

A scenic landscape view of a river valley. In the foreground, several yellow wildflowers with green stems and leaves are in focus. The middle ground shows a dense forest of green trees covering a hillside. In the background, a wide river flows through a valley, with distant hills visible under a cloudy sky.

# ***CRAWFORD COUNTY LWRM Plan 10-year Extension Request***

***February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2026***

# Crawford County Background

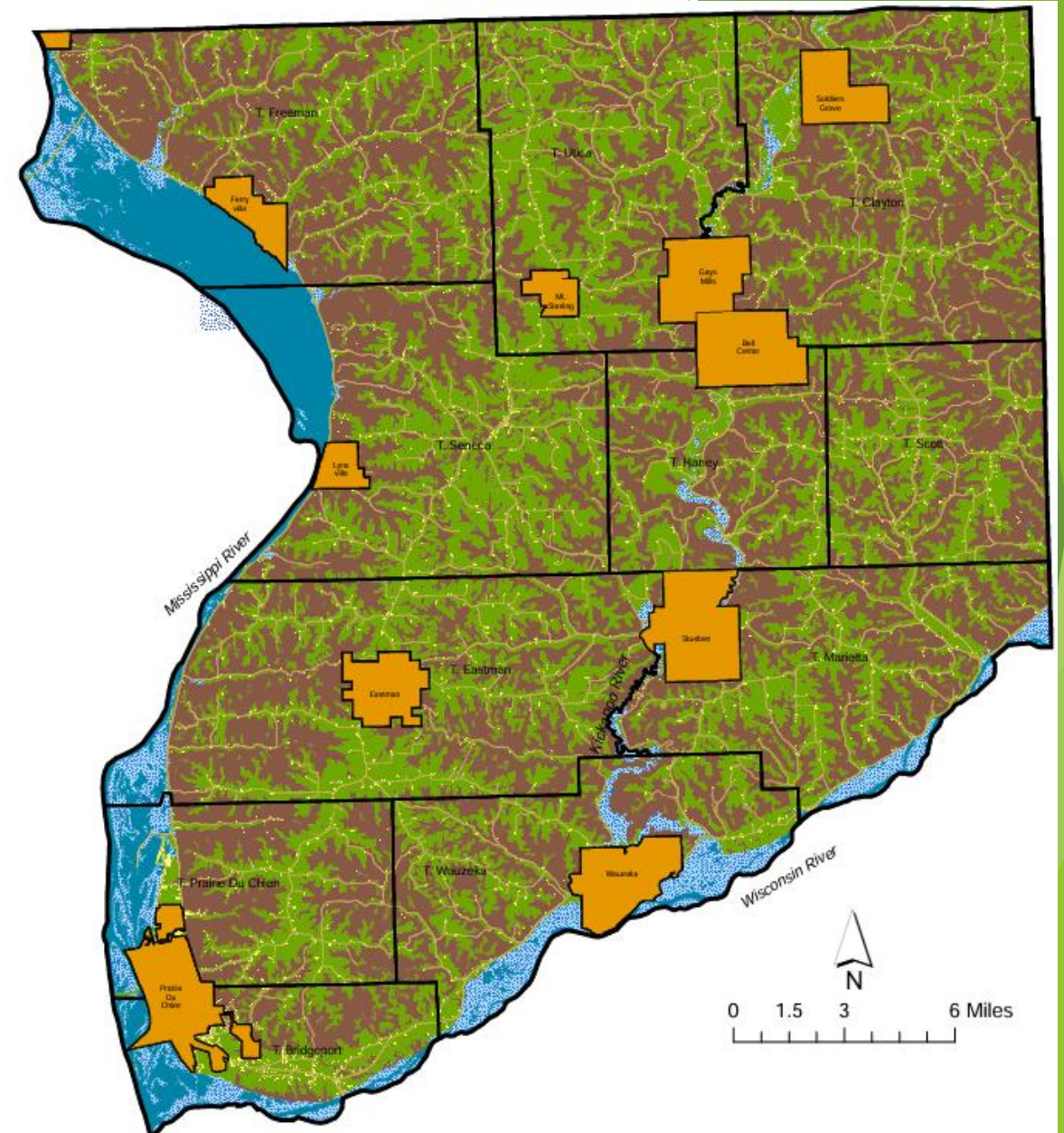
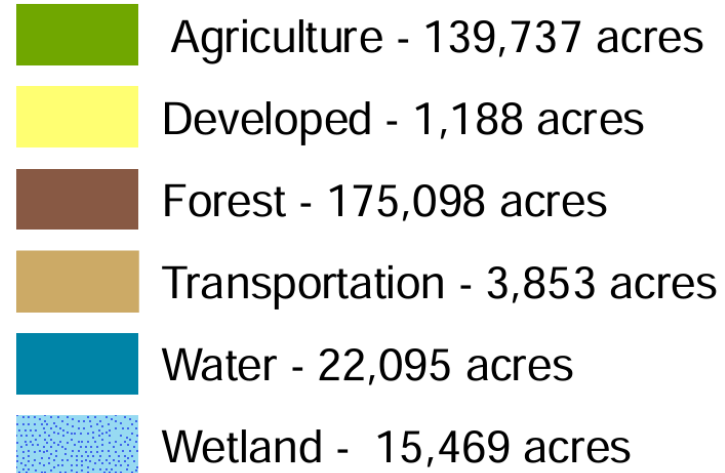
- ▶ Founded in 1818
- ▶ 2023 Population: 15,944
- ▶ Size: 586 sq. miles
- ▶ Non-developed areas are roughly 50% agriculture, 50% forested





