

DODGE COUNTY LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT 2022 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.

2022 LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

Larry Bischoff.....Chair
Dale Macheel.....Vice-Chair
Lisa Derr.....Secretary
Rodger Frievault.....Committee Member
Andrew Johnson.....Committee Member
Bill Foley.....Lake District Representative
Ken Weninger.....Member Appointed from FSA Committee



L to R: Ken Weninger, Dale Macheel, Larry Bischoff, Bill Foley, Andrew Johnson, and Lisa Derr.
Missing is Rodger Frievault.

2022 LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT STAFF

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

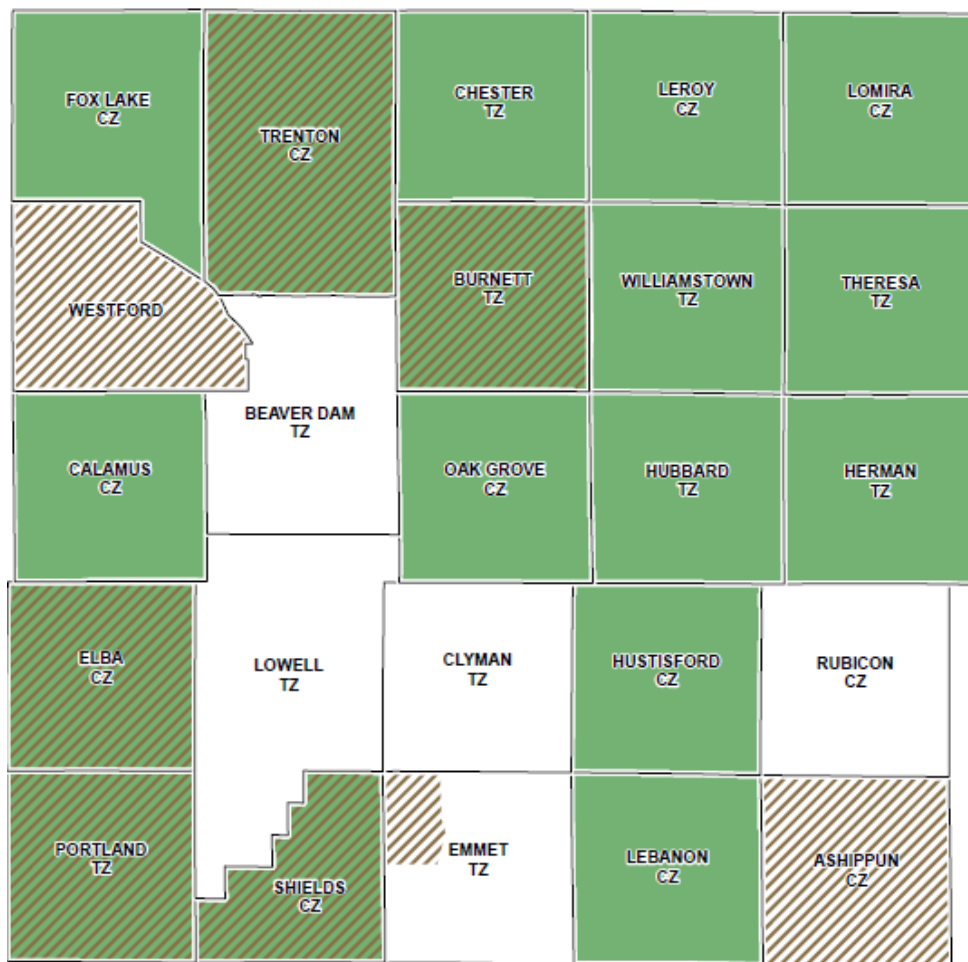


From L to R. John Bohonek, Becky Justmann, Jared Winter, Jon Duckert, Robert Bird, and Dave Braunschweig

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 2022 we had a total of 112,578 acres in the Farmland Preservation Program. This is an increase of 648 acres from 2021. We completed 144 status reviews monitoring compliance with NR151 performance standards.

