



Drainage District Program

Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection

Seth McClure, State Drainage Engineer



Agricultural Drainage in Wisconsin

What is a Drainage District?

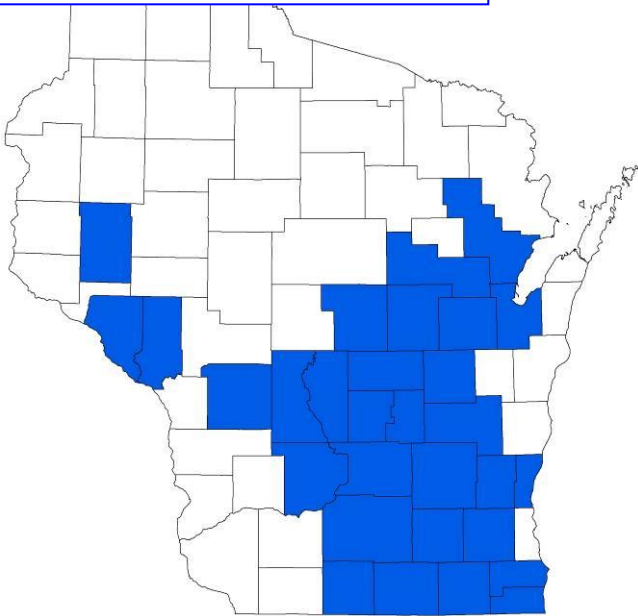
- Local governmental districts which are organized to drain lands for agricultural or other purposes.
- Landowners who benefit from drainage must pay assessments to cover the cost of constructing, maintaining, and repairing the district drains.



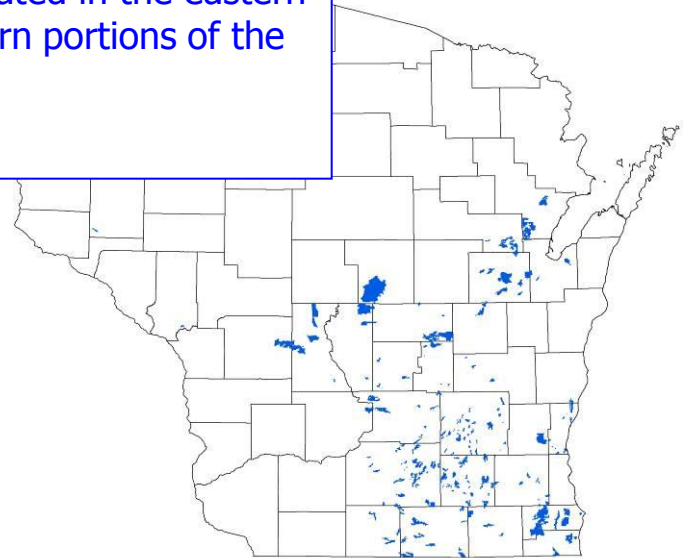
The majority of the existing drainage districts in the state were formed in the early 1900s.

Drainage Districts in Wisconsin

Counties Containing Active Drainage Districts



DATCP is aware of about 176 active drainage districts in Wisconsin. Of the 72 counties in Wisconsin, 31 of them contain one or more drainage districts. The majority of the drainage districts are located in the eastern and southeastern portions of the state.