# Crawford County Land Use

## Existing Land Uses (Acres)\*



# CRAWFORD COUNTY: A Breakdown

- ▶ Agricultural snapshot
  - ▶ 899 active farms
  - ▶ 6,200 dairy cows, 28,746 head of cattle
  - ▶ 1 dairy and 3 hog (1 constructed, 2 just recently permitted) facilities between 500-1,000 animal units
  - ▶ 1 hog facility over 1,000 animal units
- ▶ Water Resources
  - ▶ Bordered by the Mississippi River to the west, Wisconsin River to the south, and the Kickapoo River
  - ▶ 55 trout streams totaling 308 miles
  - ▶ DNR has designated 8 Exceptional Resource Waters

# CRAWFORD COUNTY: A Breakdown

- ▶ County ordinances
  - ▶ Animal Waste Storage Permit
  - ▶ Livestock Facility Siting Permit
  - ▶ Non-Metallic Mining Reclamation Permit
  - ▶ Shoreland/ Wetland and Floodplain Zoning Permit
  - ▶ Communications Tower Siting Permit





# LCD and LCC

## LCD Staff

- ▶ David Troester- County Conservationist
- ▶ Travis Bunting- Conservation Specialist
- ▶ Amy Opprieht- Administrative Assistant
- ▶ Becky Nagel- Sanitation & Zoning Technician
- ▶ Sawyer Roberts- Sanitation & Zoning Assistant



## LCC Members

- ▶ Gary Koch, Chairman, Co. Board Member
- ▶ Mary Kuhn, Co. Board Member
- ▶ Owen DuCharme, Co. Board Member
- ▶ Kate Krachey, Citizen Member
- ▶ Chad Sime, Farmer Member



# Conservation Issues

## ► Soil Erosion

- Majority of farms have HEL designation
- Reduced numbers of livestock and associated pasture and hay
- Increased acres of corn and soybeans

