

Well Water Education Program Sauk County

Kevin Masarik
Center for Watershed Science and Education



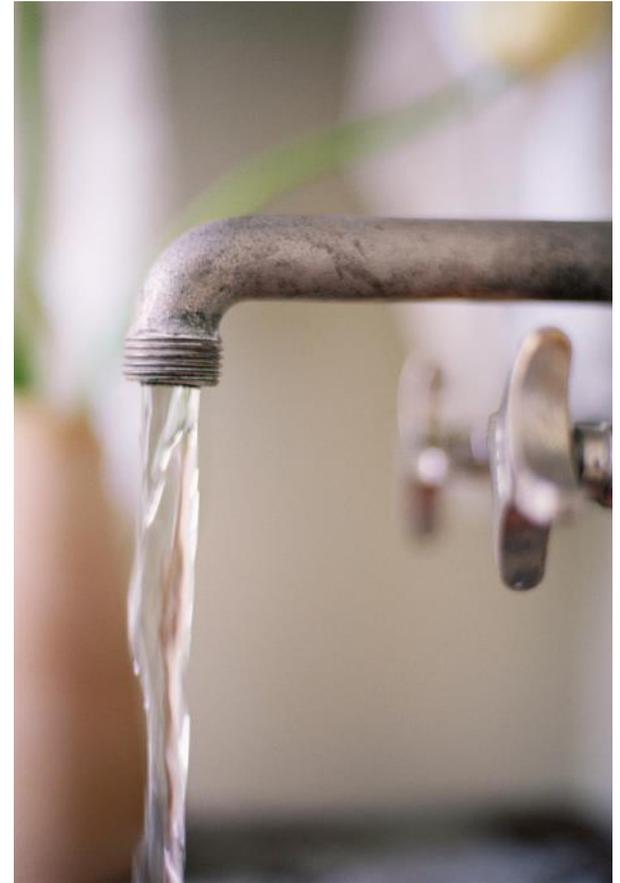
Center for Watershed Science and Education
College of Natural Resources
University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

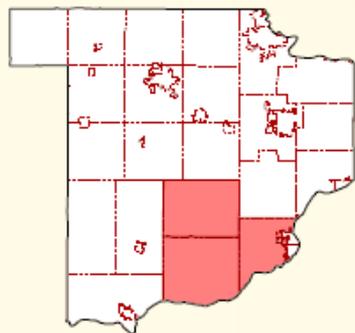
Goals for the presentation:

- Groundwater Basics: Where does my water come from
- Well Construction
- What do my individual test results mean?
- General groundwater quality in Sauk County
- Improving your water quality

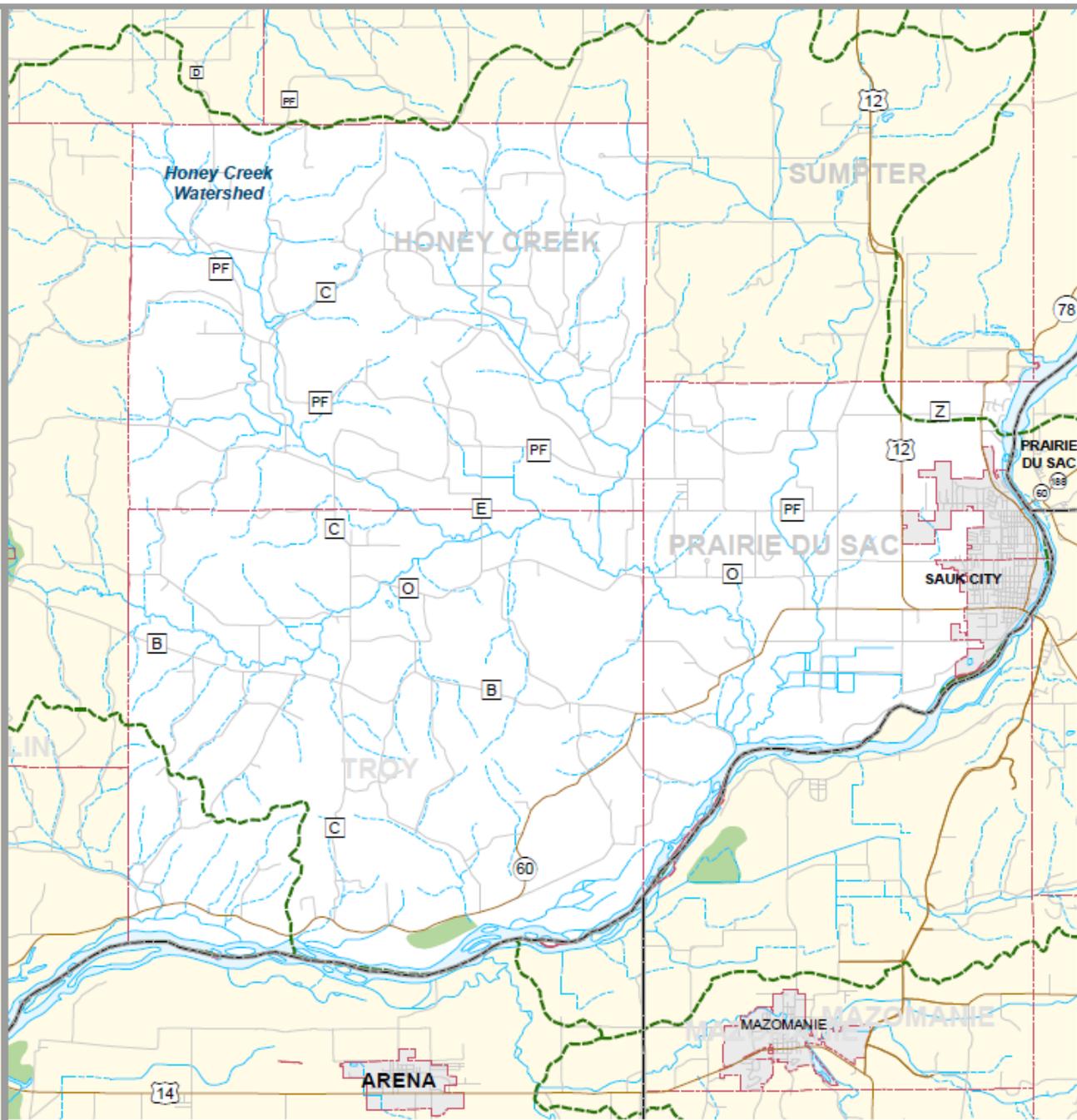
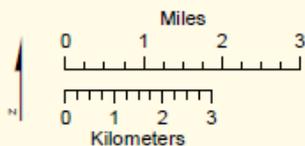


Towns of Honey Creek, Troy and Prairie du Sac

Sauk County, October 2021



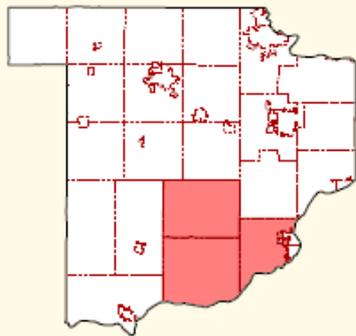
- Watershed Boundary
- Streams
- Lakes/Reservoirs
- Wetlands
- State/US Highways
- Other Roads
- Town Boundaries
- Municipalities



Center for Watershed Science and Education
College of Natural Resources
University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point

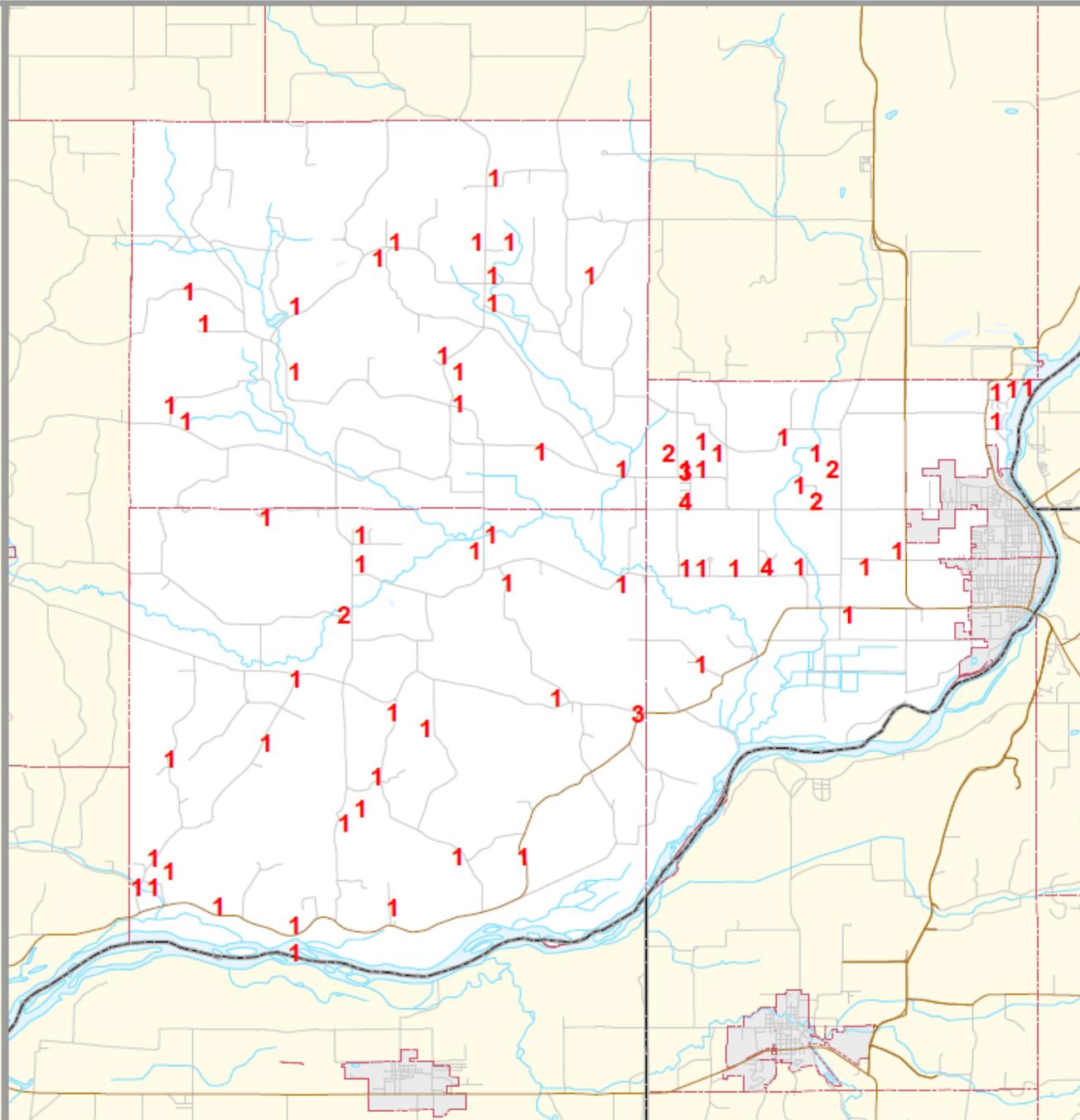
Towns of Honey Creek, Troy and Prairie du Sac

Sauk County, October 2021

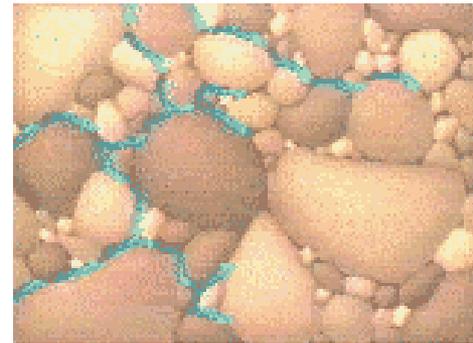
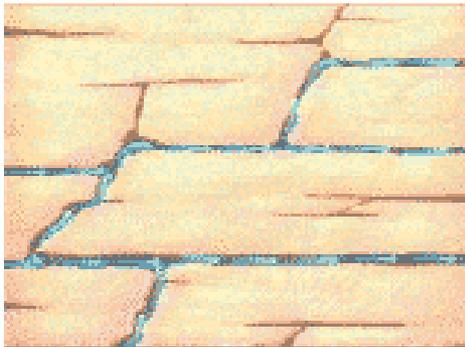
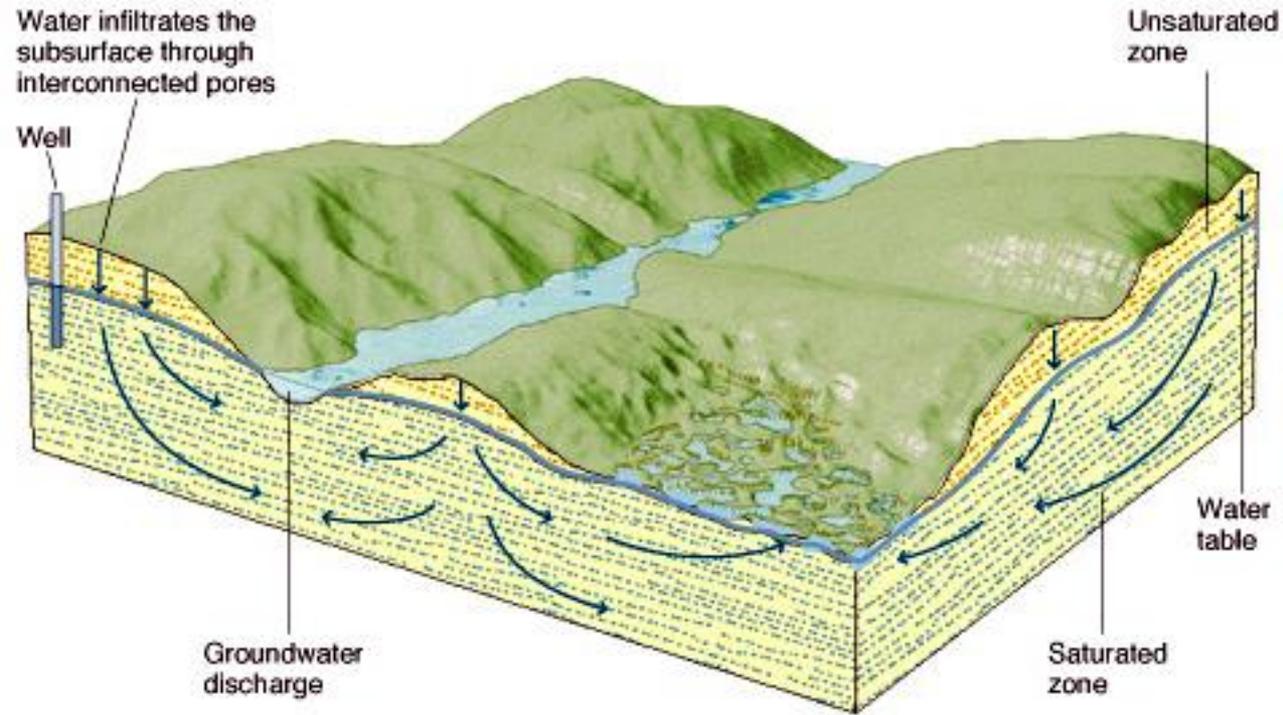


SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION

NUMBER OF SAMPLES
per 1/4 1/4 SECTION



Groundwater Movement

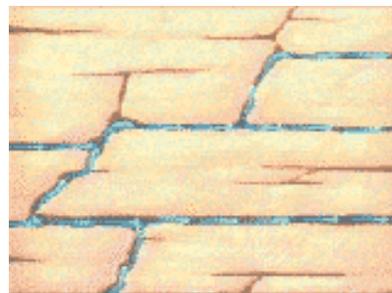


Aquifers: Our groundwater storage units

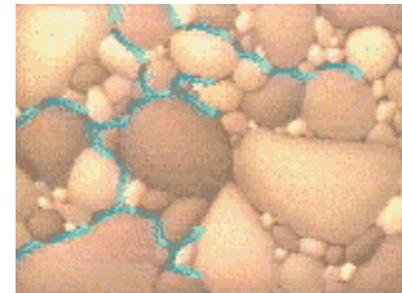
Aquifers are geologic formations that store and transmit groundwater.

The aquifer properties determine how quickly groundwater flows, how much water an aquifer can hold and how easily groundwater can become contaminated. Some aquifers may also contain naturally occurring elements that make water unsafe.

Wisconsin's geology is like a layered cake. Underneath all of Wisconsin lies the Crystalline bedrock which does not hold much water. Think of this layer like the foundation of your house. All groundwater sits on top of this foundation. Groundwater is stored in the various **sandstone, dolomite and sand/gravel** aquifers above the **crystalline bedrock** layer. The layers are arranged in the order which they formed, oldest on the bottom and youngest on top.

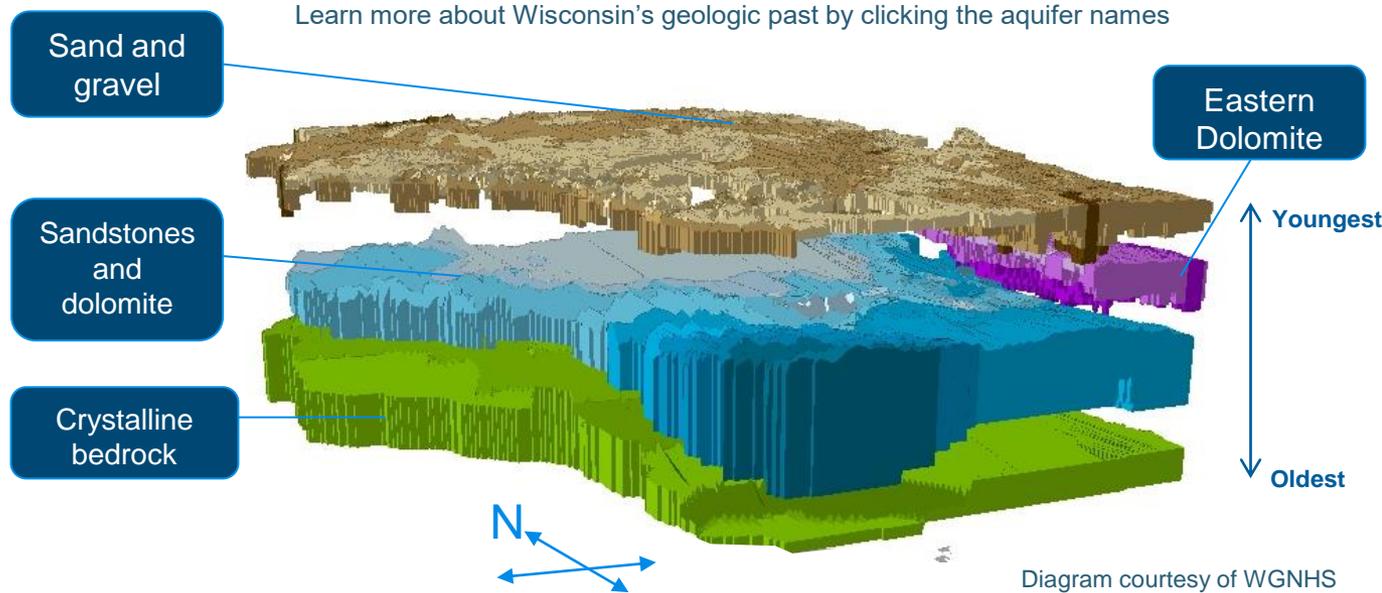


Water and contaminants can move quickly through cracks and fractures.



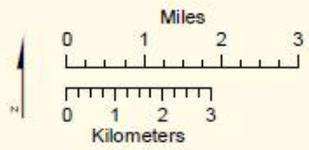
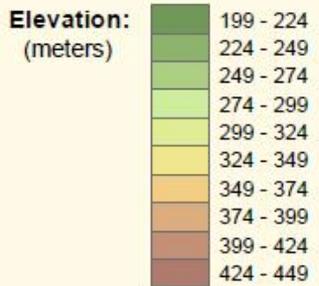
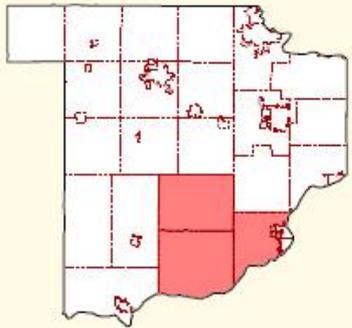
Water moving through tiny spaces in between sand particles or sandstone moves slower and allows for filtration of some contaminants.

Learn more about Wisconsin's geologic past by clicking the aquifer names

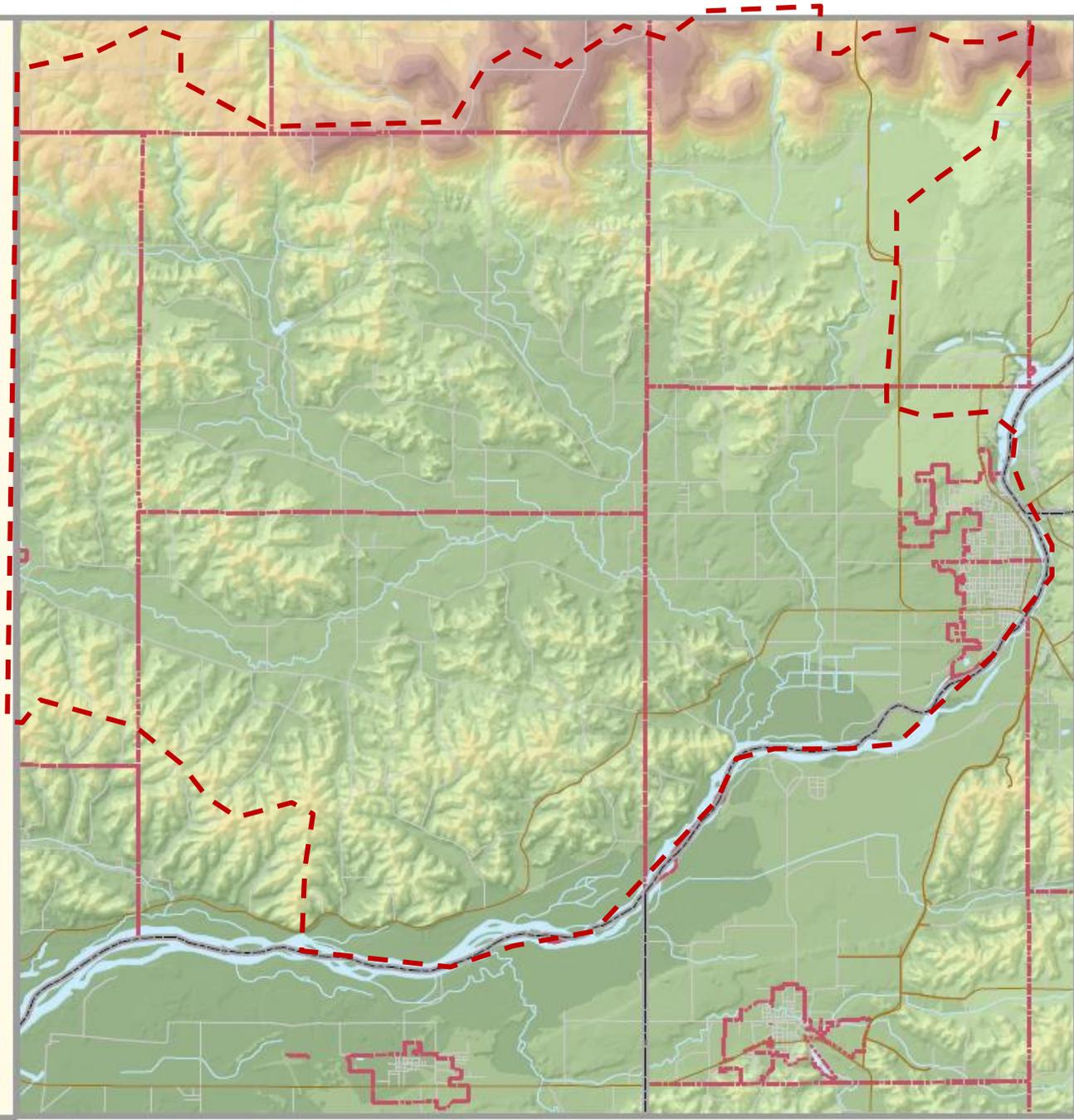


Towns of Honey Creek, Troy and Prairie du Sac

Sauk County, October 2021

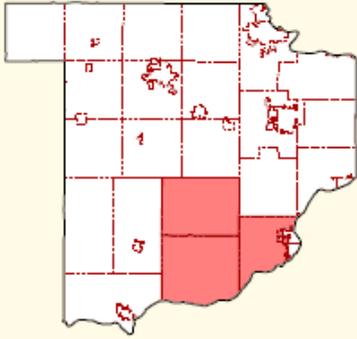


Center for Watershed Science and Education
College of Natural Resources
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point



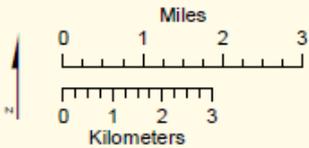
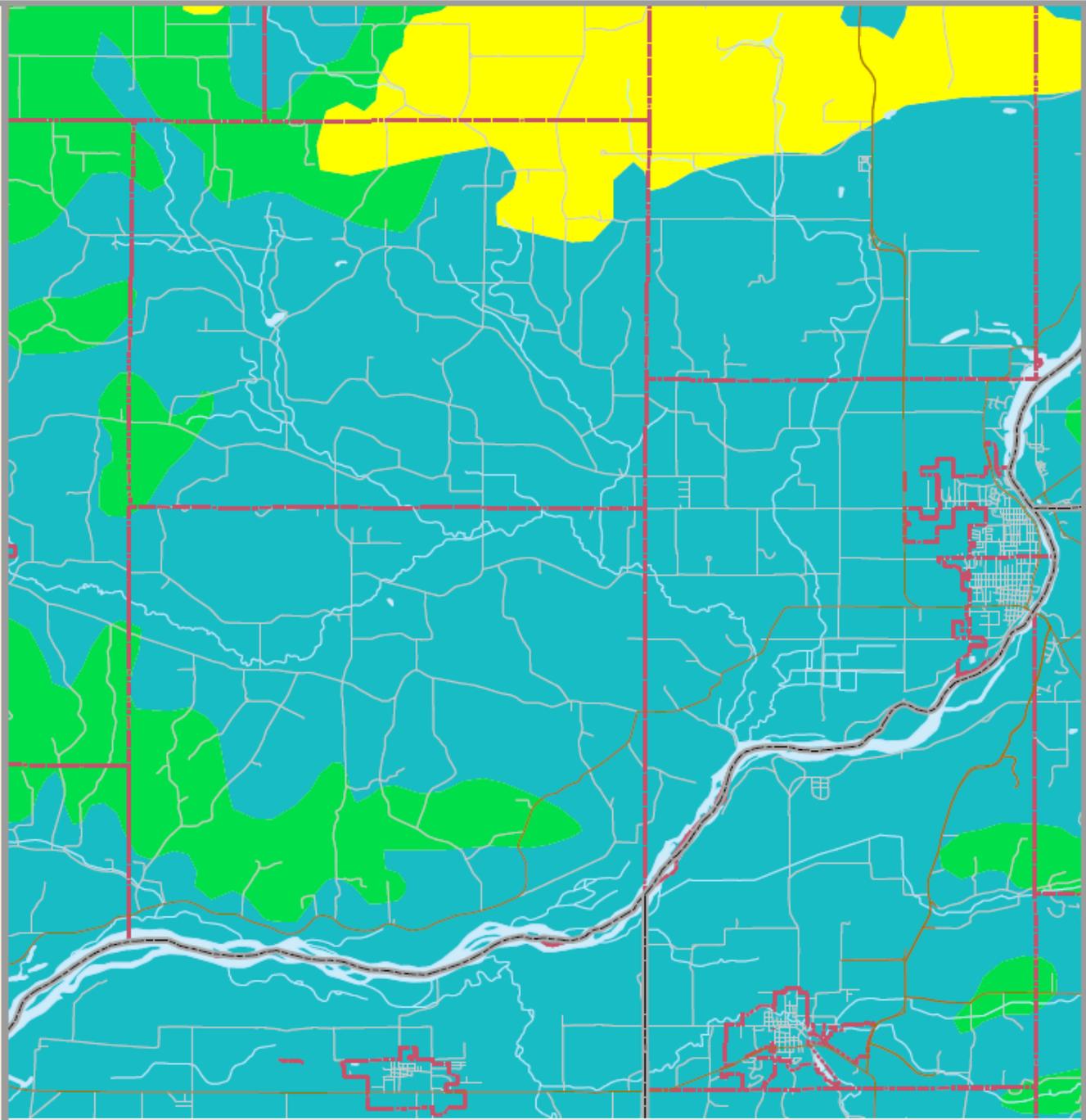
Towns of Honey Creek, Troy and Prairie du Sac

