

CLEAN WATER

ENSURING HEALTH & SAFETY FOR ALL WISCONSINITES

All Wisconsinites should be able to drink clean, safe water straight from their taps. For too long, we have been presented with a false choice between agriculture and clean water. Wisconsin Farmers Union believes that it is possible to have clean water, thriving family farms, and vibrant rural economies.

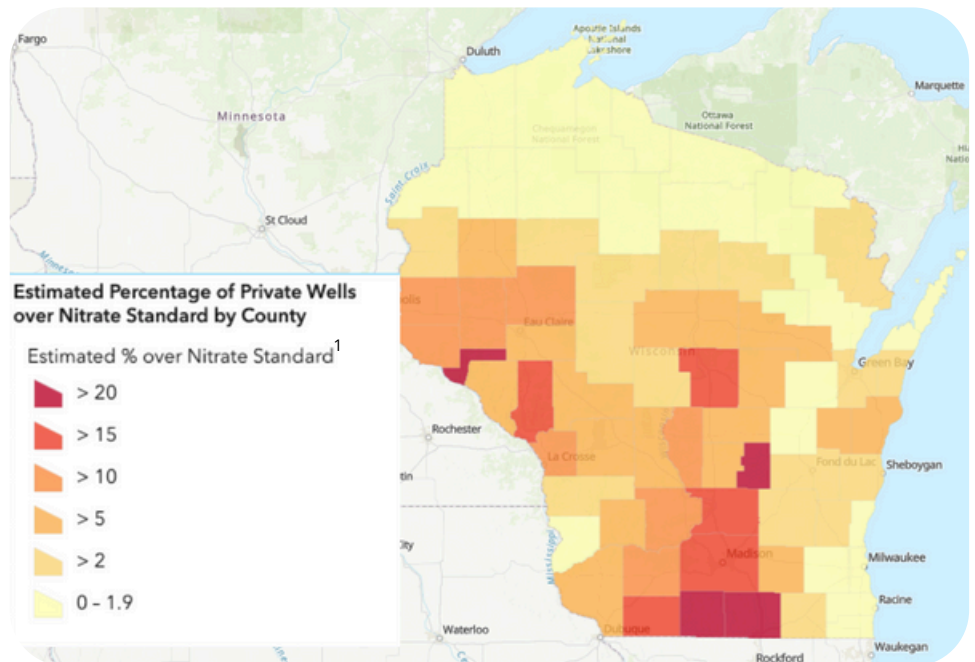
MANAGING WATER RESOURCES

The state of Wisconsin is abundant in water. It borders the Great Lakes, which contain 20% of the world's fresh surface water, and we have rich groundwater resources running below our feet. There is more than enough water available for drinking, recreation, wildlife, and business. However, growing concerns over the public health and ecological impacts of agricultural and industrial pollutants in our water mean we must reevaluate how we manage water resources in Wisconsin.



WATER POLLUTION

Agricultural runoff is a major cause of water pollution. Wisconsin has over 1,500 impaired waterways, and between a quarter to half of private wells in Wisconsin do not meet safe drinking water standards due to excess bacteria or nitrates. Bacteria such as E. coli and Cryptosporidium can sicken humans and livestock, and nitrates are known to cause certain cancers, spontaneous abortions in cattle, and "blue baby syndrome" in infants. Excess nutrients in surface water cause toxic algae blooms which threaten humans, wildlife, and recreation industries.



At the federal level, WFU supports reestablishing the original intent of the Clean Water Act of 1972 to enable the CWA to achieve the goal of restoring and maintaining the integrity of all of our nation's waters, not just those that are navigable.

¹ <https://www.cleanwisconsin.org/nitrates/>

WHAT CAN WE DO?**FULLY FUND COUNTY CONSERVATION**

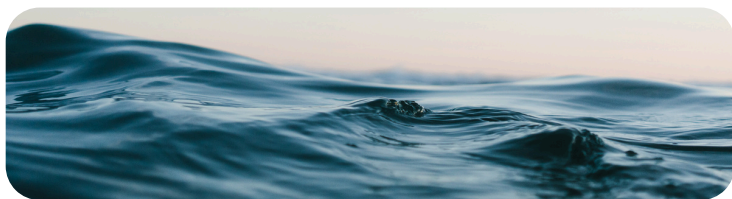
County conservationists work directly with farmers to improve land management practices to protect water and other natural resources. WFU supports increasing funding for county conservation from \$9.4 million to \$12.4 million annually.

SUPPORT FOR GROUNDWATER RESEARCH, TESTING, MAPPING, AND EDUCATION

WFU supports adding one position at the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey to conduct groundwater mapping. We also support grants for counties to study groundwater quality in private wells, assess the extent and type of contamination, and/or notify the public of the results.

EXPAND PRODUCER-LED WATERSHED PROGRAMS

The Producer-led Watershed program helps farmers share information and collaborate on solutions to protect local water resources. WFU supports funding for the producer-led watershed grant program of at least \$750,000/year. We further support expanding eligibility for lake protection grants to producer-led watershed groups.

**CONSERVATION FARMING PRACTICES**

WFU advocates that more effective agronomic practices such as cover-cropping, no or reduced tillage, inserting more small grains into the rotation system, terracing on highly erodible land, and enhanced buffer strips should be employed.

INCENTIVES FOR GRAZING

Grazing livestock on perennial pasture is highly effective at retaining water in the soil and preventing runoff. WFU supports creating a grazing program at DATCP aimed at increasing the number of acres of managed pasture.

IMPROVE WELL COMPENSATION PROGRAM

DNR's well compensation program helps households offset the cost of remediating contaminated wells. We support increasing funding for the well compensation program with priority given to lower income households. We support removing the eligibility requirements that wells must be used for livestock and must be contaminated only with nitrates. A Well Compensation Grant Program Administrator position should be created at DNR.

INCREASE CAFO MONITORING AND OVERSIGHT

WFU supports increased DNR staffing, funding, and authority for CAFO monitoring and oversight to make sure we are holding the farms that pose the greatest risk to our water accountable. We support increasing CAFO permitting fees to a level consistent with surrounding Midwest states. We further support updating the state Livestock Siting rule with increased setbacks to property lines, replacing the odor score calculator, requiring period inspections of all manure pits, and verifying that CAFO operators own or rent enough acres for spreading manure.

EXPAND NR-151 TO SENSITIVE AREAS OF THE STATE

WFU supports changes to NR-151 that restrict manure and other waste application rates and spreading of these materials on frozen soils in areas of the state deemed sensitive.