## ► Water Quality

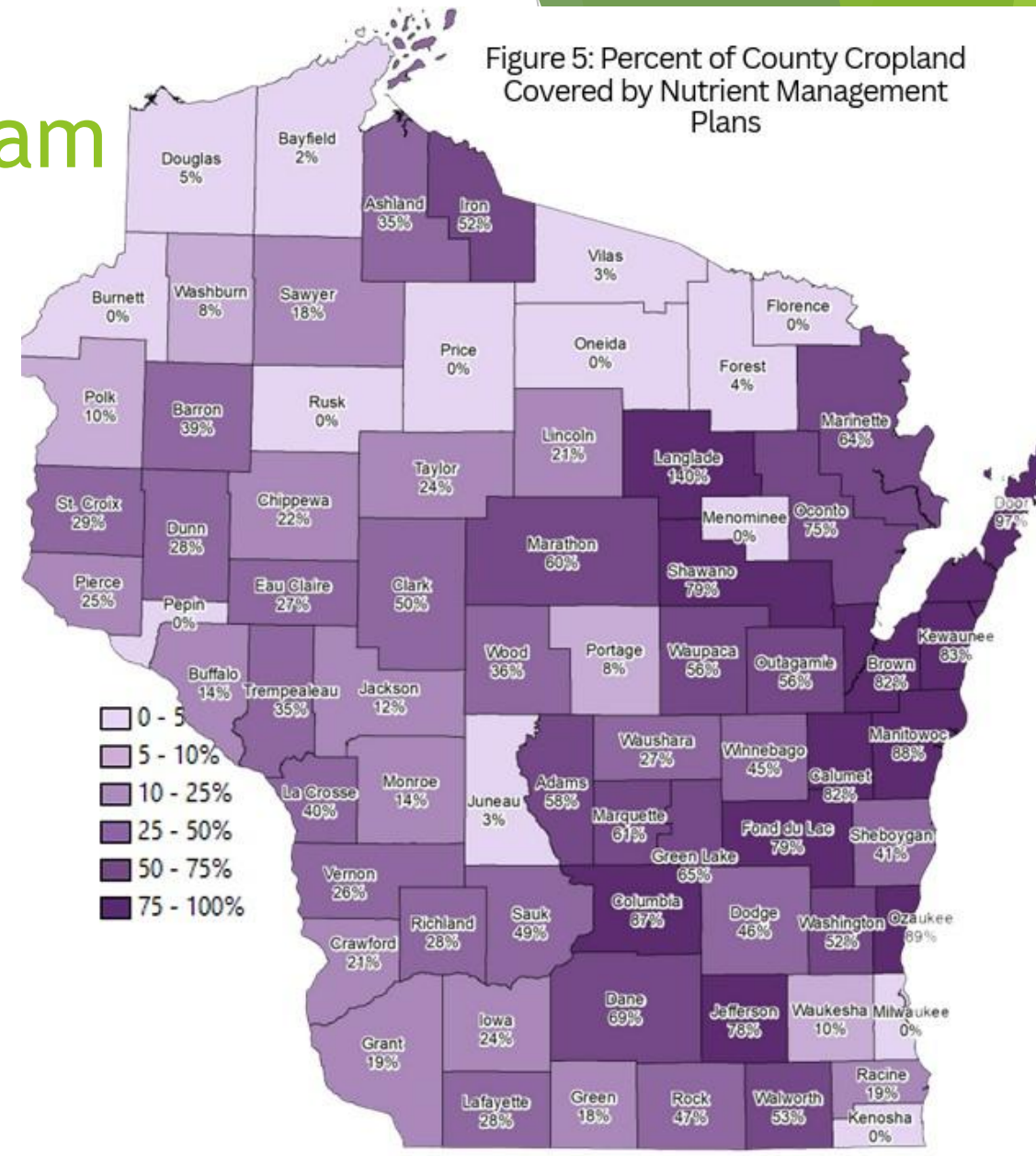
- Steep slopes of the Driftless Region have a higher potential for surface runoff
- High intensity storms have led to increased surface water degradation
- Karst topography and fractured bedrock





# Farmland Preservation Program

- ▶ 3 Towns and 1 Village with FPP Zoning
- ▶ 97 current claimants
- ▶ FPP has been the primary impetus for the increase in NMP on farmland in the county
- ▶ NMP coverage in the county
  - ▶ <1% in 2011
  - ▶ 12% in 2016
  - ▶ 21% in 2024



