

DODGE COUNTY LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Mission Statement

Working together to provide education, information and technical assistance to residents and units of government in Dodge County to protect, restore and sustain our soil and water resources.

2021 LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

Larry Bischoff.....Chair
Allen Behl.....Vice-Chair
Lisa Derr.....Secretary
Dale Macheel.....Committee Member
Naomi Kriewald.....Committee Member
Bill Foley.....Lake District Representative
James Qualmann.....FSA Representative



L to R: Bill Foley, Dale Macheel, Lisa Derr, Larry Bischoff, Allen Behl, and James Qualmann.
Missing is Naomi Kriewald

Naomi Kriewald passed away this year and will be greatly missed.

2021 LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT STAFF

John Bohonek.....County Conservationist
Dave Braunschweig.....Watershed Technician
Jon Duckert.....Farmland Preservation Technician
Robert Bird.....Conservation Agronomist
Jared Winter.....Conservation Technician
Becky Justmann.....Administrative Secretary



From L to R. John Bohonek, Becky Justmann, Jared Winter, Jon Duckert, Robert Bird, and Dave Braunschweig

FARMLAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM

The Farmland Preservation Program offers property owners a tax credit who have land that is zoned A1 and meets state performance standards. Depending on the type of zoning in their township, they may be eligible for a tax credit of \$5.00/acre, \$7.50/acre or \$10.00/acre. In 2021 we had a total of 111,930 acres in the Farmland Preservation Program. This is an increase of 1,748 acres from 2020. We completed 144 status reviews monitoring compliance with NR151 performance standards.

In the first year the Town of Westford has been an Ag Enterprise Area, we signed 7 agreements totaling 2,128.65 acres into the Farmland Preservation program.



CZ -- County Zoning | TZ -- Town Zoning

Agricultural Enterprise Area
- \$5.00/acre tax credit

Farmland Preservation Zoning
- \$7.50/acre tax credit

Farmland Preservation Zoning and Agricultural Enterprise Area
- \$10.00/acre

LAND AND WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

In 2021, \$65,202.31 of cost share money was available to Dodge County residents. \$22,774.82 was committed to projects that could not be completed due to the weather or contractor schedules and will be carried forward into 2022. \$42,428.09 was used for the following practices.

- 32 Wells were abandoned, 2 with cost sharing
- 2 Waste Storage Facility Closures
- 1.1 Acre Grassed Waterway
- 0.5 Acres Critical Area Seeding
- 1,260 Feet Animal Trails and Walkways
- 20 Feet Stream Crossing

Waste Facility Closures



Critical Area Seeding



Animal Trails and Walkways



Stream Crossings



Grassed Waterway



Contracts for the remainder of the cost share money were signed for one Grassed Waterway, two Critical Area Plantings, one Diversion, and one Managed Intensive Grazing System. These projects will be constructed in 2022.

MULTI DISCHARGE VARIANCE

As local municipality wastewater treatment plants are renewing their discharge permits, the levels of phosphorous (P) they are allowed to discharge is getting tighter. The upgrades required to reduce the P discharge levels can be costly. The multi discharge variance (MDV) program provides them temporary relief to these upgrades.

Through a formula set by the DNR, the municipality may pay a dollar amount per pound of P they need to reduce and offer that money to Land Conservation Departments to install conservation practices on the land that will reduce P runoff. Dodge County has received \$85,973.30. We have \$30,500 of conservation practices planned for implementation in the spring of 2022.

ANIMAL WASTE ORDINANCE

Two permits were issued under the Dodge County Manure Storage Ordinance. One of the plans was designed in our office. One plan was designed by a private engineer that was reviewed by our department to ensure it met the Ordinance requirements.



WILDLIFE CROP DAMAGE ABATEMENT AND CLAIMS PROGRAM

Dodge County had 2 claims for Wildlife damage in 2021. The crop damage was assessed at a value of \$5,583.00. Wildlife crop damage payments were processed to 2 producers for a total of \$4,583.00. 56 deer were donated under the Venison Donation Program, resulting in 1,360 pounds of venison being donated to our local food pantries.

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT

We assisted 38 landowners with revising their Nutrient Management Plans and teaching them how to use SnapPlus so they can prepare their own plans. We documented 132,341 acres of cropland covered by Nutrient Management Plans in Dodge County.

