

Groundwater and Well Water Education Program

Town of Empire – Fond du Lac County



University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
College of Natural Resources



Through the University of Wisconsin-Extension, all Wisconsin people can access University resources and engage in lifelong learning, wherever they live and work.

Today's presentation

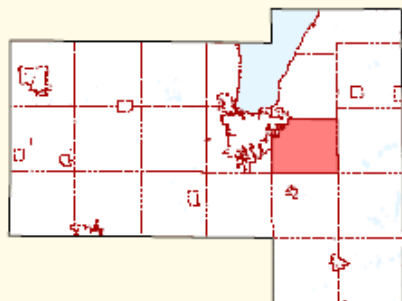
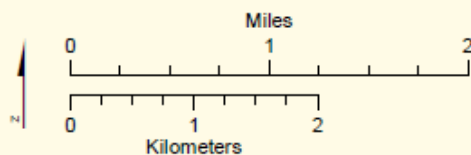
- Groundwater Basics: Where does my water come from
- Well Construction
- What do my individual test results mean?
- General groundwater quality in the Town of Empire
- Improving your water quality



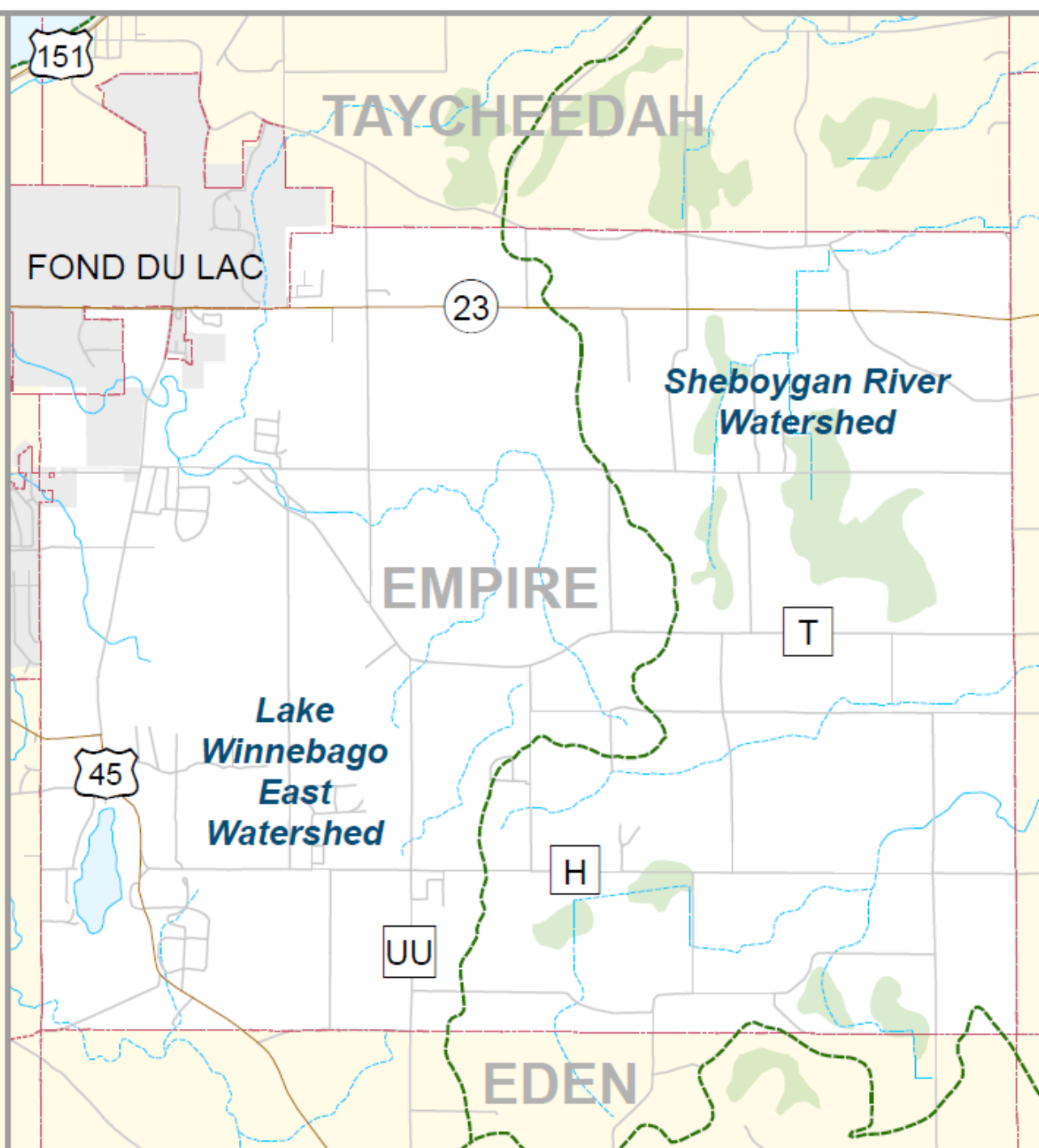
Town of Empire

Fond du Lac County, October 2018

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



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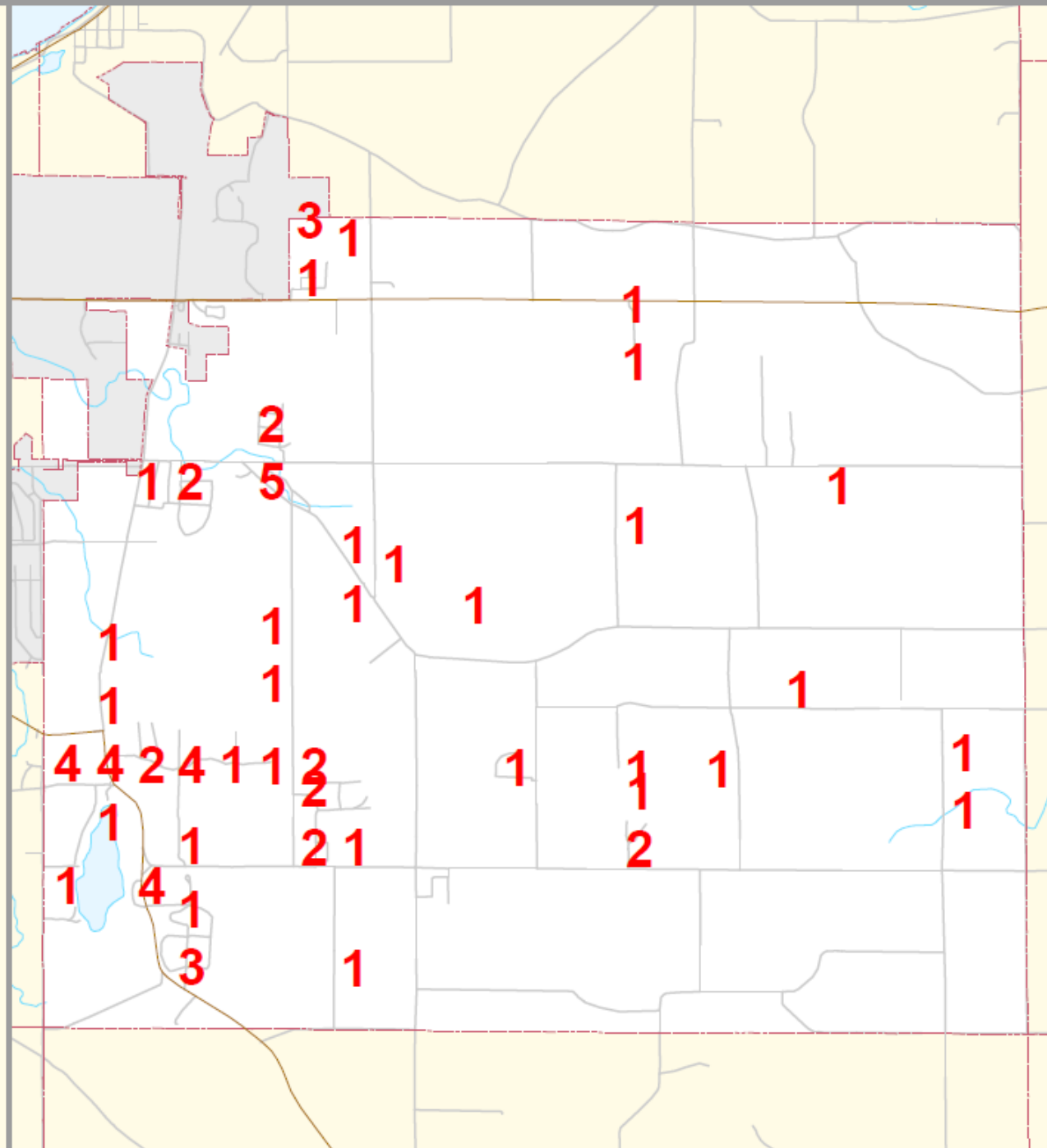
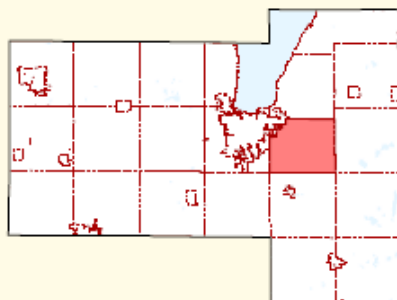
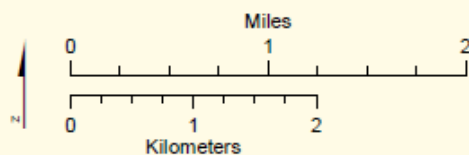


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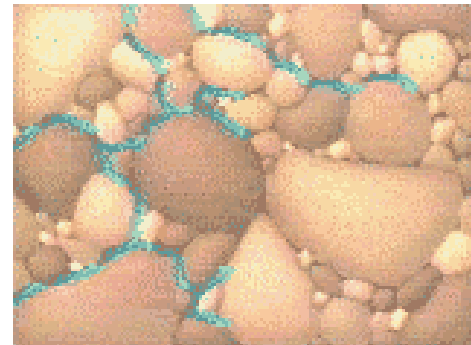
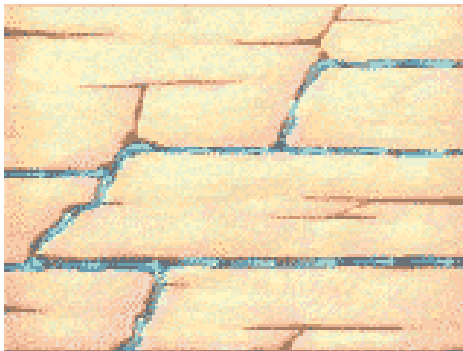
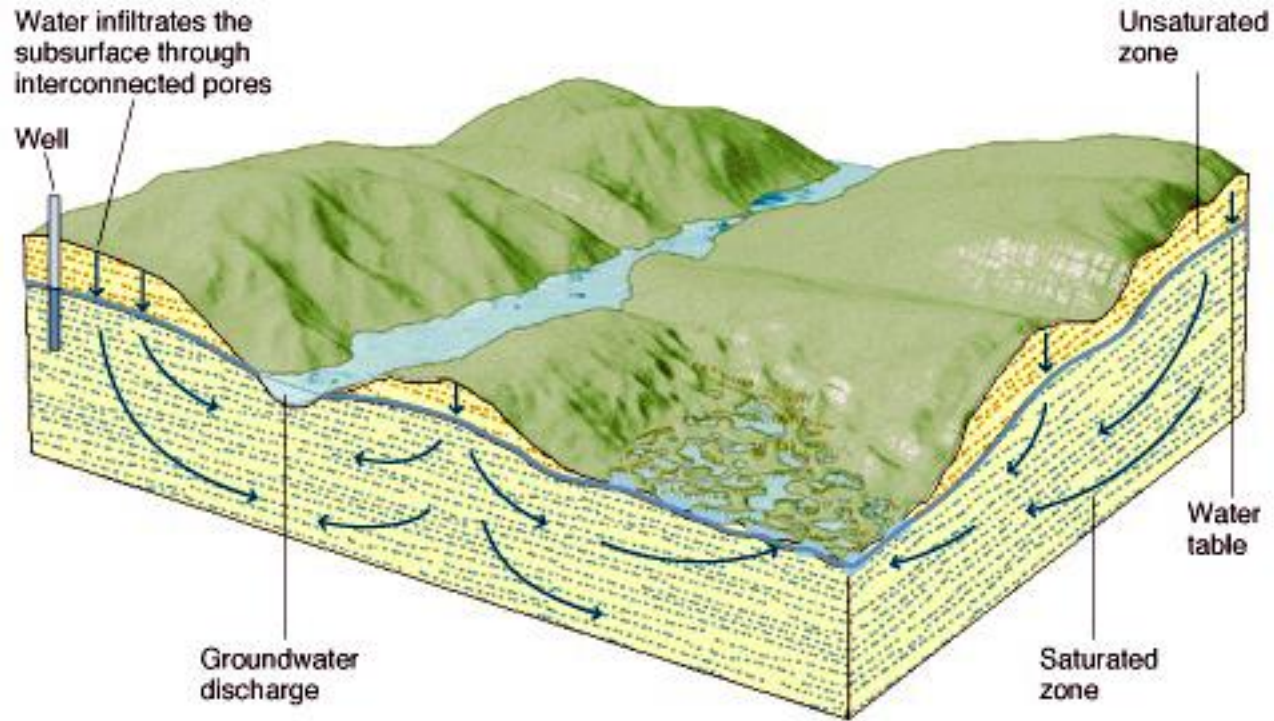
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SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION

NUMBER OF SAMPLES
per 1/4 1/4 SECTION



Groundwater Movement

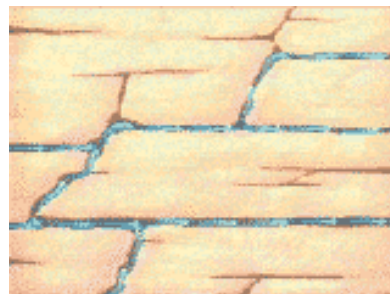


Aquifers: Our groundwater storage units

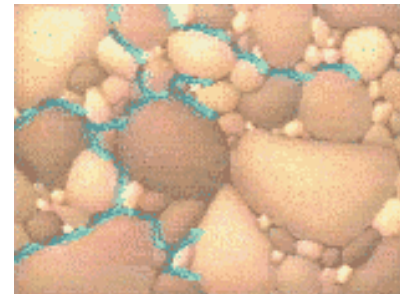
Aquifers are geologic formations that store and transmit groundwater.

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

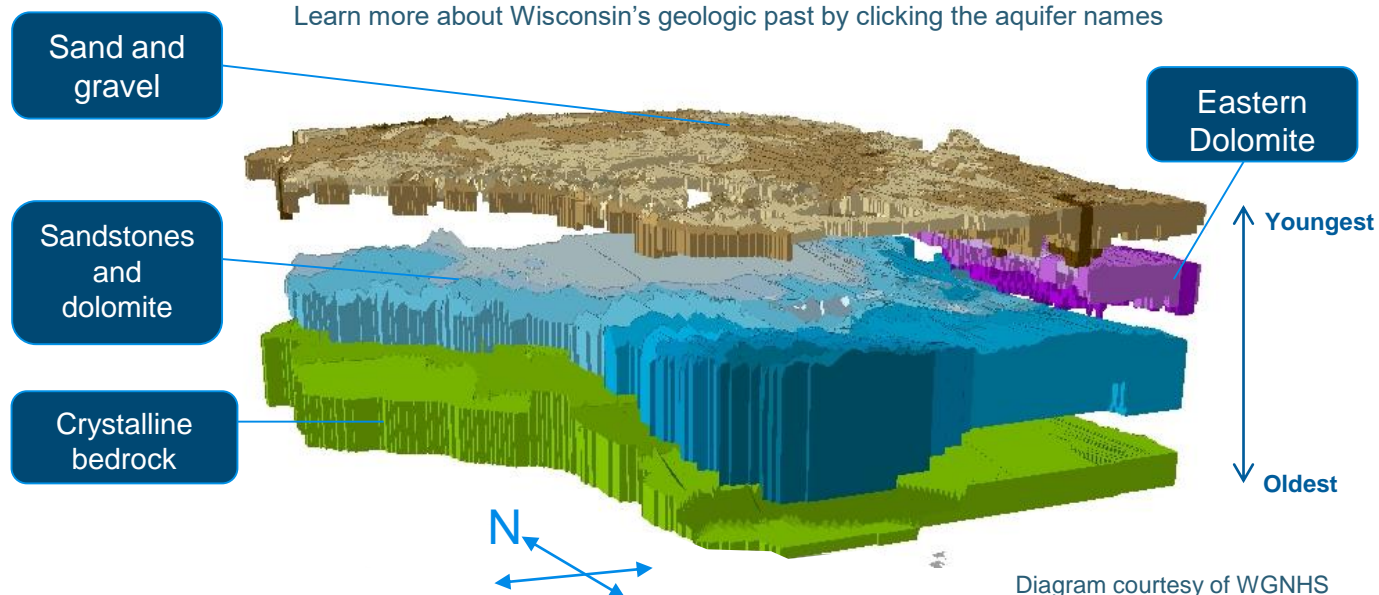
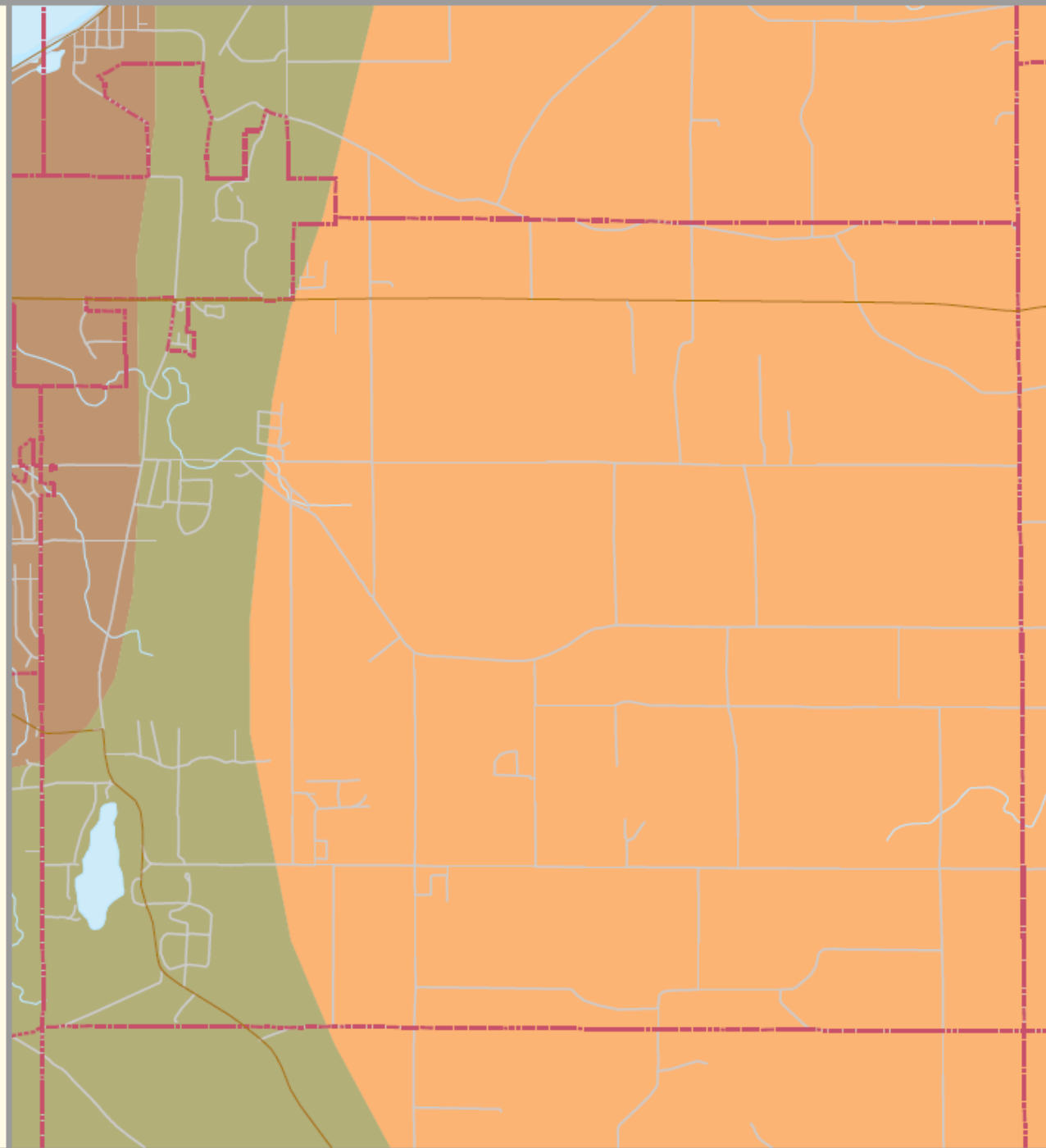
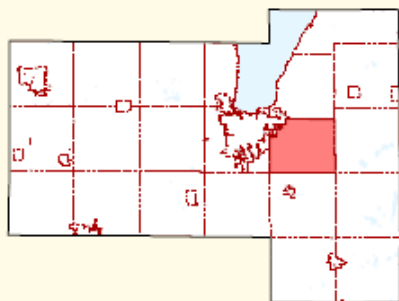
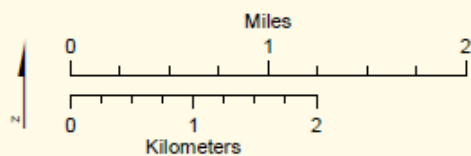
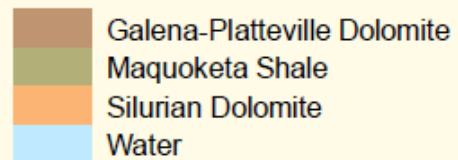


Diagram courtesy of WGNHS

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Bedrock Units:

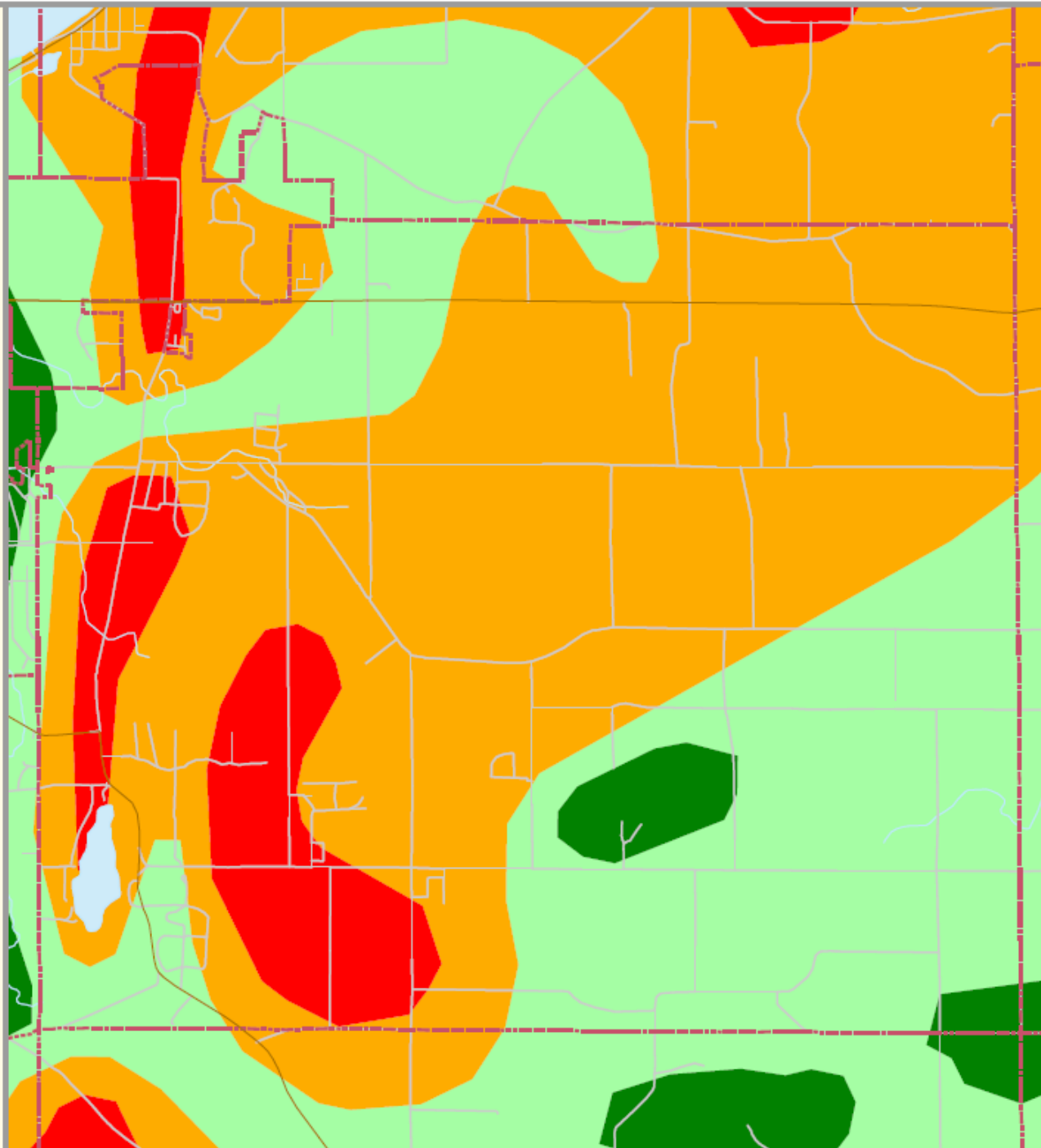
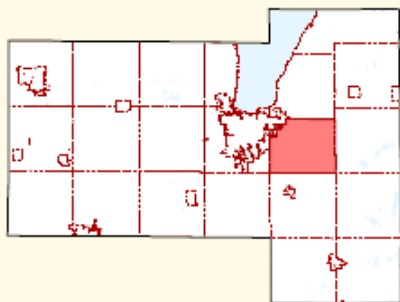
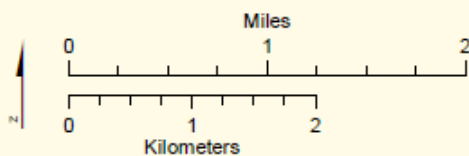
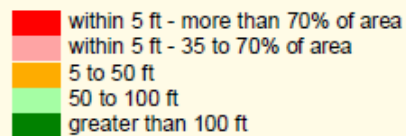