Sauk County, October 2021



Bedrock Units:

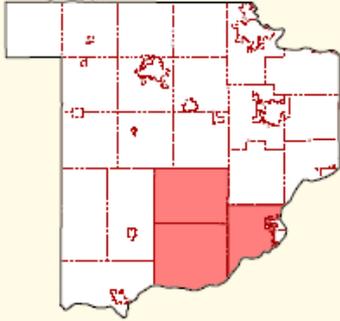
-  Cambrian Sandstone
-  Prairie du Chien Dolomite
-  Quartzite



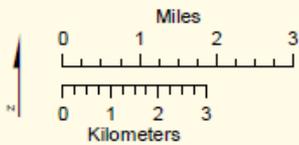
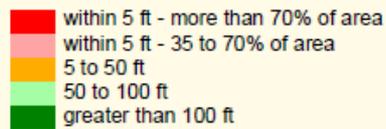
Center for Watershed Science and Education
College of Natural Resources
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

Towns of Honey Creek, Troy and Prairie du Sac

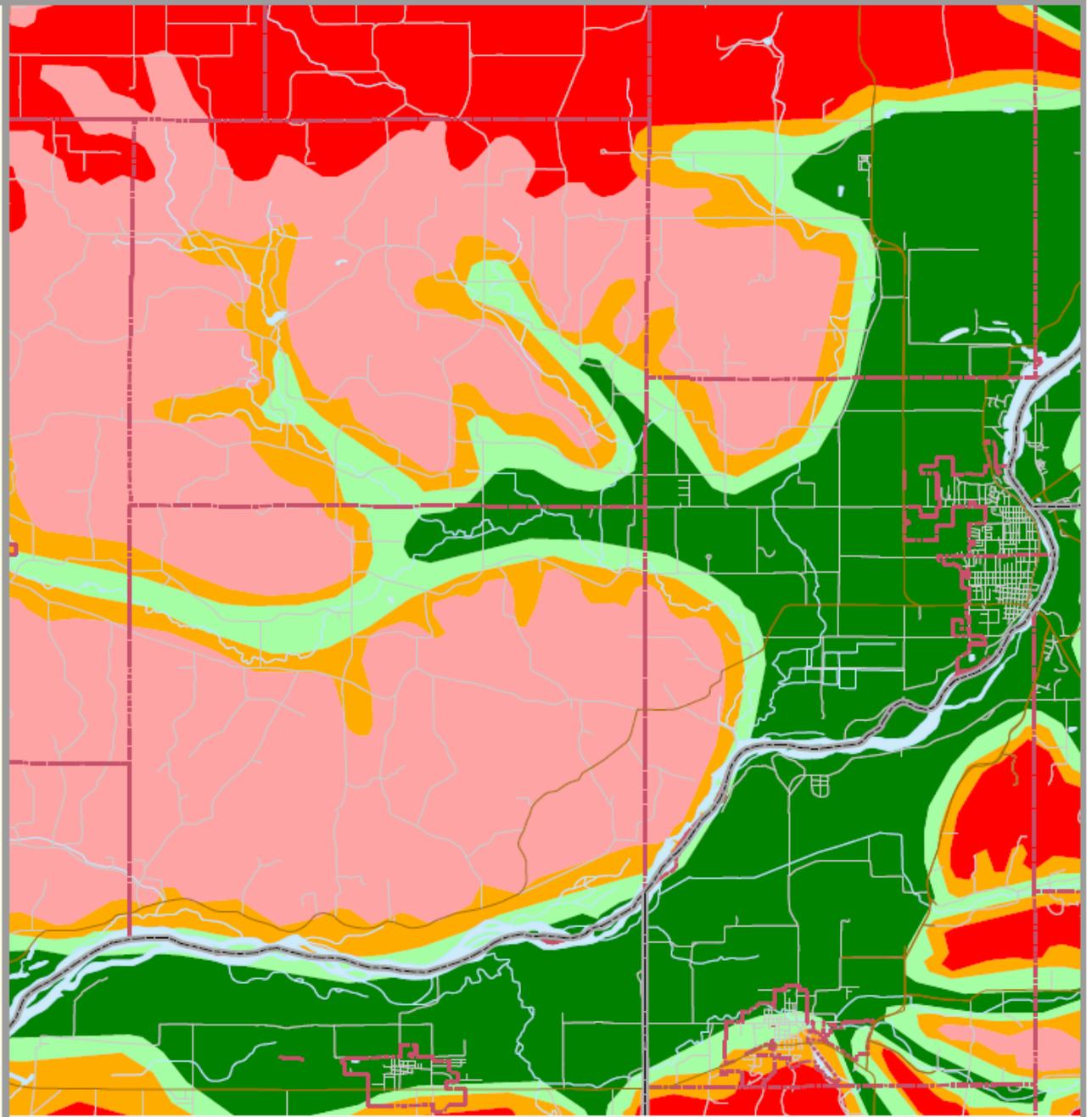
Sauk County, October 2021



Depth to Bedrock:

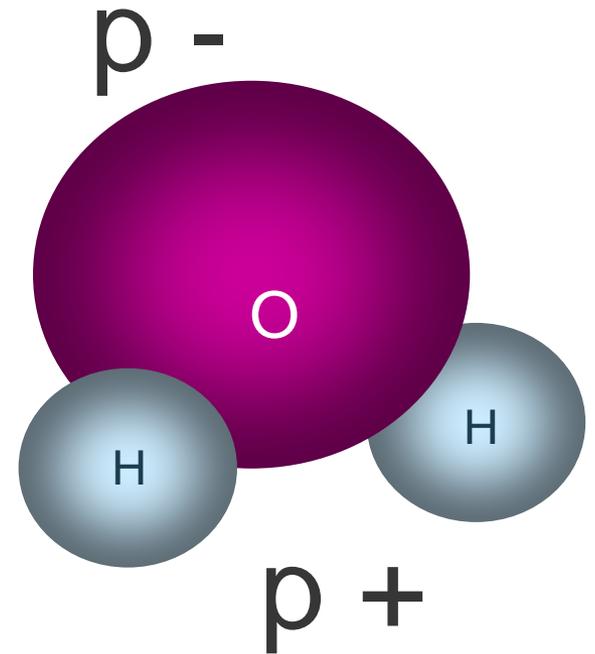


Center for Watershed Science and Education
College of Natural Resources
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point



water basics

- “Universal Solvent”
- Naturally has “stuff” dissolved in it.
 - Impurities depend on rocks, minerals, land-use, plumbing, packaging, and other materials that water comes in contact with.
- Can also treat water to take “stuff” out



Interpreting Drinking Water Test Results

Tests important to health:

- Bacteria
- Sodium
- Nitrate
- Copper
- Lead
- Triazine
- Zinc
- Sulfate
- Arsenic

Tests for aesthetic (taste,color,odor) problems:

- Hardness
- Iron
- Manganese
- Chloride

Other important indicator tests:

- Saturation Index
- Alkalinity
- Conductivity
- Potassium

Red = human-influenced **Blue** = naturally found

Health Concern Categories

Acute Effects

- Usually seen within a short time after exposure to a particular contaminant or substance.

(ex. Bacteria or viral contamination which may cause intestinal disease)

Chronic Effects

- Result from exposure to a substance over a long period of time.
- Increase risk of developing health complications later in life.

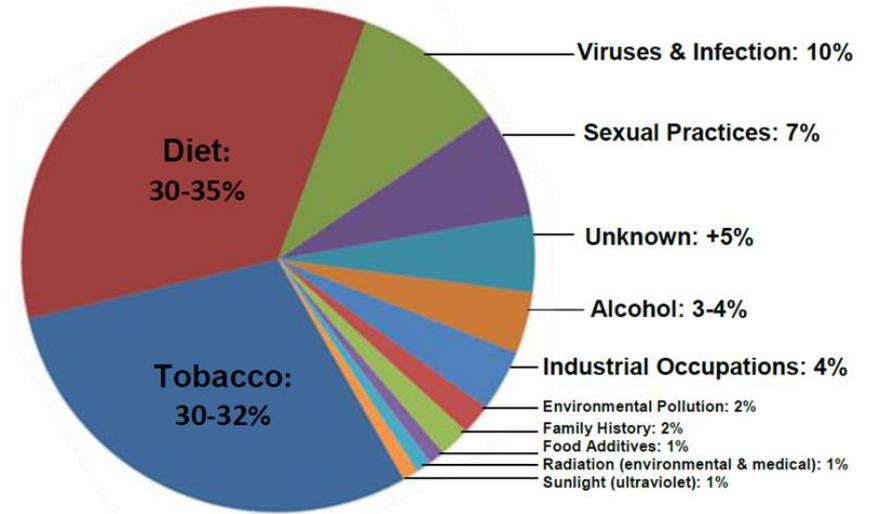
(ex. Arsenic or pesticides can increase the risk of developing certain cancers)



Chronic related health concerns are generally about risk management

National Cancer Risk Factors with Percentages

Adapted from *Everyone's Guide to Cancer Therapy*



Being struck by lightning	0.16 in 1,000 chance.
0.010 mg/L of arsenic in drinking water.	3 out of 1,000 people likely to develop cancer.
2 pCi of indoor radon level.	4 out of 1,000 people likely to develop lung cancer. ¹
2 pCi of indoor radon combined with smoking.	32 out of 1,000 people could develop lung cancer. ¹

Drinking water quality is only one part of an individual's total risk.

¹<http://www.epa.gov/radon/healthrisks.html>

Private vs. Public Water Supplies

Public Water Supplies

- Regularly tested and regulated by drinking water standards.

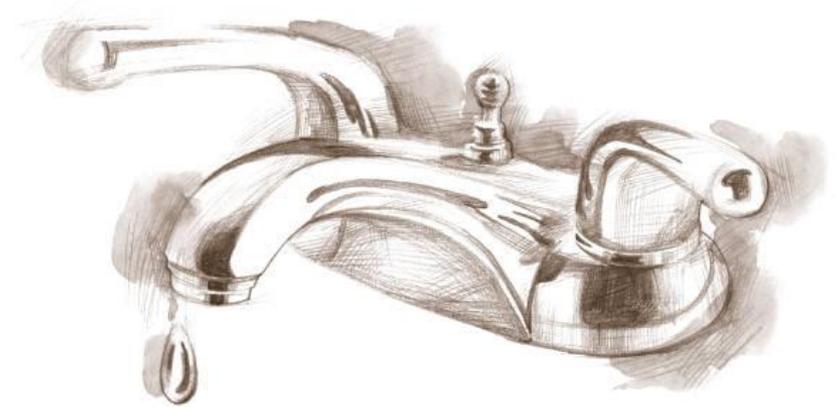
Private Wells

- Not required to be regularly tested.
- Not required to take corrective action
- Owners must take special precautions to ensure safe drinking water.



Why do people test their water?

- Installed a new well*
- Well or pump work**
- Change in taste or odor
- Buying or selling their home
- Plumbing issues
- Want to know if it's safe to drink.

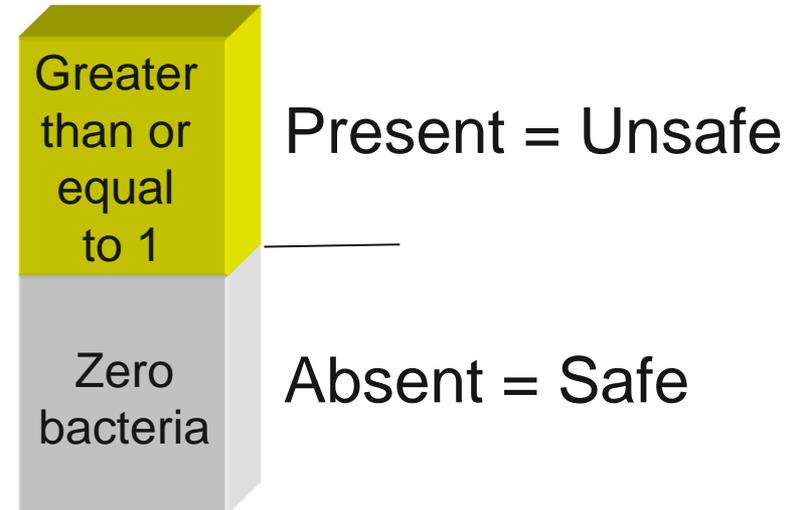
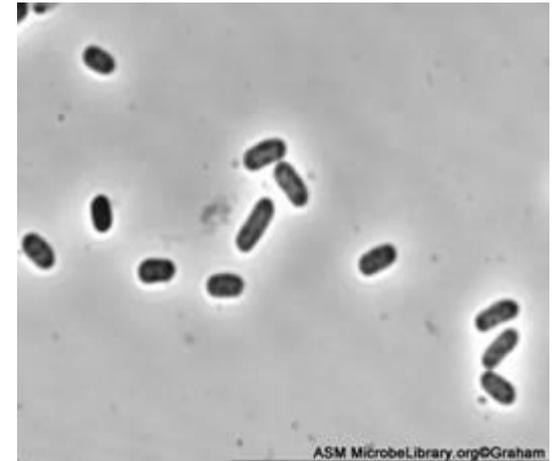


*Required to be tested by well driller for bacteria and *nitrate* (since 2014)

** Required to be tested by well driller/pump installer for bacteria, *nitrate*, and *arsenic*

Coliform bacteria

- Generally do not cause illness, but indicate a pathway for potentially harmful microorganisms to enter your water supply.
 - Harmful bacteria and viruses can cause gastrointestinal disease, cholera, hepatitis
- Well Code: “Properly constructed well should be able to provide bacteria free water continuously without the need for treatment”
- Recommend using an alternative source of water until a test indicates your well is absent of coliform bacteria
- Sources:
 - Live in soils and on vegetation
 - Human and animal waste
 - Sampling error



If coliform bacteria was detected, we also checked for e.coli bacteria test

- Confirmation that bacteria originated from a human or animal fecal source.
- E. coli are often present with harmful bacteria, viruses and parasites that can cause serious gastrointestinal illnesses.
- Any detectable level of E.coli means your water is unsafe to drink.