Source: WI DATCP 2024 NMP Annual Report



# Private Well Testing Efforts

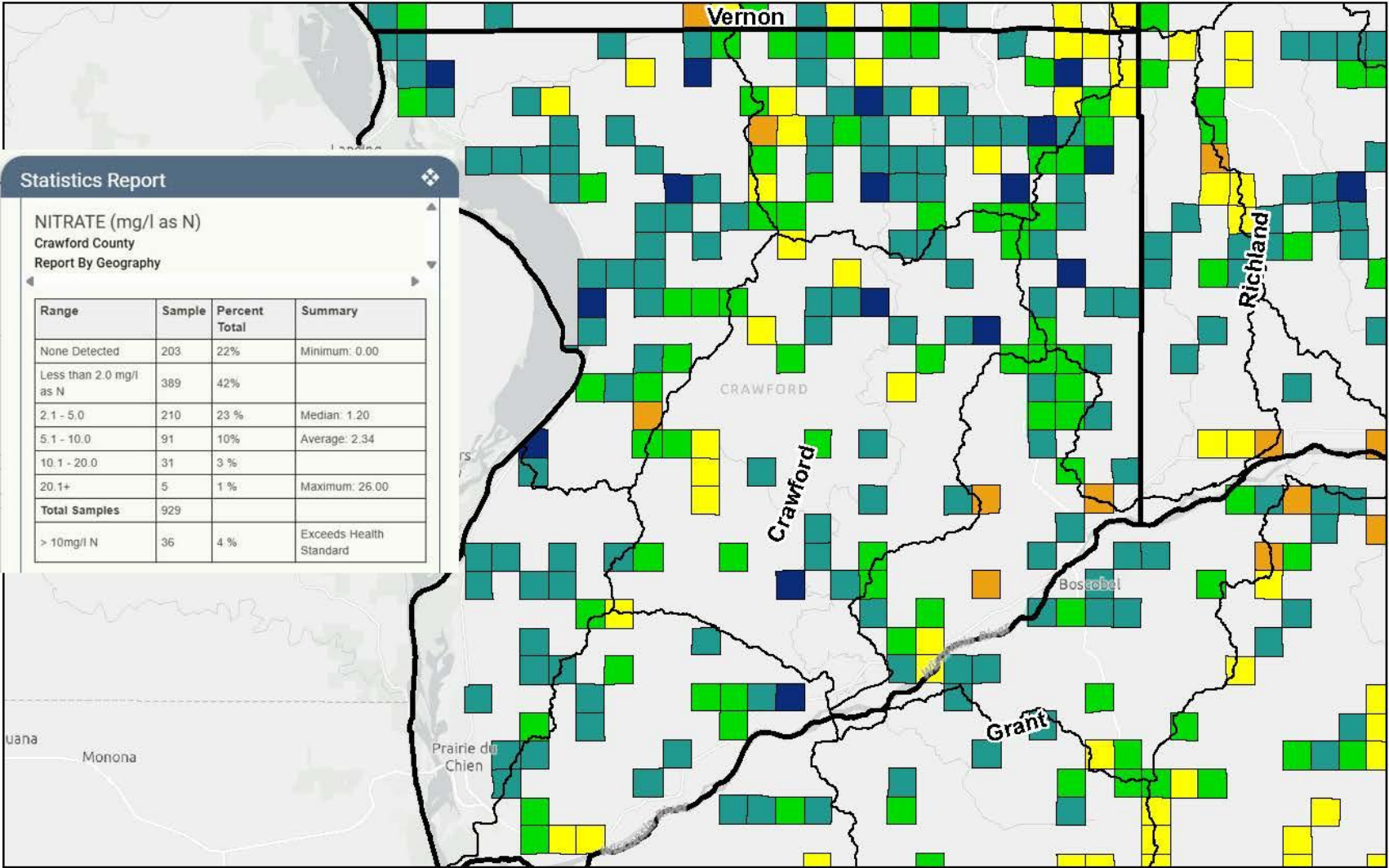
- ▶ Driftless Area Water Study (DAWS)
  - ▶ Partnership with Richland and Vernon Counties' Land Conservation Departments and Health Departments and with the Crawford Stewardship Project.
  - ▶ Goals are to increase awareness of the importance of well testing, to increase the amount of groundwater quality data in the area, and to determine circumstances that increase the likelihood of contamination
  - ▶ Currently seeking funding/ grants to assist in the costs of these well testing efforts

