under the Clean Water Act.³**
- 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 1,700 miles and 76,000 acres of surface waters are classified as Outstanding or Exceptional 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](#). ¹Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) Groundwater Retrieval Network; ²WDNR data request; ³WDNR GIS Open Data Portal; ⁴Adapted from Salvatore et al. (2022); ⁵Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection data request; ⁶Environmental Protection Agency Enforcement and Compliance History Online; ⁷WDNR Bureau for Remediation and Redevelopment Tracking System