Information Sources: United States Department of Health and Human Services – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov) and United States Environmental Protection Agency (www.epa.gov)

Contaminants	Sources	Symptoms
BACTERIA		
<p><i>Escherichia coliform (E. coli)</i> <i>Salmonella</i> <i>Campylobacter</i> <i>E. coli O157</i> (Requires a special water test for detection. Causes similar, but more serious illness than other E.coli strains. Requires medical treatment.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infected human and animal feces • Manure • Septic systems • Sewage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gastrointestinal illness • Low-grade fever • Begins 12 hrs - 7 days after exposure
<p><i>Leptosporidia</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urine of livestock, dogs and wildlife • Manure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High fever, severe headache and red eyes • Gastrointestinal illness • Begins 2-28 days after exposure
MICROSCOPIC PARASITES		
<p><i>Cryptosporidia</i> <i>Giardia</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infected human and animal feces • Manure • Septic systems • Sewage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gastrointestinal illness • Begins 2-14 days after exposure
VIRUSES		
<p>Norovirus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infected human feces and vomit • Septic systems • Sewage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gastrointestinal illness • Low-grade fever & headache • Begins 12-48 hrs after exposure
CHEMICALS		
<p>Nitrate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fertilizers • Manure • Bio-solids • Septic systems 	<p>Methemoglobinemia or "Blue Baby Syndrome" – No documented cases in Door County, but elevated nitrate levels in well water may indicate risk of contamination by additional pathogens.</p>
<p>Atrazine (trade-name herbicide for control of broadleaf and grassy weeds)</p>	<p>Estimated to be most heavily used herbicide in the U.S. in 1987/89, with its most extensive use for corn and soybeans in the Midwest, including WI. In 1993, it became a restricted-use herbicide nationally. U.S. EPA set a max. contaminant level (MCL) at 3 parts per billion for safe drinking water.</p>	<p>Short-term exposure above the MCL may cause: congestion of heart, lungs and kidneys; low blood pressure; muscle spasms; weight loss; damage to adrenal glands.</p> <p>Long-term exposure above MCL may cause: weight loss, cardiovascular damage, retinal and some muscle degeneration; cancer.</p>

Well Construction Defects



- Is the well cap or casing cracked?

Well Construction Defects



- Does your well have a vermin-proof cap?



Well Construction Defects

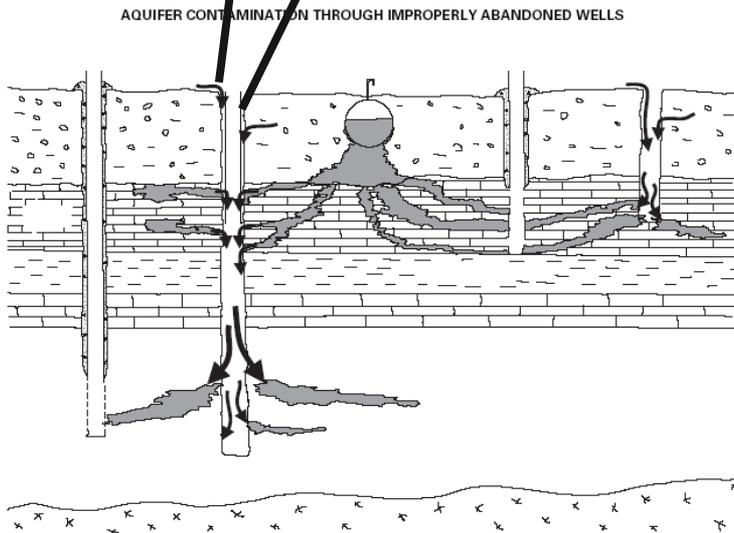


- Non-vermin proof cap
- Electrical conduit not installed correctly
- Don't leash pets within 10 feet of the well
- Avoid bird feeders and other decorations directly above the well

Well Construction Defects



- Are there old wells on the property?
 - Wells are a direct conduit to groundwater
 - Consider having them properly filled and sealed



Well Construction Defects



08/29/2014 01:32PM

Photo: Matt Zoschke

- Do yard hydrants, livestock waterers, and service to outbuildings have proper backflow prevention?

HOW BACKFLOW CAN HAPPEN

- 1** **Stage 1:** Your home or business has a connection to the public water system not protected by a backflow device.
- 2** **Stage 2:** Water pressure is reduced because of a break in the water main or a fire event using a lot of water suddenly.
- 3** **Stage 3:** The sudden drop in water pressure creates a reverse pressure situation.



- 4** **Stage 4:** Dangerous contaminants from the unprotected connection can now potentially enter the drinking water supply.



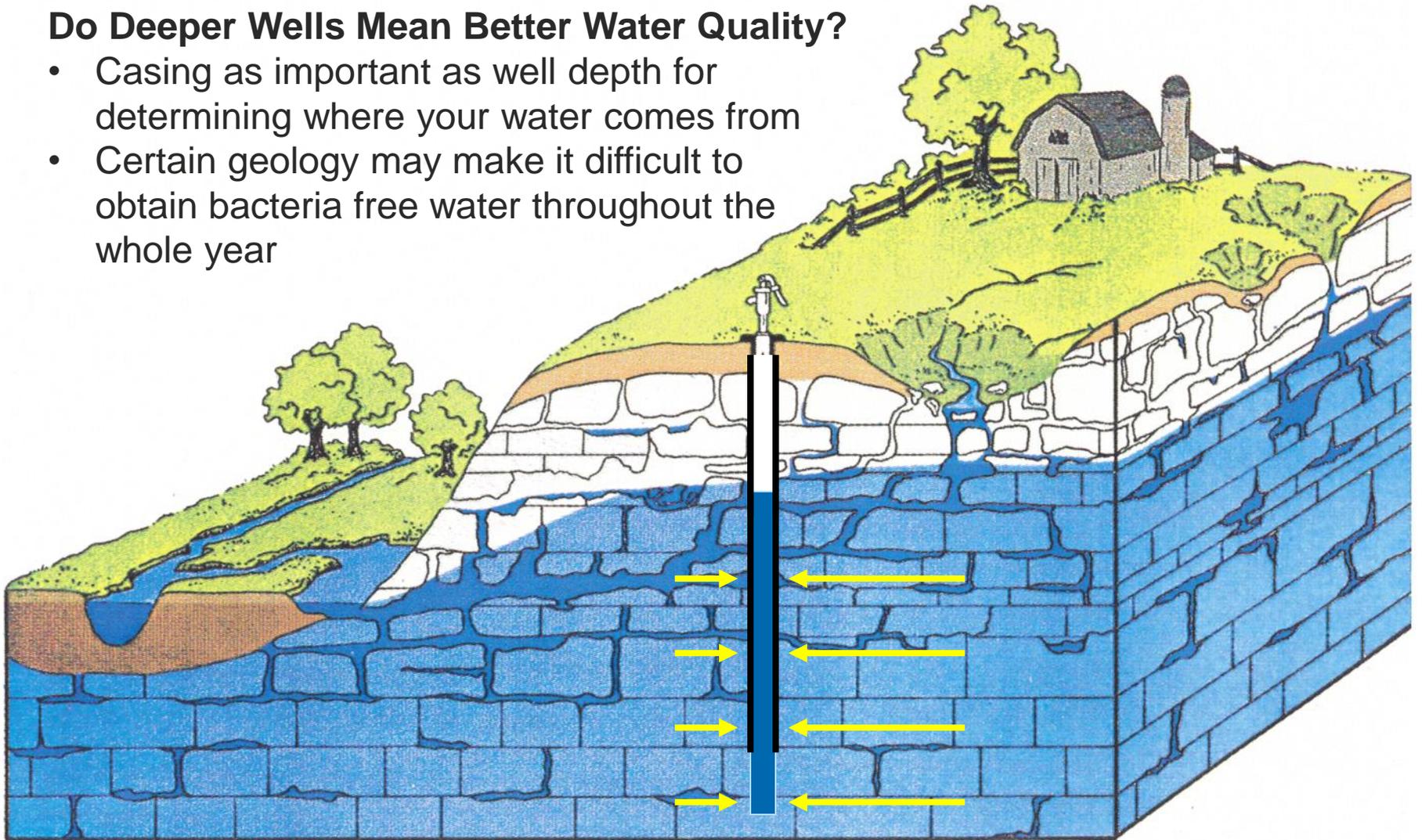
What makes a good well.....



- Vermin proof cap
- Casing extends at least 12" above grade
- Area around well free and clear of debris or other obstructions
- Down spouts or runoff from driveways/other surfaces not directed towards the well

Do Deeper Wells Mean Better Water Quality?

- Casing as important as well depth for determining where your water comes from
- Certain geology may make it difficult to obtain bacteria free water throughout the whole year



What should I do if coliform bacteria was present?

1. Use alternative source of water for drinking
2. Retest
3. Try to identify any sanitary defects
 - Loose or non-existent well cap
 - Well construction faults
 - Cross connection
 - A nearby unused well or pit
 - Inadequate filtration by soil
4. Disinfect the well
5. Retest to ensure well is bacteria free.

➤ *For reoccurring bacteria problems the best solution may be a new well or if new well is unlikely to remedy the problem because of geology, may seek approval for treatment.*



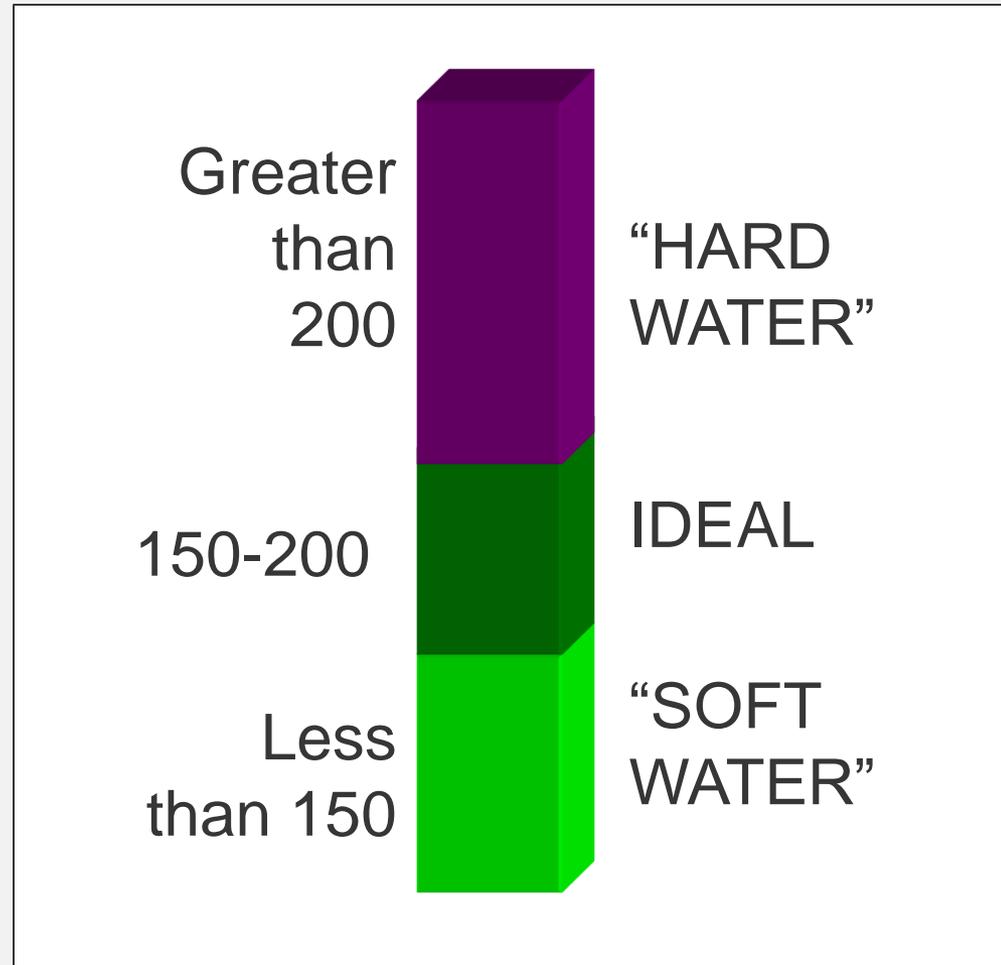
Rock and Soil Impacts on Water Quality

Tests for Aesthetic Problems

Hardness

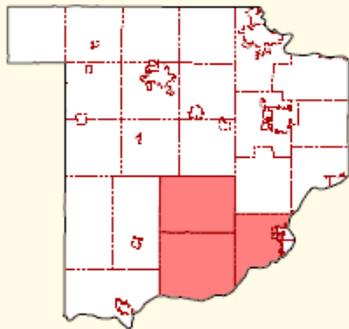
- Natural (rocks and soils)
- Primarily calcium and magnesium