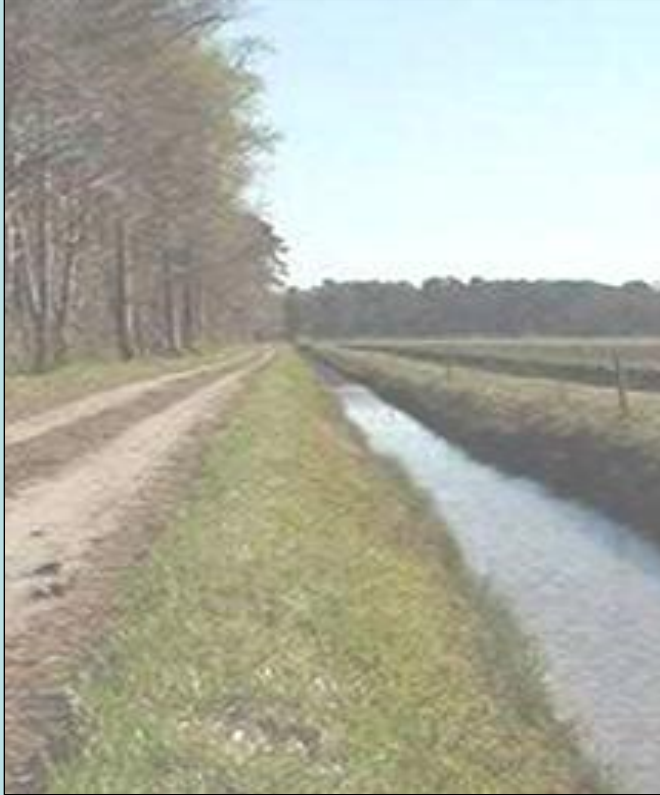
Distribution of Active Drainage Districts

What are the advantages of being in a drainage district?



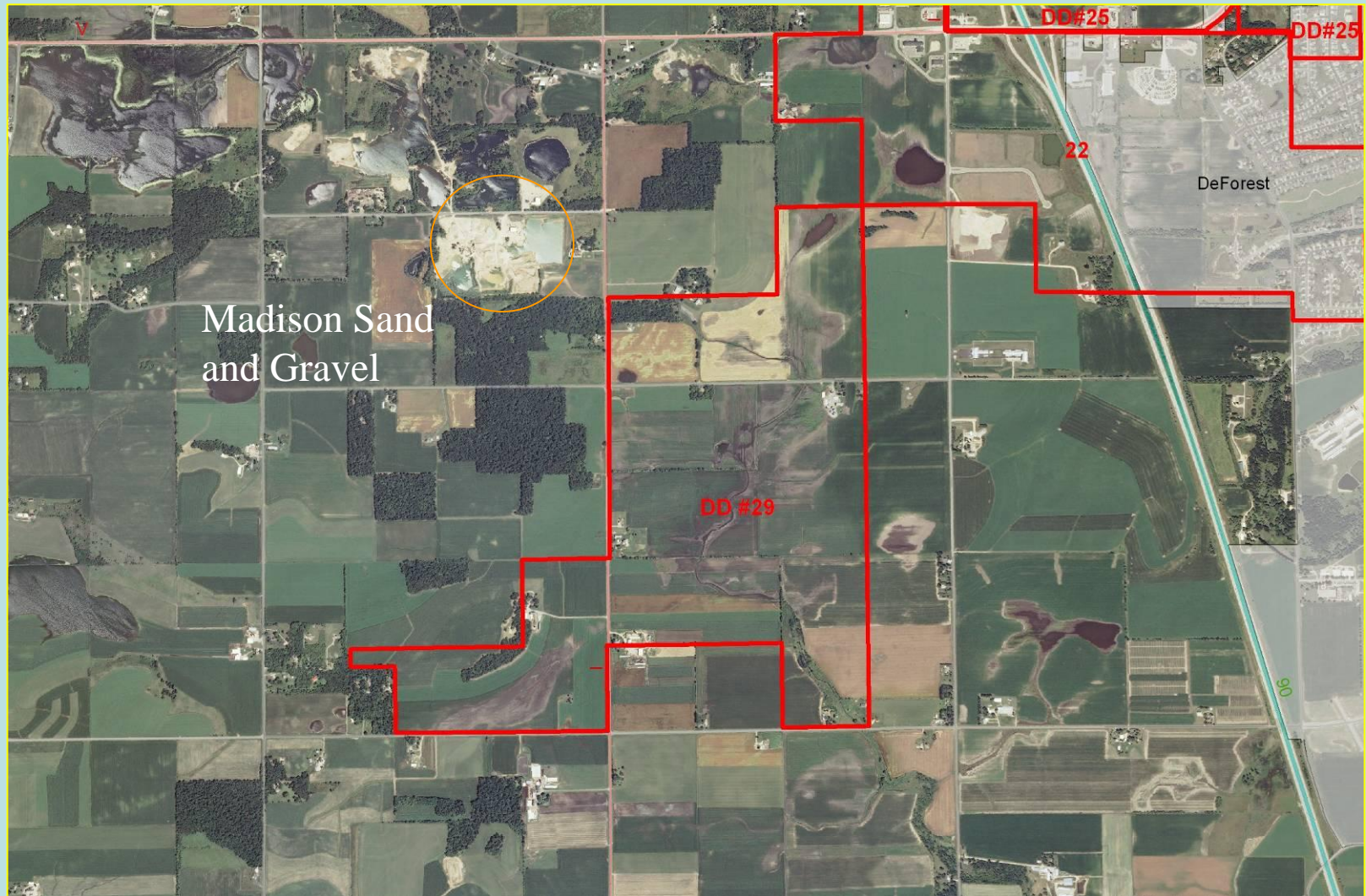
- Oftentimes the solution to the removal of water is best approached regionally, or with many neighbors working together for a common goal.
- When landowners take it upon themselves to drain their fields, divert stormwater, or pump out their basements, frequently it is at the expense of the next landowner downstream. As you can imagine, this causes problems.
- County drainage boards and county drainage districts can greatly simplify the implementation and maintenance of a common drainage system.
- Drainage boards actually reduce the amount of community conflict inherent in flooding or persistent high water by providing an organized and localized process for resolving drainage problems.

How do drainage districts operate?

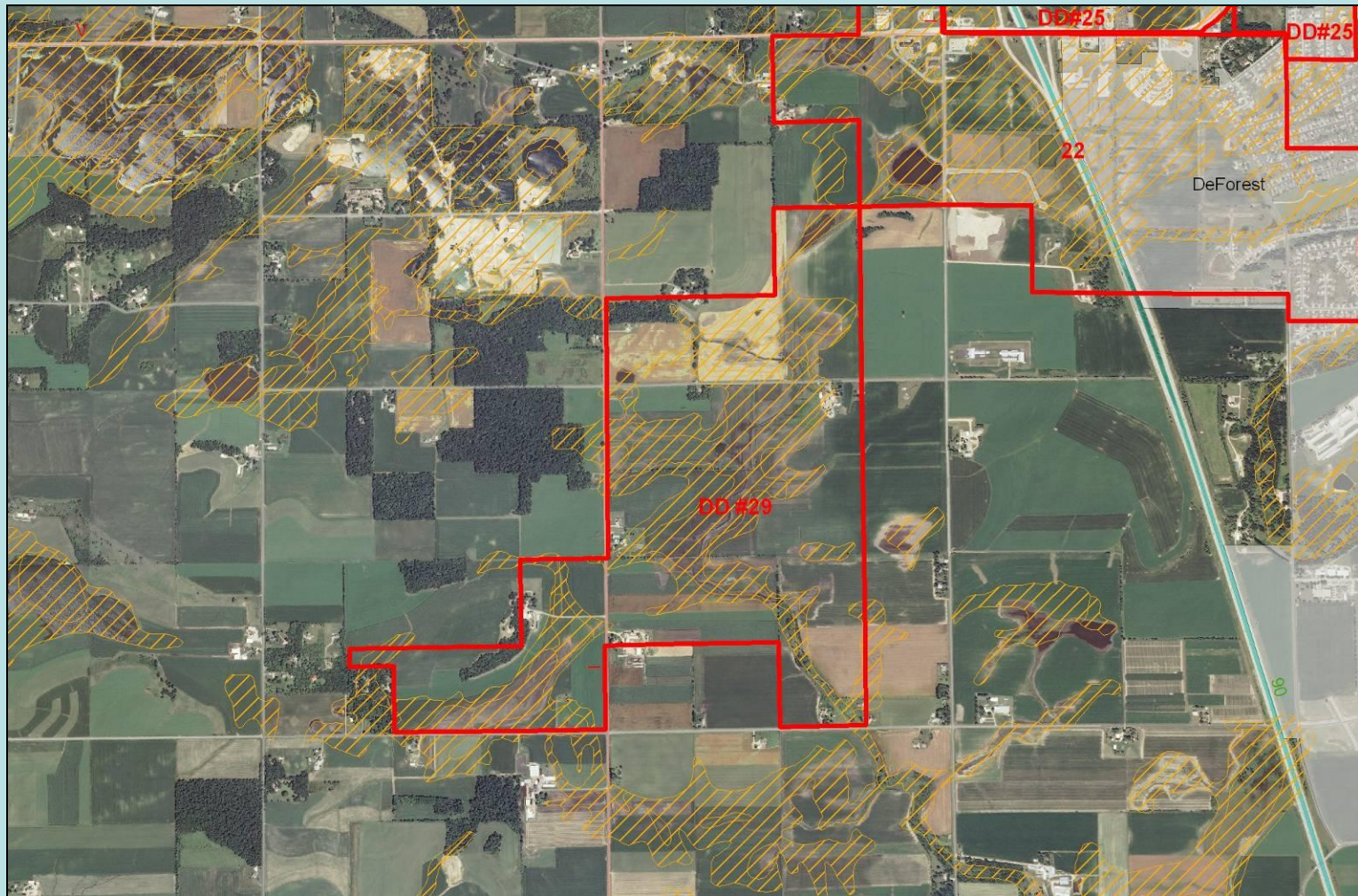


- The county drainage board holds public meetings to discuss drainage issues within the drainage districts and to decide on a course of action.
- The county drainage board is required to ensure that all drainage districts under its jurisdiction comply with the standards in the drainage rule (Ch. ATCP 48, Wis. Admin. Code) and statute (Ch. 88, Wis. Stats.).
- The county drainage board has the power to:
 - ❑ annex or withdraw lands from a drainage district
 - ❑ purchase or lease equipment
 - ❑ levy assessments
 - ❑ obtain injunctions
 - ❑ hire attorneys, engineers, or other assistants
 - ❑ construct and maintain district drains
 - ❑ contract with governmental agencies
 - ❑ borrow money
 - ❑ perform inspections

Dane County Drainage District No. 29



Drainage District No. 29: Hydric Soils



Drainage District No. 29: Detail

- Should a wetland be maintained here?
- What happens when different governmental entities are in conflict?
- How many governmental entities should have jurisdiction over waterways? DD #29



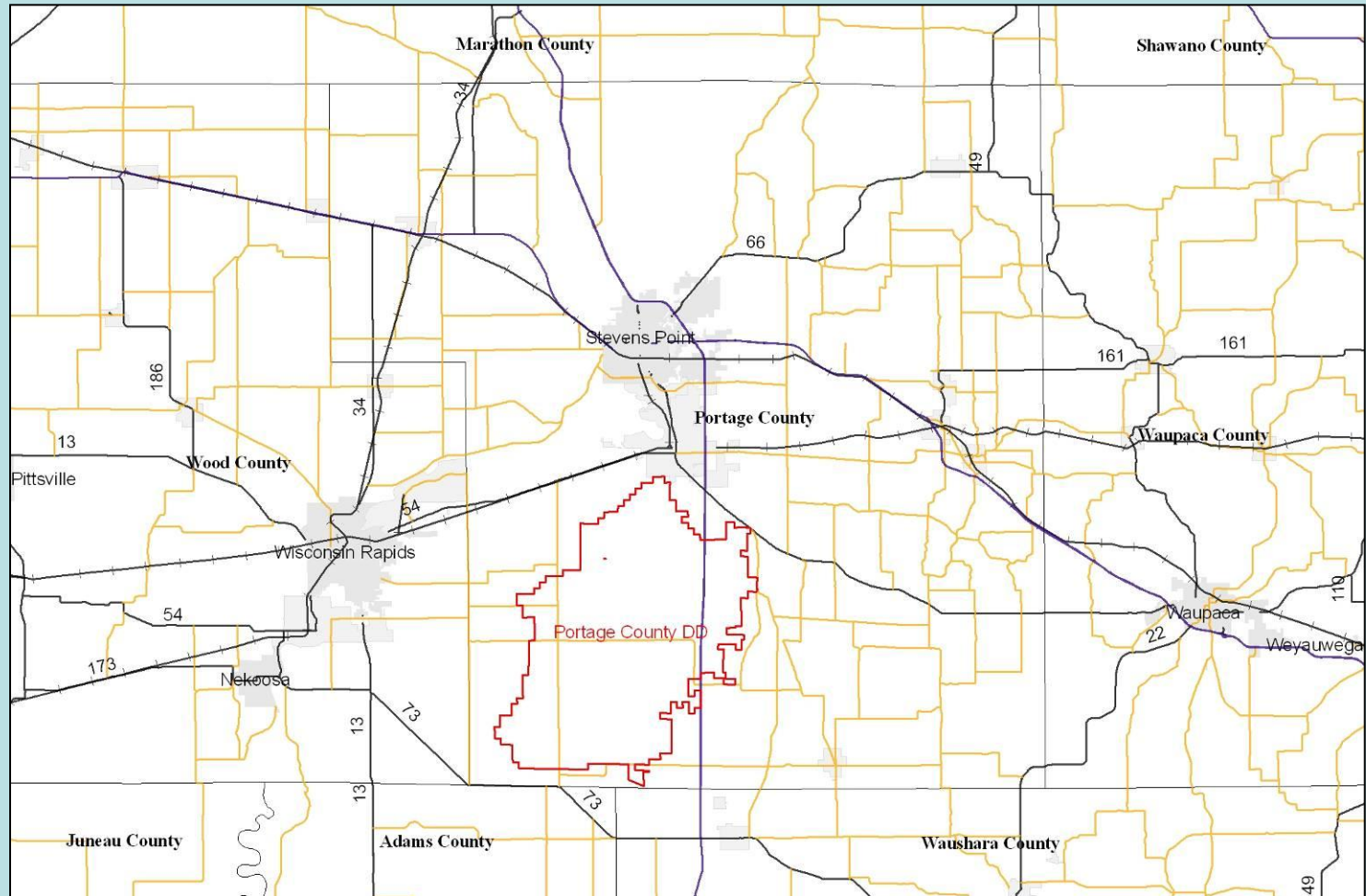
Drainage District No. 29 (Completed Construction)



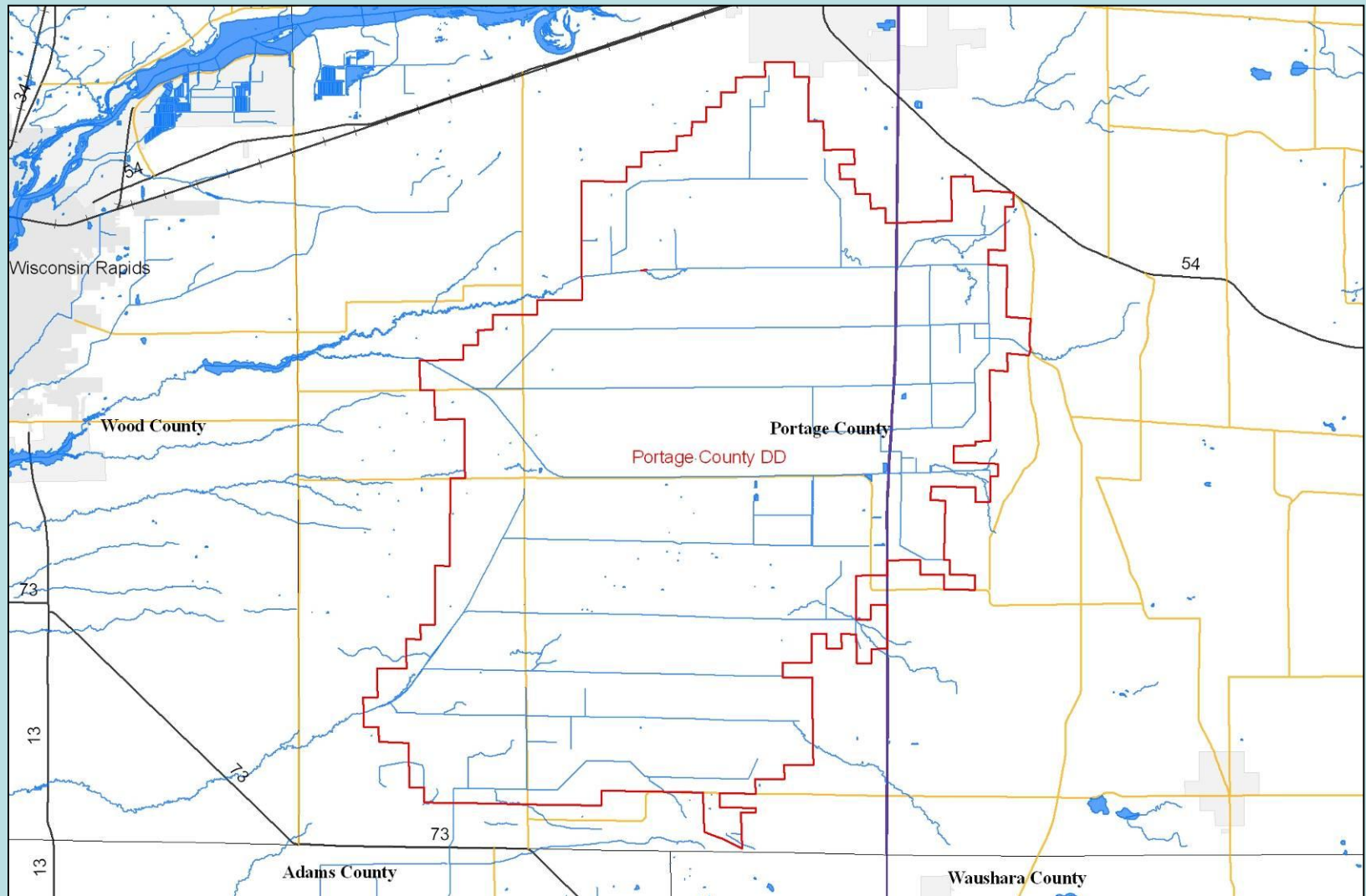
Drainage District No. 29 (Completed Construction)



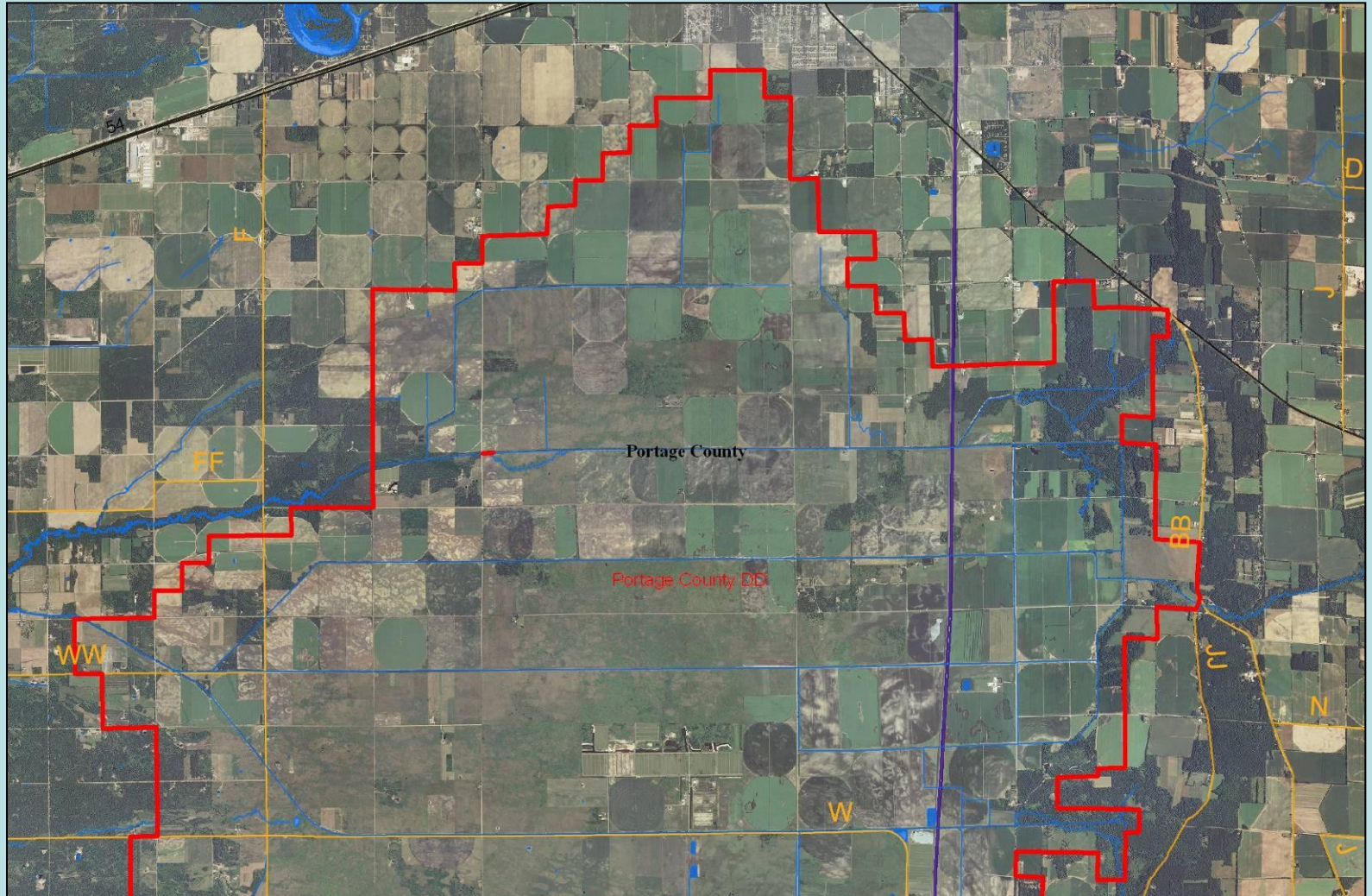
Portage County Drainage District



Portage County Drainage District



Portage County Drainage District: Land Use



Portage County Drainage District: Management



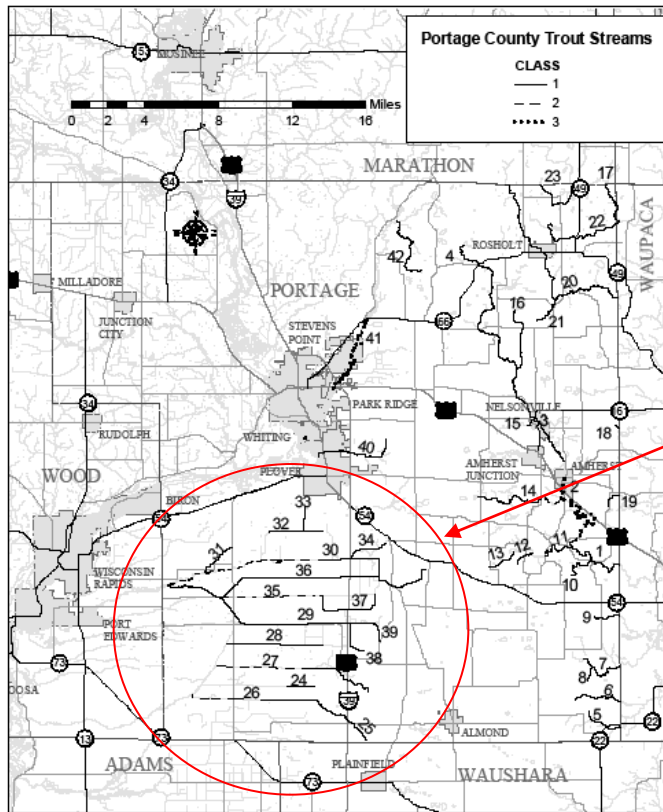
Portage County Drainage District: Management



Portage County Drainage District: Management



Portage County Drainage District: Trout Streams



Area of Portage
County Drainage
District

Questions? Comments? Axes to grind?

For further information contact:

Seth McClure
State Drainage Engineer
DATCP
Division of Agricultural Resource Management
2811 Agriculture Drive
P.O. Box 8911
Madison, WI 53708 – 8911
(608) 224 -4627
seth.mcclure@wisconsin.gov

Drainage Program Website:
http://datcp.wi.gov/Environment/Drainage_Programs/index.aspx

Drainage Districts Web Map
<https://datcpgis.wi.gov/DrainageDistricts/>