We signed 6 new Ag Enterprise Agreements totaling 969.96 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 2022, \$39,257.35 of cost share money was spent on the following projects to Dodge County residents. \$9,065.00 was committed to projects that could not be completed due to the weather or contractor schedules and will be carried forward into 2023. The projects that were completed resulted in reducing 268 tons of sediment, and 543 pounds of phosphorus running off into our surface waters.

- 14 Wells were abandoned, 1 with cost sharing
- 1 Grazing plan implemented covering 26.5 acres
- 0.75 Acres Grassed Waterway
- 2.75 Acres Critical Area Seeding
- 20 Feet Stream Crossing
- 140 Acres cover crops

Critical Area Seeding



Stream Crossings



Grassed Waterway



Managed Grazing



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. \$7,027.22 was used for the following practices. A sediment runoff savings of 43.8 tons, and a Phosphorus runoff savings of 53 pounds were achieved.

- 0.9 Acre Grassed Waterway
- 1.25 Acres Critical Area Seeding

ANIMAL WASTE ORDINANCE

Two permits were issued in 2022 under the Dodge County Manure Storage Ordinance for construction in 2023. Both projects were designed by private engineers and reviewed by our office. We designed one project that may go in in 2023, but no permits were issued at this time.

WILDLIFE CROP DAMAGE ABATEMENT AND CLAIMS PROGRAM

Dodge County had 4 claims for Wildlife damage in 2022. The crop damage was assessed at a value of \$11,582.87. Wildlife crop damage payments were processed to 4 producers for a total of \$9,635.27. 43 deer were donated under the Venison Donation Program, resulting in 1,263 pounds of venison being donated to our local food pantries.

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT

We assisted 24 landowners with revising their Nutrient Management Plans and teaching them how to use SnapPlus so they can prepare their own plans. We documented 118,691 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, Chief River Nursery in Grafton, WI, and Alpha Nurseries Inc. Michigan. We sold 23,860 trees and 2000 tree tubes in 2021-2022 season to 289 property owners. This is an increase of 1,160 trees and 800 tree tubes from 2020-2021 season.



Our tree planter was rented out to five landowners planting 14,300 trees.



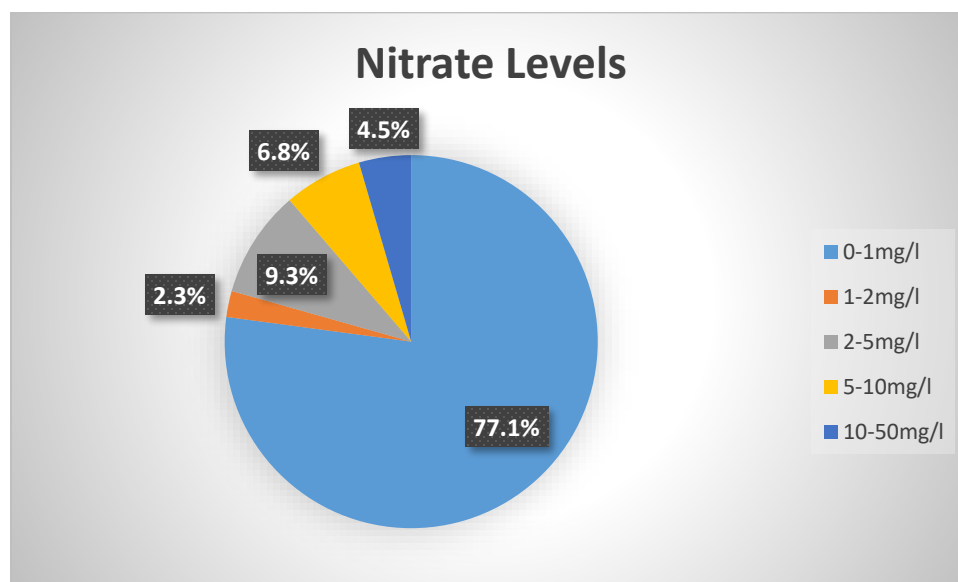
Dodge County Groundwater Quality Index

The results from our second year of well testing are shown in the graph below. We had a total of 354 wells tested. 22 property owners opted out of the program from last year.

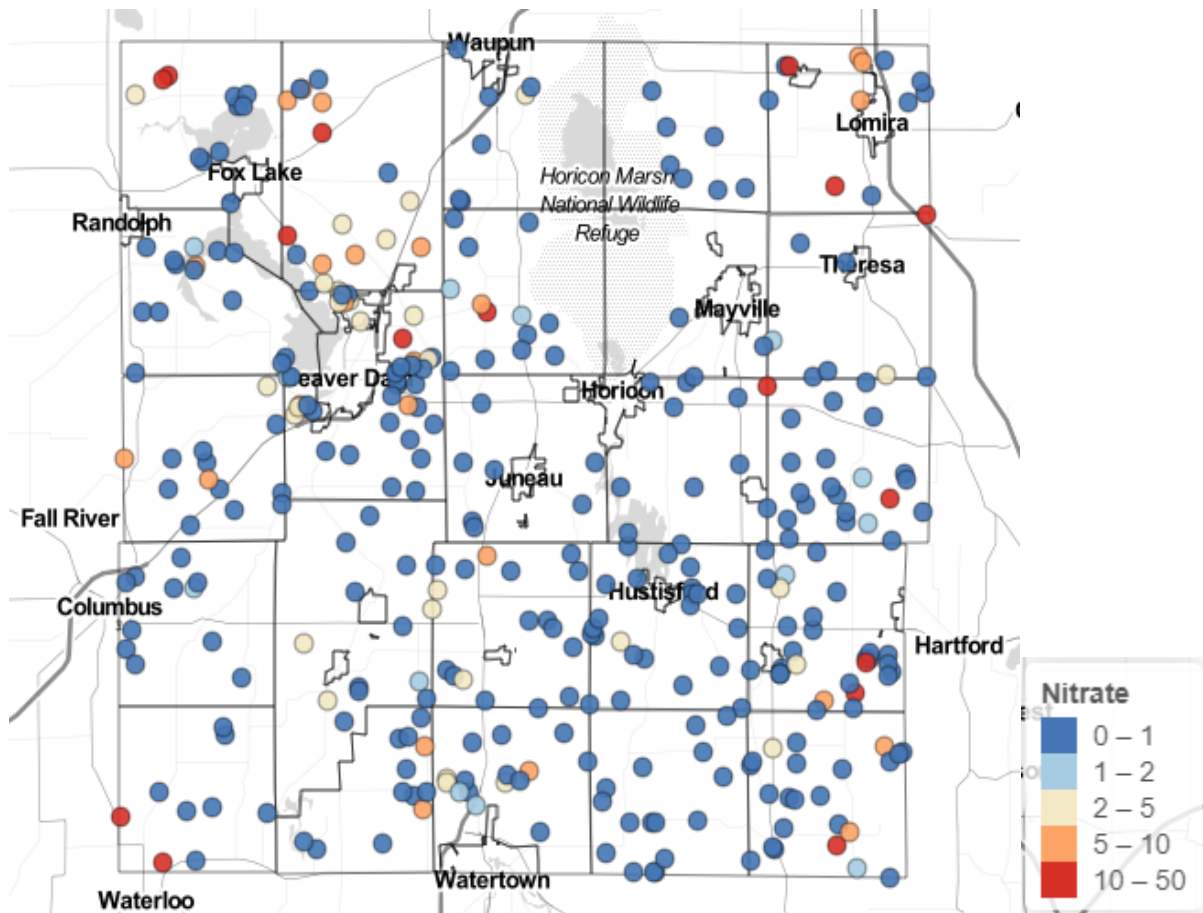
- 4.5% of the samples exceeded the state and federal standards for nitrate in public drinking water of 10mg/l. No infant or any female who is or may become pregnant should consume any water that exceeds this standard.
- 6.8% tested in the range of 5-10mg/l. It is recommended that wells in this range be tested annually.