- Problems: scaling, scum, use more detergent, decrease water heater efficiency



Towns of Honey Creek, Troy and Prairie du Sac

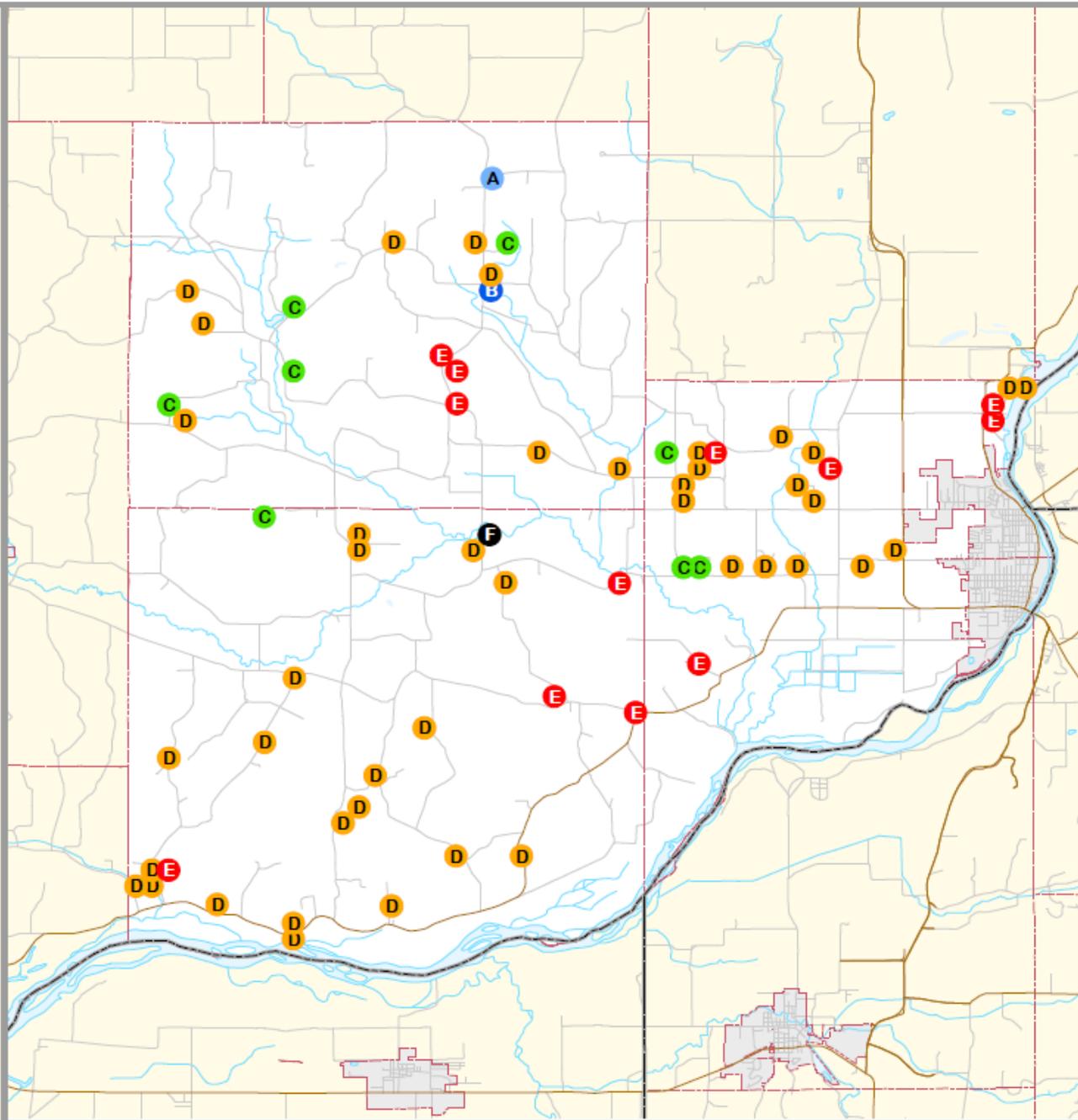
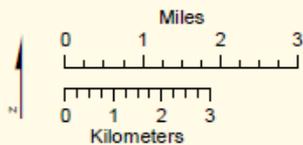
Sauk County, October 2021



TOTAL HARDNESS (ppm CaCO₃)

A ... 50	11	13%
B 51 - 100	1	1%
C 101 - 200	8	9%
D 201 - 300	52	60%
E 301 - 400	13	15%
F 401 ...	1	1%

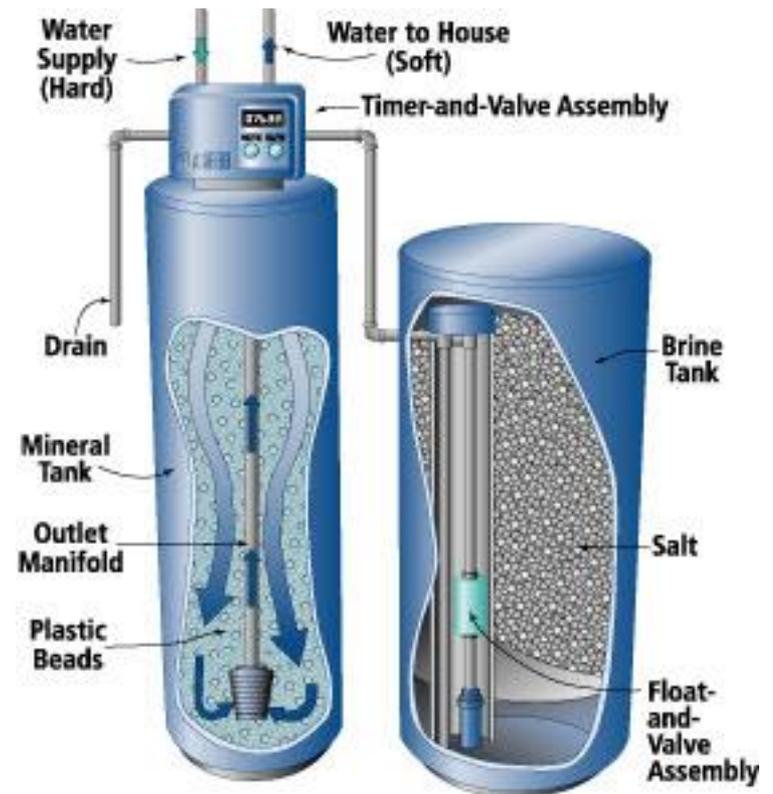
Mapped value is the average for the 1/4 1/4 section
Treated samples not mapped



Water Softening

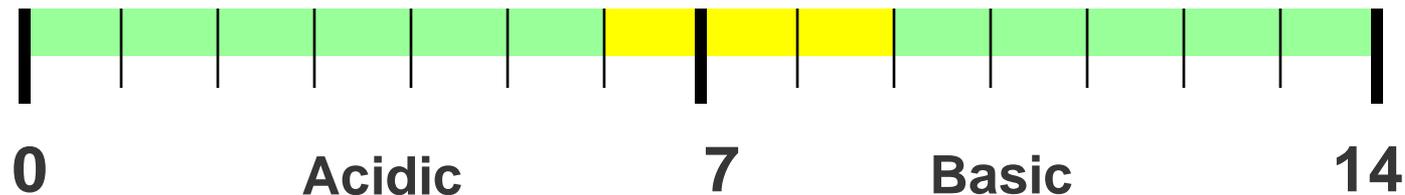
Water softeners remove calcium and magnesium which cause scaling and exchange it for sodium (or potassium).

- Negative: Increases sodium content of water.
- Suggestions:
 - Bypass your drinking water faucet.
 - Do not soften water for outdoor faucets.
 - If you are concerned about sodium levels – use potassium chloride softener salt.



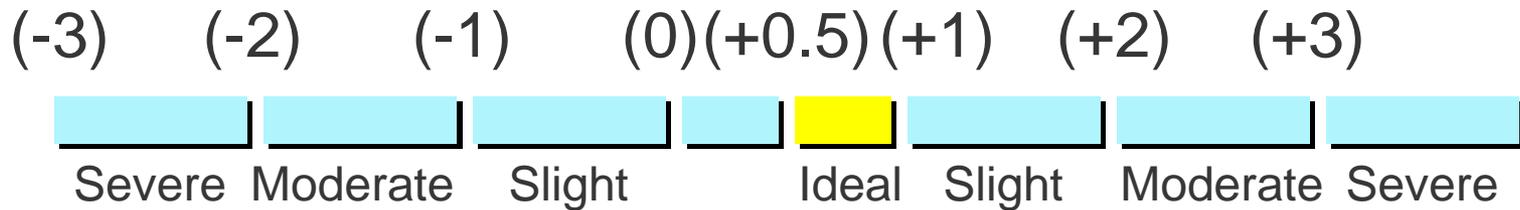
Tests for Overall Water Quality

- **Alkalinity** – ability to neutralize acid
- **Conductivity** –
 - Measure of total ions
 - can be used to indicate presence of contaminants (~ twice the hardness)
- **pH** – Indicates water's acidity and helps determine if water will corrode plumbing



Tests for Overall Water Quality

Saturation Index



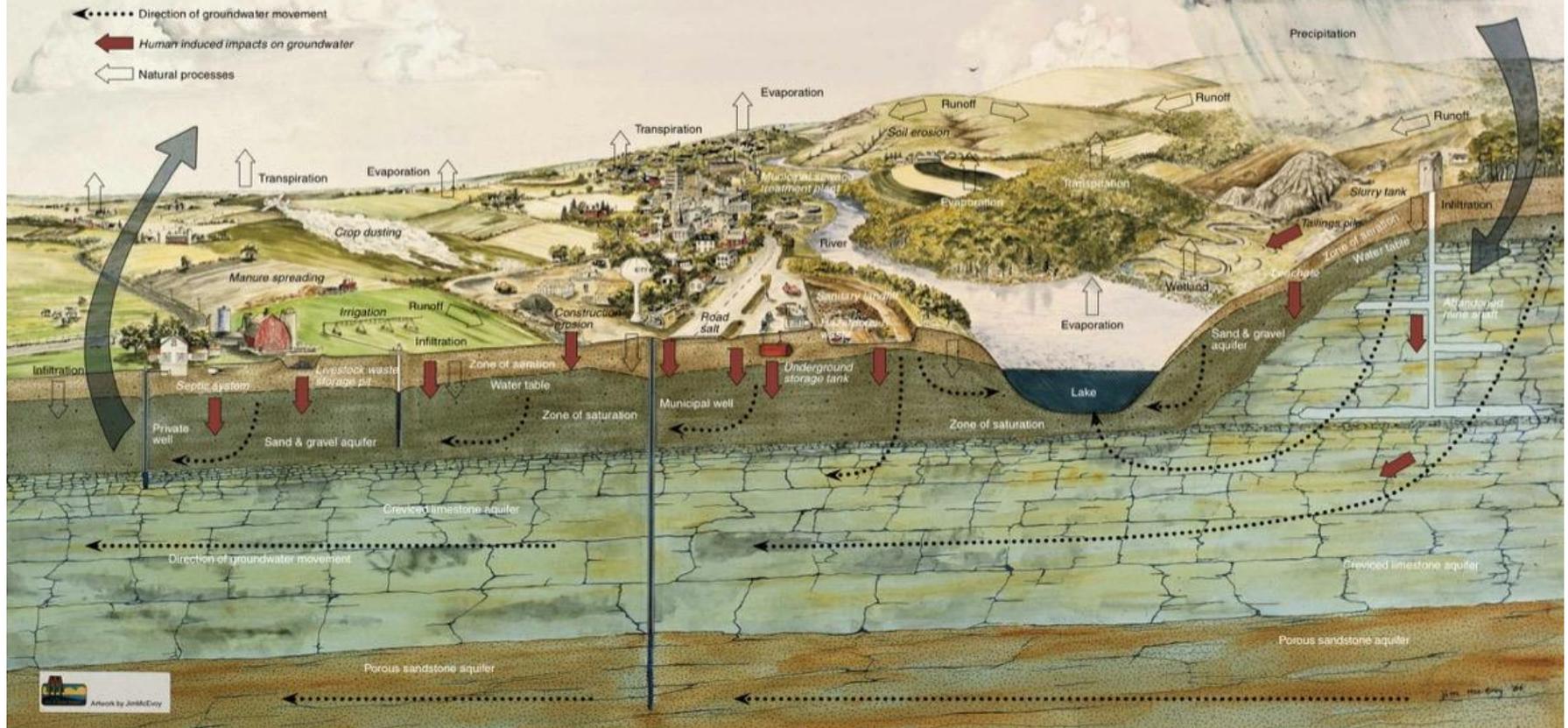
Corrosion occurs



Scaling occurs



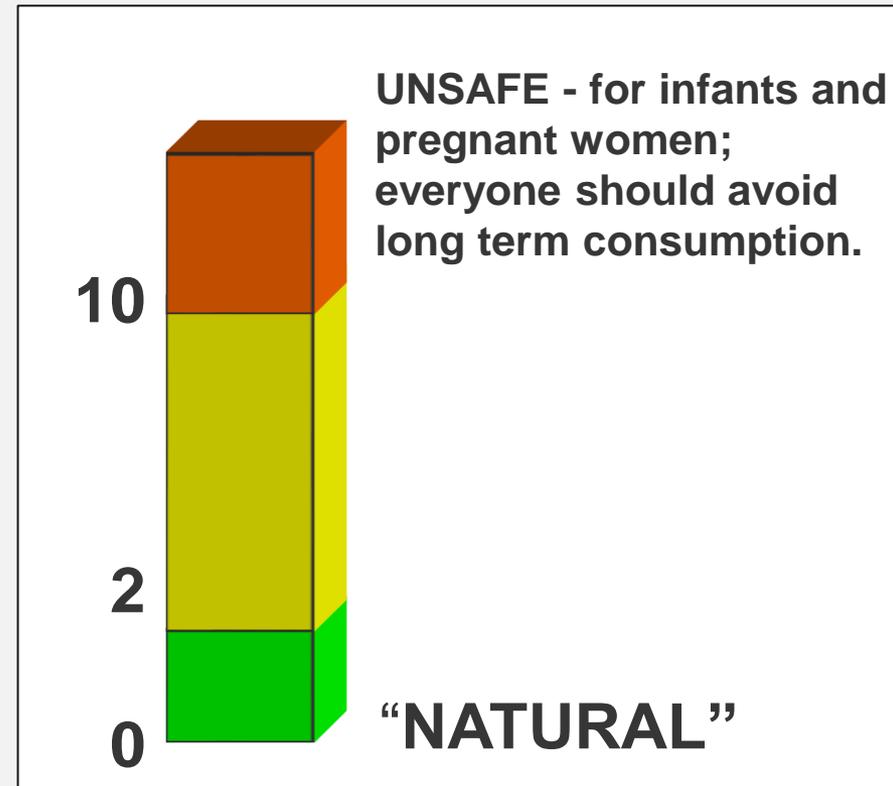
Groundwater and land use in the water cycle