TREE PROGRAM

We held our 19th annual tree sales program. Our trees come from Laura's Lane Nursery in Plainfield, WI and from Chief River Nursery in Grafton, WI. We sold 22,700 trees and 1,200 tree tubes in 2020-2021 season to 224 property owners. This is an increase of 3,000 trees from 2019-2020 season.



Our tree planter was rented out to seven landowners planting 18,975 trees.

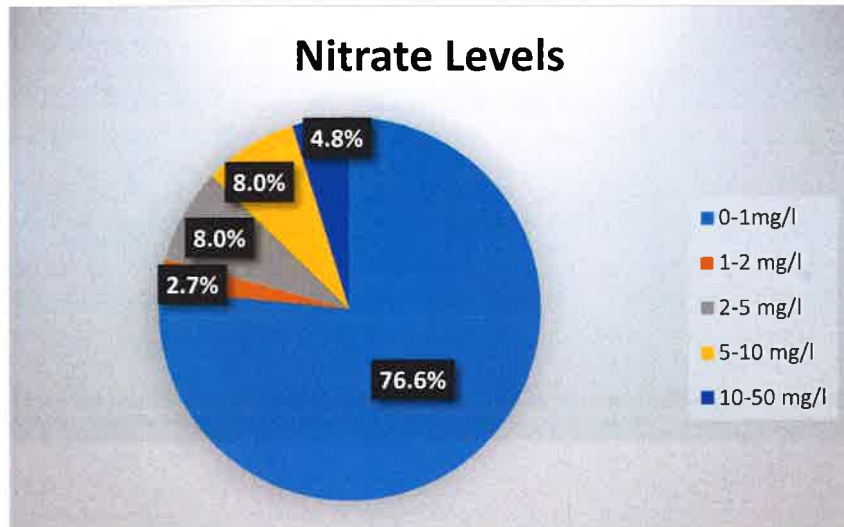


Dodge County Groundwater Quality Index

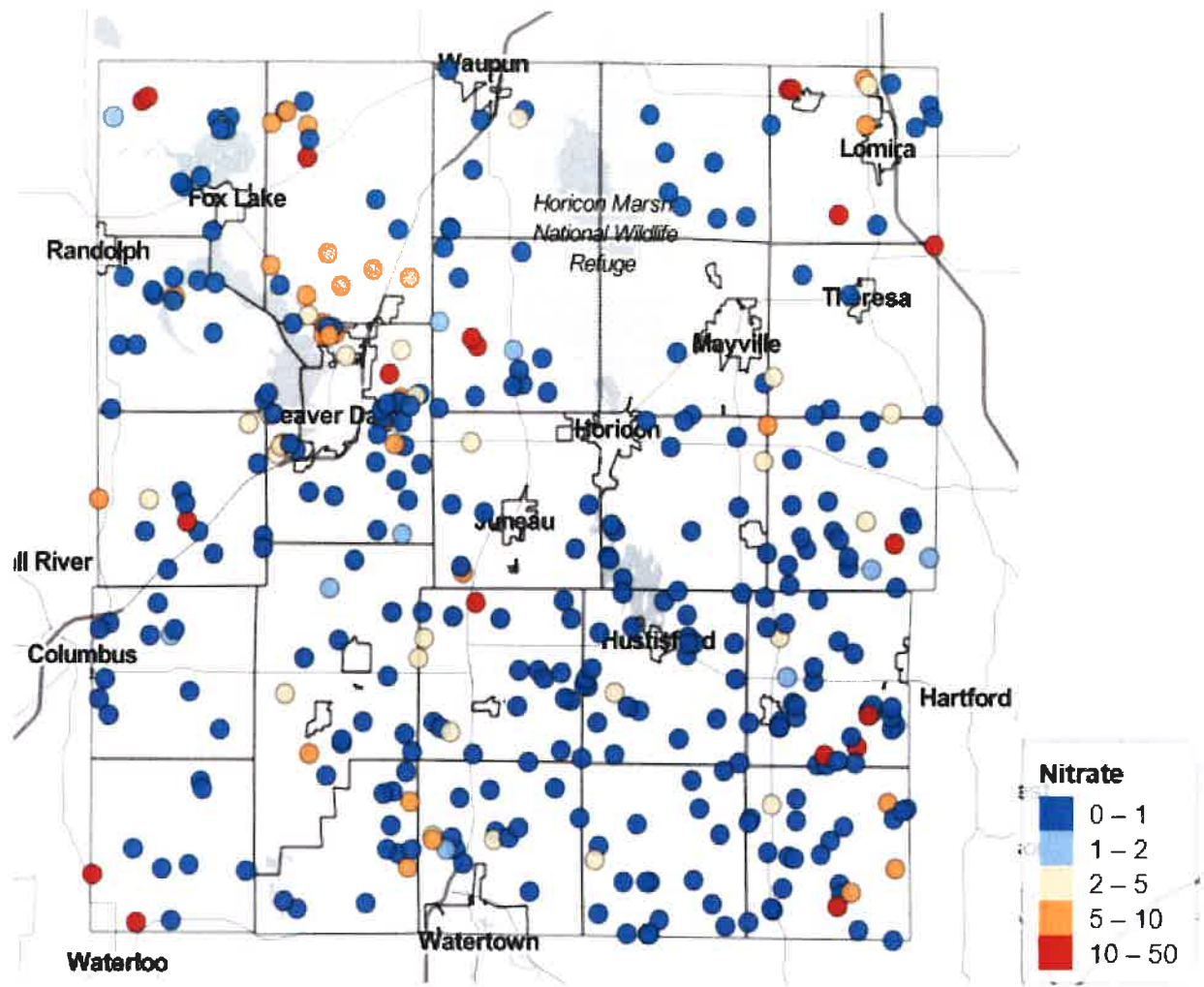
The results from our first year of well testing are shown in the graph below. We had a total of 387 wells tested.

- 4.8% of the samples exceeded the state and federal standards for nitrate in public drinking water of 10mg/l. No infant or any female who is or may become pregnant should consume any water that exceeds this standard.
- 8% tested in the range of 5-10mg/l. It is recommended that wells in this range be tested annually.

The results from our second year should be coming back shortly. We will then be able to start looking at trends.



Percent of Wells testing in Each Range



Approximate Location and Nitrate Levels of Wells

Poster Contest

The Theme this year was **“Healthy Soil, Healthy Life”**. We received 28 posters this year. The posters submitted were for grades 4-6 and grades 7-9. In grades 4-6, Etelka Feher received 1st place, Jamie McCauley received 2nd place, and Riley Bushue received 3rd place. In grades 7-9, Natalie Hargrave received 1st place.

Our two first place winners moved on to the Southern Area Contest. Etelka Feher placed 2nd and Natalie Hargrave placed 3rd.



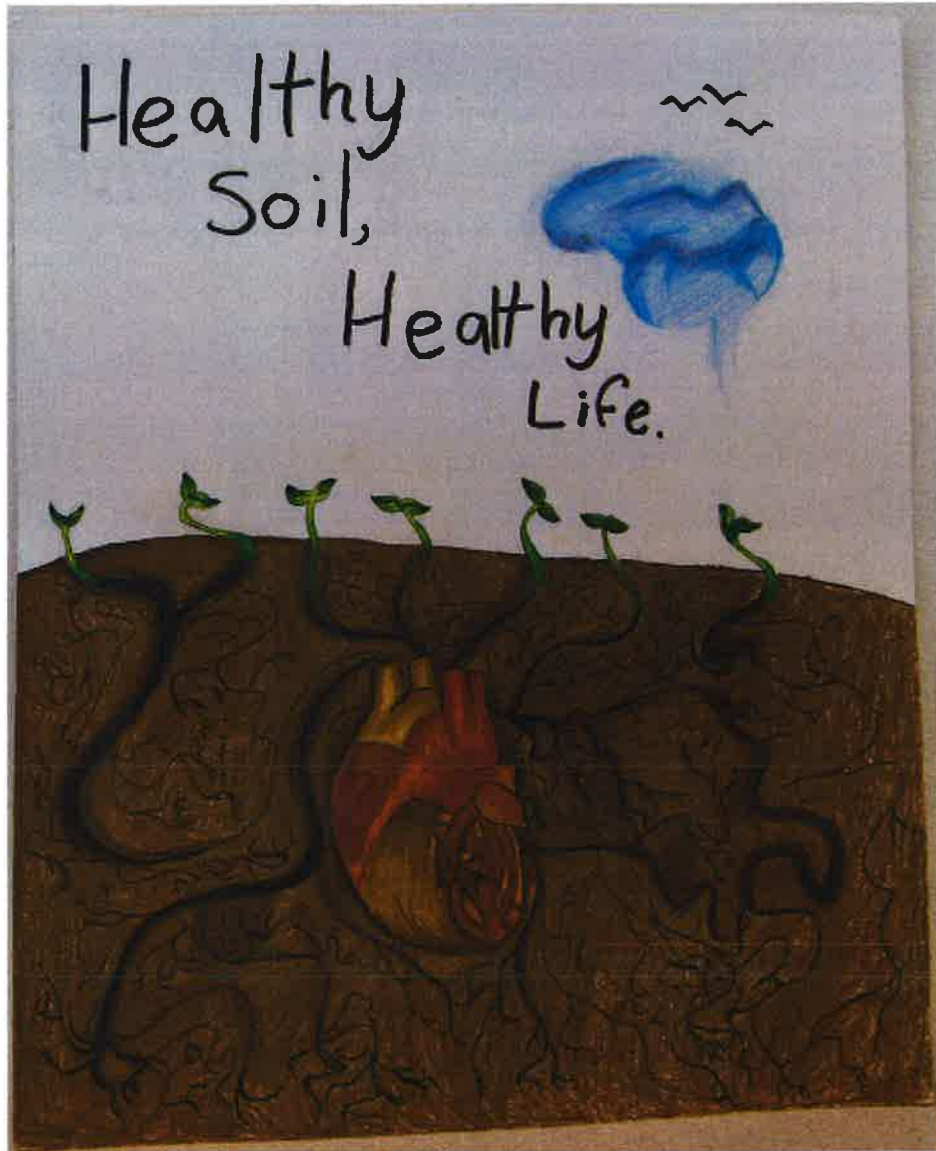
1st place grade 4-6



2nd place grade 4-6



3rd place grade 4-6



1st place grade 7-9

DODGE COUNTY FARMERS FOR HEALTHY SOIL HEALTHY WATER

The Dodge County Farmers for Healthy Soil – Healthy Water is a farmer led group. Their mission statement reads:

“Improving Our Community’s Soil and Water through Conservation Practices & Education.”

The farmer group’s major efforts have been in their educational events that focus on the benefits of reduced tillage and cover crops. The group has also started getting involved with Nitrogen Use Efficiency studies through UW- Discovery Farms and have implemented their own incentives program with monetary assistance from three lake groups.

February Conference