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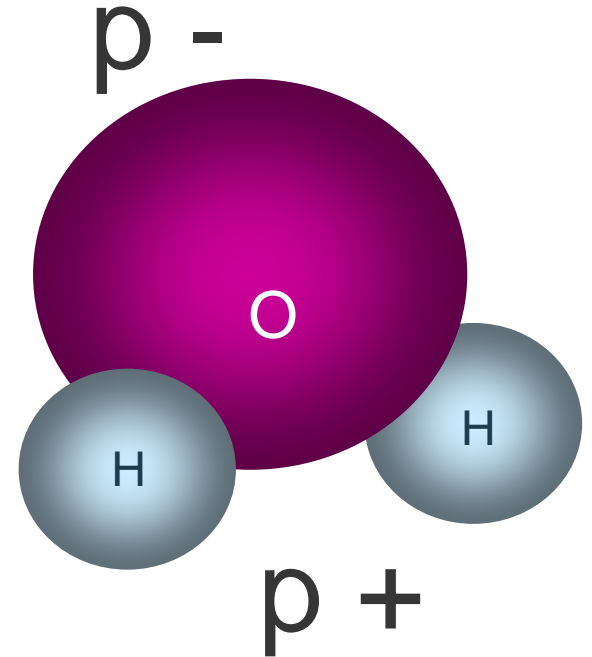
Depth to Bedrock:



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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 impurities 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)



Private vs. Public Water Supplies

Public Water Supplies

- Regularly tested and regulated by drinking water standards.



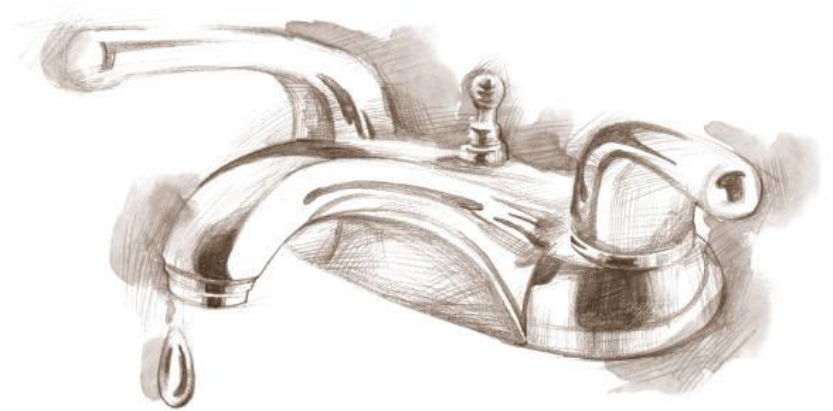
Private Wells

- 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?

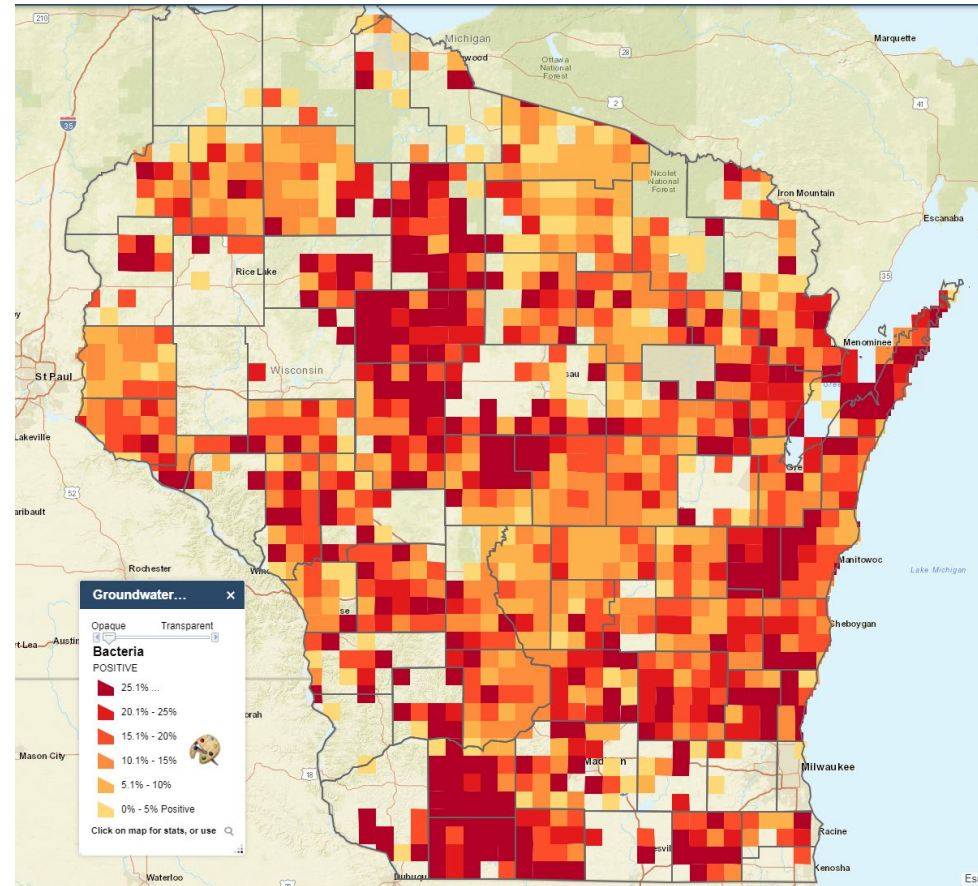
- Installed a new well
- Change in taste or odor
- Buying or selling their home
- Plumbing issues
- Want to know if it's safe to drink.



Coliform Bacteria

If we were to test all the private wells in the state of Wisconsin we would expect between 15-25% to come back positive for coliform bacteria. Defects with the well water system are often times responsible for coliform bacteria positive results.

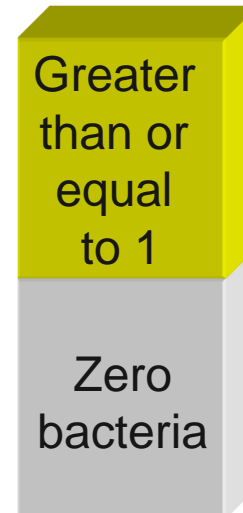
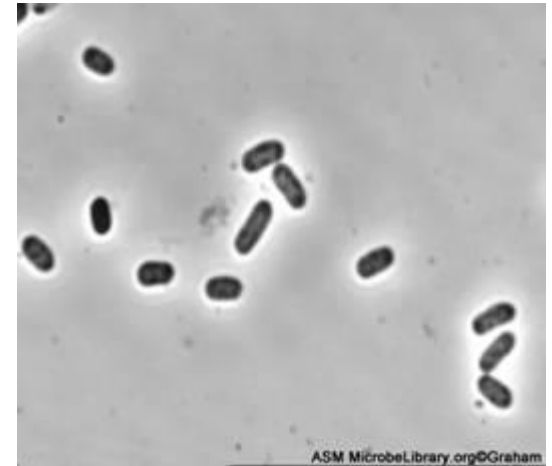
In those areas where more than 25% of wells are positive, it may be related to geologic concerns that make groundwater/wells in that area more prone to coliform bacteria.



[WI Well Water Viewer, UW-Extension & UW-Stevens Point](#)

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



Present = Unsafe

Absent = Safe

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		
<i>Escherichia coliform (E. coli)</i> <i>Salmonella</i> <i>Campylobacter</i> <i>E. coli</i> 0157 (Requires a special water test for detection. Causes similar, but more serious illness than other E.coli strains. Requires medical treatment.)	<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
<i>Leptosporidia</i>	<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		
<i>Cryptosporidia</i> <i>Giardia</i>	<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		
Norovirus	<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		
Nitrate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fertilizers • Manure • Bio-solids • Septic systems 	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.
Atrazine (trade-name herbicide for control of broadleaf and grassy weeds)	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.	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. Long-term exposure above MCL may cause: weight loss, cardiovascular damage, retinal and some muscle degeneration; cancer.

Well Construction

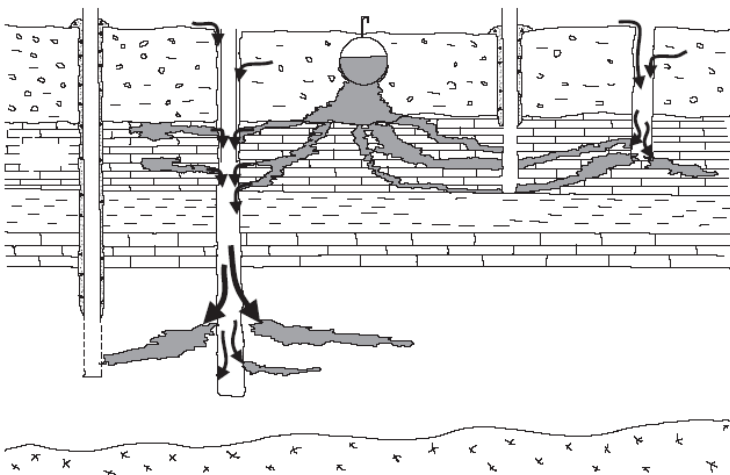


Photos courtesy of: Matt Zoschke

Other Pathways for Bacteria to Enter Your Water System



AQUIFER CONTAMINATION THROUGH IMPROPERLY ABANDONED WELLS



Source: Adapted from DiNovo and Jaffe, 1984.

Comm 82.40(8)(e)2, Wisconsin Administrative Code prohibits the installation of a yard hydrant with a below ground discharge. The code reads:

"Stop and waste-type control valves may not be installed underground."

This type of hydrant, with a below ground discharge is popular because of the ease of operation and the relative low cost.



The plunger (control valve) is located below the frost line. When the handle is lifted water enters the riser and flows through the head. A drain at the same level as the plunger allows water in the riser and the head to drain each time the handle is lowered. This draining action prevents freezing temperatures from causing the water in the hydrant riser or head to expand and burst the device. If a hose connected to the hydrant without a hose connection vacuum breaker were submerged in a barrel, the entire contents of the barrel could be siphoned through the drain port and could contaminate the groundwater or even your drinking water supply.

If you have further questions, please check the Commerce website at: <http://commerce.wi.gov/SB-SB-PlumbingProgram.html>

or, contact your local plumbing inspector
or, contact one of the consultants listed



District #	Name	Phone/fax
1	Tim Joyce	608-235-0557 / 608-283-7454
2	Tom Braun	715-340-5387 / 608-283-7455
3	Don Oremus	715-584-2007 / 608-283-7452
4	Don Hough	715-634-4804 / 608-283-7451
5	Ryan Boebel	608-412-3996 / 608-283-7449

SBD-10893-F006(00)

What does an approved yard hydrant look like?