Test Important to Health

Nitrate Nitrogen

- **Greater than 10 mg/L**
Exceeds State and Federal Limits for Drinking Water
- **Between 2 and 10 mg/L**
Some Human Impact
- **Less than 2.0 mg/L**
“Transitional”
- **Less than 0.2 mg/L**
“Natural”



Nitrate-Nitrogen

Health Effects:

- Methemoglobinemia (blue baby disease)
- Possible links to birth defects and miscarriages (humans and livestock)
- Indicator of other contaminants



Source: Wisconsin Department of Health Services

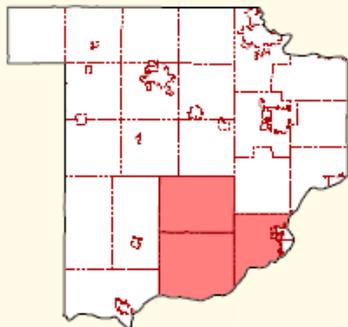
Sources:

- Agricultural fertilizer
- Lawn fertilizer
- Septic systems
- Animal wastes



Towns of Honey Creek, Troy and Prairie du Sac

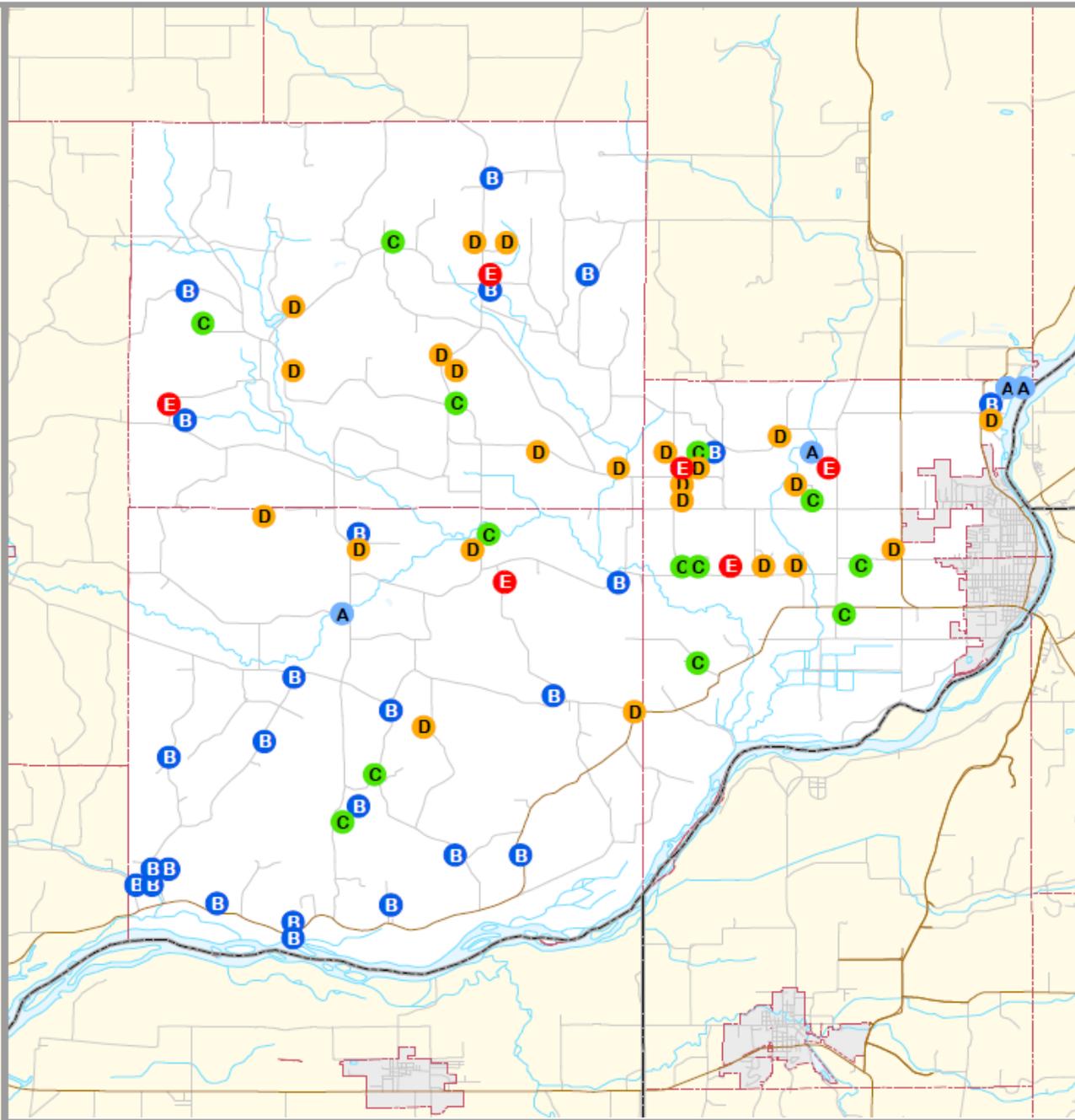
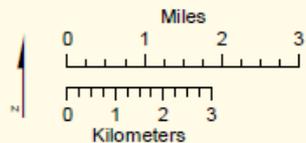
Sauk County, October 2021



NITRATE-NITRITE (ppm N)

A None Detected	6	7%
B ... 2.0	27	31%
C 2.1 - 5.0	19	22%
D 5.1 - 10.0	23	27%
E 10.1 - 20.0	11	13%
F 20.1 ...	0	0%

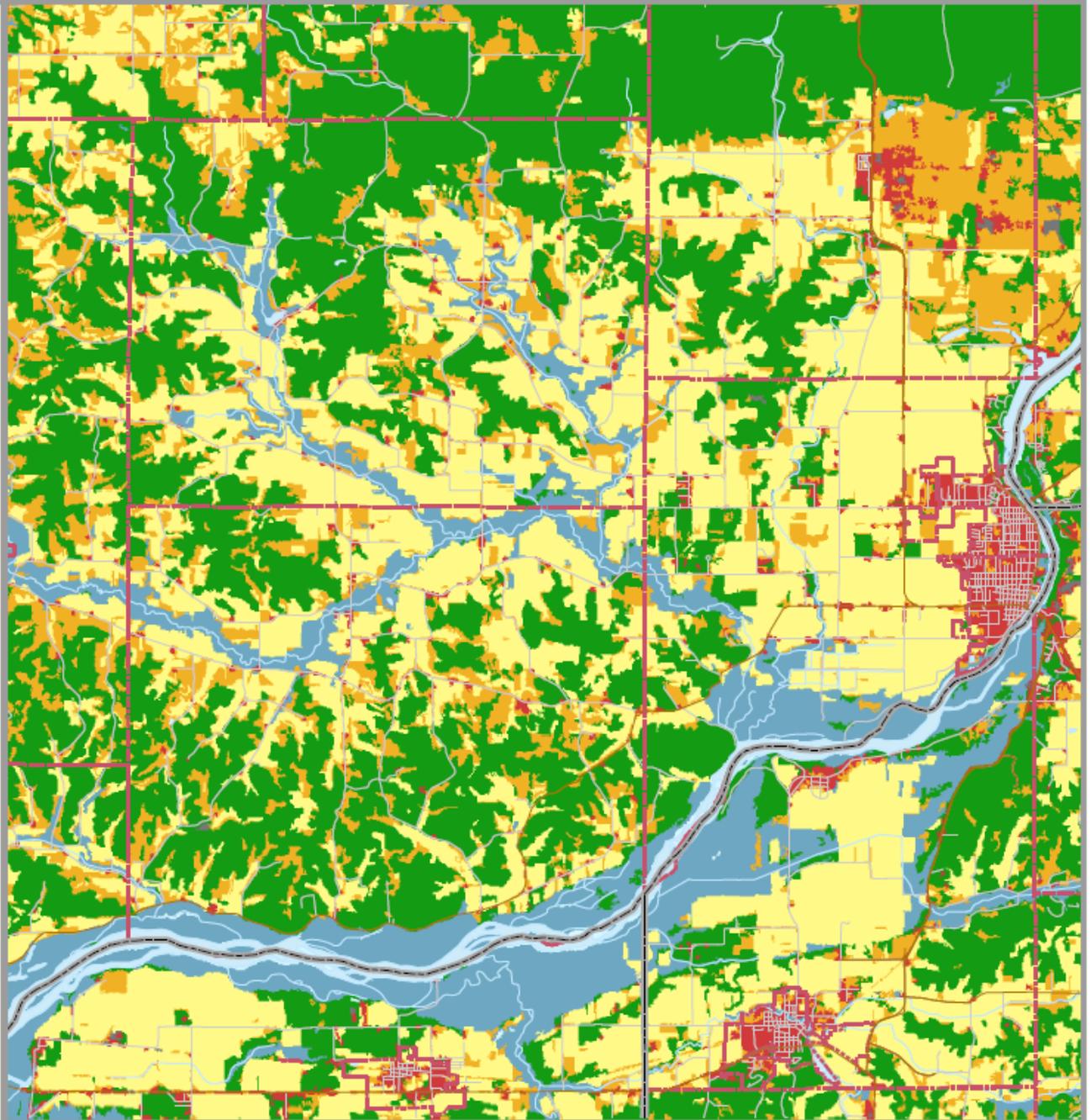
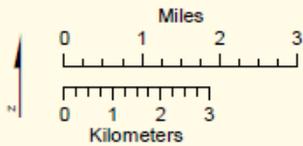
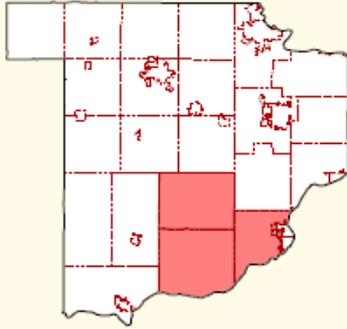
Mapped value is the average for the 1/4 1/4 section
Treated samples not mapped



Center for Watershed Science and Education
College of Natural Resources
University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point

Towns of Honey Creek, Troy and Prairie du Sac

Sauk County, October 2021



What can I do to reduce my nitrate levels?

Solution:

- **Eliminate contamination source or reduce nitrogen inputs**

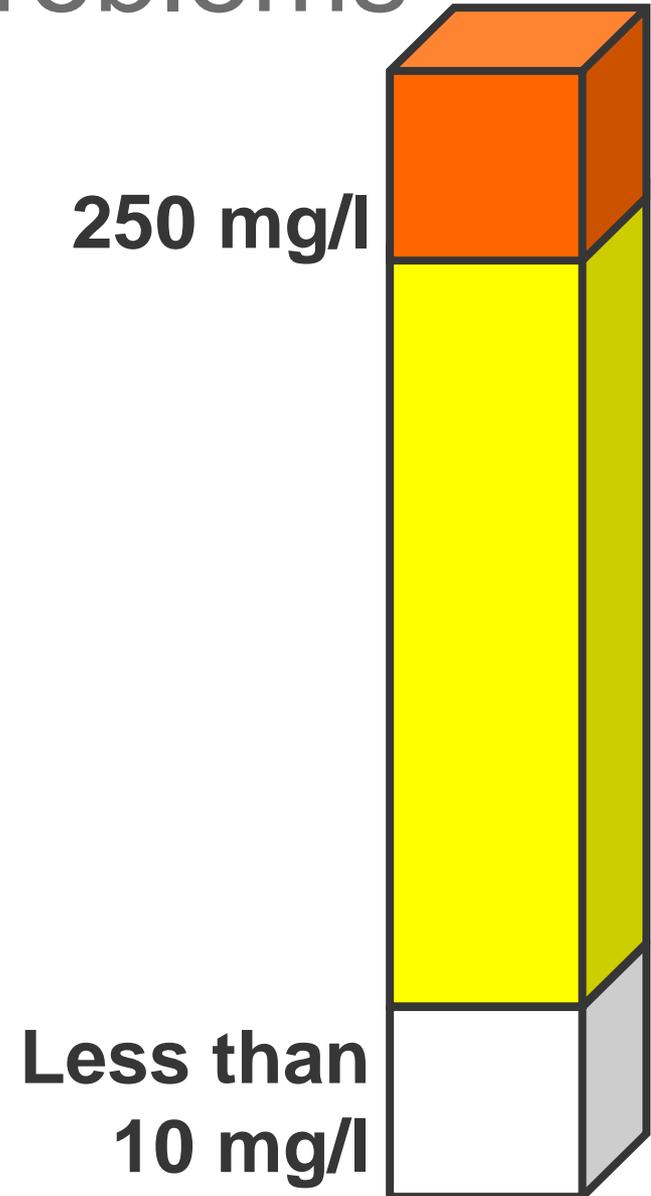
Short term:

- **Change well depth or relocate well**
- **Carry or buy water**
- **Water treatment devices**
 - **Reverse osmosis**
 - **Distillation**
 - **Anion exchange**

Tests for Aesthetic Problems

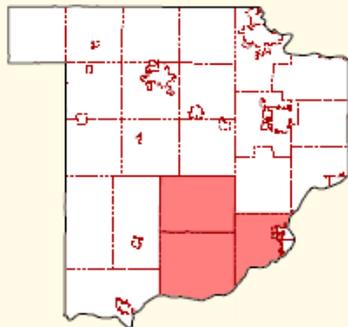
Chloride

- Greater than 250 mg/l
 - No direct effects on health
 - Salty taste
 - Exceeds recommended level
- Greater than 10 mg/l may indicate human impact
- Less than 10 mg/l considered “natural” in much of WI
- **Sources:** Fertilizers, Septic Systems and Road Salt



Towns of Honey Creek, Troy and Prairie du Sac

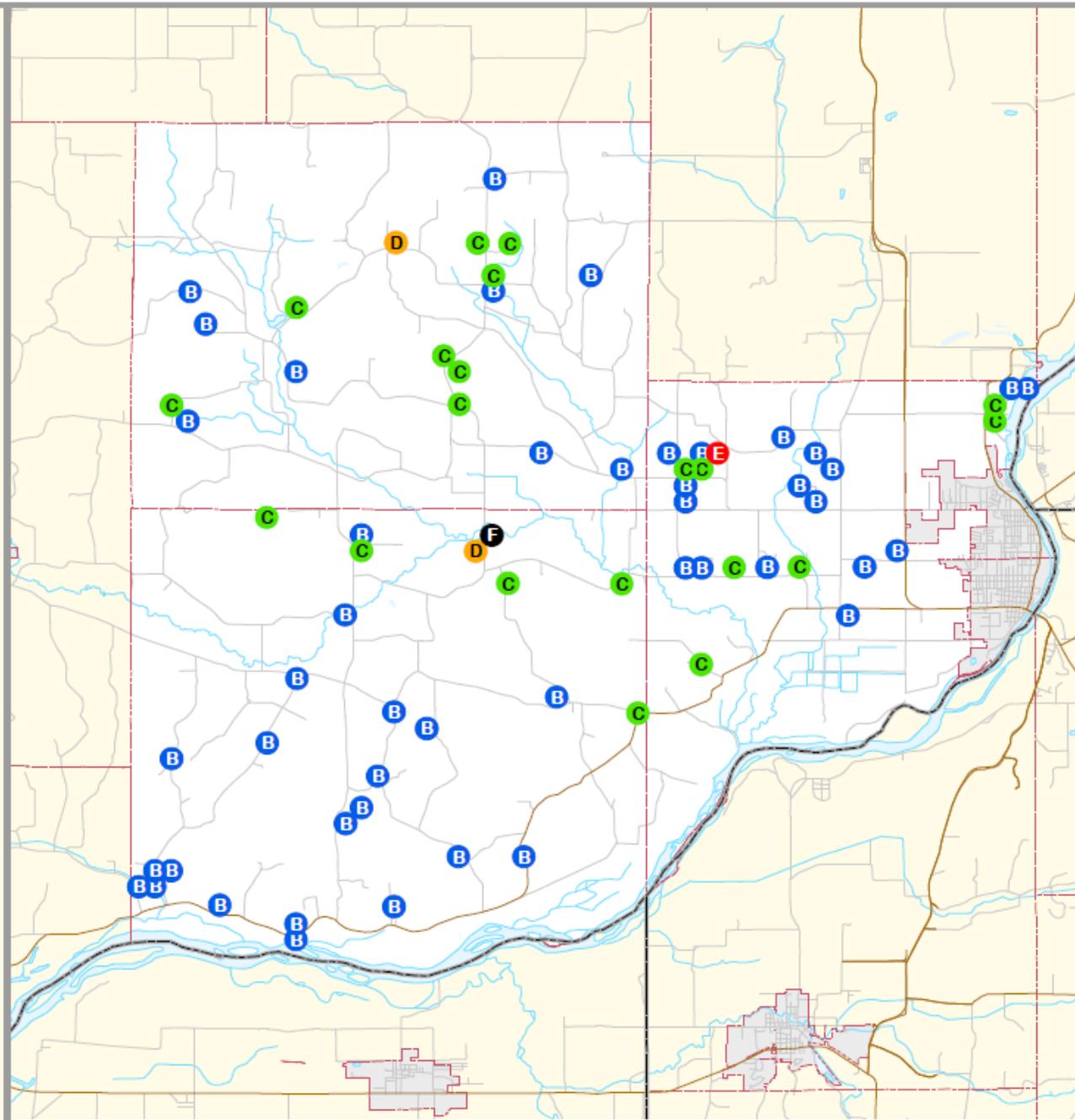
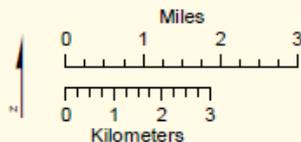
Sauk County, October 2021



CHLORIDE (ppm)

A None Detected	0	0 %
B ... 10	58	67 %
C 11 - 50	24	28 %
D 51 - 100	2	2 %
E 101 - 200	1	1 %
F 201 ...	1	1 %

Mapped value is the average for the 1/4 1/4 section
Treated samples not mapped



Center for Watershed Science and Education
College of Natural Resources
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

Test Important to Health

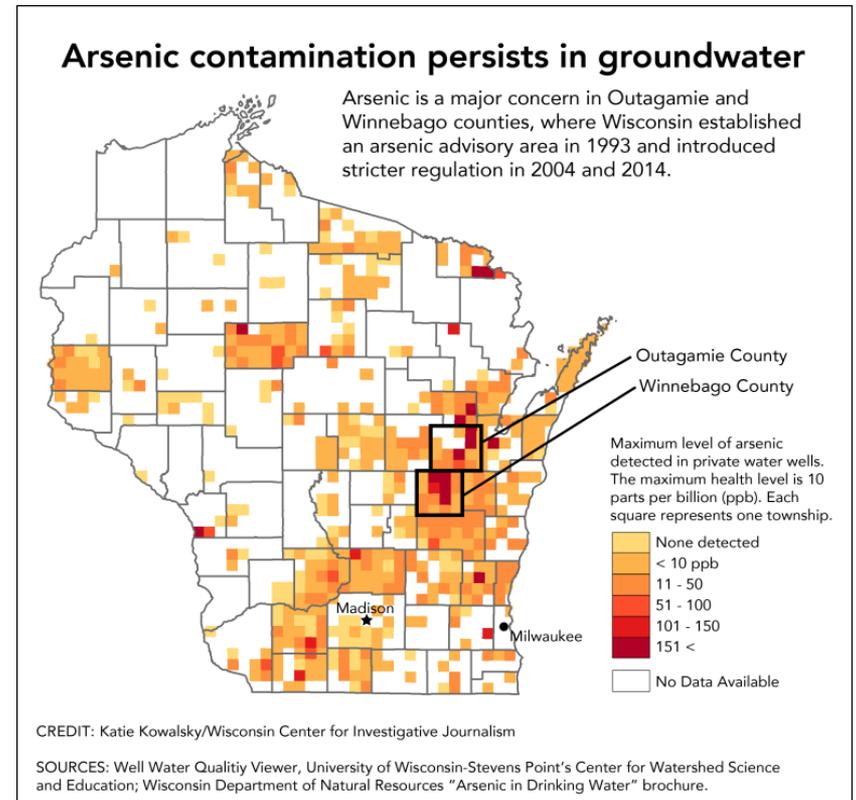
Arsenic

Sources: Naturally occurring in mineral deposits

Standard: 0.010 mg/L (10 ppb)

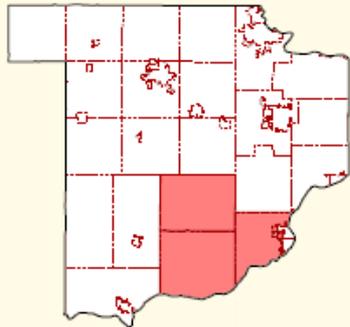
Health Effects:

- Increased risk of skin cancers as well as lung, liver, bladder, kidney, and colon cancers.
- Circulatory disorders
- Stomach pain, nausea, diarrhea
- Unusual skin pigmentation



Towns of Honey Creek, Troy and Prairie du Sac

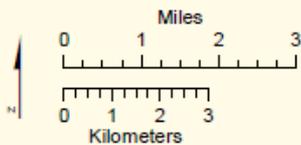
Sauk County, October 2021



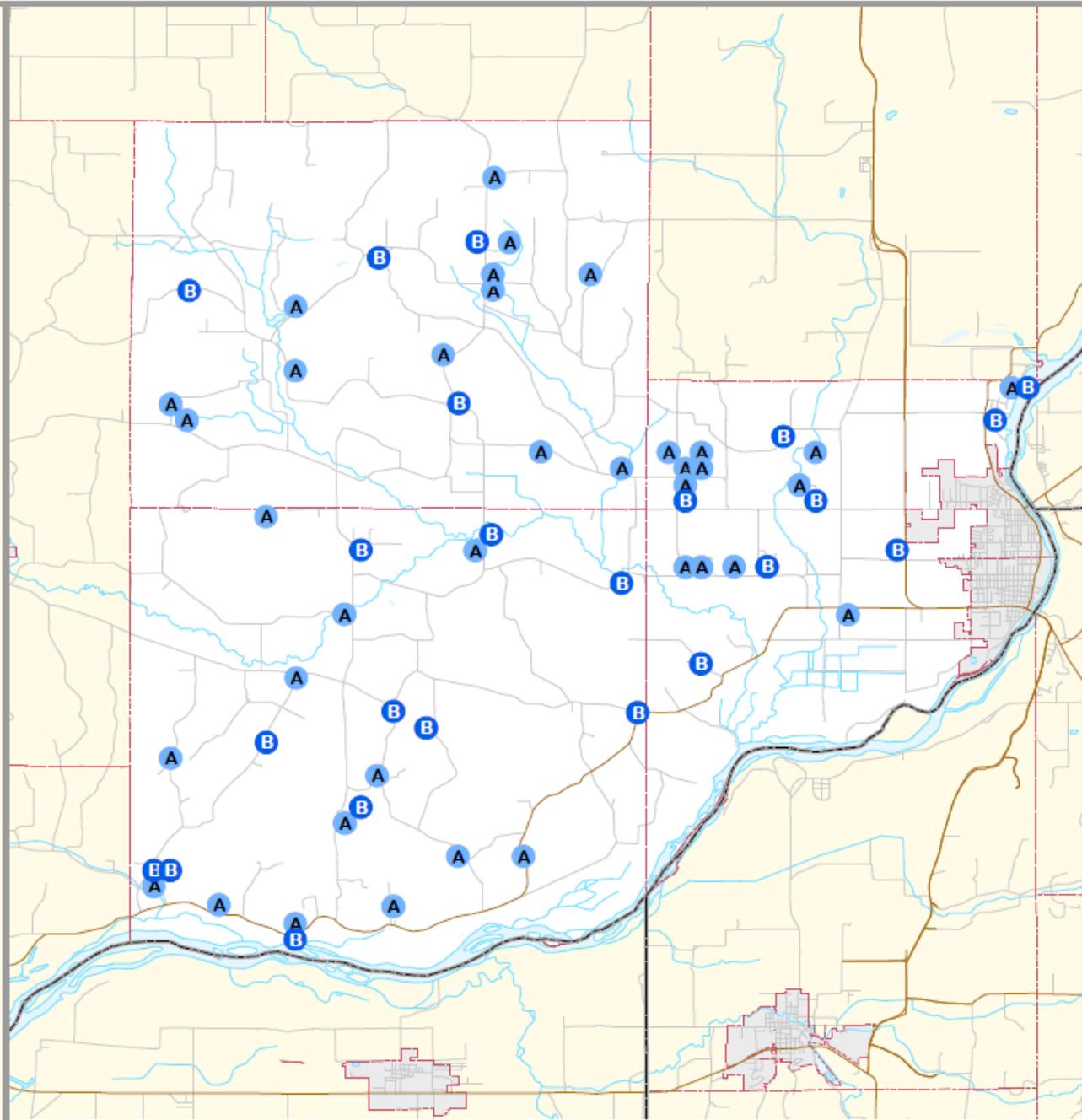
ARSENIC (mg/l)

A None Detected	46	65 %
B ... 0.010	25	35 %
C 0.011 - 0.050	0	0 %
D 0.051 - 0.100	0	0 %
E 0.101 - 0.150	0	0 %
F 0.151 ...	0	0 %

Mapped value is the average for the 1/4 1/4 section
Treated samples not mapped



Center for Watershed Science and Education
College of Natural Resources
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point



Tests for Aesthetic Problems

Iron

- Natural (rocks and soils)
- May benefit health
- Red and yellow stains on clothing, fixtures

- If iron present, increases potential for iron bacteria
 - Slime, odor, oily film



**Greater
than 0.3
mg/L**

**Less
than 0.3 mg/L**

**Aesthetic
problems
likely**

Test Important to Health

Copper

- **Sources:** Copper water pipes
- **Standard:** Less than 1.3 mg/L is suitable for drinking

Health Effects:

- Some copper is needed for good health
- Too much may cause problems:
 - Stomach cramps, diarrhea,
 - vomiting, nausea
 - Formula intolerance in infants



Test Important to Health

Lead

Sources: Lead solder joining copper pipes (pre-1985) or brass fixtures

Standard: 0.015 mg/L (15 ppb)

Health Effects:

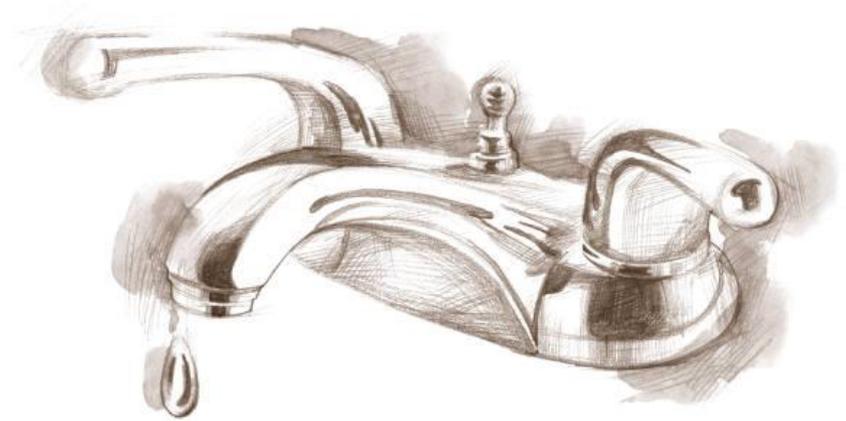
- Young children, infants and unborn children are particularly vulnerable.
- Lead may damage the brain, kidneys, nervous system, red blood cells, reproductive system.