**Table 2-7 Coordinated Well Testing Results in Crawford County**

	October 2020		April 2021		November 2022		November 2024	
NITRATE mg/L	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Not Detected	18	20	21	22	10	27	33	100
<=2.0	32	36	32	34	10	27		
2.1- 5.0	22	25	23	24	11	30		
5.1- 10.0	11	12	10	11	4	11		
10.1- 20.0	6	7	6	6	2	5	0	0
>20.0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0
Average Nitrate	2.9	-	3.1	-	2.6	-	-	-
Coliform Bacteria present	22	25	10	11	10	27	13	26
E. coli positives	4	18	0	0	1	10	1	8
Total Samples	89	-	94	-	37	-	49	-

\*\*Please note that the November 2024 testing did not produce results that showed each specific samples nitrate level, just a cumulative summary of the number of wells above or below the 10 mg/L health standard.

Crawford County - Private Wells Nitrate Contamination - 2025



11/11/2025

County Watershed Nitrate

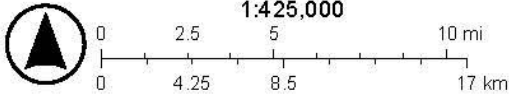
None Detected

Less than 2.0 mg/l as N

2.1 - 5.0

5.1 - 10.0

10.1 - 20.0



Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

WDNR  
Nov 2025



# Youth Outreach

Youth Conservation Day, Arbor Day event, 4-H events, NACD Poster Contest



Youth Conservation Day



2014 State Poster  
Contest winner



Mississippi River  
Adventure Day

# 2027-2036 Goals

## ► **Soil Erosion**

- Goal 1: Maintain soil erosion on all cropland to “T”.
- Goal 2: Reduce erosion on land other than cropland.
- Goal 3: Increase money available for cost-sharing to install practices to prevent erosion.

## ► **Water Resources**

- Goal 1: Preserve, protect, restore, and enhance surface water, groundwater and riparian areas.
- Goal 2: Implement NR151 Strategy outlined in Section 4 of this plan.
- Goal 3: Increase funding for cost-sharing and demonstration projects.

## ► **Land Use Planning**

- Goal 1: Work with the towns on the implementation of their comprehensive plans.
- Goal 2: Promote and support local land use planning to protect the natural resources of the county.
- Goal 3: Improve and protect the quality of natural resources by the judicious and economic use of nutrients.
- Utilize Floodplain and Shoreland/ Wetland Zoning to protect our natural resources.

## ► **Land Management**

- Goal 1: Encourage sustainable forestry practices that improve our unique ecosystems.
- Goal 2: Protect and enhance important wildlife habitat areas.
- Goal 3: Limit wildlife damage to crops.

## ► **Waste Disposal**

- Goal 1: Provide hazardous waste recycling/disposal opportunities.



Streambank stabilization project



# Agricultural Performance Standards Strategy

## ► Priority Farms

- Farmland Preservation zoned farms
- Farms with formal complaints filed
- Farms located in targeted watersheds (or with impaired waters)
- Cropland and livestock facilities located in WQMA's

## ► FPP Farms

- Visit all farms once every 4 years
- Issue COC's and NON's when necessary



# Challenges

- ▶ Climate change and increasing high-volume precipitation events in an area with steep slopes
- ▶ Fewer farms with grass in their rotation, more fenceline-to-fenceline cash grain operations



- ▶ Funding Needs
  - ▶ Additional staff to target water quality issues and seek out beneficial initiatives
  - ▶ An increase in SWRM grant cost-share dollars as costs have risen significantly over the last decade due to inflation and increased design standards for certain projects
  - ▶ County-funded cost-share



# 2027-2036 Projects

- ▶ Improve NR151 compliance
- ▶ Increase NMP acres
- ▶ Private well water studies and outreach
- ▶ Determine soil erosion rates and/or groundwater contamination areas throughout the county to assist in targeting outreach and technical and financial assistance





# Questions??