Of the 22 wells that dropped out of the program, their first year test showed that one well tested in the 2-5mg/l range, one well tested in the 5-10mg/l range and twenty wells tested in the 0-1mg/l range. Overall, the second year of testing showed an improvement.

The results from our third year should be coming back shortly. We will continue to look at trends.



Percent of Wells testing in Each Range



Approximate Location and Nitrate Levels of Wells

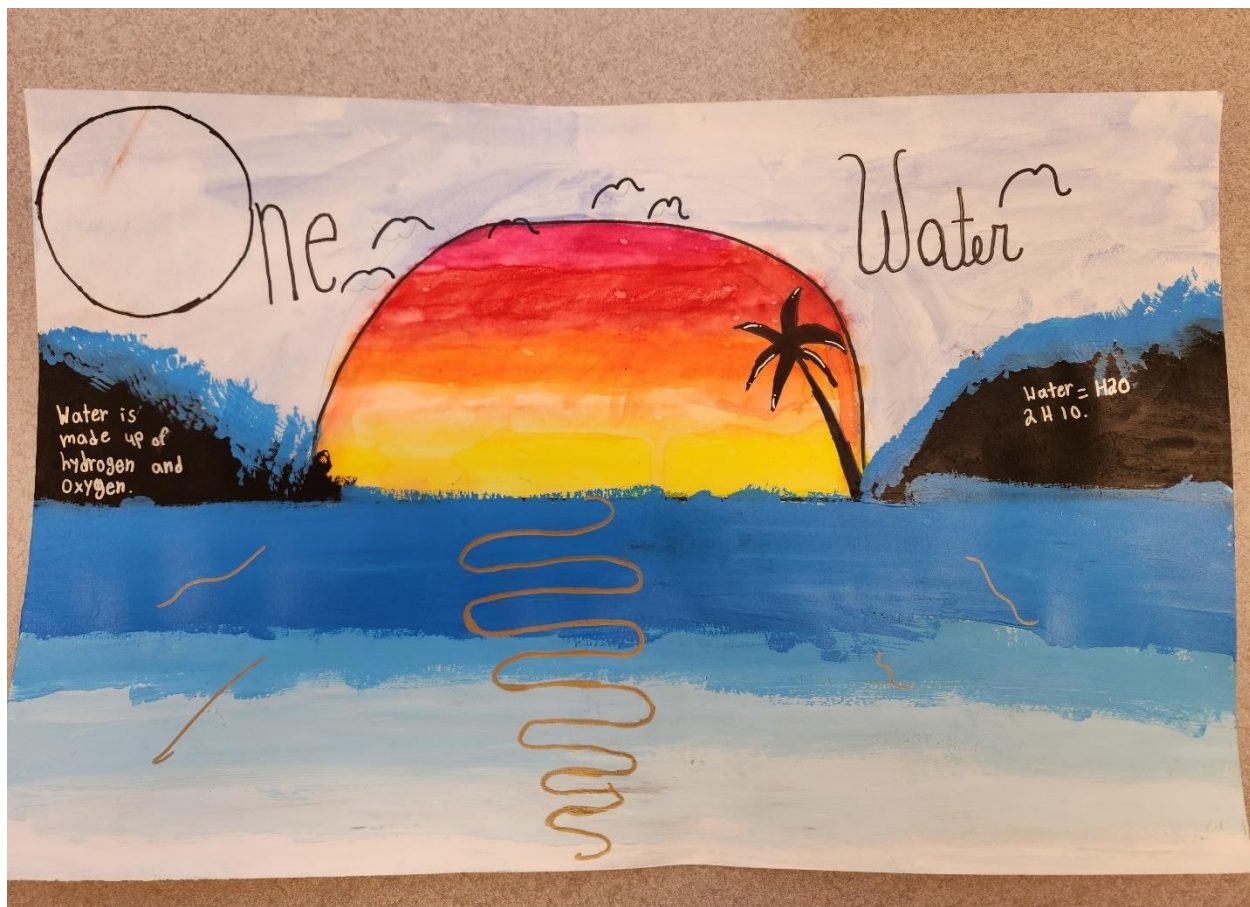
Poster Contest

The Theme this year was **"One Water"**. We received 4 posters this year. The posters submitted were for grades 4-6 and grades 10-12. In grades 4-6, Makenna Casper received 1st place, Samantha Rhodes received 2nd place, and Kilyan Laubenstein received 3rd place. In grades 10-12, Natalie Hargrave received 1st place.

Our two first place winners moved on to the Southern Area Contest. Natalie Hargrave placed 3rd.



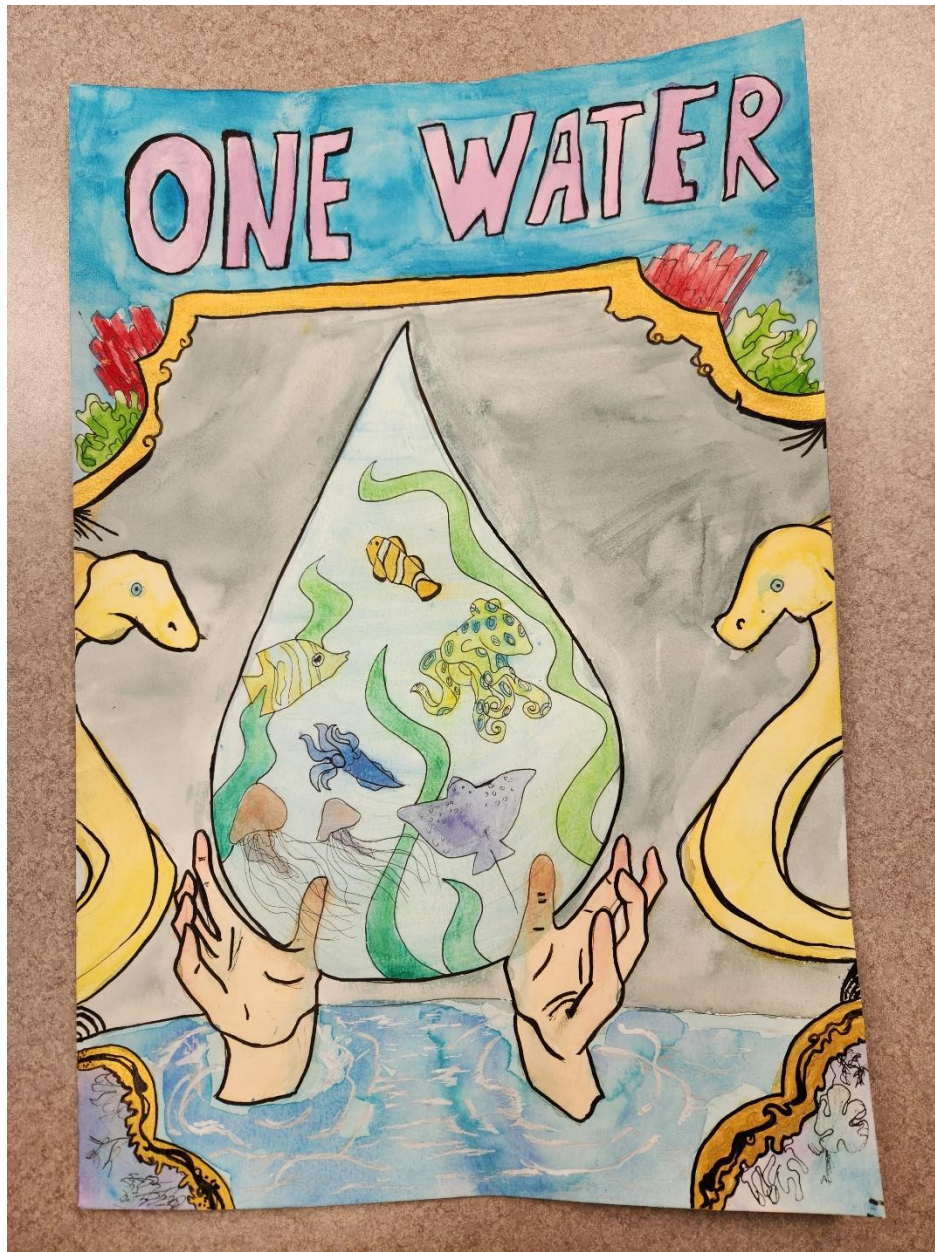
1st place grade 4-6



2nd place grade 4-6



3rd place grade 4-6



1st place grade 10-12

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 is working with UW- Discovery Farms conducting Nitrogen Use Efficiency studies. They are working with the Sand County Foundation on water infiltration monitoring. They received a \$33,180 grant from the Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection that they use to provide the following educational events and offer incentive payments for installing conservation practices including cover crops.

February Conference

This Soil Health Expo was held on February 9th in the Juneau Community Center. The theme for this year’s expo was “Benefitting from Soil Health”. The main speakers were Gabe Brown and Dr. Rodrigo Werle. 173 people attended the Expo.

Gabe Brown is a farmer from North Dakota. He shared general principles and techniques that any farmer can use to improve soil health.

Dr. Rodrigo Werle is an Assistant Professor and Cropping Systems Weed Scientist at UW-Madison. Dr Werle discussed how you can use cover crops to suppress weeds on your farm.

After lunch, a local farmer panel discussed their personal achievements in applying soil health principles.

Pre-Plant Workshop

On March 23rd a pre-plant workshop was held on a farm in the town of Theresa to discuss “Setting your planter up for success this spring”. The landowner had his planter and grain drill on display. An equipment representative discussed how to adjust your planters correctly. 76 people attended this event.

No-till and planting green grow success in grazing cattle

30 people attended this event on June 21st. They looked at a dairy farm that switched to no-till and planting green 5 years ago. They graze their dairy herd on permanent pasture and plan to graze cover crops next year. This farm is one of 30 other farms that are working with Sand County Foundation monitoring water movement through the soil. A Moisture Manager System was installed that will collect data during runoff time in March, May and June.

