Clean Water Council Meeting Agenda
Monday, April 21, 2025
9:00 a.m. to 2 p.m.

IN PERSON at MPCA offices in St. Paul with Webex Available (Hybrid Meeting)

9:00 Regular Clean Water Council Business

- **(INFORMATION ITEM)** Introductions
- **(ACTION ITEM)** Agenda - comments/additions and approve agenda
- **(ACTION ITEM)** Meeting Minutes - comments/additions and approve meeting minutes
- **(INFORMATION ITEM**) Chair, Committee, and Council Staff update
    - Policy Committee Update
    - Budget and Outcomes Committee Update
    - Staff update
    - New Administrator

"A conflict of interest, whether actual, potential, or perceived, occurs when someone in a position of trust has competing professional or personal interests, and these competing interests make it difficult to fulfill professional duties impartially. At this time, members are requested to declare conflicts of interest they may have regarding today's business. Any member who declares an actual conflict of interest must not vote on that agenda item. All actual, potential, and perceived conflicts of interest will be announced to the board by members or staff before any vote."

9:45 (INFORMATION ITEM) Legislative Update on Clean Water Fund Recommendations

10:00 (INFORMATION ITEM) Presentation on Drinking Water Outcomes

- Tannie Eshenaur & Frieda VanQualen, Minnesota Department of Health

10:45 Break

11:00 (INFORMATION ITEM) Olmsted County Soil Health and Drinking Water Source Protection

- Skip Langer, Olmsted County Soil and Water Conservation District

11:45 (DISCUSSION ITEM) How Olmsted County initiative fits in with existing programs

- Agency staff & Council

12:00 Lunch

12:30 (DISCUSSION ITEM) Contingency Plans for Potential Lower Revenue in the Clean Water Fund

1:45 Public Comment

2:00 Adjourn

Steering Committee Meets Directly After Adjournment

Clean Water Council
March 17, 2025, Meeting Summary

Members present: John Barten (Chair), Steve Besser, Eunie Biel, Rich Biske (Vice Chair), Dick Brainerd, Gail Cederberg, Steve Christenson, Warren Formo, Brad Gausman, Rep. Steve Jacob, Justin Hanson, Holly Hatlewick, Annie Knight, Chris Meyer, Fran Miron, Jason Moeckel, Peter Schwagerl, Glenn Skuta, Marcie Weinandt, and Jessica Wilson.
Members absent: Tannie Eshenaur, Kelly Gribauval-Hite, Peter Kjeseth, Ole Olmanson, Jeff Peterson, Sen. Nicole Mitchell, Rep. Kristi Pursell, and Sen. Nathan Wesenberg.
Others attending: Frieda Van Qualen (MDH), John Bilotta (UMN), Paul Gardner (CWC), Brianna Frisch (MPCA), Joel Larson (UMN), Jen Kader (Met Council), Sophia Wilson (MDH), Sheila Vanney (MASWCD), April Swenby (Sand River Watershed District), David Petry (Rice Creek Watershed District), Brad Jordahl Redlin (MDA), Raj Mann (MDA), Margaret Wagner (MDA), Trevor Russell (Friends of the Mississippi River), Stephanie Hatzenbihler (Stearns County SWCD), Julie Westerlund (BWSR), Cameron Gaspard (BWSR), Jeff Berg (MDA), Jim Stark (SWMP), Marcey Westrick (BWSR), Ryan Hughes (BWSR), Judy Sventek (Met Council)
To watch the Webex video recording of this meeting, please go to https://www.pca.state.mn.us/clean-water-council/meetings, or contact Brianna Frisch.

Regular Clean Water Council Business

- Introductions
- Motion to approve the March 17th meeting agenda by Dick Brainerd, seconded by Chris Meyer. Motion carries unanimously.
- Motion to approve the February 24th meeting summary by Steve Christenson, seconded by Marcie Weinandt. Motion carries unanimously.
- Chair, Committee, and Council Staff update
  - Policy Committee Update
  - Budget and Outcomes Committee Update
  - Staff update
    - Field Tour choice for September will be the Upper Mississippi Headwaters to visit. Motion by Steve Christenson, seconded by Dick Brainerd. Motion carries unanimously.
    - Please complete new conflict of interest form for 2025. Please return to staff.

Budget Forecast & Adjustments to CWF Recommendations *(Webex 00:47:30)*

- There are three documents in the meeting packet on this item: The information document from Minnesota Management and Business (MMB), the memo regarding MMB's information document, and a spreadsheet on the proposed reductions.
- The November forecast was $310,752,000 in Clean Water Funds (CWFs). The February forecast released on March 6th revealed a shortfall of $6.826 million to $303 million.
  - Additions:
    - Sales taxes are estimated to increase in the CWFs by $1,684,000.
    - The reserve carryover is estimated to be $36,000.
    - Interest earnings are estimated at $2,030,000.
    - These additions total $3,750,000.
  - Subtractions:
    - An additional set aside for the require five percent reserve at $101,000.
    - Correction for the lottery in lieu taxes clawed back to general fund at $10,475,000.
  - The Lottery Taxes Correction:
    - The Minnesota Department of Revenue (DOR) recently discovered an error in the distribution of lottery gross receipts tax revenue from FY 2010 through FY 2024. This error resulted in Minnesota's four legacy funds receiving $31.7 million in sales tax revenue that should have been distributed to the general fund over this 15-year period.
    - Minnesota has a sales tax rate of 6.875%, with 6.5% attributable to the general fund and 0.375% attributable to the Legacy funds. Lottery tickets are subject to a 6.5% gross receipts tax in lieu of these

sales taxes. However, the Department of Revenue incorrectly interpreted the lottery revenues as sales tax revenues, rather than gross receipts tax revenues, resulting in the agency distributing the funds as if the additional 0.375% applied. As a result, $31.7 million was erroneously deposited into the four legacy funds over the past fifteen years.
    - This means that MMB needs to deduct roughly one-third of $31.7 million from the Legacy funds, or $10,475,000 from the Clean Water Fund.
  - The recommendation:
    - The Budget & Outcomes Committee (BOC) made some initial recommendations for meeting this lower figure and then asked the Interagency Coordination Team (ICT) for its expert opinion on how to meet the gap. The result is the attached spreadsheet for your consideration.
    - The BOC proposed reductions in five programs (Culverts, Watershed Based Implementation Funding (WBIF), Soil Health, Stormwater Research, and Forever Green Initiative). These cuts were at $5,652,000, with a remaining $1,174,000 left to cut. This was for the state agencies to consider. The BOC did not want to impact staffing. The state agencies came up with the remaining cuts (these are included in the meeting packet as well).
  - There is a FY26 to FY27 Shift: The Council makes recommendations for the entire biennium. The ICT works with Minnesota Management and Budget to split those recommendations among the two years of the biennium. MMB informed us that instead of an even 50/50 split between years that some of these requests would have to be shifted to FY27 for cash flow purposes. This is the "shift" in the attached spreadsheet.
  - This is happening very quickly, so the Legislature wants to hear from the Council soon.

Questions/Comments/Discussion:

- John Barten: Minnesota Environmental Partnership expressed their concern about Forever Green.
- Steve Christenson: What we have in our packet is a good proposal. First, thank you to MMB for restoring the funds back in a timely way to the correct accounts. We should feel good about that even though it hurts us in the short term. Second, this still aligns with the Council's Strategic Plan. Third, I want to talk about sustainable aviation fuel and cover crops. These are balanced well, investing in new crops and implementing the new crops. I feel good about this budget and support it.
- Gail Cederberg: The amount of discussion and linking together of projects, helps to set the stage. I was concerned about staffing. It is good to hear we are not losing people. I support the process, the communication, and that we set the stage for the next budget process.
- Marcie Weinandt: Thank you to the BOC. I am at the point of acceptance for this recommendation.
- Chris Meyer: Thank you for those who worked on it. I was concerned about Forever Green Initiative, but it was just a decrease. I accept these recommendations.

Public Comments on Revised Recommendations *(Webex 01:24:00)*

- Trevor Russell, Friends of the Mississippi River: Thank you to the Council for their transparency in recommending these funds. The clean water goals are not attainable without widespread adoption of continuous living cover cropping systems. It reinforces the importance of investing in this system of change mentioned. We know integrating perennial and winter annual crops into existing systems helps hold soil in place and stops pollutants from leaching into our groundwater. It is good for soil, water, habitat, and pollinators. It is particularly good for groundwater. We know we need new solutions to address groundwater pollution from nitrates, especially in vulnerable areas like southeast Minnesota. Historically, for every dollar CWFs support, Forever Green Initiative (FGI) has secured an additional $5 dollars in complimentary funds. We think this is a great return on investment for CWFs. We are disappointed with the BOCs decision to cut $1 million from FGI for the next biennium. It is a 17 percent reduction from the current funding levels. We appreciate the current limitations of this Council. There is only so much the Council can do. We understand how you have arrived at this decision. We know it is hard to make predictions about the future. We request the Council consider prioritizing restoring the $1 million back to FGI in the next year if there are any surplus CWFs. That is a good approach. It is a really important time for these cropping systems and for Minnesota's farm economy. Thank you for all the work you are doing.

Continued Discussion:

- Margaret Wagner, Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA): The MDA is strong partners with FGI, and agree it is a big part of the solution.

- Gail Cederberg: If we receive funds back later, I hesitate to automatically restore the last items cut. There is a lot going on at the federal landscape and a lot of uncertainty. The money may need to go someplace else.
- Steve Christenson: We could make a deeper cut to the expanded ag weather station network and shift to Forever Green. We talked about it at the BOC but rejected it. I wanted to raise that option.
    - Steve Besser: Delaying it could increase costs later.
    - Margaret Wanger, MDA: This is the last request for weather stations to complete the network. A $200,000 reduction would be appropriate. We have other funding for maintenance and operation.
    - Rich Biske: How are people using the network? What are the user rates? *Answer:* We just have the demand for the install. We can back to you on the use. It helps the local scheduling of BMPS and water use, knowing soil temperatures. Farmers are volunteering to host these stations.
    - Brad Gausman: Thank you to Steve Christenson for raising this topic. If we have to make a decision, I would rather see the funds go to FGI than the weather stations. Are there other ways to pay for the stations. Is the info for the farmers free? Is there a money-making part? *Answer:* No, it is a public resource. It is free. Anyone can access and download that information.
- Dick Brainerd: We agree that FGI is a great program. The BOC has spent a lot of time going over these programs. However, I would like to see the weather stations complete.
- Marcie Weinandt: If it were a million, I would suggest splitting it and putting half in the WBIF.
- Holly Hatlewick: The BOC crunched these numbers, and then brought it to the Interagency Coordination Team (ICT). We asked the ICT to think about scalability when it came to staffing and continuity. FGI is fantastic. If they are saying it is scalable, let's trust that number, and revisit it if funds become available.

Vote on Revised Clean Water Recommendations *(Webex 01:45:00)*

- Steve Besser: I motion to approve the ICT budget recommendations. If surplus funds become available, and there are no other emergencies at the time, that it would go back into WBIF and FGI. Seconded by John Barten, with a friendly amendment to specify the recommendations list provided by the ICT included in the meeting packet. Amendment accepted. Motion unanimously approved.

Proposed Adoption of a Public Engagement Strategy & Conference Abstract *(Webex 01:48:00)*

- Jessica Wilson: During the budget process, we put together our budget proposal first, and then sent it out to the public at the end of the process. We have a public engagement plan draft for proactive input next time.
- This draft was presented at the recent policy committee. We received input from those members. Additions and edits have been made. We now are bringing it to the full Council for review and feedback.
- Today's comments with be reviewed and updated. We will prepare an abstract for the Water Resources Conference, which is due at the end of the month. They will present again to the policy committee on March 28th. At the next full Council meeting on April 21st will be a final review and vote.
- As part of the plan, they would review it again in January of 2026, as they start the budget year process again.

Questions/Comments/Discussion:

- Holly Hatlewick: This captures our conversations well and is easy to follow. I appreciate this work.
- Gail Cederberg: All the people who receive funding, should know what they need ahead of time and what they need to communicate ahead of time as well. This helps to lay it out and involve the stakeholder more.
- Brad Gausman: On page 2 to 3, would it be appropriate to move the ICT structure and process from "decisions already made" to "other considerations"? I learned a lot of the structure and purpose of the ICT. I don't think it fits in as well with the others. I would place it in the other consideration, because it is with purpose and intention, but not in with the decisions already made category.
- Annie Knight: When I think about outreach and engaging the public. I am thinking about 2034. People will likely ask if Minnesota's water quality is better, and if the funds were used appropriately. I think we can confidently answer yes to both of those with this document. I like that it is a living and working document. I think the water resources abstract is great. Can the ad hoc group come to the BOC meeting because it is measuring outcomes and relating to how we connect with the public? It would be good to have some concrete and formalized input from not just the Council, but also the public.
- Frieda Van Qualen, Minnesota Department of Health (MDH): Could you add local public health officials?