Lead and Copper

Solutions:

- Allow water to run for a minute or two before using for drinking or cooking
or
- Use a treatment device, but generally not necessary



Pesticides in Drinking Water

- Pesticides include: insecticides, herbicides, fungicides and other substances used to control pests.
- Health standards usually only account for parent compound.
- Parent compounds breakdown over time.
- Little research into health effects from the combination of chemicals..
- **Most frequently detected pesticides in Wisconsin:**
 - Alachlor* and its chemical breakdown products
 - Metolachlor and its chemical breakdown products
 - Atrazine** and its chemical breakdown products
 - Metribuzin
 - Cyanazine and its chemical breakdown products.



Tests Important to Health

DACT Screen

Sources: Triazine pesticides (mainly atrazine used on corn crops)

DACT Screen: Only measures the diaminochlorotriazine (DACT) residue levels of triazine type pesticides (atrazine, simazine, propazine, cyanazine, etc)

Specific to diaminochlorotriazine (DACT), does not account for parent compound or other breakdown components

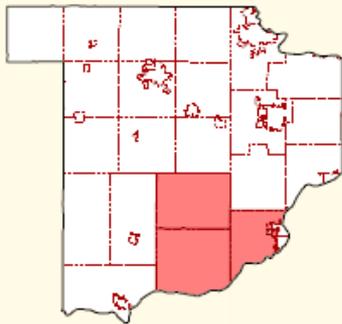
Drinking water limit:

- **3 ppb of total atrazine** (*atrazine + the 3 breakdown components*)



Towns of Honey Creek, Troy and Prairie du Sac

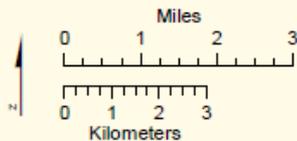
Sauk County, October 2021



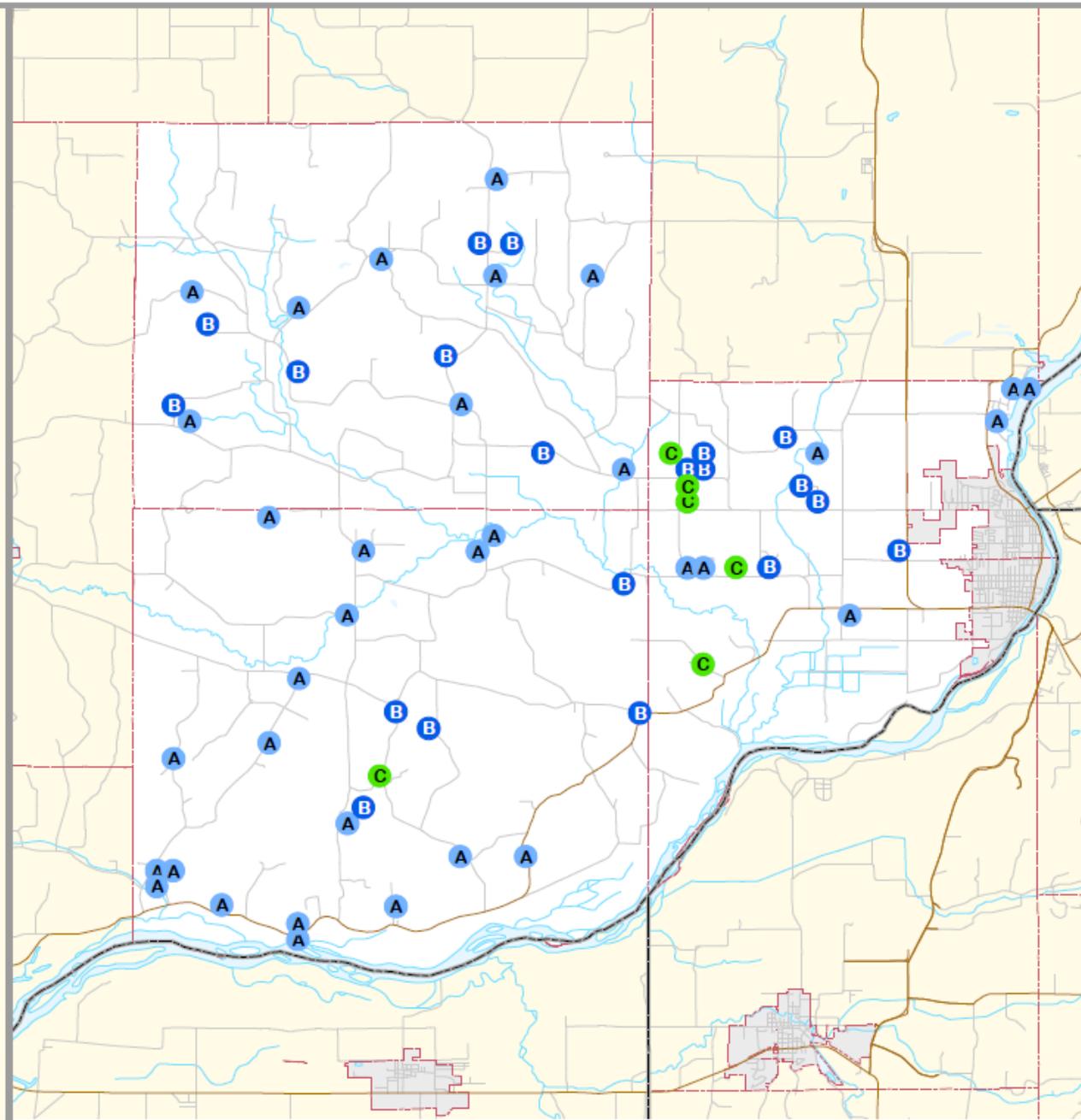
DACT (ug/l)

A None Detected	44	63 %
B ... 0.3	20	29 %
C 0.4 - 1.0	6	9 %
D 1.1 - 2.0	0	0 %
E 2.1 - 3.0	0	0 %
F 3.1 ...	0	0 %

Mapped value is the maximum for the 1/4 1/4 section
Treated samples not mapped



Center for Watershed Science and Education
College of Natural Resources
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

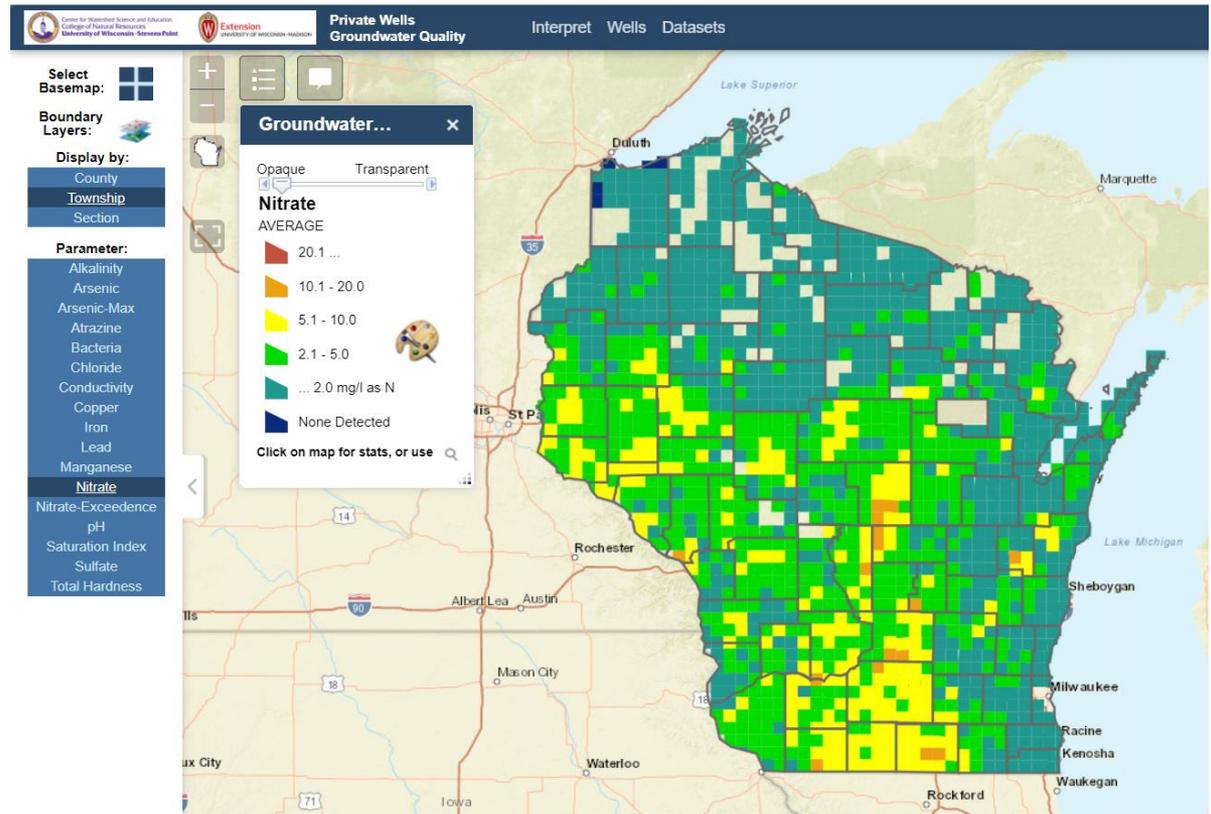


Where do you go from here: Recommended next steps

- Test well annually for bacteria, or if water changes color or clarity.
- Consider testing annually for nitrate, particularly if your levels are approaching 10 mg/L.
- If your nitrate level was greater than 5 mg/L consider testing for pesticides
- If you haven't checked for arsenic consider testing.

WI Well Water Viewer

- Find out more about well water quality in your area
- Interactive online dashboard

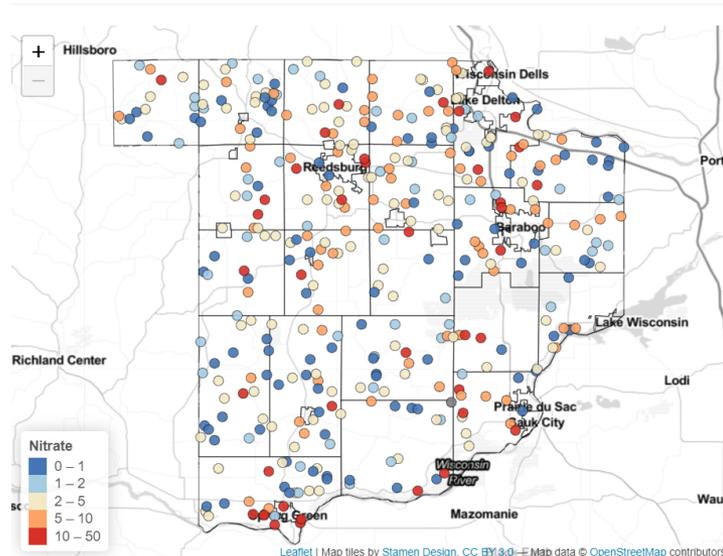


Sauk County Well Water Quality Index

- 300-400 wells tested annually for 5 years
- Investigate trends and variability in quality

Sauk County Well Water Monitoring Project

Map Type: Individual Wells
Year: 2020 (Year 2)
Variable: Nitrate-Nitrogen



ABOUT the Project LEARN about Tests EXPLORE project data

Individual Wells Municipality County-wide

Investigate Water Quality by Individual Well

One of the major goals of the project is to understand variability in well water quality over time. By sampling the same wells annually, we can better understand whether water quality is different from one year to the next or relatively similar. If water quality is different, we can make assessments of whether those differences constitute an increasing or decreasing trend.

Well Water Project IDs have been assigned specifically for this project. If you are a participant and know your well's Project ID, you can select or enter from the drop-down menu. Otherwise if you are interested in learning about a particular point on the map, simply click on the point and enter that Project ID into the drop down menu. In order to maintain anonymity, Project IDs have only been shared with project participants for their individual well.

Select or enter a Project ID number:

80198



Thanks to you and the following for helping sponsor this program:

- Town of Honey Creek
- Town of Prairie du Sac
 - Town of Troy
- Extension Sauk County
- Sauk County Land Resources and Environment

Contact Info:

Kevin Masarik

Center for Watershed Science and Education

800 Reserve St.

Stevens Point, WI 54481

715-346-4276

kmasarik@uwsp.edu

www.uwsp.edu/cnr/watersheds



Center for Watershed Science and Education
College of Natural Resources
University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON