

# Agriculture & Our Lakes







Hello friends! My name is Billie (they/them).  
I live in Lake Mendota in Madison, Wisconsin.  
I have a WATER WONDER to share. Did you  
know that cow poop can end up in my home?



Cow poop (also known as manure) is used by farmers to grow vegetables and other crops.







When it rains, manure can wash off the field, which can be bad because it is high in phosphorus.





# Phosphorus

Element P is very reactive. A little can go a long way - that's why it is used in matches!





Too much phosphorus harms fish like me because it grows blue-green algae (also known as Cyanobacteria). This reaction makes the water stinky, and unsafe for swimming.

So, what can you do to help?

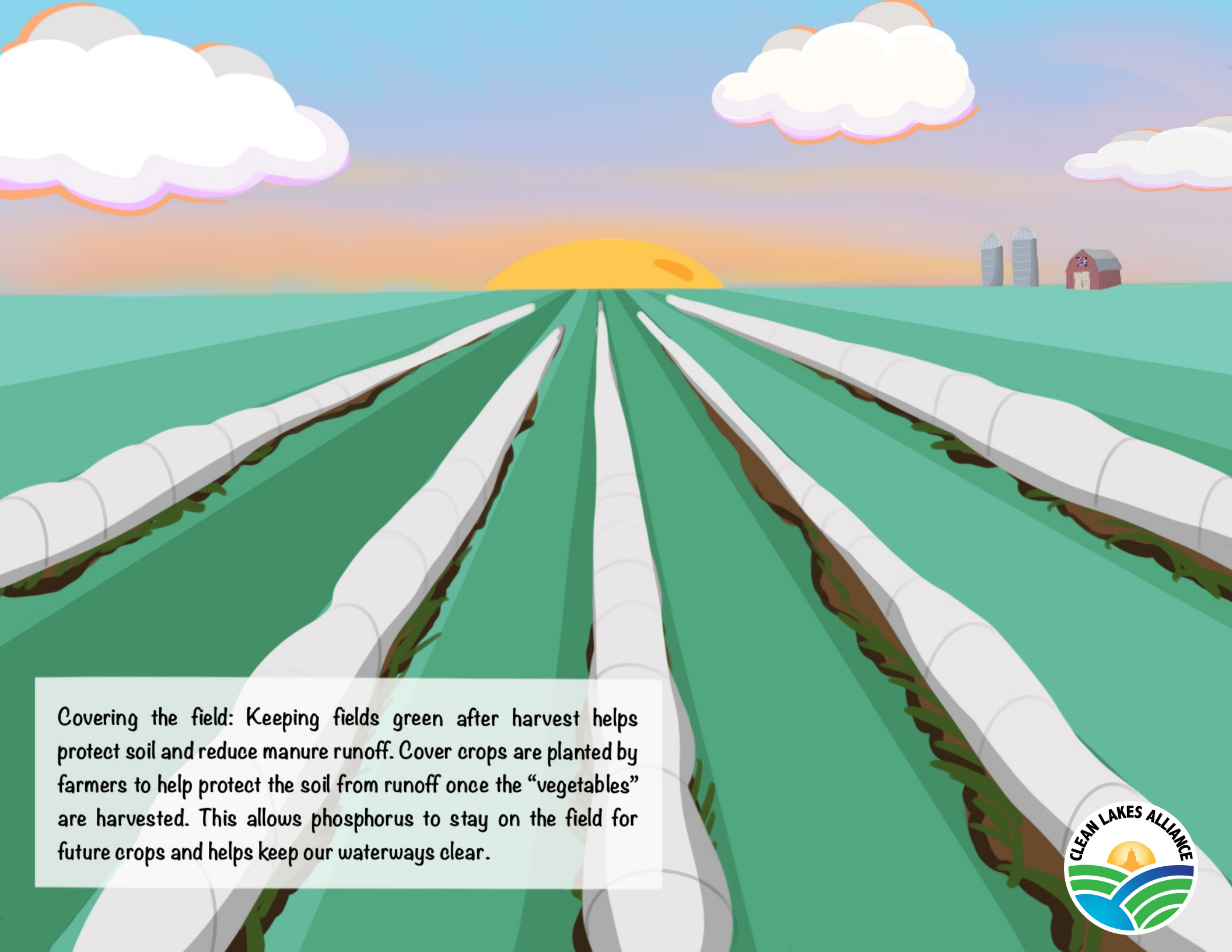






Our local farmers are taking steps to slow manure runoff. Runoff describes the process of precipitation, such as rain, collecting and moving across the ground. This movement of water can carry things into my home that don't belong there, like cow poop that is meant to grow vegetables and not algae.





Covering the field: Keeping fields green after harvest helps protect soil and reduce manure runoff. Cover crops are planted by farmers to help protect the soil from runoff once the “vegetables” are harvested. This allows phosphorus to stay on the field for future crops and helps keep our waterways clear.





Buffer strips: Farmers add a grass buffer between crop fields and waterways which keeps phosphorus in its place.

Buffer strips help to reduce manure runoff by creating a barrier that filters runoff before it reaches places like my home, Lake Mendota.





Manure management: Our farmers use new ways of applying manure like low-disturbance manure injection. This practice helps farmers put manure in the ground where it can't wash away when it rains.







All of these actions keep water clean  
and safe for you and me! See you again  
soon as we work together to protect  
our lakes!