- Steve Christenson: I look forward to connecting at a future BOC meeting. How much does this cost? Are staff needed to do this work? From the corporate world, we would have two or three people working on this task.
- Jessica Wilson: We will submit this to the Water Resources Conference. We can prepare for a session to engage with folks and collect themes. Are we comfortable submitting the session idea? There is no guarantee it is selected, but I feel like it might be. It is a good candidate option.
- Rich Biske: I liked it when the large water users issue came up. Freshwater was ready, submitted the issues and provided solutions that the Council could do. Could we set an expectation to hear others who do not receive CWFs, to be open to invite that kind of information year-round?
- Updates will be incorporated, and the latest version will be reviewed at the next full Council meeting.

Water Quality Outcomes Discussion, by Kim Laing, Surface Water Monitoring Manager (MPCA) and Glenn Skuta, CWC Member and Watershed Division Director (MPCA) *(Webex 02:40:00)*

- Water quality outcomes keep coming up at Council meetings. Agencies have collected a lot of data over a decade and a half. We can start to see statistical trends after two cycles of intensive watershed management. We also want to provide data in a slightly different approach since we often get too detailed too soon. We are looking at first impressions, what makes sense, and what is helpful. It can help inform communication.
- Preview of Questions:
  - What was your first reaction?
  - What left an impression?
  - What questions do these raise for you?
  - What are your thoughts? What do you take away from these?
  - What do you want to know more about?
  - What would you like to see differently?
  - What would make it easier to view?
- The nine indicators:
  - Streams and rivers – macroinvertebrate
  - Streams and rivers – fish
  - Rivers – Nitrate
  - Rivers – Total Phosphorus
  - Lakes – clarity (and zebra mussel impact on lake clarity)
  - Rivers – Total Suspended Solids (TSS)
  - Streams and rivers – clarity
  - Delisted waters
- Graphics (see meeting packet for presentation graphics)
  - Stream and River Macroinvertebrate Community Condition Change between Intensive Water Monitoring (IWM) Cycle 1 and Cycle 2, map and bar graphics.
    - No watersheds saw an actual decline. Blue is improvement, gray is no change, and dark grey has not been evaluated yet.
    - Dick Brainerd: Comments about seeing colors on the map.
  - Stream and River Fish Community Condition Change Between IWM Cycle 1 and Cycle 2.
    - The green is a decline, blue is an improvement, light gray is no change, and dark gray is not evaluated.
  - Rivers – Nitrate Trends in Concentration (numbers indicates how many WPLMN sites are reporting that trend (2008-2022)
    - Five sites are increasing (green triangle), two sites are decreasing (dark blue triangle) and forty-five sites that have no trend detected (white circle).
  - Rivers – Total Phosphorus Trends in Concentration. The number indicates how many WPLMN sites are reporting that trends (2008-2022).
    - Decreasing number is getting better. There are three increasing (green triangle), nineteen decreasing (dark blue triangle), and thirty-nine sites are reporting that no trend is detected (white circle).
  - Lakes – Clarity Trends
    - They can calculate if the lake is improving or declining in clarity. Green triangles are improving, red triangles are degrading, yellow dots are no improvement, and gray dots have no trend.
    - No change is data reporting no change. No trend can have data going up and down with no trend.

        - Brad Gausman: Does no trend indicate an acceptable state? Is it not changing, but with no trend? *Response:* We will come back to it, but it may lead us down a rabbit hole. You can be trending in a great direction having started from a horrible place, and still be in a no trend. The bar graph gives you the subtotals, while the map gives you an idea of where the locations are across the state.
    - Lakes – Clarity trends, Zebra Mussels Impacts
        - Twenty percent does not have zebra mussels, and eleven percent have zebra mussels (indicated by the star). We see them in all categories.
    - Rivers – Total Suspended Solids Trends in Concentration.
        - Four that are decreasing (getting worse), two are increasing, and 52 have no trend detected.
    - Streams and River – Clarity Trends
        - A whole section called "too clear for trends" will be added with the next update. About 25 percent are improving in clarity, 14 percent declining in clarity, five percent are no change (the change has stayed static), 15 percent that have no trend (its too variable), and 41 percent that are too clear for a trend.
    - Delisted Waters Statewide through the 2024 Impaired Waters List
        - The colors should be changed because they are too close.
- Discussion of Questions:
    - Jessica Wilson: I thought this was on brand for the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), and it was very technical. It felt a little intense. Increasing and decreasing, takes a second to figure out if those are good or bad each time. It was hard to tell if things were improving or worsening. Perhaps a color change of red and green (even if up or down) would help identify if something is good or bad quicker for the viewer. Also, terms of "better" or "worse" may be helpful. You could also talk about why things are getting better, to highlight the narrative on a few items. It may be complicated and hard, but it would provide more narrative. You don't know what conclusions people may jump too. Also, people often ask, "is it safe?" and that might be a way to share the information too.
    - Steve Besser: Is there some way to show the different biomes (forests, prairie, etc.).
    - Steve Besser: No trend was not informative, so perhaps "unchanged". *Response:* For no trend, the data is too variable. No change is flat and no variability throughout the data set (no increases or decreases).
    - Steve Christenson: I like seeing the items that are getting better. There are four positive things that are getting better. I thought no trend meant no data versus scattered data. Is water clarity a metric for swimmable? *Answer:* It is a proxy for aquatic recreation, closer to the phosphorus relationship. It is part of the lake eutrophication.
    - Chris Meyer: Where is groundwater? That is what I am interested in. I was surprised with zebra mussels, and that narrative was not as clear to me because I did not know if that was good or bad.
        - Kim Laing: Was it context? It is missing some of it. We were trying to go over concisely, because we didn't want to say too much. *Answer:* Yes.
    - Brad Gausman: There is a need for more information presenting the no trend data. People need to understand it. Fisheries consumption from lakes needs to be clear as "fishable". People think if I can't eat the fish in the water, that's a problem. If we view clean water as the ability to ingest things coming out of that water, that may be a way to communicate it. Fish consumption changes for different reasons.
    - Gail Cederberg: My first thought was how much data is present to make a trend. I am dubious when you talk about trends without some context. Statistics can lie, because you can make it say what you would like it to say. I agree if something is negative you should make it red. There is a lot on color theory that you could incorporate here. You should move away from the MPCA colors. People read left to right. The first thing you see are the maps and then the bars. So, what do you want people to look at first, because that should be what is listed first. When you want someone to remember something you need to say it three times, so there are some organizations communication strategies that you can use to point the viewers eye towards. Rethink general communication, there is a whole art on it.
    - Jason Moeckel: I wondered about land area instead of by watershed. Perhaps that could be a percentage. What is happening in a stream and river is happening in the lake. There are different size lakes. Certain lakes are more important for different individuals. Perhaps, across the board in some way would work better for most people to understand.
    - Paul Gardner: If I was cynical person about governance and water quality in southern Minnesota, I would assume seeing no trends in that part of the state would be wasting funds without having any progress.

Yet, there was progress in that part of the state. Something is working. I would be curious if there are some cross sections that you can attribute to restoration. It would be interesting to see something on the subwatershed scale. Where we spend money, trends generally change. *Response:* That analysis is going to take more thought, and I have been asking my modelers and other folks to try to tease some of that out. It is very complicated, but we are trying to get to that part.

- Rich Biske: The baseline condition would be good to see, so we know the starting point. Compare it to where it is now this next round. Some way to categorize it or bracket would be helpful. Also, impaired waters, to know what is included to know if we are making good progress on the different parts.
- Joel Larson: Did you have a chance to work with the field of science communication. It helps to make sense for people to understand high level trends, but also understand it is complicated. We might be able to connect with some folks at the university to connect on that part. Additionally, regarding audiences, there is some work from the Yale Climate Communication Group has done on segmenting audiences. That might be another approach. Theirs is a spectrum of difference ways people view climate change. There are different groups that they customize for the information.
- Frieda Von Qualen: If there is a way to make it clear, if someone walks away with nothing else from the chart, what is it you want them to walk away from. I think some of it depends on who your audience is.
- Annie Knight: Do we have a solid understanding of where we started, where the goal is, and where we are on that progress. That would be good to know too. *Answer:* It is dependent, we have water quality standards, we have the IBI for aquatic species. We are accounting by water bodies to see which ones are not achieving by goal. We have some maps that can share so much information, but it is something to digest. It is a struggle figure out what to show to get the information across. It is easier for one site, but for many sites it gets complicated fast.
- Rich Biske: This groups should be able to digest more, and it would be good to have more. It is good to see. I like seeing it from a watershed basis. Knowing the standard and breaking it down would be helpful. This is too much to the general public, but for this group, it would be good to have these foundational things, to see what the next ten years will look like. I am interested in the results. I want to know what the changes are from the initial baseline to the first cycle, from the first cycle to the next cycle.

- Additional Indicators – Performance Report
  - Chloride trends in the Twin Cities Metro Area (from Metropolitan Council)
    - About ninety-three percent are increasing in chloride in the percentage of metro rivers and streams, seven percent have no trend detected, and no percent are decreasing.
    - The Performance Report includes more data on this area, talking more about other it.
  - Clean Water Fund Roadmap
    - For Health Fish Stations, they started at 60.8 percent and now it is at 62.2 percent.
    - Percentage of Lakes Meeting Goal (using clarity and phosphorus levels)
  - Coming Soon: They will hit the ten-year length of data they need to complete this trend data.
    - Nutrient Reduction Strategy (public notice will begin this summer)
    - Nitrate Sensor Network
    - Watershed Pollutant Load Monitoring Network Subwatershed Trends
    - Continued Stream and River Biology change over time
    - Lake Biology change over time
  - Nutrient Reduction Strategy (NRS) Preview:
    - Twin Cities Area Stream Phosphorus Trends (Metropolitan Council)
    - Total phosphorus concentrations in major rivers in Twin Cities area, back to the late 1970s (Metropolitan Council)
    - Upper Aquifer Well Nitrate Trends (MPCA and MDA)
    - Wastewater Effluent Phosphorus Loads by Basin

No public comment

Adjournment *(Webex 04:04:12)*

How is our drinking water in Minnesota?

Sophia Walsh | Environmental Consultant, Water Policy Center

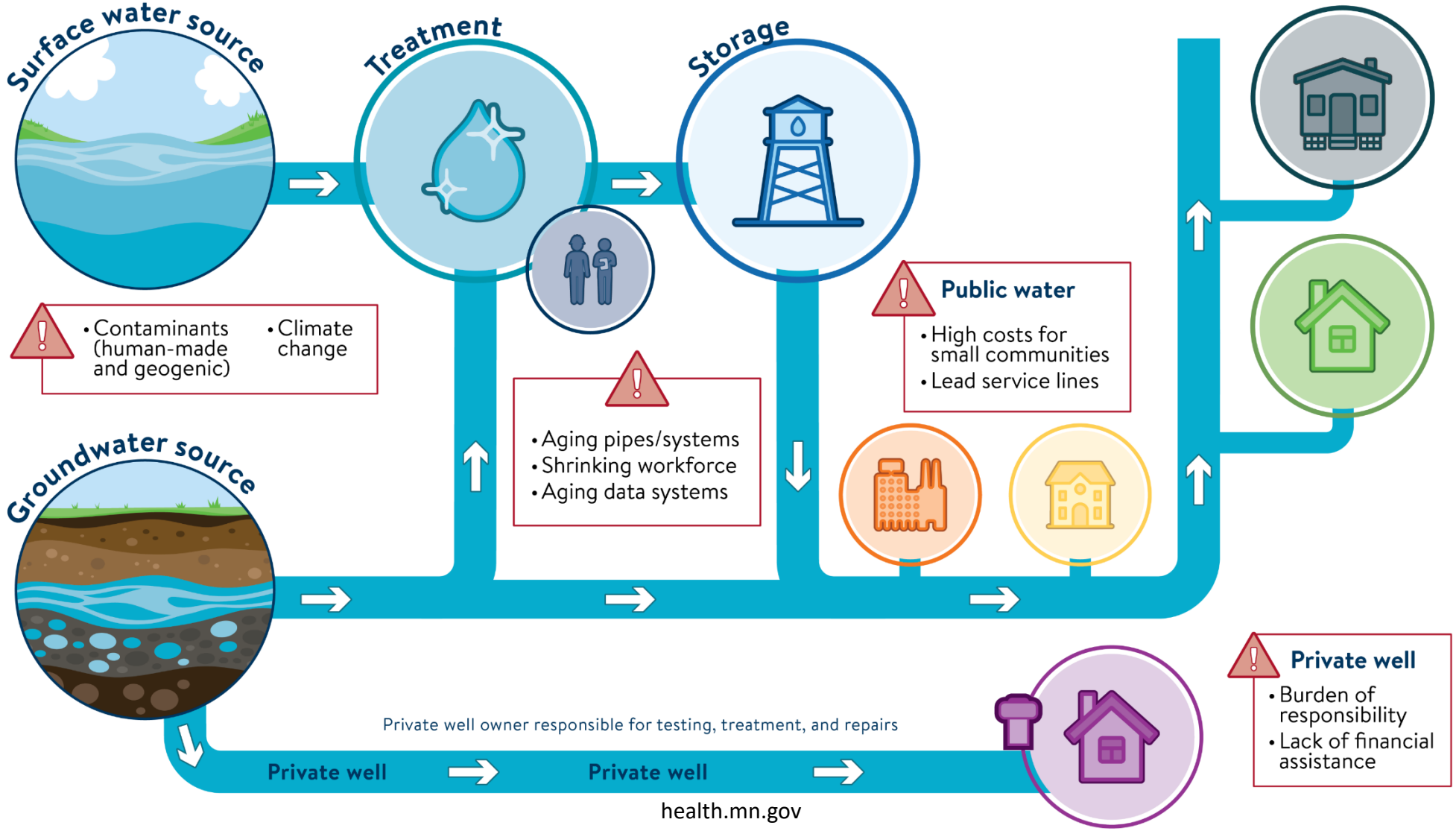
Alycia Overbo | Supervisor, Communications & Strategic Initiatives

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

CLEAN WATER LAND & LEGACY AMENDMENT

YOUR Clean Water Fund AT WORK

Protecting drinking water from source to tap



health.mn.gov

Core connections to the Clean Water Council Strategic Plan

Groundwater is clean and available

- **1: Protect and restore groundwater**
  - Groundwater Restoration and Protection Strategies (GRAPS)
  - Decreasing nitrate concentrations in public and private wells

Drinking water is safe for everyone, everywhere

- **1: Public water systems**
  - Source water protection plans
  - Groundwater Protection Rule
  - Protect groundwater in Drinking Water Supply Management Areas
  - Prevent and manage newly identified contaminant risks
  - Policy recommendations to accelerate Safe Drinking Water Act compliance
- 2. **Private wells**
  - Testing
  - Mitigation
  - Policy recommendations to support private well users

All Minnesotans value water and take actions to sustain and protect it.

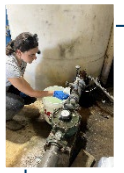
- Private well testing and mitigation
- Engage nontraditional audiences

Funding Sources

Protecting drinking water sources

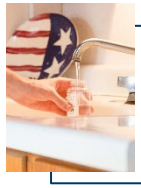
Safe Drinking Water Act monitoring

Drinking water treatment



Testing for emerging contaminants

Strategic initiatives



Private Well Testing

Private Well Inventory

Private Well Contaminant Mitigation

Private Well Outreach and Education

Questions to consider

- What is your first reaction?
- What left an impression?
- What questions do these raise for you?
- What are your thoughts? What do you take away from these?
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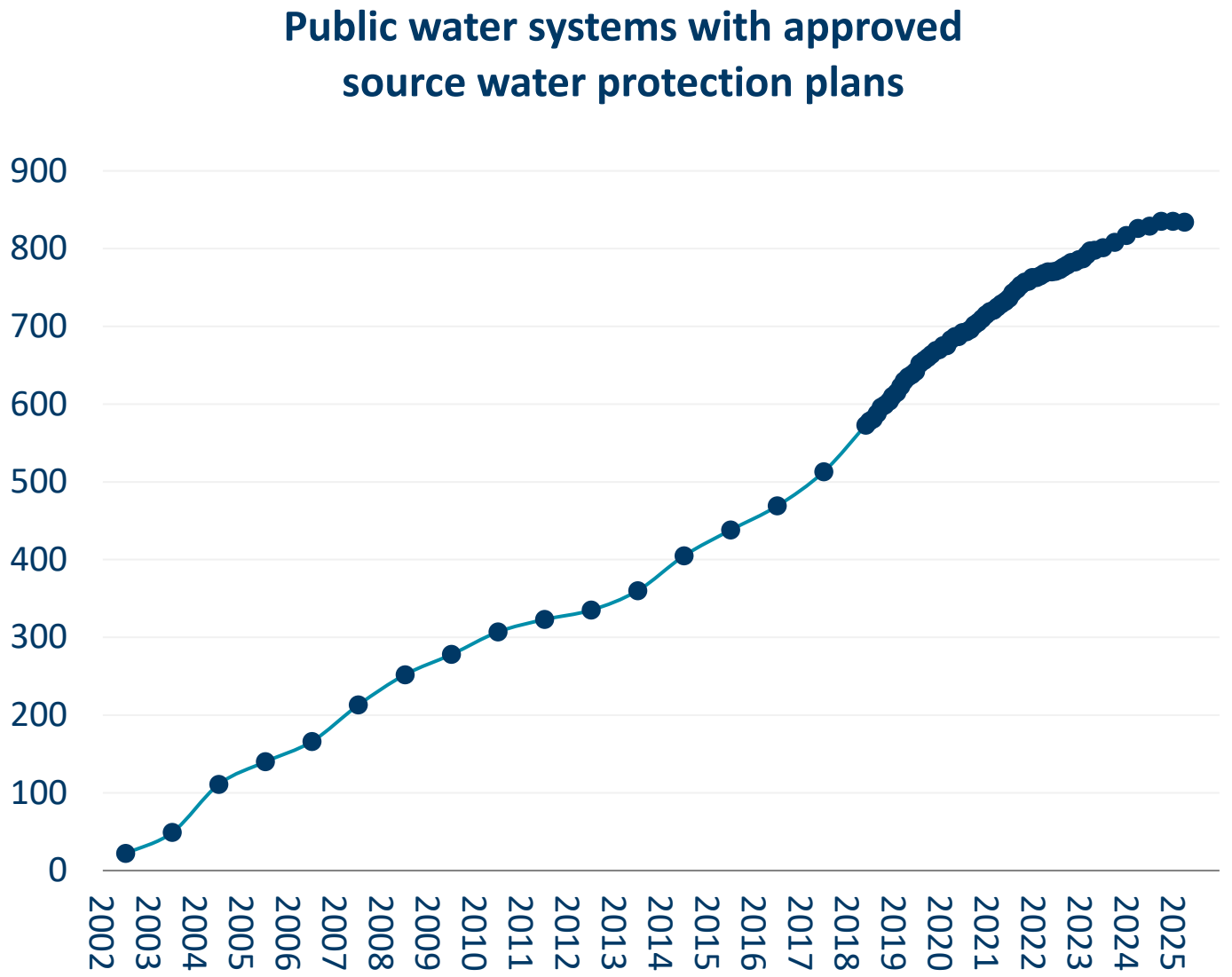
Public water systems:
Help develop source water protection plans for both groundwater and surface water systems



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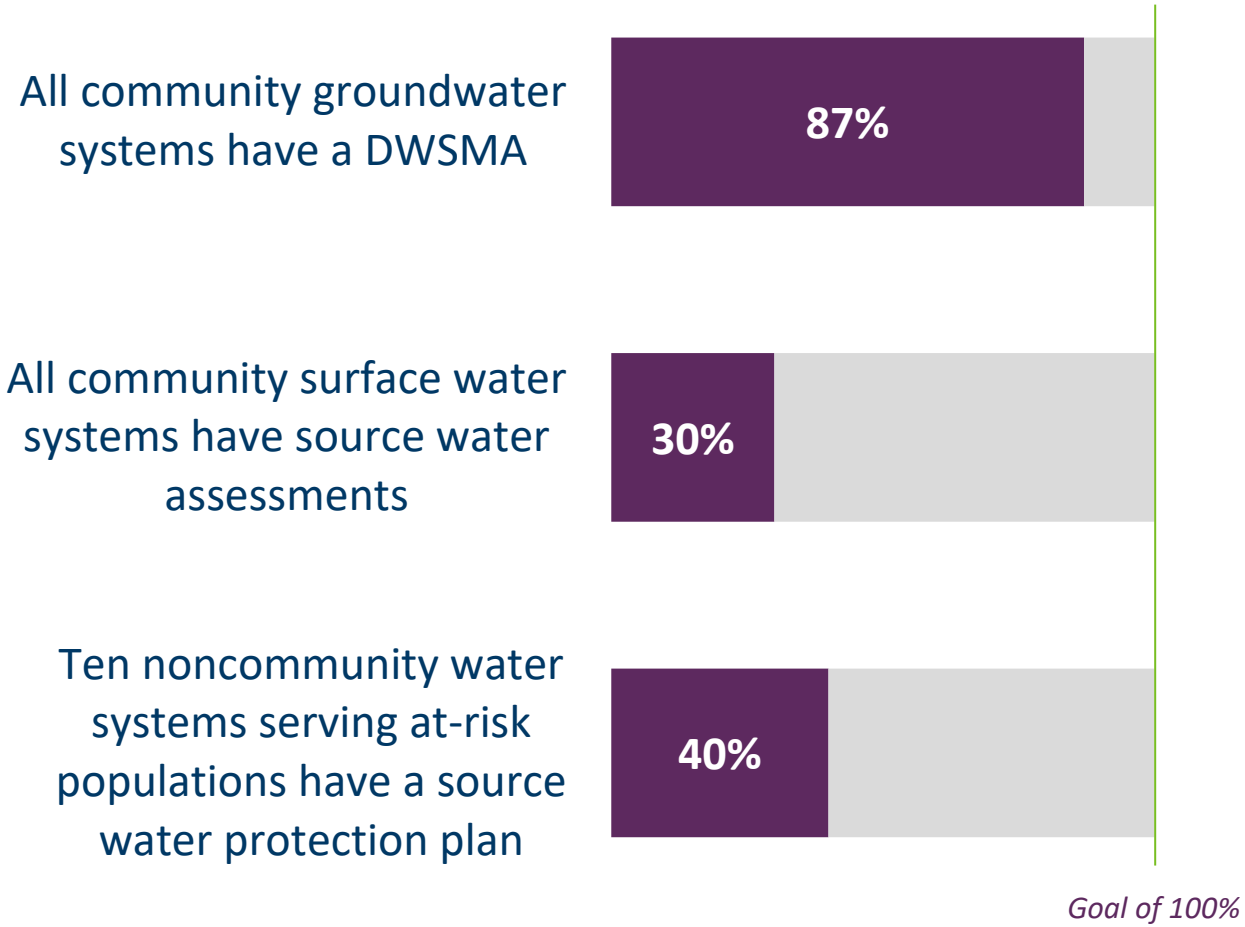
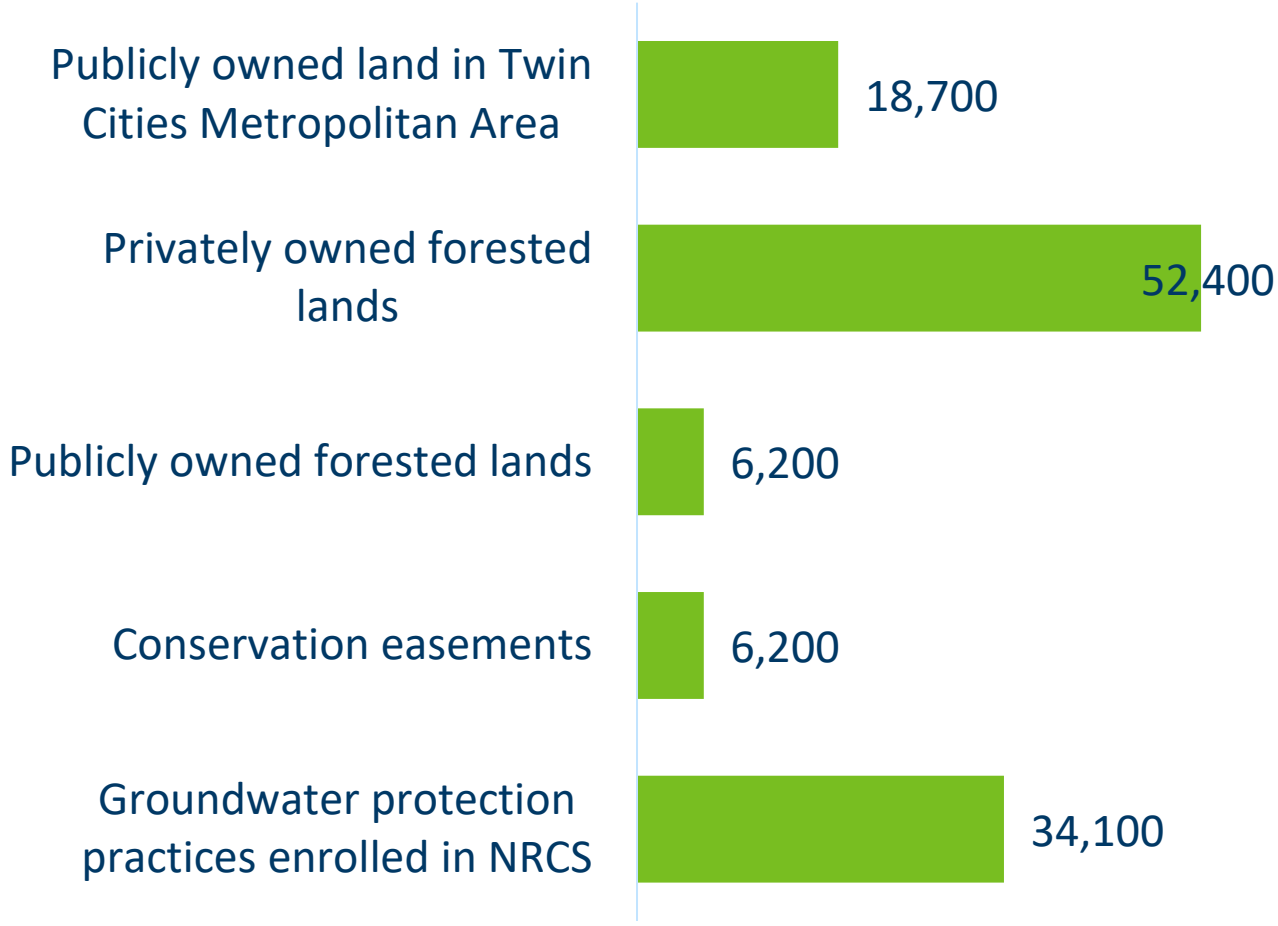


Public water systems: Provide a framework for protecting the approximately 400,000 acres of vulnerable land in DWSMAs statewide by 2034.

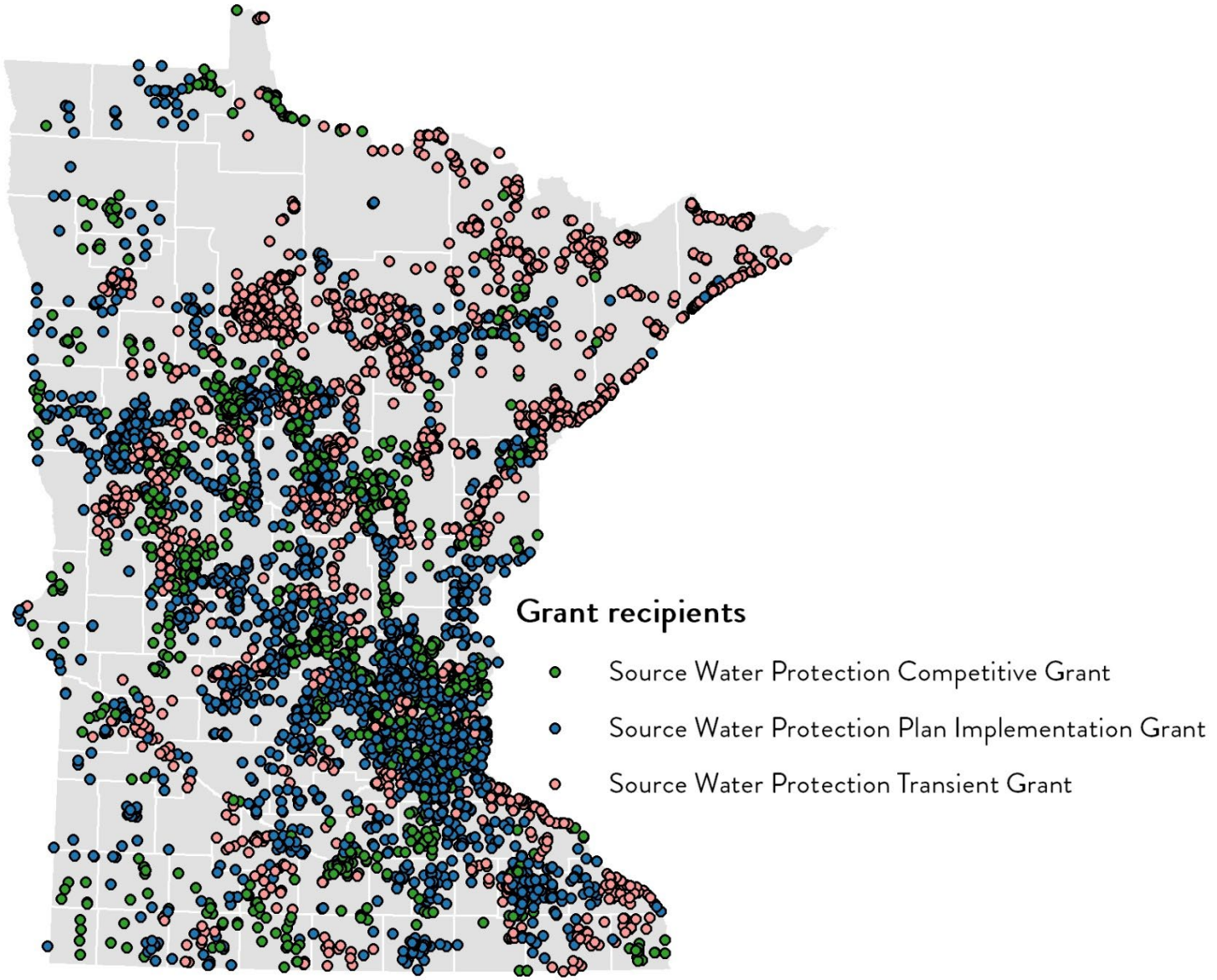
117,600 acres are protected, or the current land use does not present a risk



Public water systems:
Provide financial assistance for source water implementation activities.

Target

- Grants satisfy 50% of submitted proposals.



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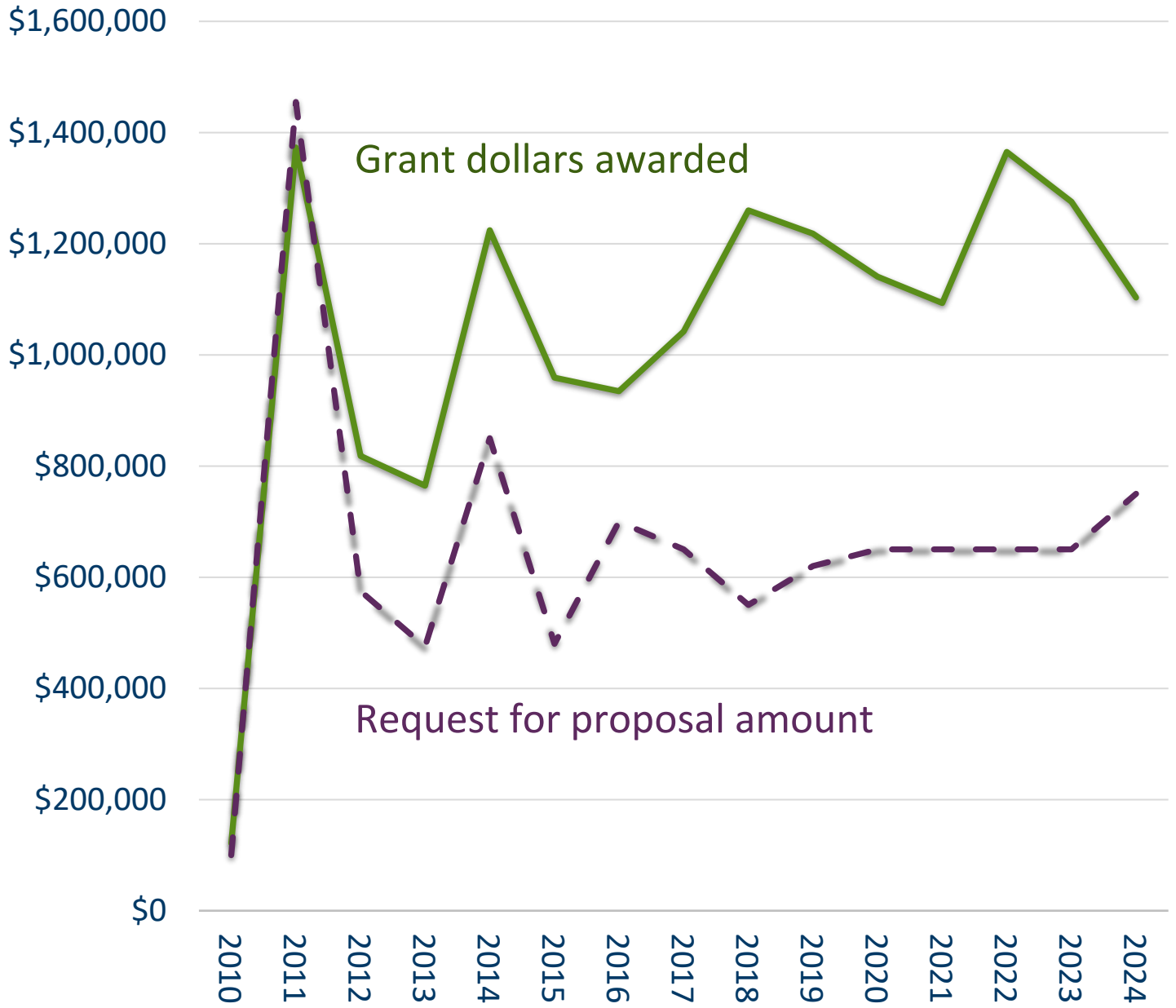
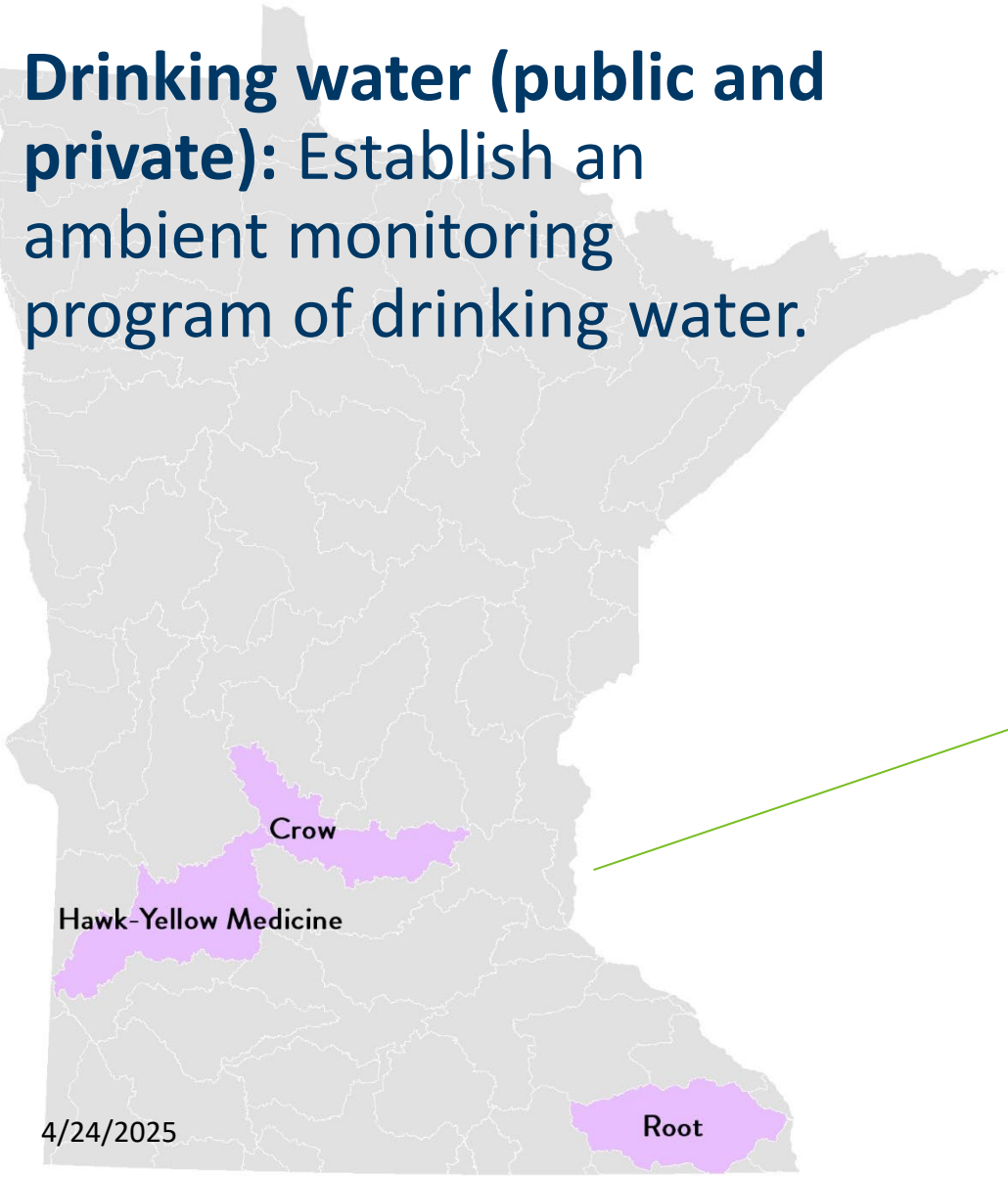


Drinking water (public and private): Establish an ambient monitoring program of drinking water.



Target

- Sample all HUC-8 watersheds in Minnesota.

2024 Status

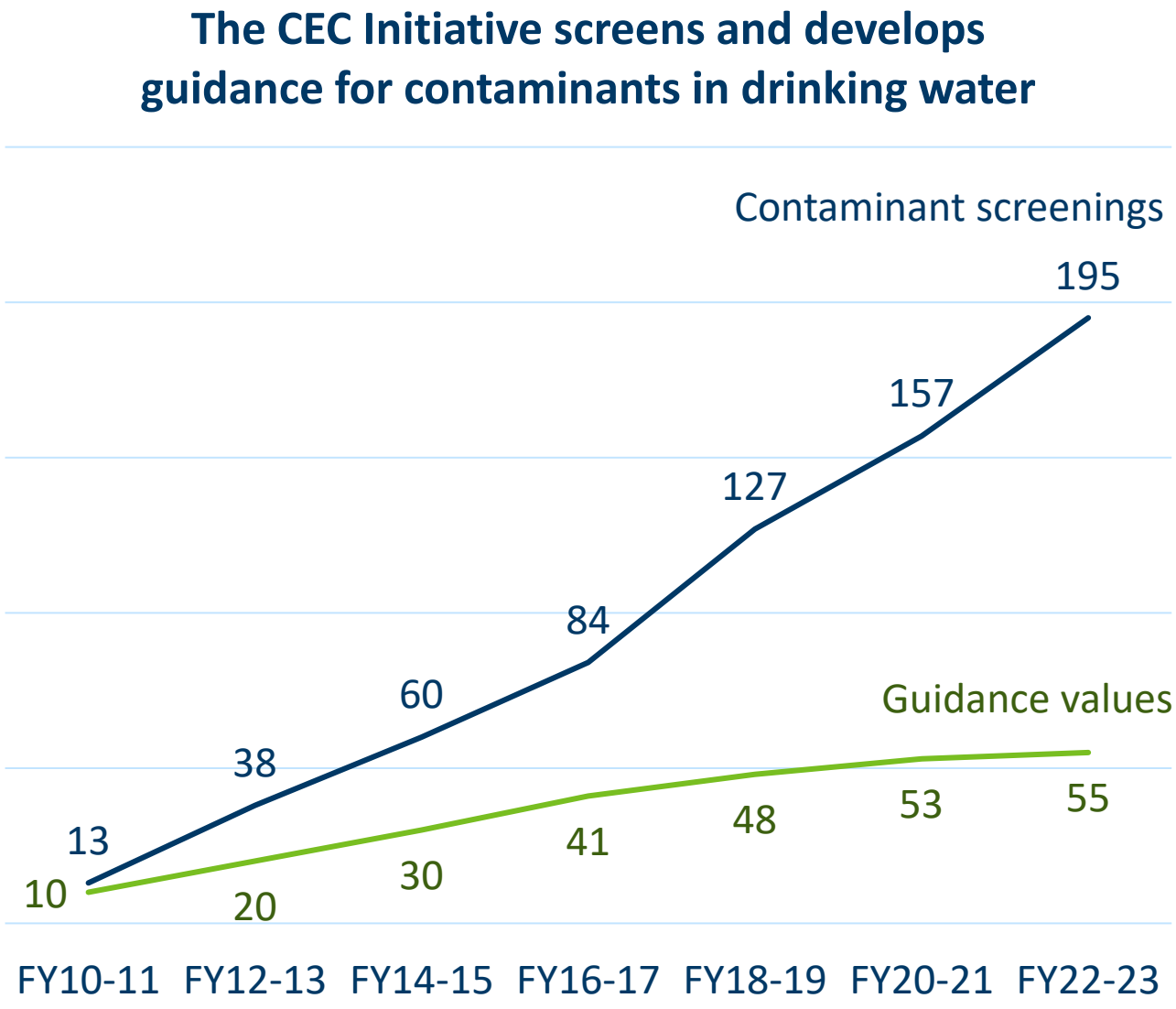
- The Drinking Water Ambient Monitoring Program launched in 2024
- Across Crow, Yellow Medicine, and Root Watersheds, samples were collected from:

114 Private wells

28 Public wells

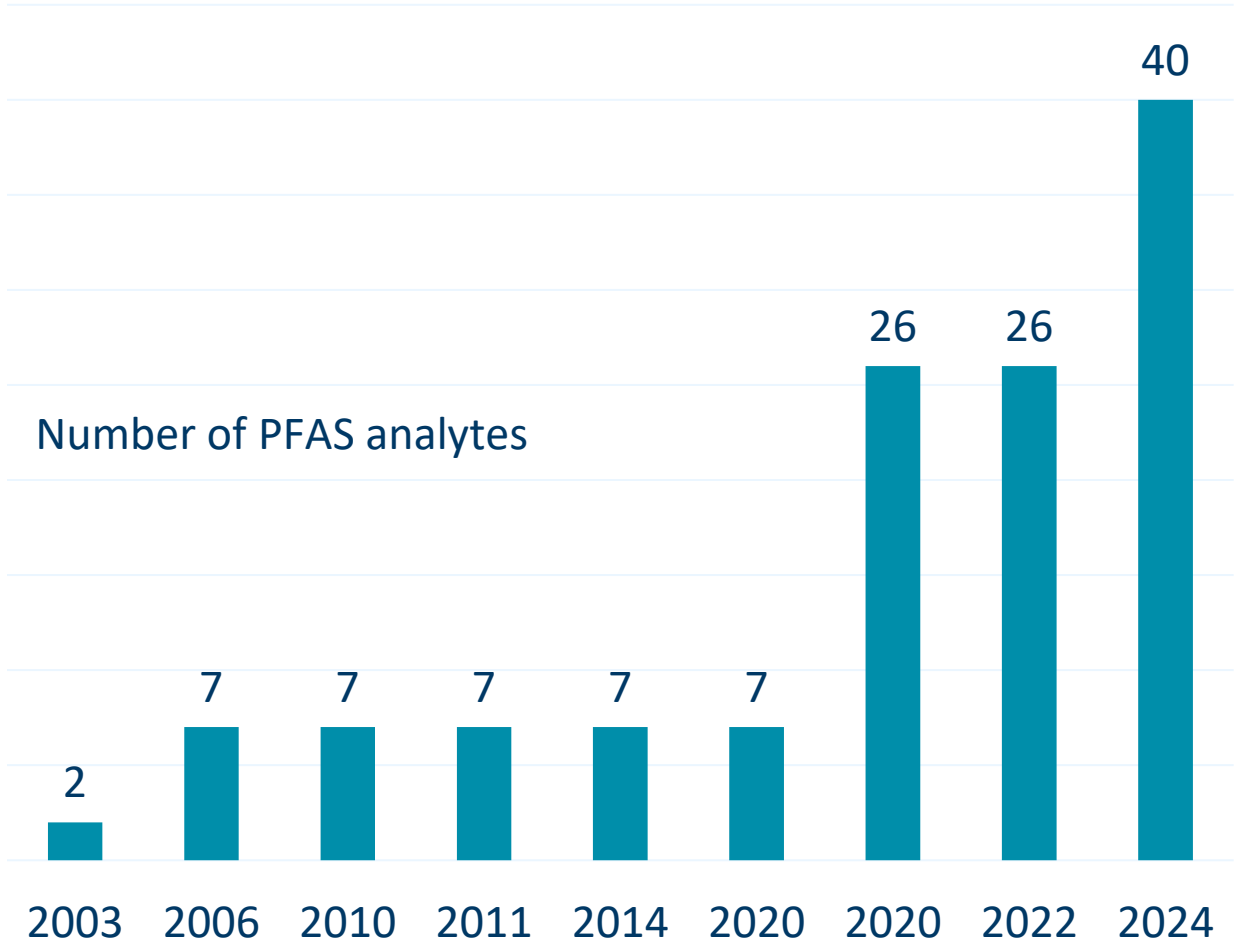
25 Surface water locations

Drinking water (public and private): Develop health-based guidance for contaminants in drinking water.



Drinking water (public and private): Develop health-based guidance for contaminants in drinking water.

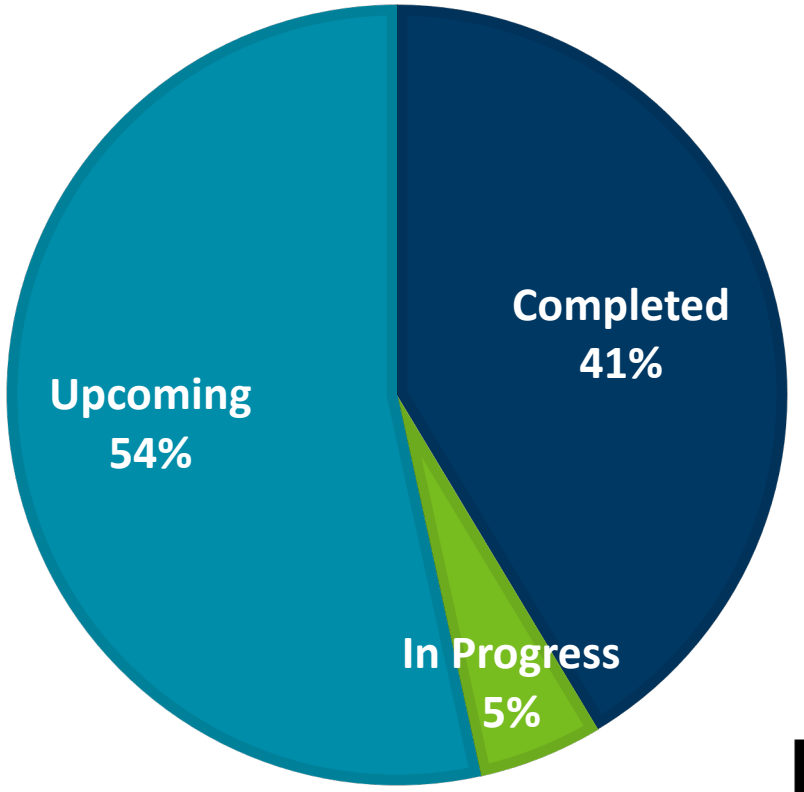
Our Public Health Laboratory has increasing capability to detect PFAS analytes in drinking water



Protect and restore groundwater: local organizations use Groundwater Restoration and Protection Strategies (GRAPS) reports to develop water management plans

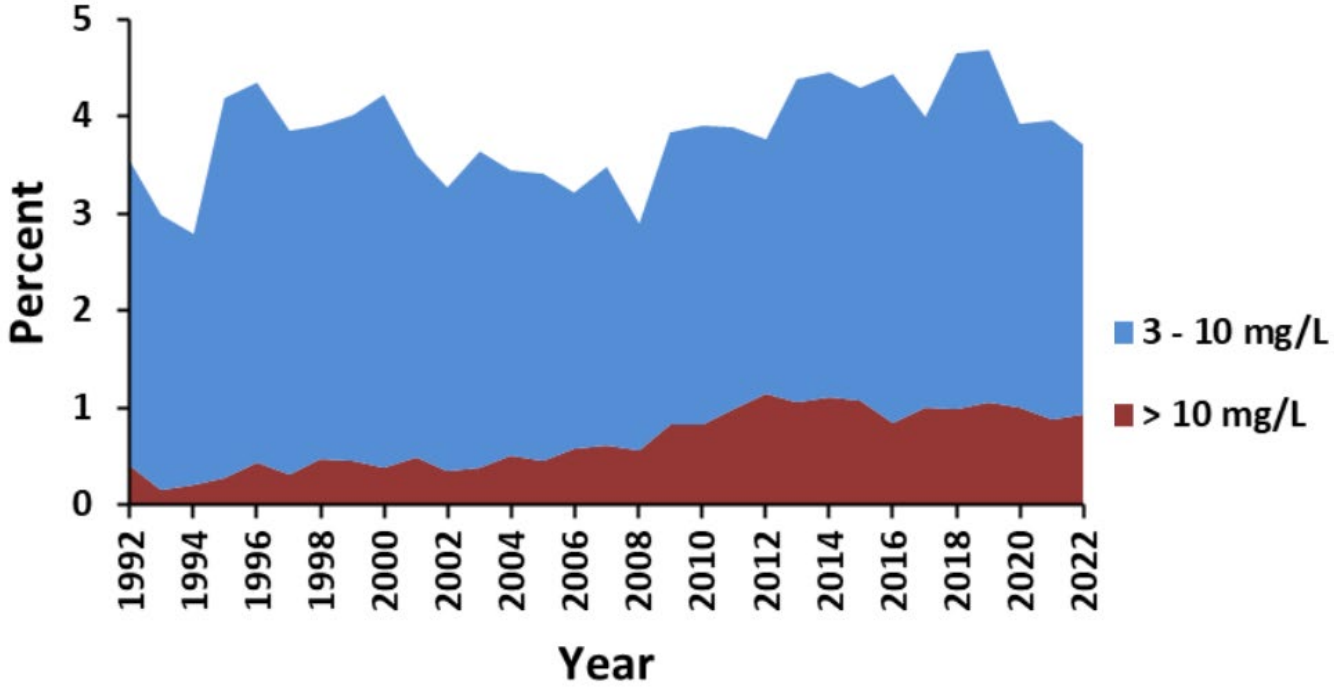
- Maps and data describe groundwater conditions in the watershed.
- Identify local groundwater concerns.
- Outline strategies and programs to address concerns.

41% OF GRAPS REPORTS ARE COMPLETED



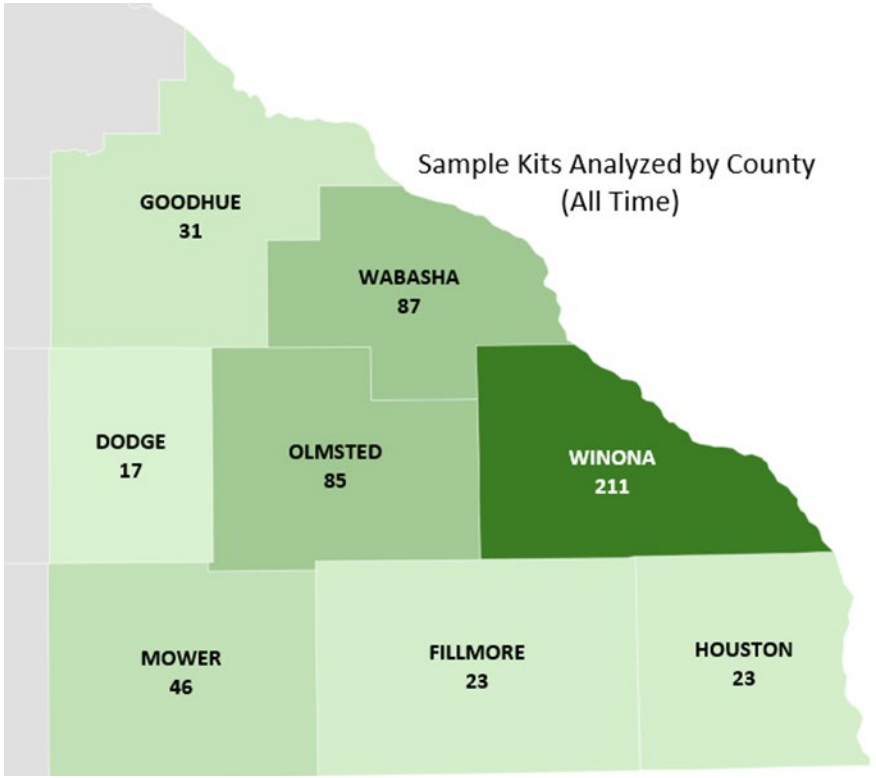
Protect and restore groundwater: all newly constructed private drinking water wells are tested for nitrate.

Since 1992, there has been a **general increase** in the percent of new wells that have nitrate levels above the drinking water standard.

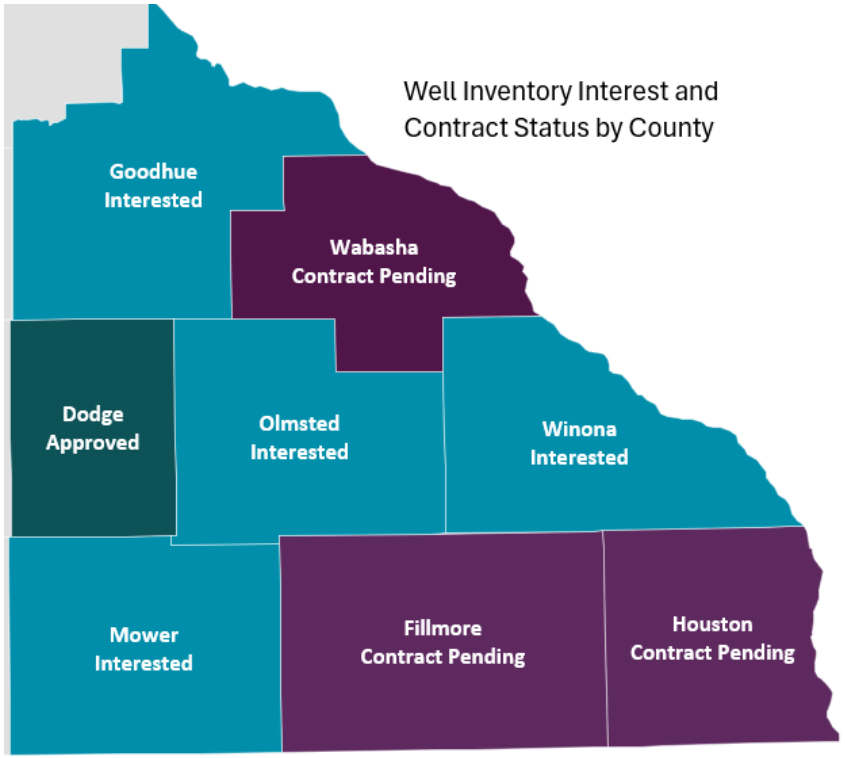


Private Well Measures SE MN

- Kits requested
- Kits returned
- RO’s installed



Private wells: Identify where private wells are in Minnesota.



2024 status (Red)

Target:

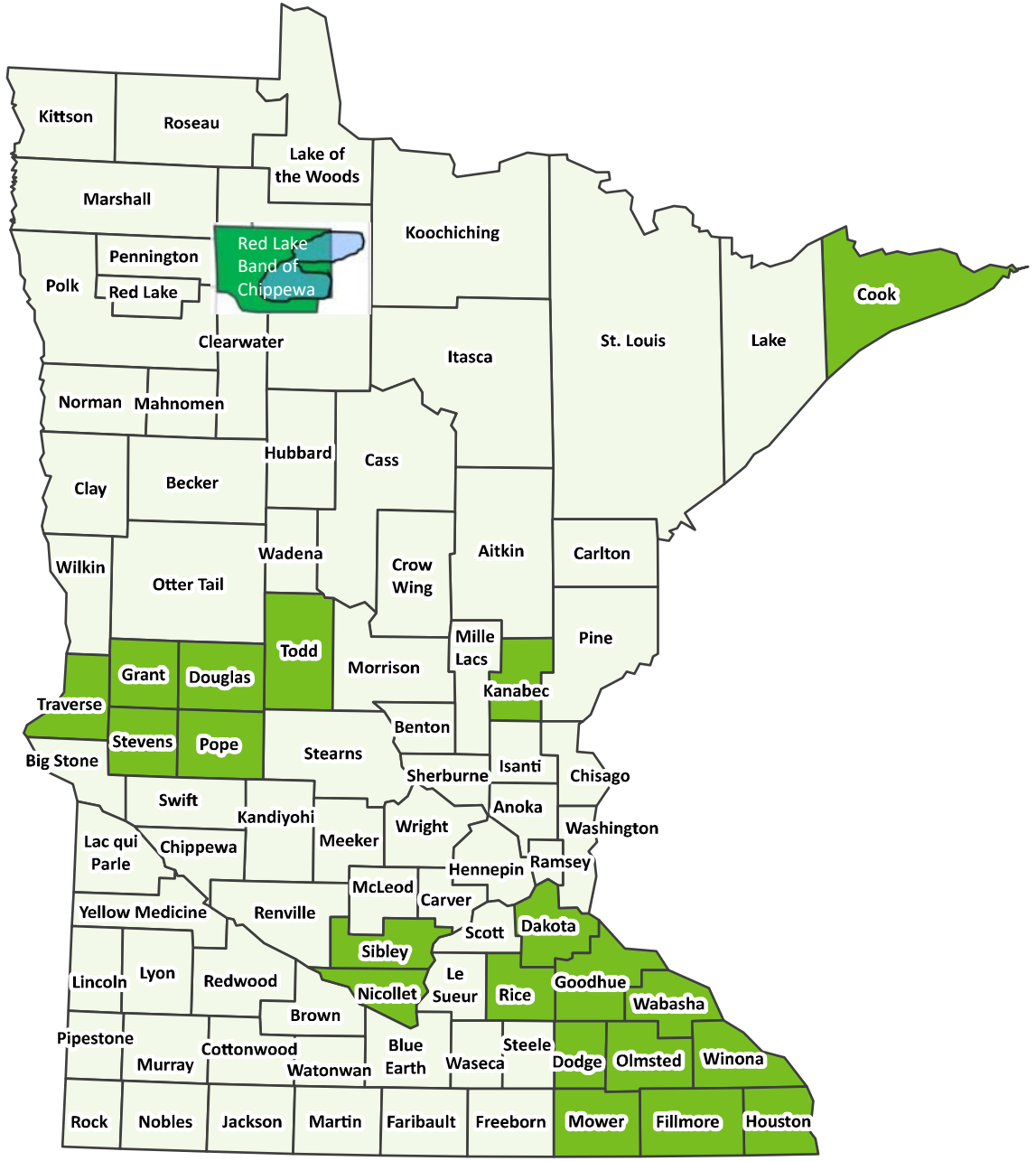
90% of the parcels estimated to rely on a private well are in MWI.

Current State:

Based on tax parcel data overlaid with community public water system boundaries, we estimate about **79%** or 429,880 private wells are in the MWI compared to 541,497 properties we estimate are relying on a private well for drinking water. There are a handful of local efforts to identify where private wells are, but no ongoing or statewide effort.

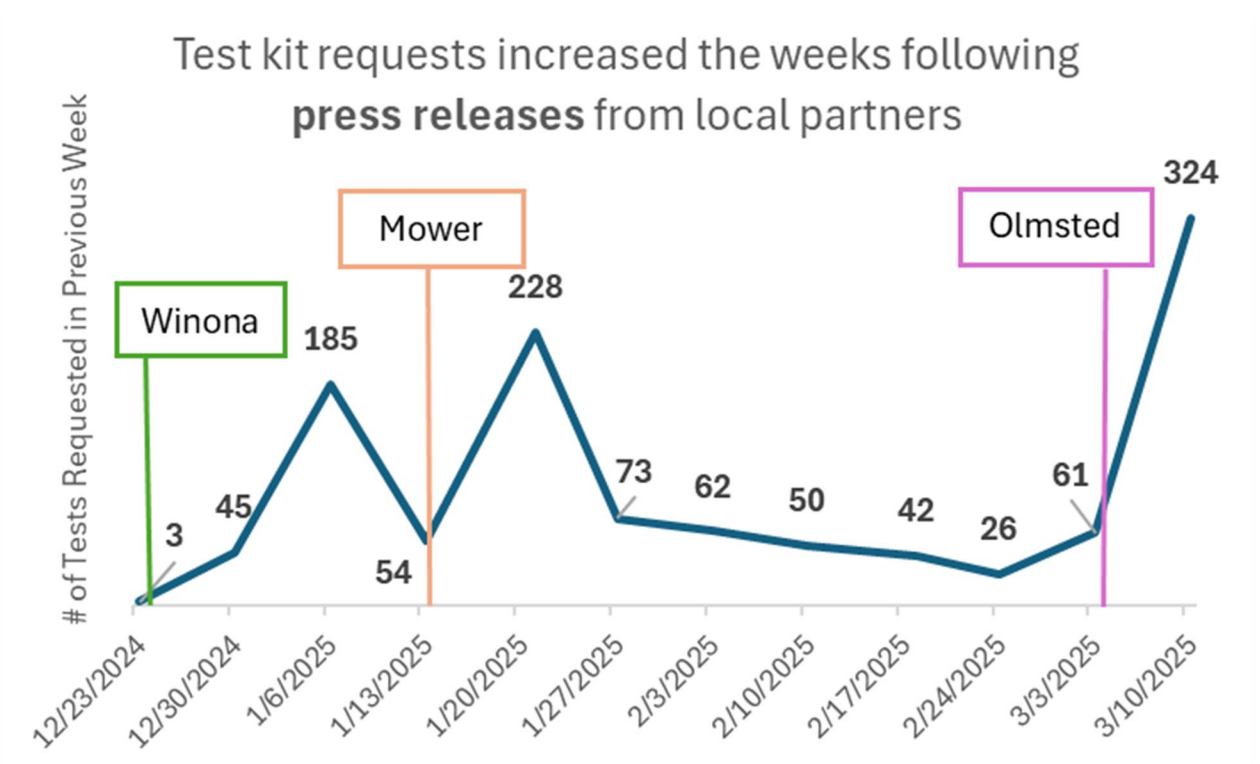
Private wells: Provide financial resources to private well owners for well testing.

20 counties (some through a shared organization) and one tribal nation have received grant dollars for private well testing



Private wells: Mitigation

- Private well testing
- Outreach and education
- Well Inventory
- Mitigation Navigator

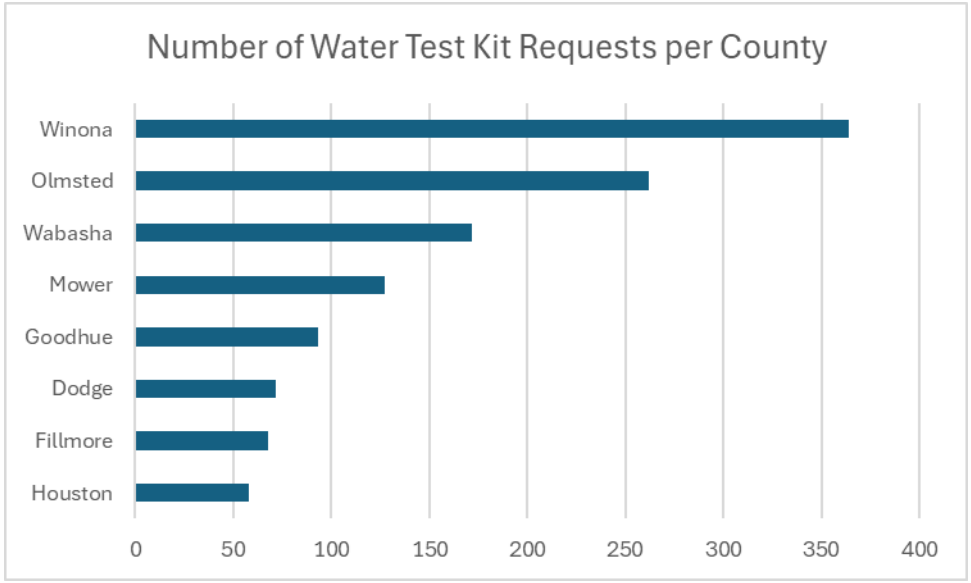


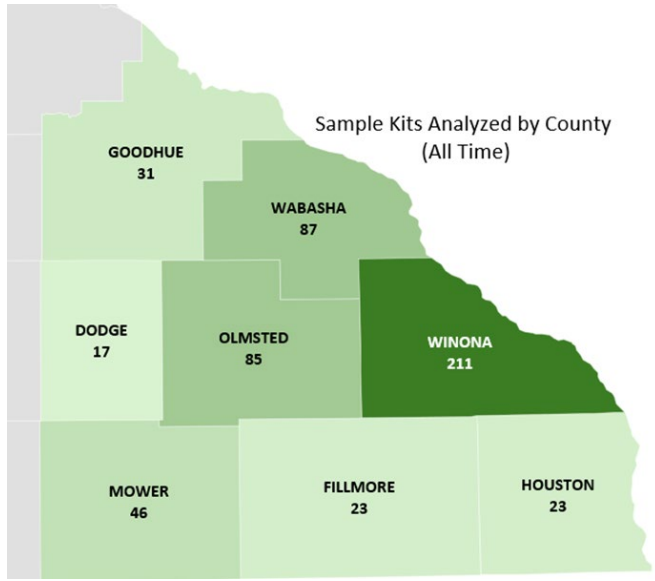
Private wells: Encourage local ordinances that require well testing and disclosure at the time property is transferred and in rental properties.

- MDH has example ordinances local governments could look to as guidance on Local Government as Well Partners.
- As of 2024:
  - Dakota County is the only county that requires the seller test the well water and share the results with the buyer at property transfer.
- No counties have testing requirements for primary rental residences.

What's next?

- Data Viz Training
- Data/Information Position





Questions to consider

- What is your first reaction?
- What left an impression?
- What questions do these raise for you?
- What are your thoughts? What do you take away from these?
- What do you want to know more about?
- What would you like to see differently?
- What would make it easier to view?

Thank You

Alycia Overbo

alycia.overbo@state.mn.us

Sophia Walsh

Sophia.walsh@state.mn.us

Olmsted County Soil Health Program
Southeast MN regional program expansion

Clean Water Council

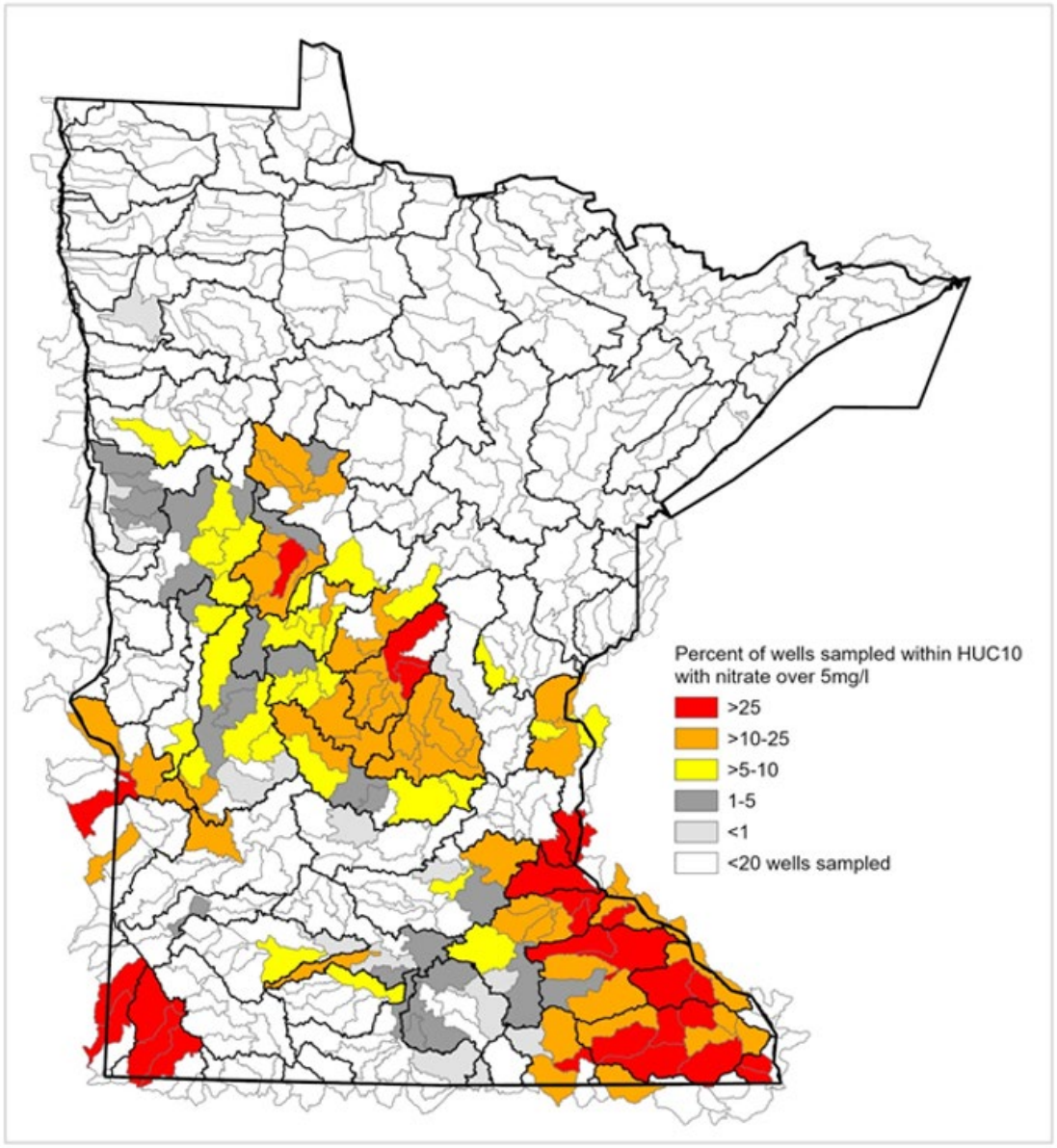
April 21, 2025

Background

- Rising nitrate trends in groundwater in Olmsted Co
- Well drillers - drilling deeper – higher costs
- 2021 – discuss groundwater protection program
- Soil health practice implementation rose to top
- 2023 – pilot program in Olmsted begins
  - ARPA funding created opportunity
- Late 2023 – EPA petition - 8 SE counties – identified nitrate as public health threat

Southeastern Minnesota's vulnerable geology demonstrated by well testing results (MDA)

Figure 3-18. Priority watersheds for groundwater nitrate based on the fraction of high-nitrate wells sampled through MDA's Township Testing Program, using the most recent well monitoring result for each well in watersheds where 20 or more wells were sampled between 2014 and 2020.



Soil Health Program Background

Goal:

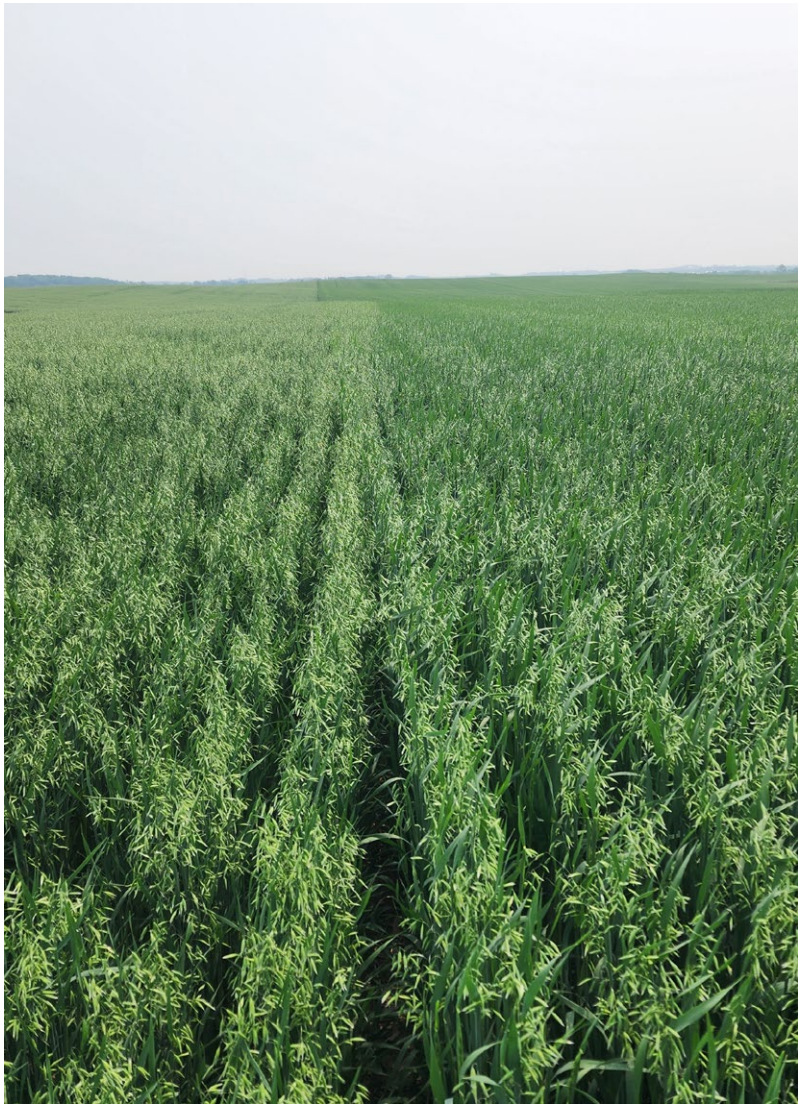
- improve soil quality and protect groundwater through adoption of sustainable practices.
- Offer flexibility to farmers, farmer vetted

Program "menu" options:

- Enhance existing cover crop program
- Incentivize alternative crops and small grains
- Incentivize haying and grazing activities
- ***Payments are outcome based***
- Enrollment acreage limit = 150 ac
- Multiple enhancement options
- Max Annual Payment = $15,750

Benefits:

- reduce nitrate leaching,
- improve nitrogen retention,
- limit soil erosion,
- increase soil microbiology.



Soil Health Program Summary

2023 Pilot:

66 producers participated - 87 contracts certified

Total Program acres = 6,468

Total overall acres = 13,820

2024 (Yr 2):

113 Producers – 166 contracts certified
60 new farmers enrolled in 2024!
Total Program acres enrolled = 12,665
Total overall acres = 19,095

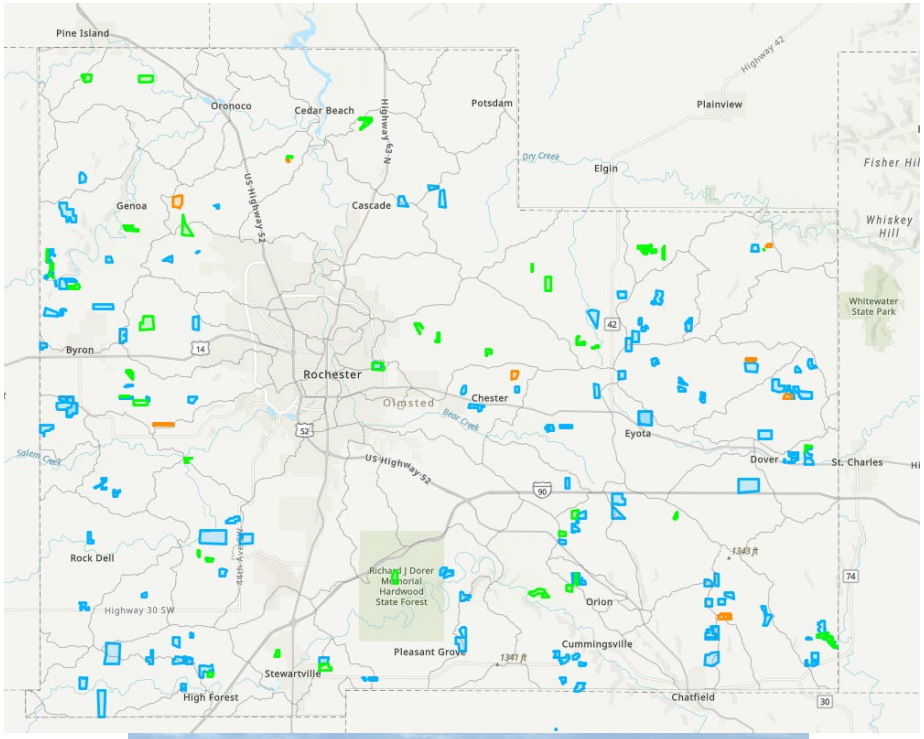
2025 (Yr 3):

118 producers enrolled (to date)

27 new farmers to the program

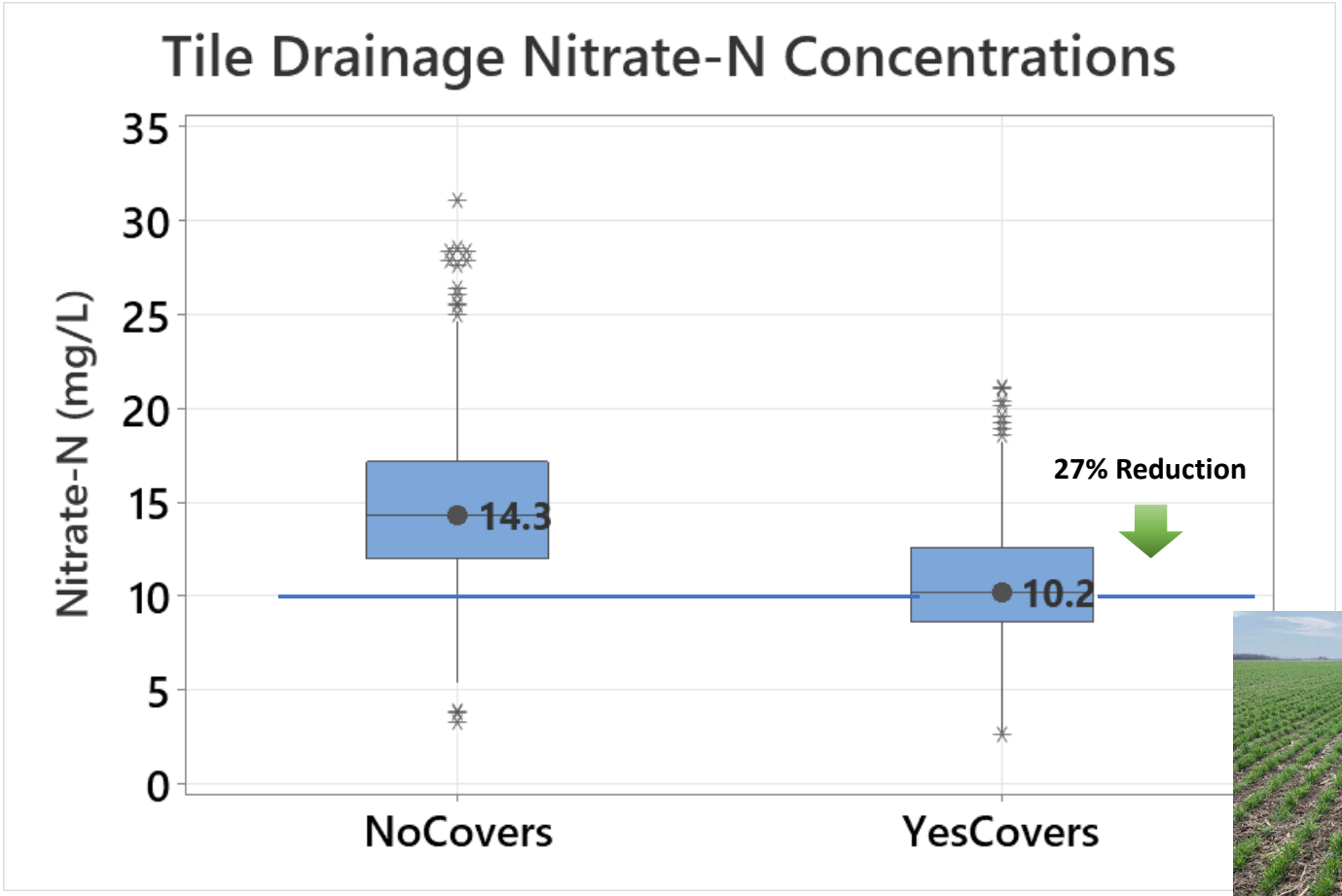
Nearly 10,000 ac cover crops

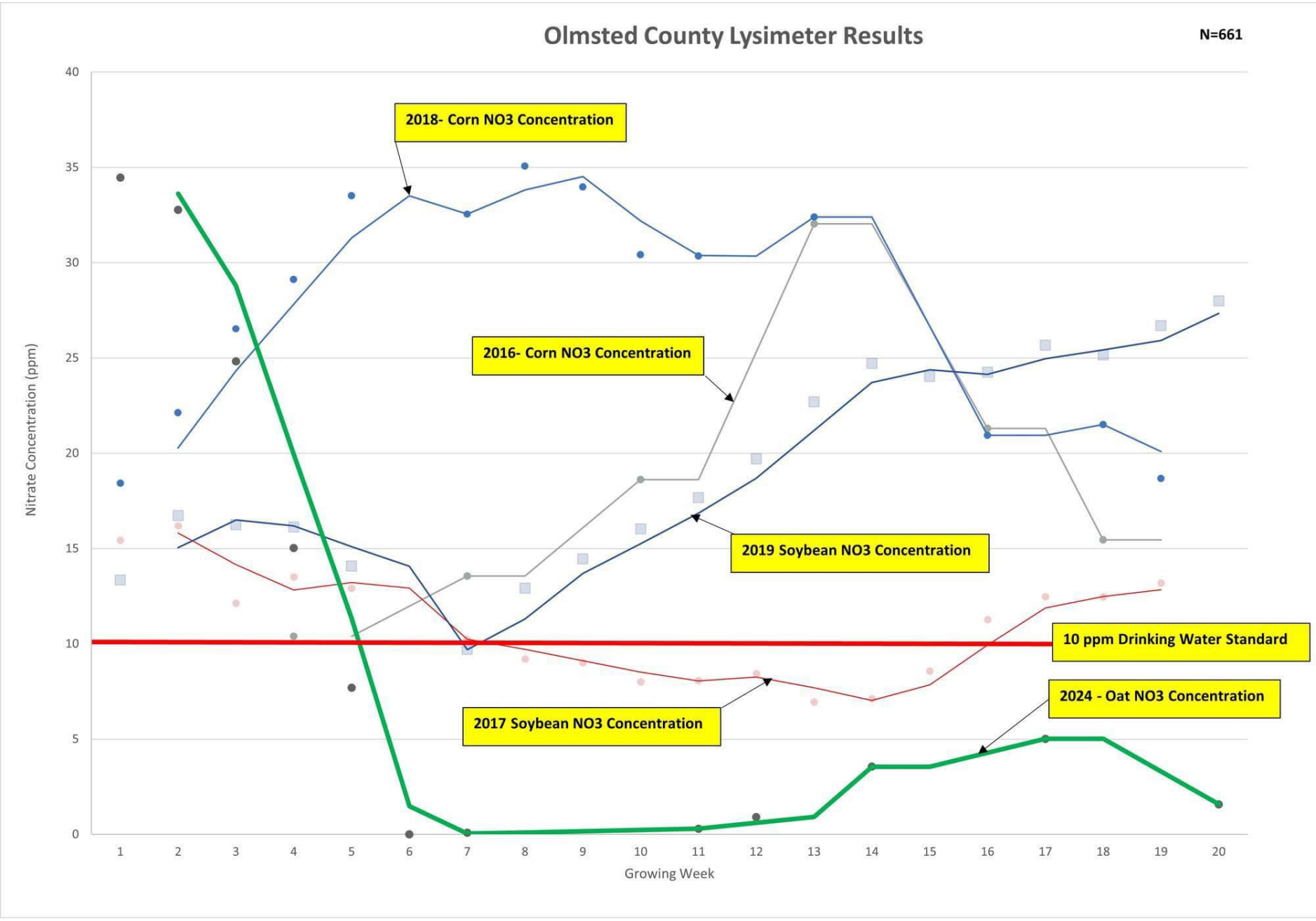
***Planting Bonus: ~ 2:1 additional acres**



Farmers Protecting Bridgewater Streams 2019-2024

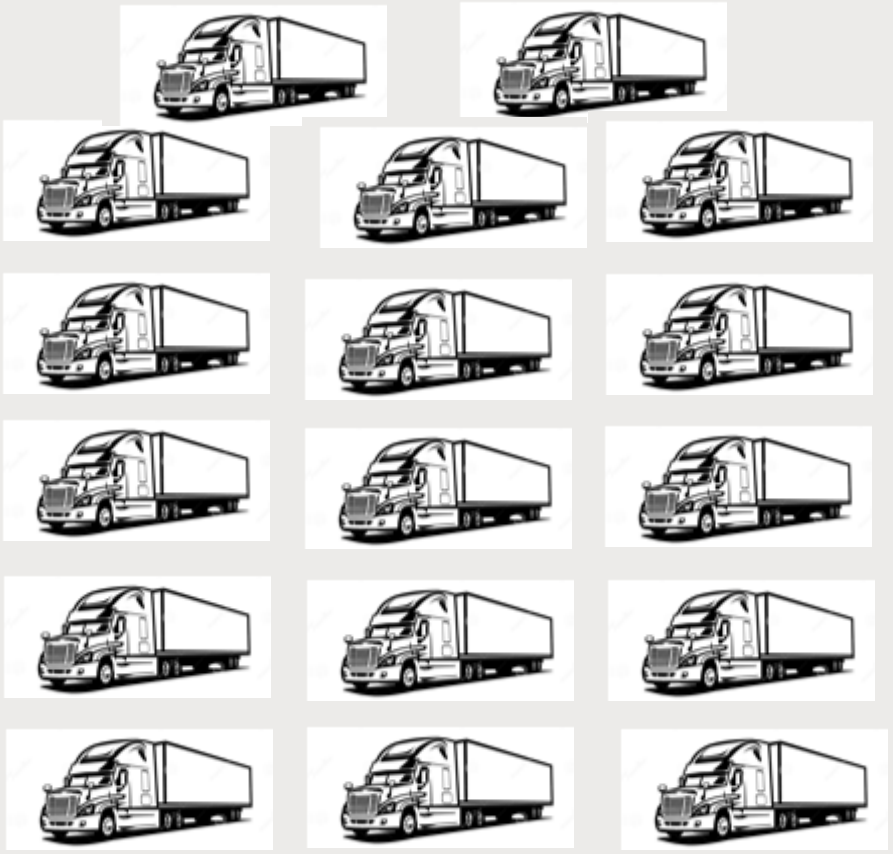
984 Samples over 5 yrs




Olmsted County Lysimeter Results
N=661
2018- Corn NO3 Concentration
2016- Corn NO3 Concentration
2019 Soybean NO3 Concentration
10 ppm Drinking Water Standard
2017 Soybean NO3 Concentration
2024 - Oat NO3 Concentration
Nitrate Concentration (ppm)
Growing Week
0
5
10
15
20
25
30
35
40
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20

Estimated 2024 Benefits

- **Direct program reduction of approximately 295,000 lbs nitrogen (12 semi trailer loads of urea fertilizer).**
- **Indirect program reduction of 425,000 lbs of nitrogen (17semi trailer loads of urea fertilizer).**



KEY TAKE AWAYS

1) Farmer Engagement

2) Outcome Based – measurable results

3) Farmers & Community Members want the program

Thank You!