This Soil Health Expo was held on February 10th in the Juneau Community Center. Due to Covid, a hybrid of in person or virtual was offered this year. 79 people attended in person and 64 people attended virtually. The theme for this year’s expo was “Rolling into Covers”. Rick Clark is a farmer from Indiana. He started off talking about “Farming Green and terminating Cover Crops”. After lunch, he talked about the “Economic Impact of Regenerative Farming and Organic No-Till”.

Dr. Erin Silva is an Associate Professor in the Plant Pathology Department at UW Madison. She discussed “Considerations for adapting the cover crop-based reduced tillage systems using the roller-crimpers to conventional acres”.

Both speakers did a Q & A session at the end of the day.

Pre-Plant Workshop

On March 26th a pre-plant workshop was held on a farm in the town of Hustisford to discuss “Setting your planter up for success this spring”. The farmer had his planter on display and an equipment representative discussed adjusting your planter correctly. 59 people attended this event.

August Field Day

On August 26th an event was held in the Town of Leroy. Topics discussed were, "How the weather affected cover crops", "Cover Crop Economics", and "Field Drone Demos". Different pieces of equipment were also on display. 124 people attended this event.

Fall Cover Crop Showcase

This event was held on a field near Fox Lake on October 6th. This event was open to farmers and lake residents. The event showcased Water and Sediment Control Basins that were constructed to reduce sediment runoff into Fox Lake. 42 people attended this event.

Cover Crop Incentives Programs

The farmer's group incentive program continued this year to promote the adoption of cover crops across the County. There were 34 producers planting a total of 3,060 acres of cover crops. The incentive program helped offset the cost of the seed and planting. The operator had to match those acres 1:1 if this was their first time participating. If this was their second time participating, they had to match the acres 2:1.