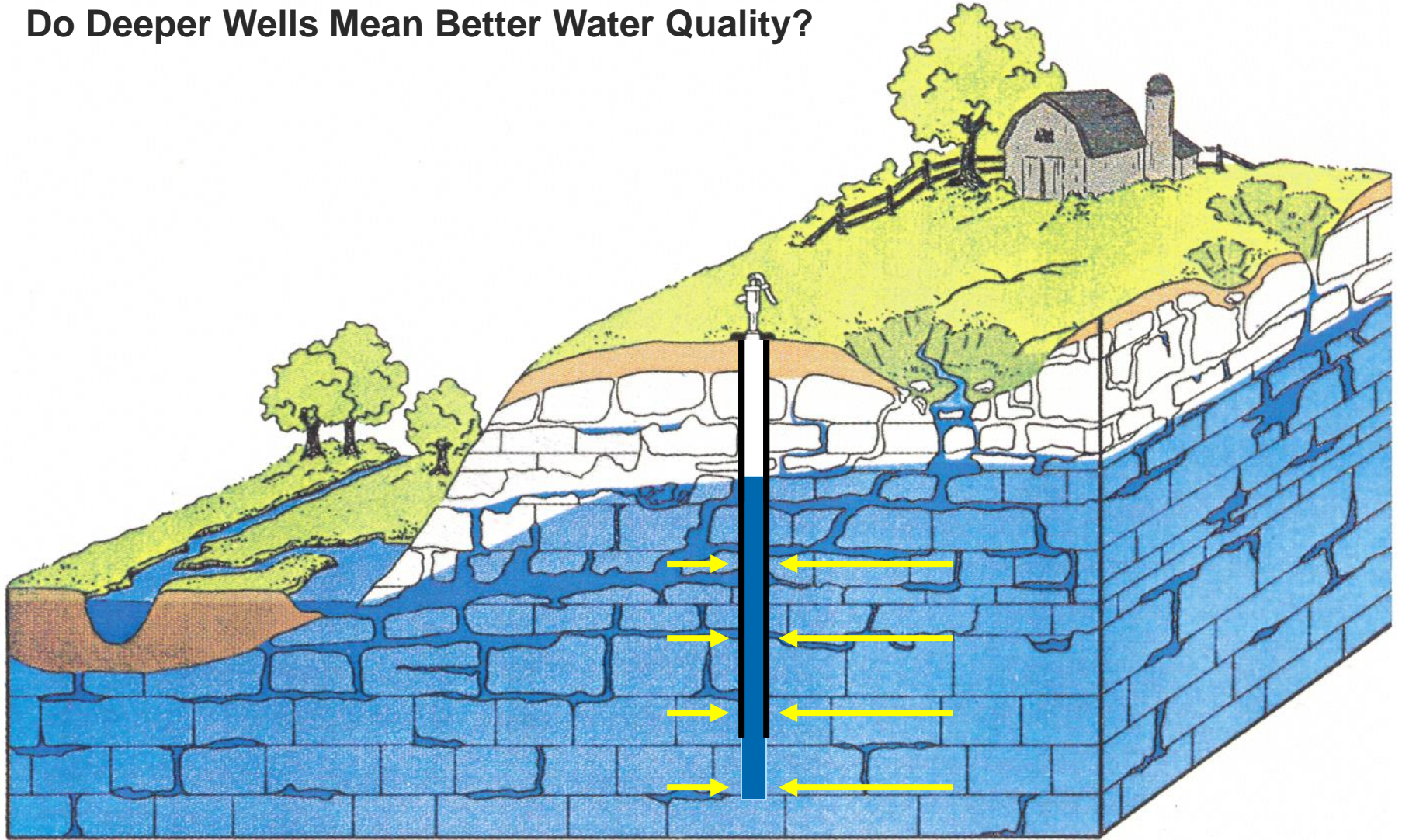


There's no "one" answer for a code-compliant yard hydrant. Many manufacturers produce models that are code compliant. When you buy a hydrant, make sure that it has an approved hose connection vacuum breaker and does not include an underground drain.

And if you install a hose connection vacuum breaker on a yard hydrant make sure you loosen it during the winter to prevent freezing conditions from bursting the hydrant.

If you find a model that you have questions about, contact the department or your local plumbing inspector.

Do Deeper Wells Mean Better Water Quality?



What should I do if coliform bacteria was present?

1. Retest
 2. Try to identify any sanitary defects
 - Loose or non-existent well cap
 - Well construction faults
 - A nearby unused well or pit
 - Inadequate filtration by soil
 3. Disinfect the well
 4. 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.*

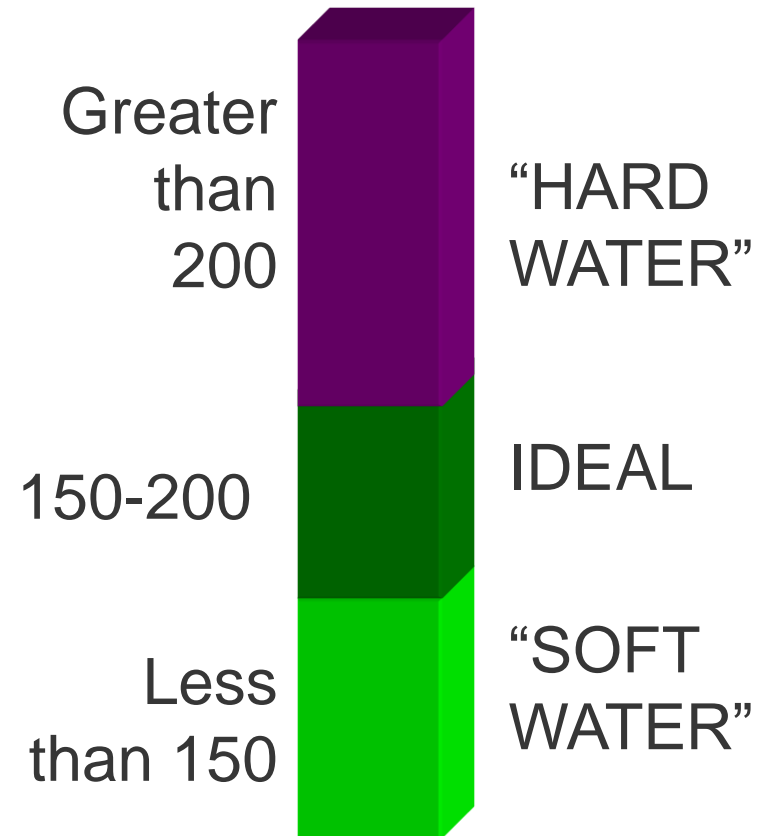


Rock and Soil Impacts on Water Quality

Tests for Aesthetic Problems

Hardness

- Natural (rocks and soils)
- Primarily calcium and magnesium
- Problems: scaling, scum, use more detergent, decrease water heater efficiency



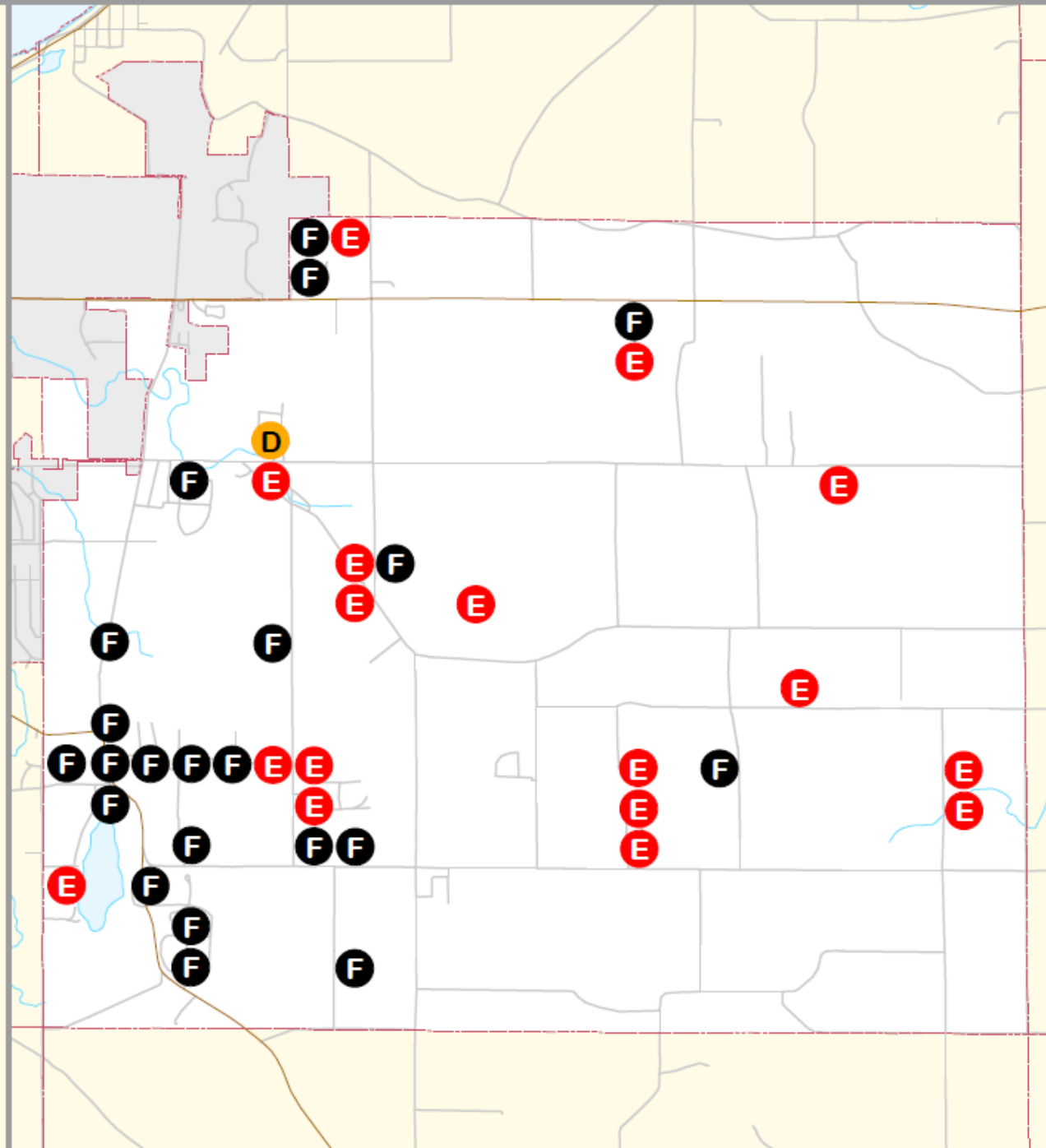
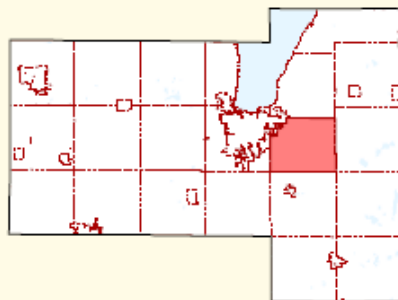
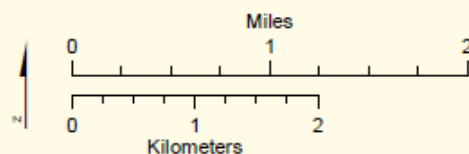
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TOTAL HARDNESS (ppm CaCO₃)

A ... 50	8	11%
B 51 - 100	1	1%
C 101 - 200	1	1%
D 201 - 300	2	3%
E 301 - 400	24	32%
F 401 ...	38	51%

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

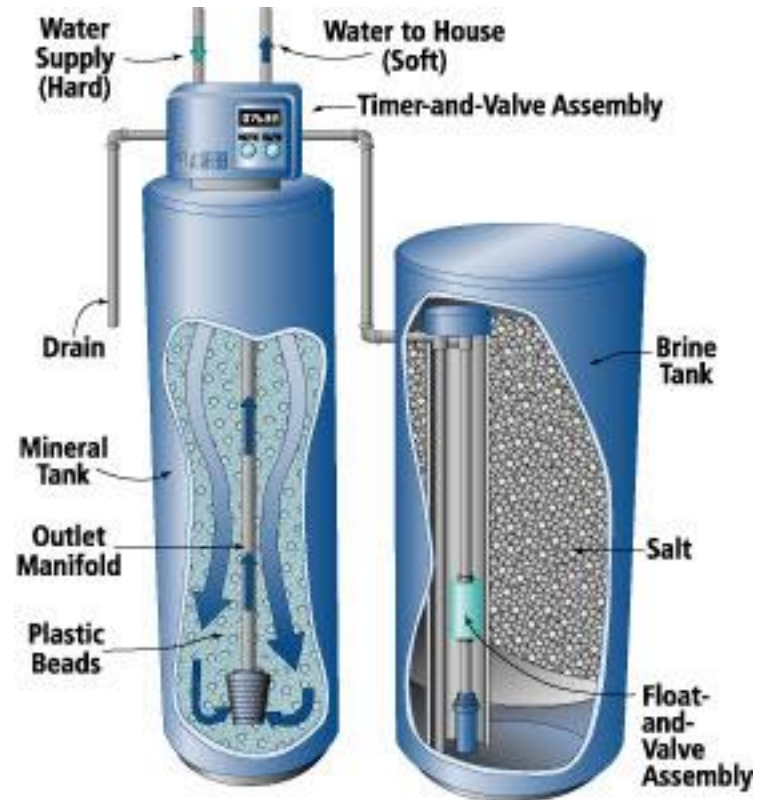


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Water Softening

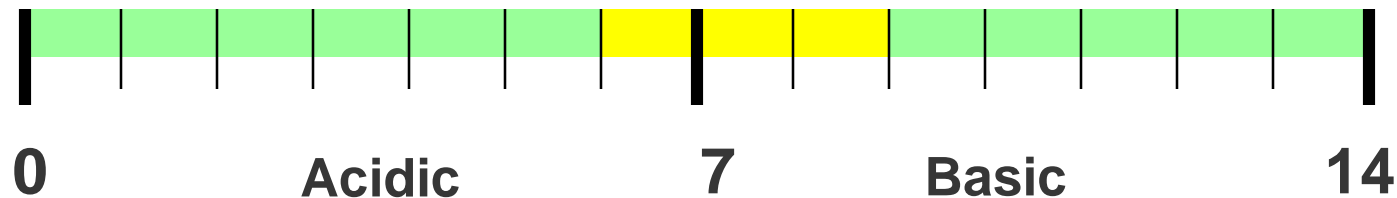
Water softeners remove calcium and magnesium which cause scaling and exchange it for sodium (or potassium).

