

Most lawns in St. Albans do not require extra phosphorus

In an effort to reduce algal blooms in the St. Albans Bay, the St. Albans Area Watershed Association launched a project in spring 2004 to educate city residents about lake friendly lawn and garden care practices. One of the efforts included encouraging residents to apply fertilizer based on the results of soil tests. Free soil tests were offered to homeowners. Master Gardener volunteers and BFA high school students collected over 90 soil tests. The results of these tests were sent to the homeowner to help them manage their lawns and gardens with lake friendly practices.

A map of the soil test results indicates that phosphorus levels throughout the city are high to excessive, with only a few places where phosphorus levels appear to be low. This suggests that lawns in the area would thrive with a no-phosphorus fertilizer. The next step is convincing local garden stores to carry fertilizers that have low levels or no phosphorus.

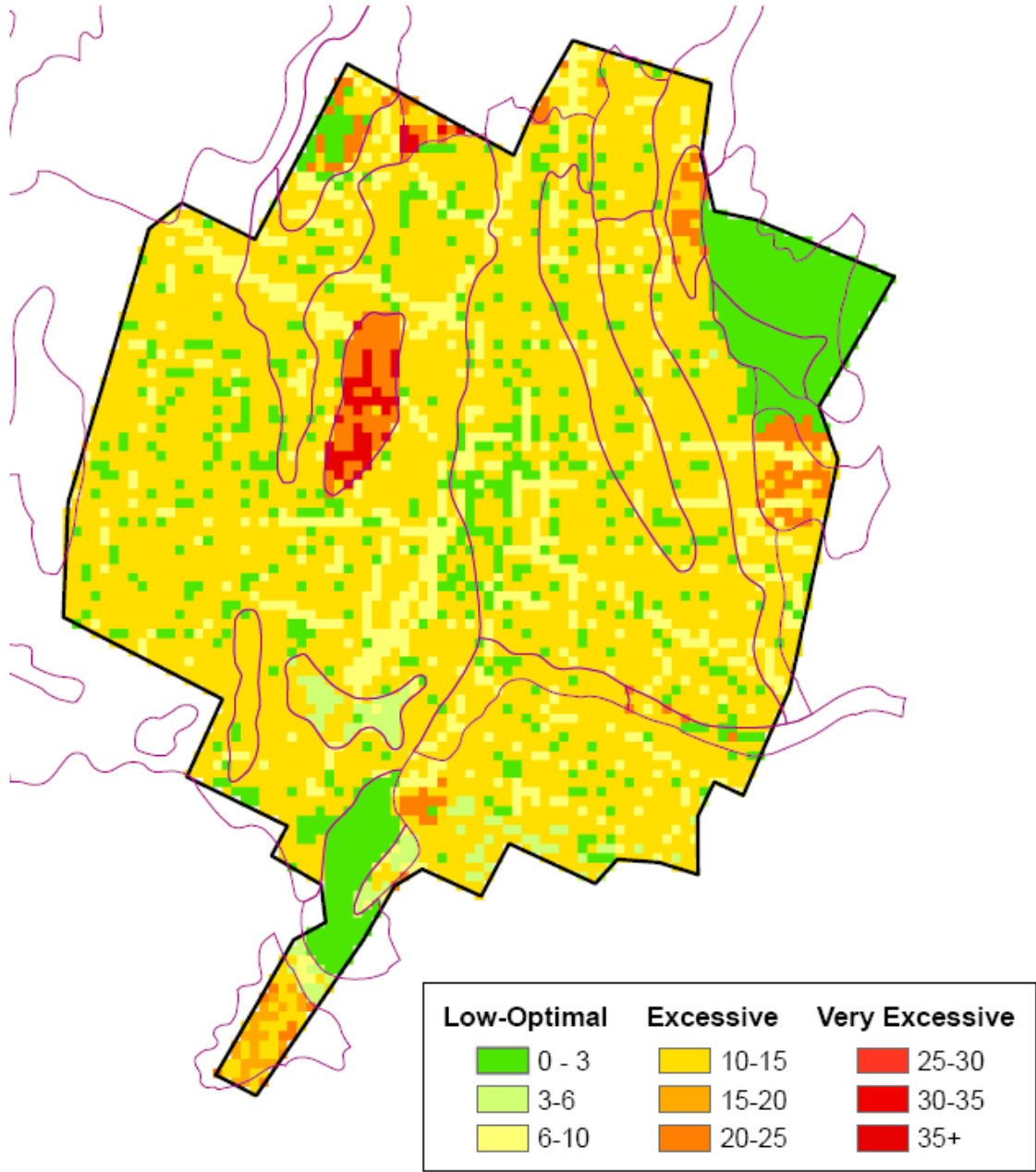
State senators asked for the map and testimony from Jeff Rouleau, the BFA high school teacher, to help in their subcommittee's discussion of a no phosphorus fertilizer bill during the 2006 legislative session. Erica Gaddis, Ph.D candidate who developed the map, will also input the data to a landscape model so that phosphorus running off lawns during a rainstorm can be more accurately simulated to capture real spatial patterns.



BFA students take soil samples from school athletic fields

The St. Albans Area Watershed Association received assistance from Erica Gaddis at the Gund Institute for Ecological Economics, University of Vermont, Master Gardener Program and Vt. DEC and funding through the Lake Champlain Basin Program and the Waterwheel Foundation

Estimated* Soil Available P (mg/kg) in St. Albans



* Note: Soil available P was estimated by sampling over 90 sites around the city and calculating average concentrations for each unique landuse-soil type combination. For combinations that were not sampled, the most similar landuse and soil type were used to estimate values. Soil type boundaries are indicated by thin purple lines.