Lush Farms organic worm castings Tour

On July 21st, 49 people attended a tour of Lush Farms north of Watertown to see how worms were raised and their castings were collected. The castings can be diluted and used as fertilizer gardens, landscaping, and agricultural practices.

August Field Day

On August 11th an event was held in the Town of Emmet. The theme for this event was, "Building soil health after winter wheat with cover crops". A soil pit was dug to look at the soil profile. Different pieces of equipment were also on display. 81 people attended this event.

Fall Cover Crop Showcase

This event was held on a field near Hustisford on October 6th. This event was open to farmers and lake residents. A field that was planted with several different cover crop mixes were looked at. 33 people attended this meeting.

Grazing interseeded covers for profitability: Do the numbers pencil out?

15 people attended this chilly event. Interseeding cover crops in 60" corn was looked to see if you can extend the grazing season and still achieve respectable corn yields.

Fall Wrap Up

On December 7th, 27 members met in a more social environment to discuss what worked, what didn't, what challenges they faced, and what changes or new ideas they plan to make next year.

Incentives Programs

The farmer's group incentive program changed some this year. While they still offered funding for planting cover crops for those trying it for first time, they created a new program called Pay for Performance. This program looks at Phosphorus runoff reductions based on several different conservation practices the landowner may implement. By using SnapPlus, you can calculate the tons of sediment runoff reduction and Phosphorus runoff reductions. There were 970 acres enrolled in this program. Nine producers took advantage of this program showing a runoff reduction of 906 tons of sediment, and 2,872 pounds of phosphorus.