- **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.



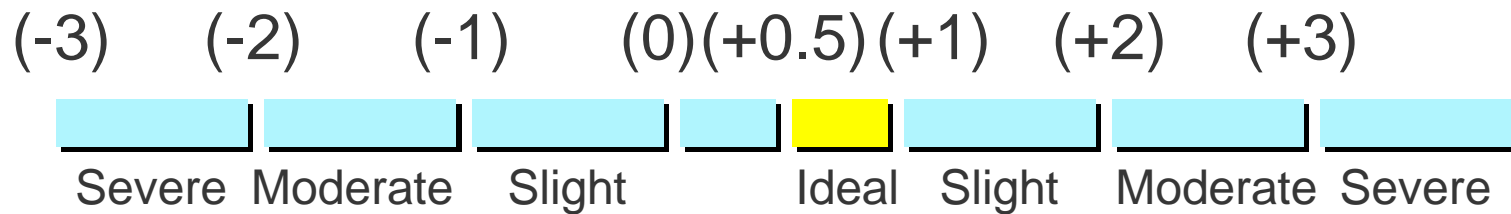
Tests for Overall Water Quality

- **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



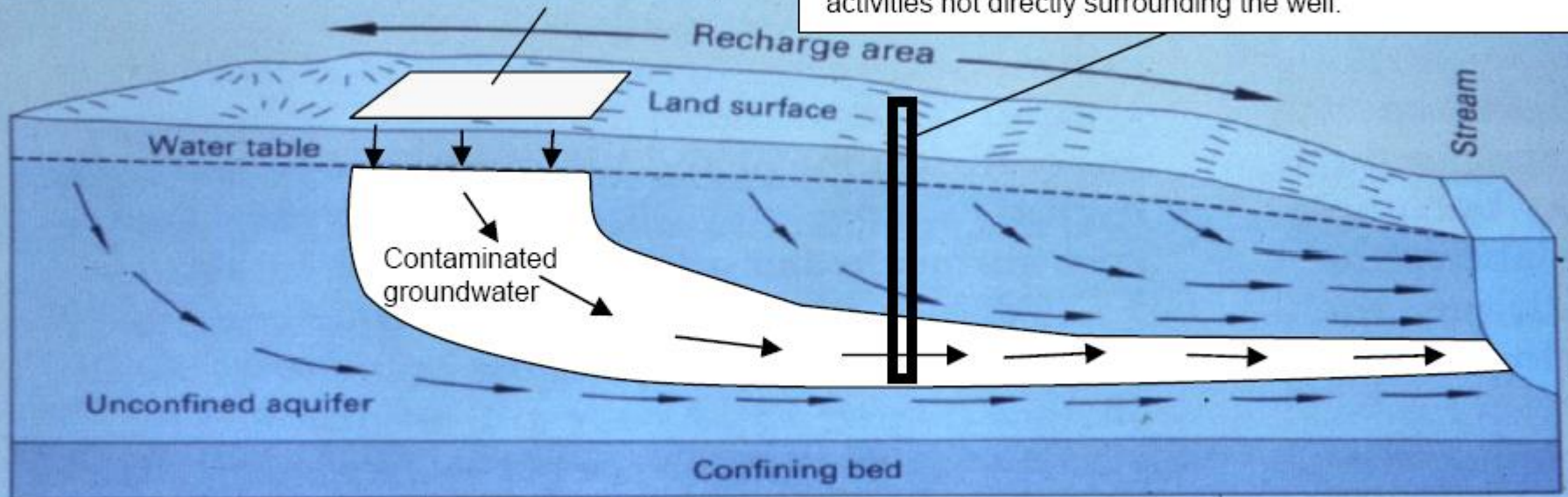
Scaling occurs





Land-use activity that pollutes groundwater.

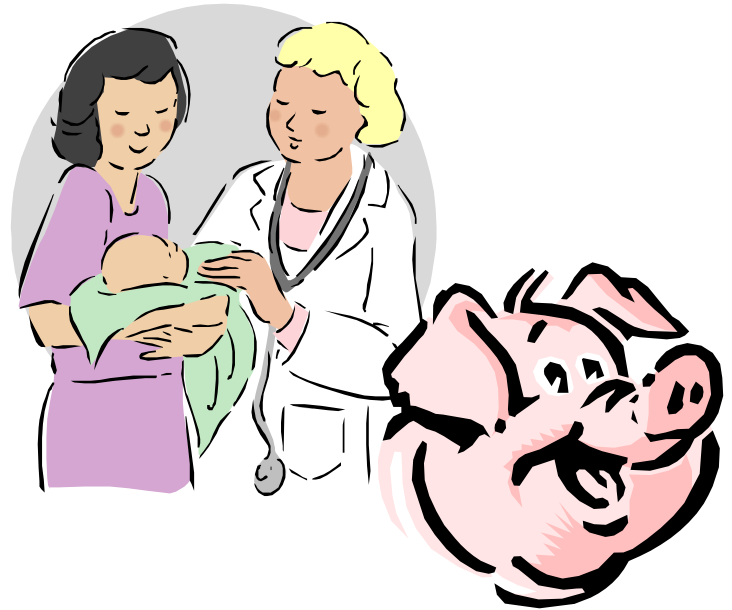
Because groundwater moves, wells located far from the contamination source can sometimes be polluted from activities not directly surrounding the well.



Nitrate-Nitrogen

Health Effects:

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



Sources:

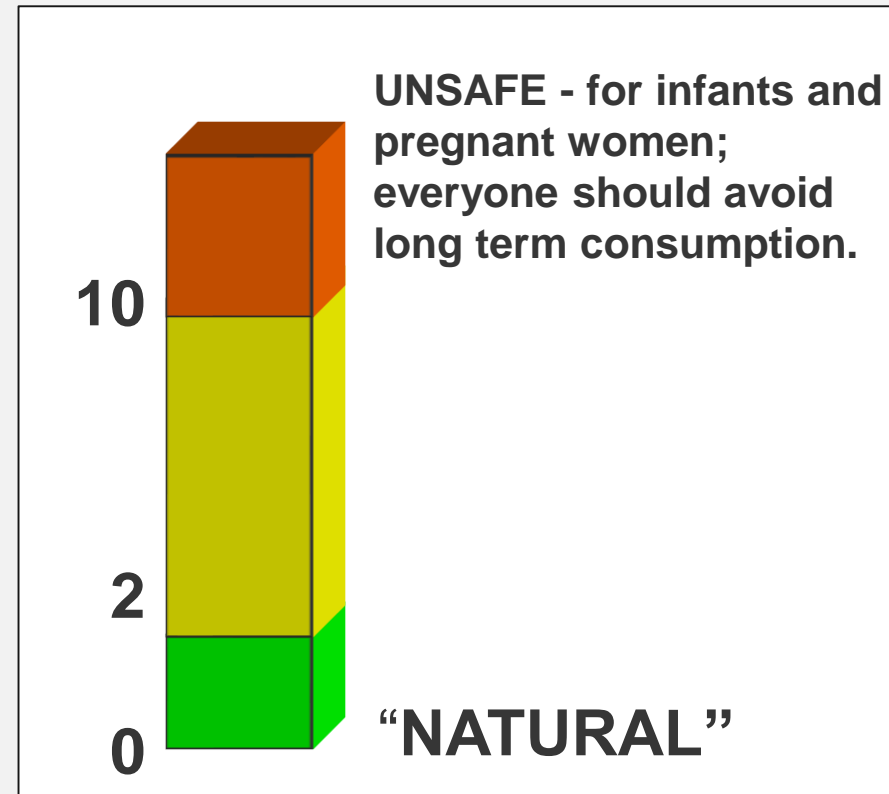
- Agricultural fertilizer
- Lawn fertilizer
- Septic systems
- Animal wastes



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”



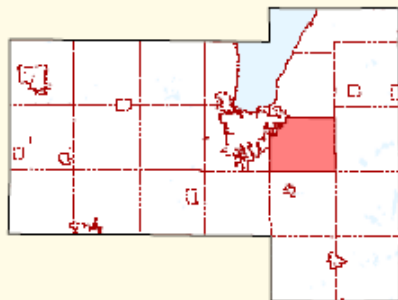
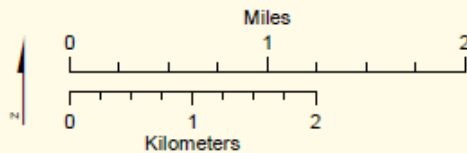
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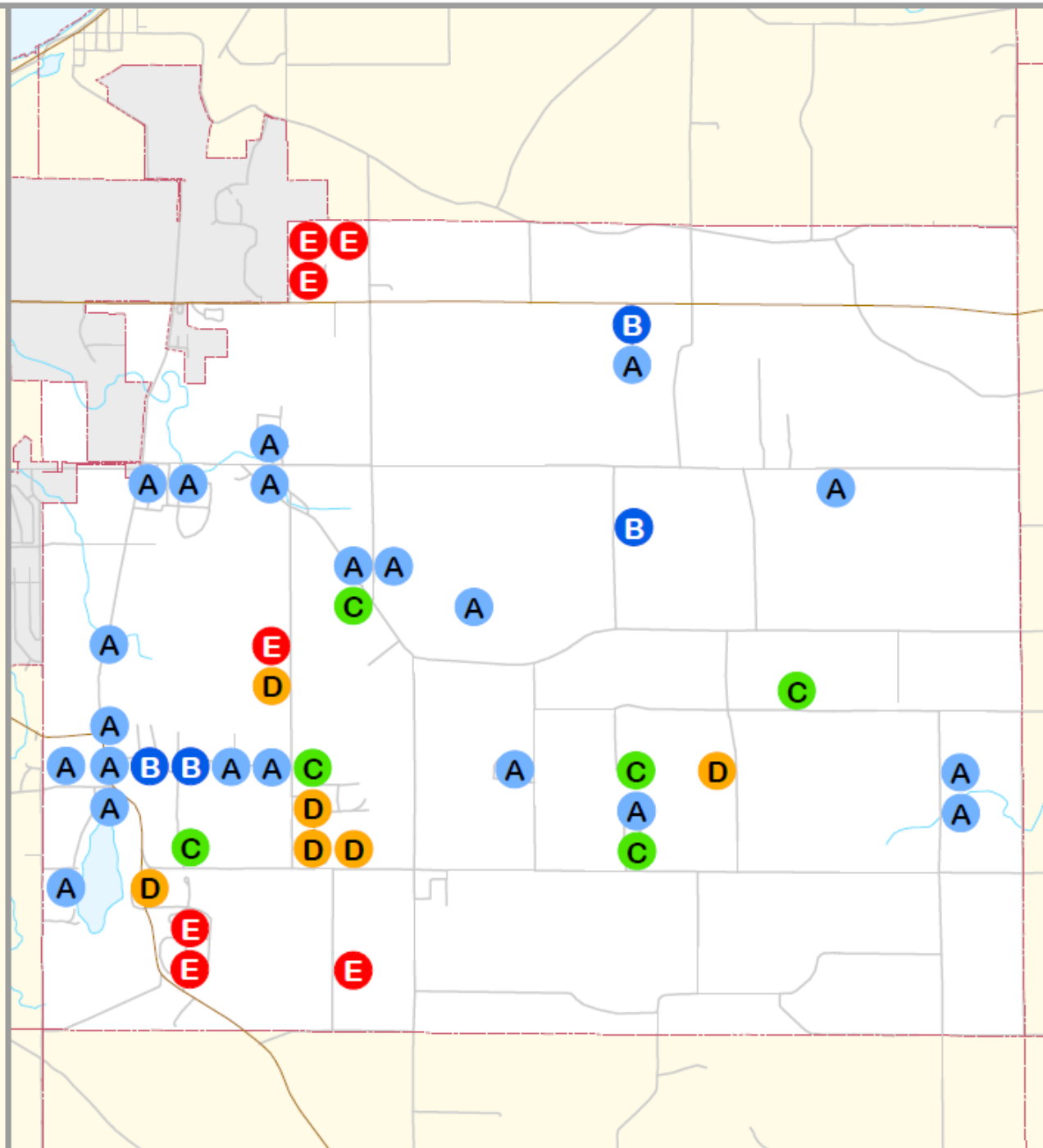
NITRATE-NITRITE (ppm N)

A	None Detected	38	51 %
B	... 2.0	6	8 %
C	2.1 - 5.0	9	12 %
D	5.1 - 10.0	10	14 %
E	10.1 - 20.0	11	15 %
F	20.1 ...	0	0 %

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



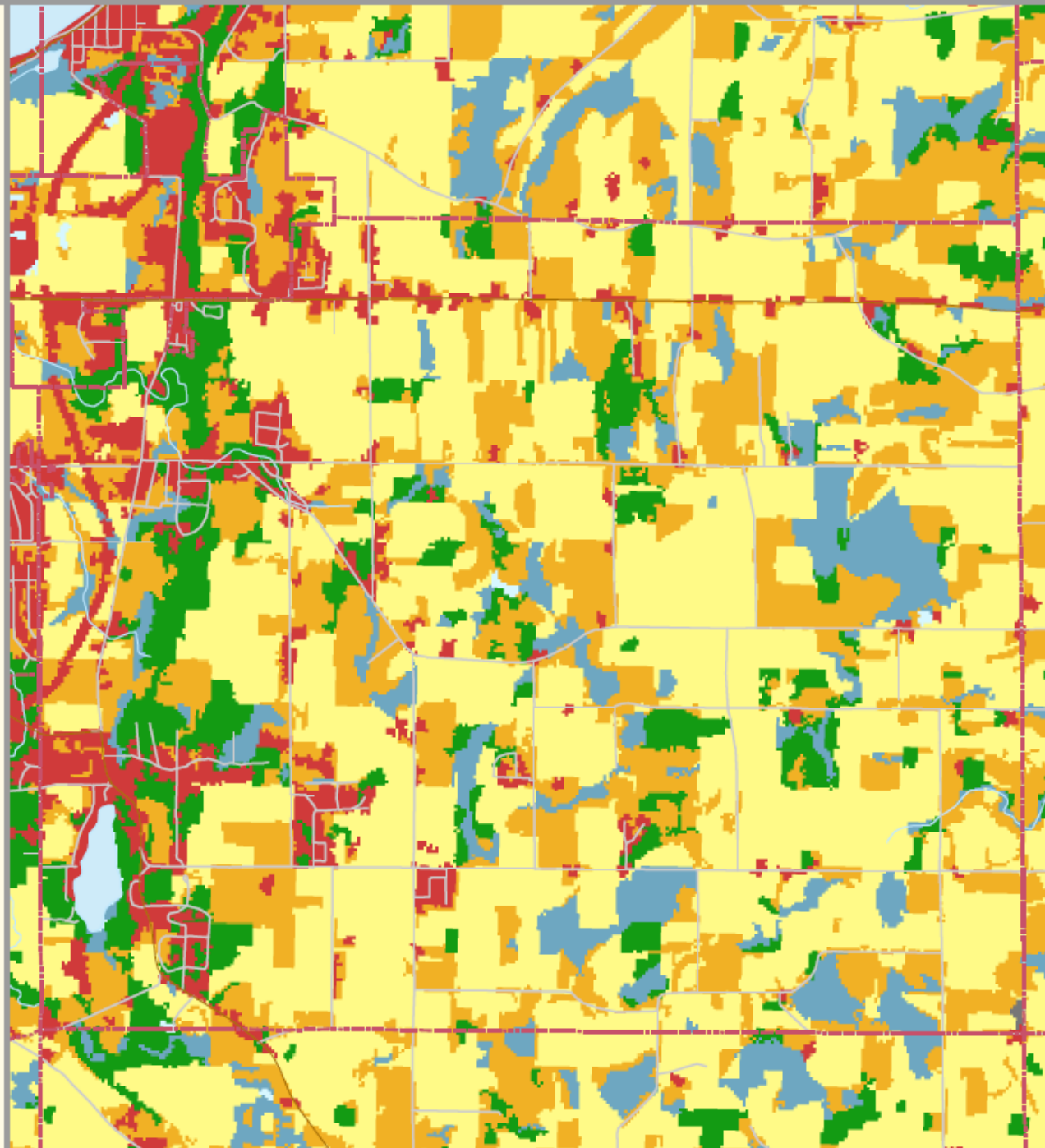
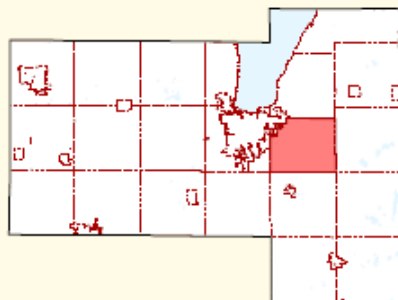
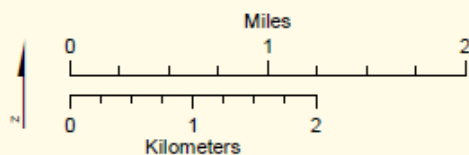
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Land Use:



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What can I do to reduce my nitrate levels?

Solution:

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

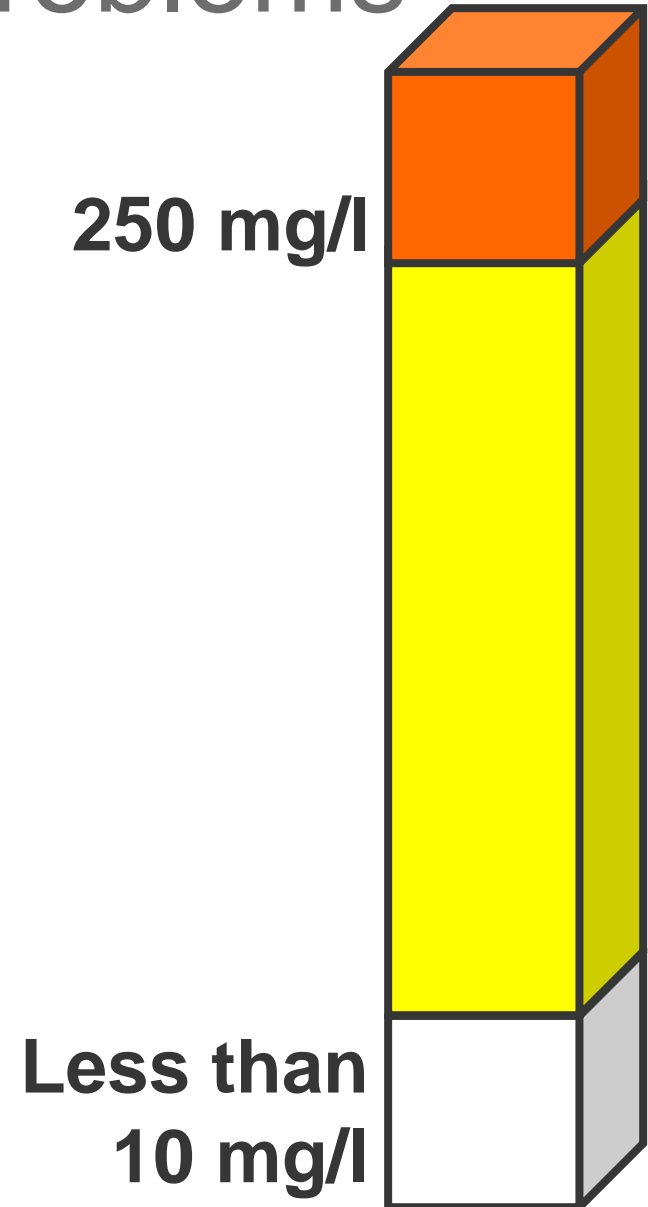
Short term:

- **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



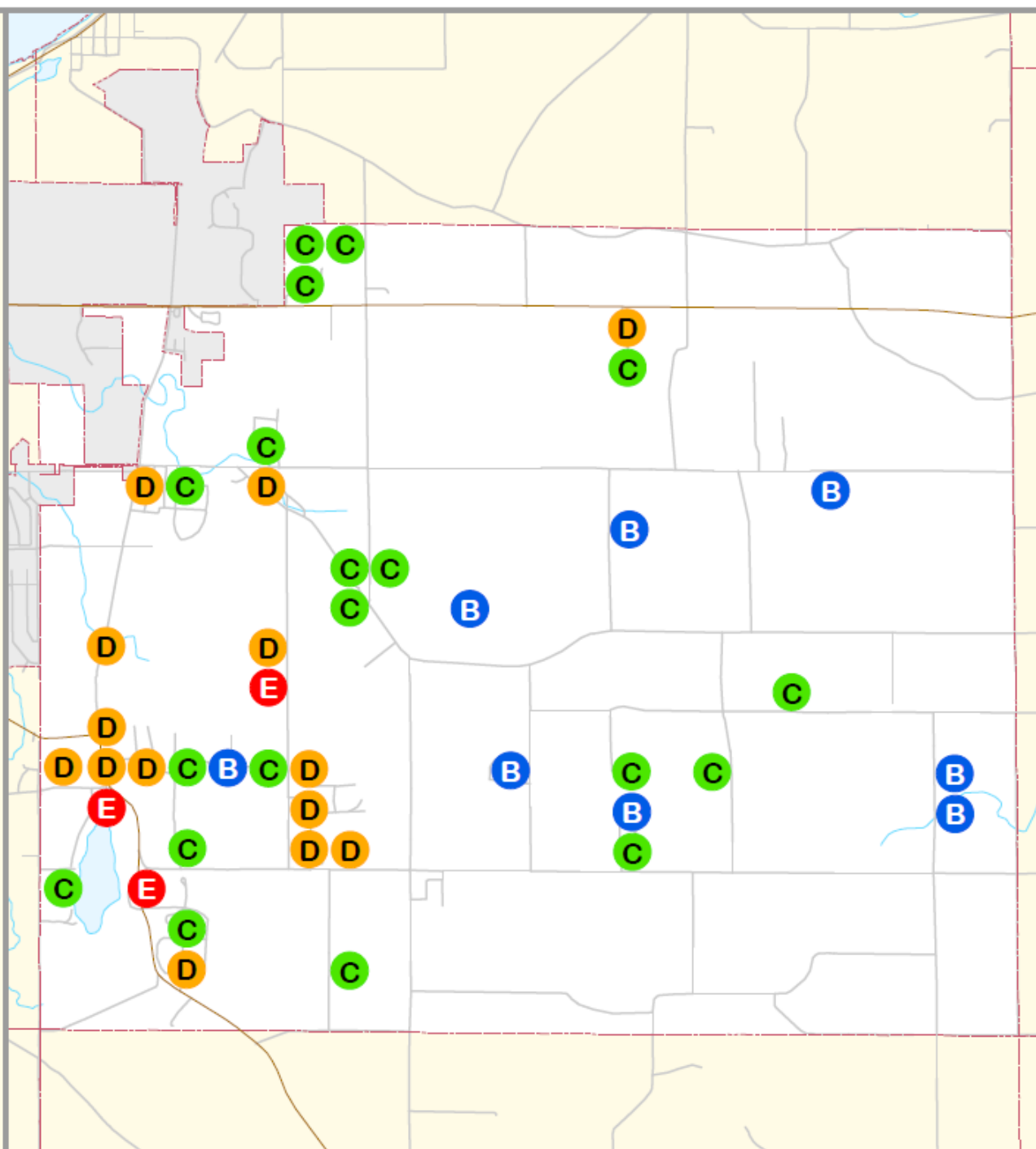
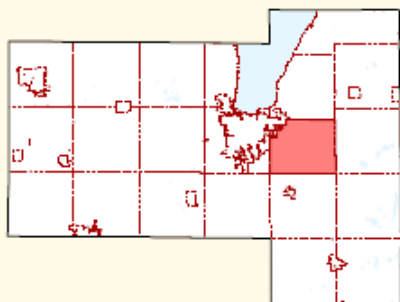
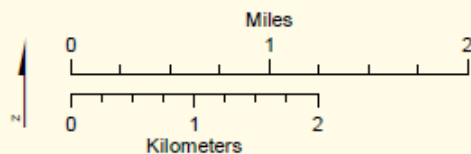
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CHLORIDE (ppm)

A None Detected	0	0%
B ... 10	11	15%
C 11 - 50	30	41%
D 51 - 100	28	38%
E 101 - 200	5	7%
F 201 ...	0	0%

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



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Test Important to Health

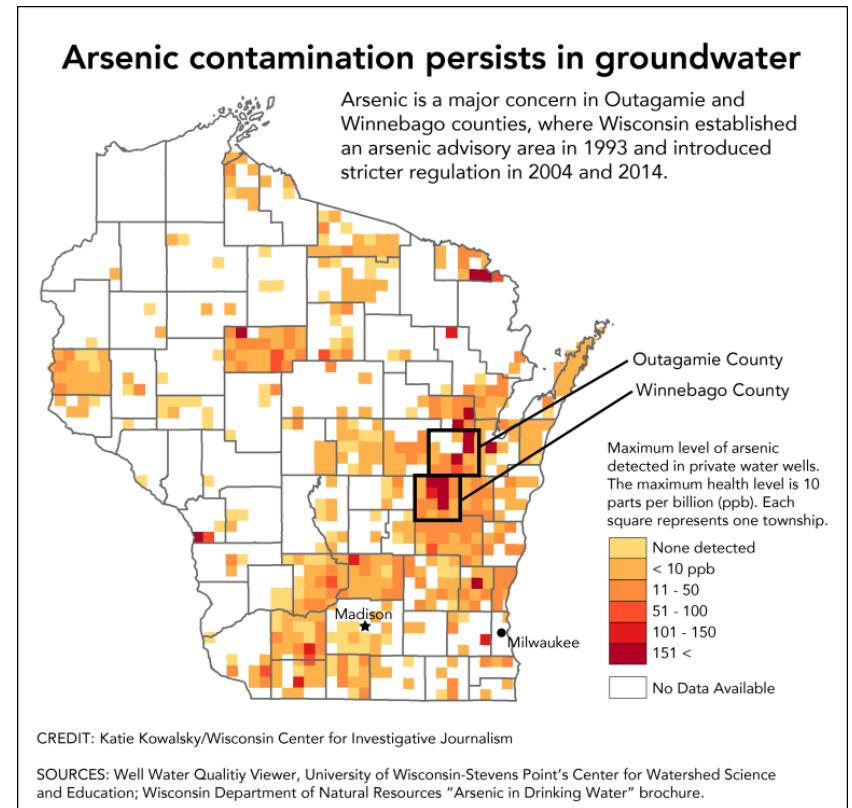
Arsenic

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



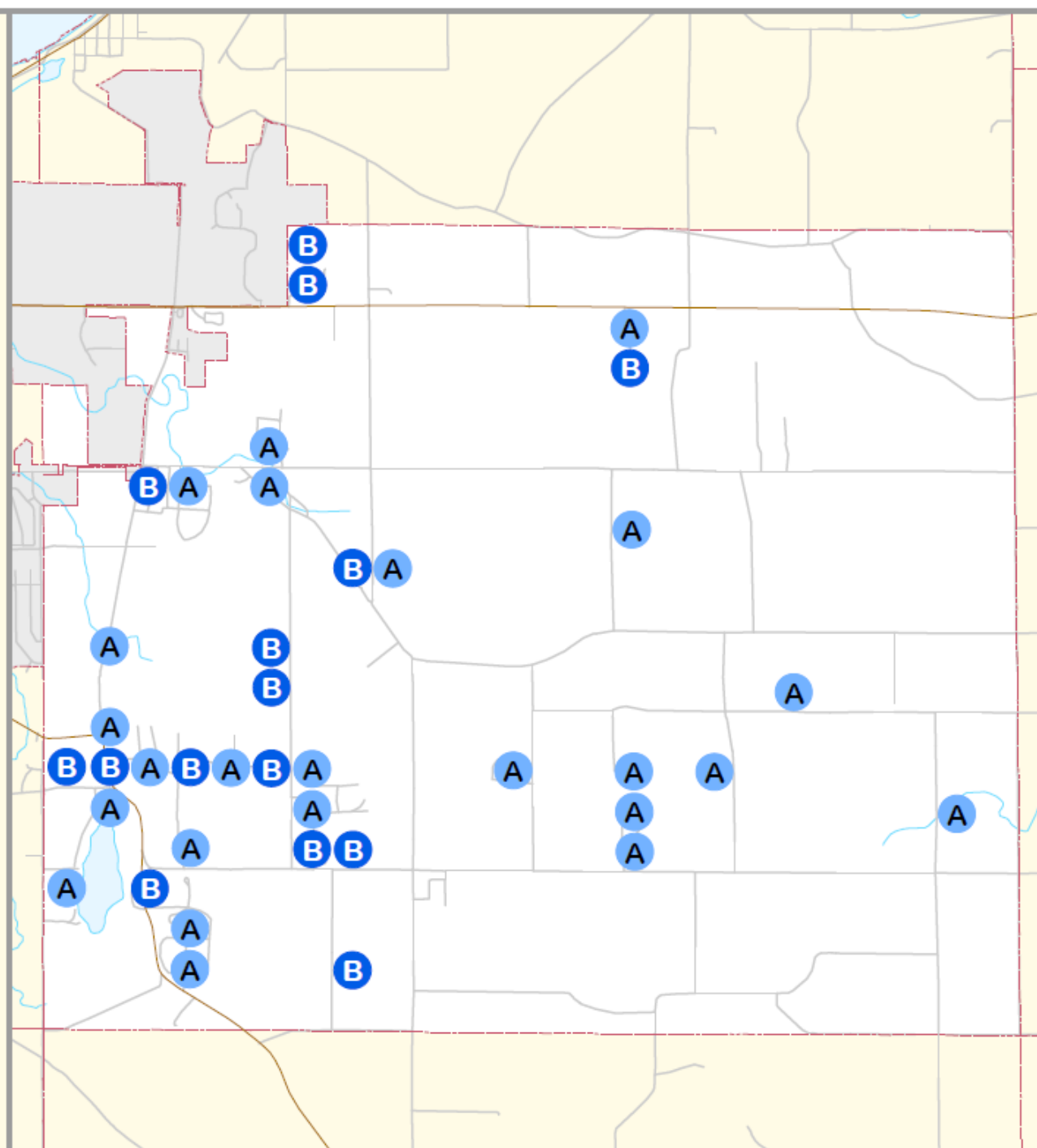
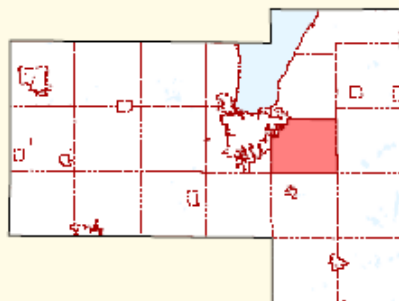
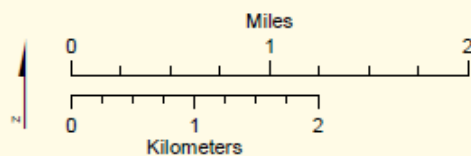
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ARSENIC (mg/l)

A None Detected	51	76 %
B ... 0.010	14	21 %
C 0.011 - 0.050	2	3 %
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



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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**

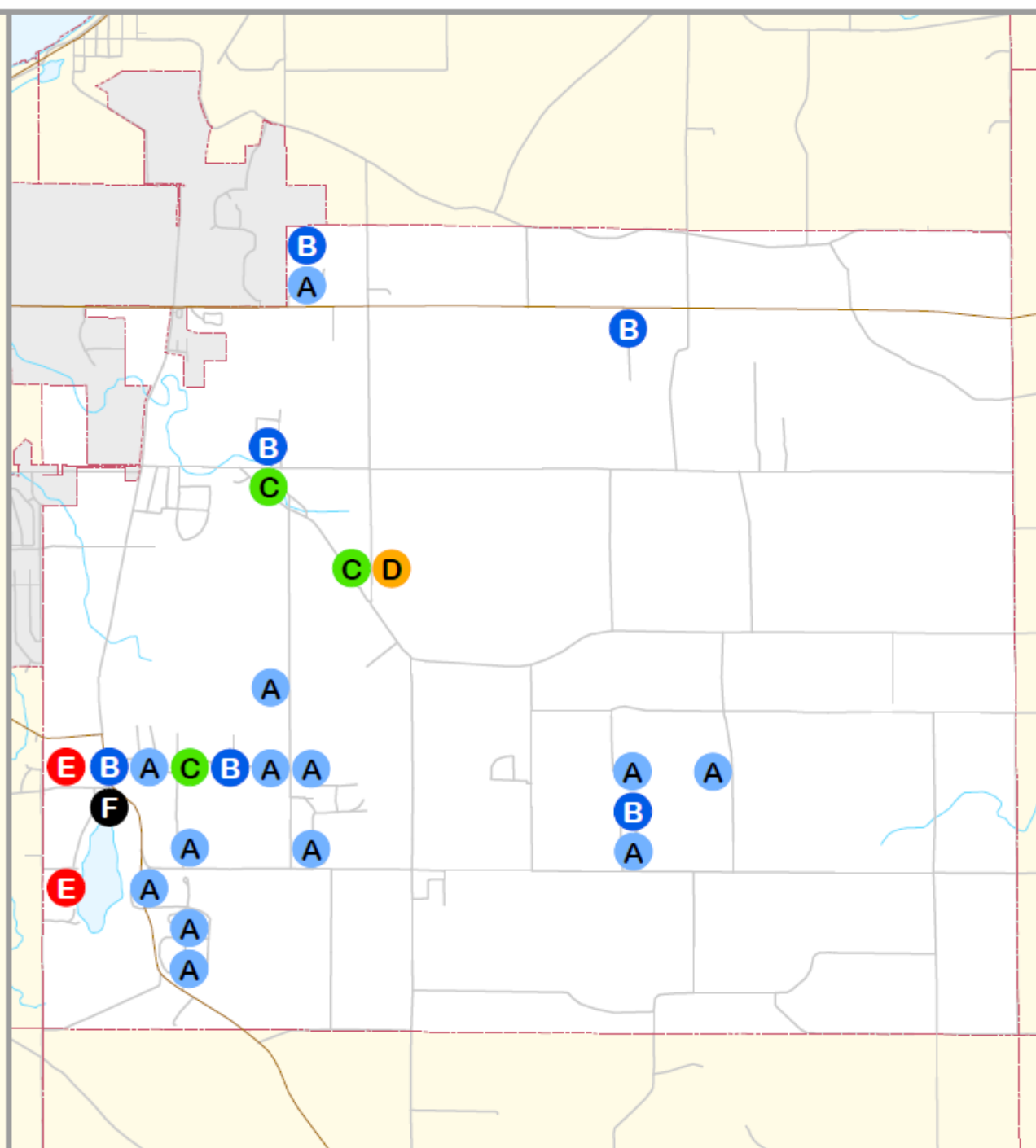
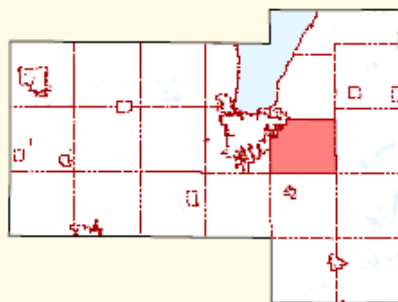
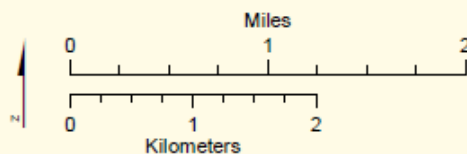
Town of Empire

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IRON (mg/l)

A None Detected	34	51 %
B ... 0.300	24	36 %
C 0.301 - 1.000	3	4 %
D 1.001 - 2.000	3	4 %
E 2.001 - 5.000	2	3 %
F 5.001 ...	1	1 %

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



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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



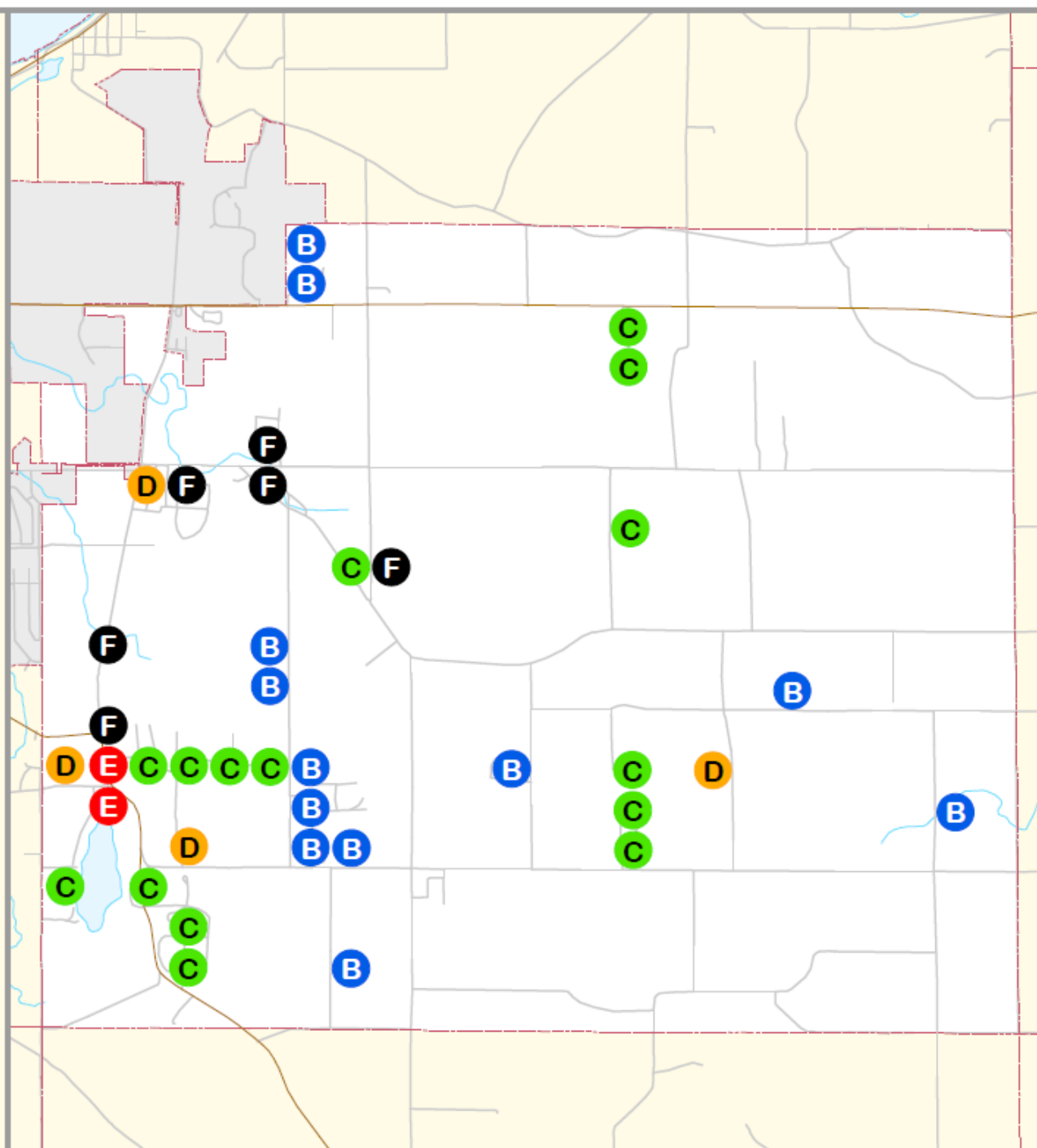
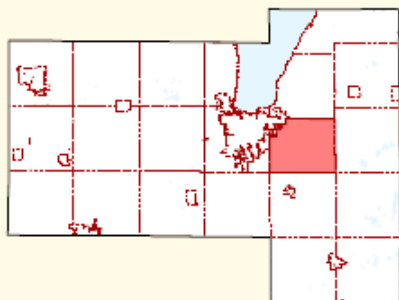
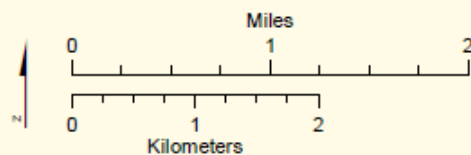
Town of Empire

Fond du Lac County, October 2018

SULFATE (mg/l)

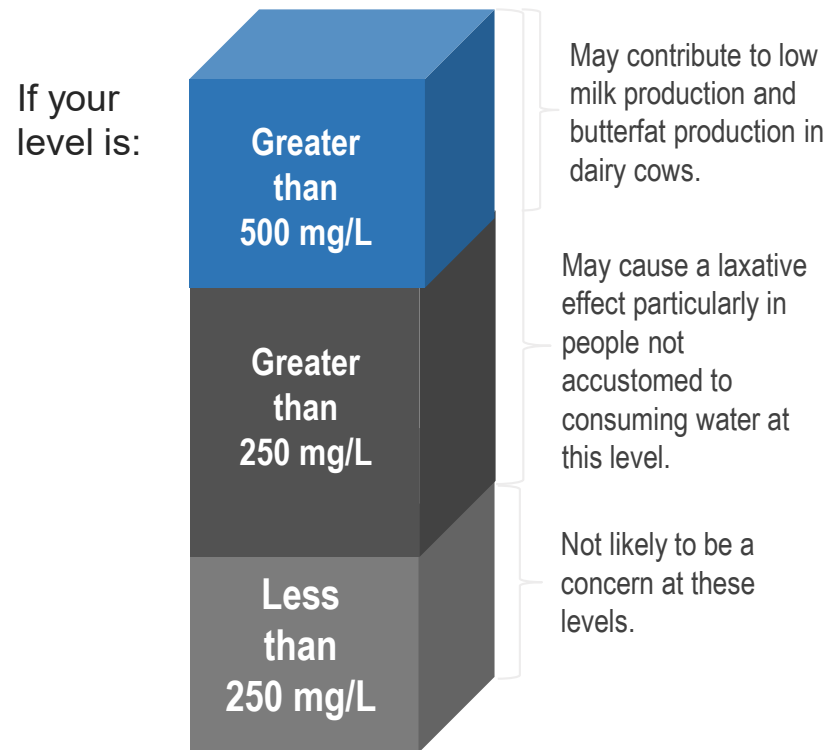
A None Detected	0	0 %
B ...25	18	27 %
C 26 - 50	26	39 %
D 51 - 75	5	7 %
E 76 - 100	9	13 %
F 101 ...	9	13 %

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



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Sulfate



General Information:

- Naturally occurring in groundwater in some parts of Wisconsin.

Health Concerns:

- Concentrations over 250 mg/L may give water an off taste and cause diarrhea in people not accustomed to consuming the water. Sulfate over 500 mg/L may lower milk production and butterfat production in dairy cows.

Additional Information:

- Sulfate is not the same as hydrogen sulfide.

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*)



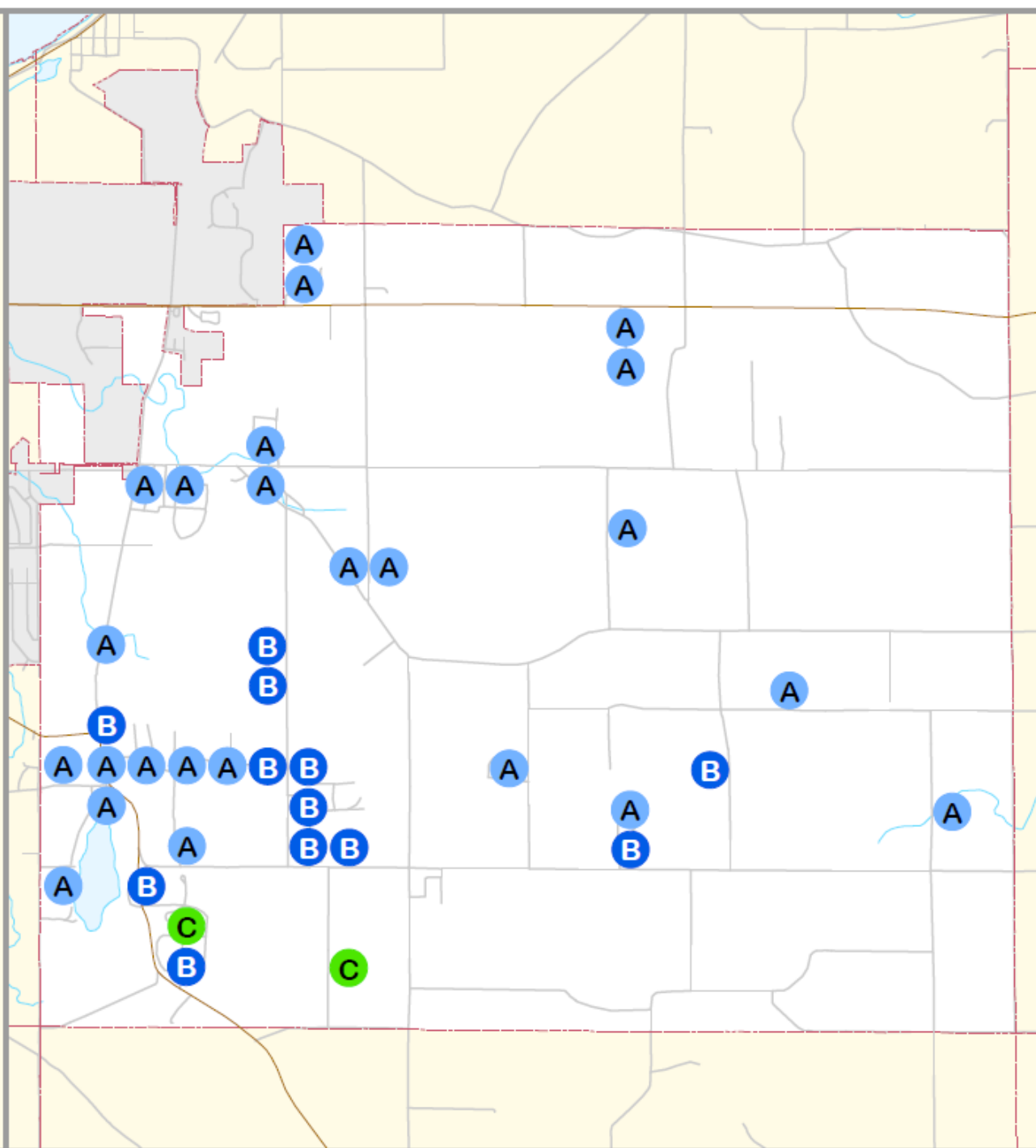
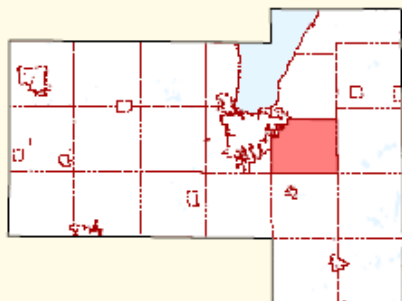
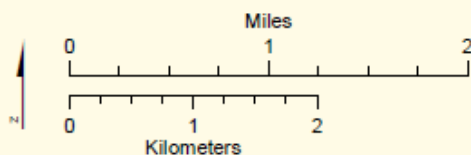
Town of Empire

Fond du Lac County, October 2018

DACT (ug/l)

A None Detected	46	69 %
B ... 0.3	18	27 %
C 0.4 - 1.0	3	4 %
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



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understanding water treatment

- **Advantages:**

- + Reduce level of contaminants and other impurities
- + Improve taste, color and odor

- **Disadvantages:**

- Require routine maintenance.
- Can require large amounts of energy.
- Testing is often the only way to know it is functioning properly for most health related contaminants.

- **Cautions:**

- Treatment methods often selective for certain contaminants
- Multiple treatment units may be necessary
- Treatment may also remove beneficial elements from water in the process.



Where do you go from here:

Recommended next steps

- Test well annually for bacteria, or if water changes color or clarity.
- If levels are elevated, test again in 15 months for nitrate.
- If levels of DACT Screen > 2.0 ppb, consider contacting Dept. of Ag, Trade and Consumer Protection for free follow up testing.

Contact Info:

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Stevens Point, WI 54481

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

- **Town of Empire**
- **Fond du Lac County UW-Extension Office**
- **Fond du Lac County Health Dept.**

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