

# CITIZENS (WOOD COUNTY) GROUNDWATER GROUP MEETING

DATE: Monday, August 19, 2019  
TIME: 2:00 p.m.  
LOCATION: Wood County Riverblock Building, 111 West Jackson Street Room 206, Wisconsin Rapids WI

**Present:** Rhonda Carrell, Bill Clendenning, Bruce Dimick, Nicole Gessert, Mark Holbrook, Tamas Houlihan, Maria Filtz, Bill Leichtnam, Logan Manthe, Rick Potter, Cecile Stelzer Johnson, Nancy Eggleston, Shane Wucherpennig and Nancy Turyk.

1. **Call Meeting to Order:** Bill Leichtnam called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.
2. **Public Comment:** Bruce Dimick stated there is concern about the Saratoga water tables being too high and noted the climate change appears to be a long term problem in the upper mid-west.
3. **Correspondence/Updates:**  
Bill Leichtnam shared comments from conversations he has had with individuals regarding the fear associated with contaminated wells and the affects also to property values.
4. **Report on Speaker Vos's Task Force on GW Quality:**  
Bruce Dimick summarized the recent meeting if Speaker Vos's Task Force on GW quality.
  - Good turn-out but not many Legislatures
  - Facts – Highest % of high-density wells are in Portage County. 24% of wells in Portage County exceed the EPA limits for nitrates, 91% of the problem is attributed to Ag, 47% of the wells in Nelsonville exceeded EPA limits and is directly related to a CAFCO on the edge of town.
  - Mark Borchardt (USDA) gave a good factual talk. Manure storage needs to be 2,000-3,000 feet away from well placement. Casing depth for wells really has no effect on pollution potential. Well depth is not a protection against pollution.
  - Legislature stripped most of the funding from water pollution abatement initiatives.
  - County Conservationist funding cut from 12.4 to 9.4 million. Which doesn't meet the state statues.
  - Funds for well compensation not included in the budget
  - 40 million in Lead service line bond funding was eliminated.
  - Many Citizens presented cases of pollution and recreational spoilage with no action taken.
  - Bill Leichtnam pointed out that Highway 12 & Highway 13 manure dumping went unabated for at least 2 years.
  - Riparian tax payer's water is being contaminated from Ag with no recourse.

Bill Leichtnam shared that Mark Borchardt said some of the best research has been done in Denmark. Leichtnam asked if someone could check into the findings from the research.

Tamas Houlihan shared that abundant rainfall has helped to reduce the amount of water needed to be applied but that doesn't necessarily help water quality. Growers are investing in research to get the most up to date information to measure evapotranspiration investing in the Eddy Covariance Flux tower method of ET measurement. Working with Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences Professor UW Professor Ankur Desai. Trying to use the best science possible to be responsible with water usage and conservation. Not an easy solution.

Tamas Houlihan indicated potato acreage growth has been flat for 20 years.

Bill Clendenning questioned Tamas about the Plainfield- 3 lake study funding (Lake Hurion, Long Lake, Plainfield Lakes)? Tamas indicated the funding for the study was for \$400,000.00 and has not been concluded but the committee is asking for more money to complete their study. Everything is on hold until the committee can get the additional funding for the study. Bill Leichtnam suggested an objective of this committee should be to ask Legislators for the additional money to complete the study.

Tamas mentioned that Adam Hoffer from the DNR has a PDF document with updates which he will share with the group.

Rick Potter spoke that he had attended the Tomahawk meeting and was disappointed that no action was taken. Rick passed around an article about some former farmers that spoke regarding their findings. The article notes that the Eau Plaine Water Shed Community recognize that most of the pollutants are coming out of Marathon and Clark Counties; which are the two most polluted Counties in the State.

Bill Leichtnam shared that after he spoke in Stevens Point; Chairman Novak had conveyed the idea that he is confident that something is going to happen soon.

Nancy Eggleston shared that Pepin County is doing a field study where crops are getting their nitrogen from the air. Nancy will get more information and report back.

5. **Action Items if Task Force recommendations are inadequate or don't lead to meaningful legislative actions:**

Bill Leichtnam questioned how the group would like to proceed if the Task Force's recommendations are not adequate. Proposed the group to start thinking about how the Wood County Citizens Ground Water Group would like to proceed if action is not taken.

Rick Potter mentioned he spoke with Seth Hoffmeister, the Regional Director of the League of Conservation Voters and he would be a great speaker.

Bruce Dimick noted that the group needs to be ready to support and testify regarding the recommendation from the taskforce before the legislators vote in Madison.

Shane Wucherpennig noted the State agencies directive regarding the NR151 rule revision will be a 30 month process and various effected parties will be invited for input.

6. **Update on MOU with AGC & status of bottled water distribution and RO System Installation:**

Nancy Eggleston reported the current status is the collation is working on identifying the samples that were over 30 parts per million and will be contacting those homeowners to give them their treatment options. They are also working on cleaning up the list of people that have not been tested yet to be able to make another push for testing. Long term monitoring will also be conducted on existing wells.

Bill Leichtnam shared that since the MOU has begun approximately \$25,000.00 has been spent by the AGC on the testing. The AGC indicated that they would not be opposed to contributing more money if asked later in the year.

7. **Outreach Activities:**

Bill Leichtnam indicated the Natural Resources Educator position from UW Extension will be filled around approximately October and the first step would be to consider a possible first project for this position.

8. **Future Speakers to invite** Rick Potter will reach out to Seth Hoffmeister. Bill Leichtnam will look into Senator Testin as a speaker and someone from Green Fire.

9. **Roundtable**

- a. Nany Turyk – Update on the 7 county organization -official name is Central Sands Groundwater County Collaborative in the process of comprising 3 work groups 1) County Board Supervisors (to deal with internal politics & policies), 2) Technical in nature (to deal with studies etc.), 3) Communications & Outreach.

- b. Nancy Eggleston – the CSGCC Communications group will be working on a letter for funding assistance to Katrina Shankland.
- c. Cecile Stelzer Johnson – contributed a handout to be added to the minutes from Donna Gilson from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection regarding upcoming hearings on Livestock Facility Siting Rule. Cecile will be attending one of the hearings and will report back to the group.
- d. Rick Potter – Grant request to Katrina should also be sent to Senator Testin & Representative Krug.
- e. Tamas Houlihan – The Little Plover River project received a \$300,000.00 EPA grant from the Wisconsin Wetlands Association for water quality and quantity and UWSP students and several stakeholders have started clearing brush which are showing high levels of flow.
- f. Mark Holbrook – Thinks State Representative, Nancy VanderMeer should be contacted. She has the town of Port Edwards and Portage County as her districts and we have not heard from her.

10. **Announcements of members / visitors (upcoming parallel events / meetings)**

- Rick Potter noted the upcoming Clean Sweep event being held at the Saratoga Town Hall on 9/7/19 from 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
- Choose to Reuse will be held at the Grand Rapids Town Garage on 28<sup>th</sup> St and Two Mile on 9/21/19.
- Rhonda Carrell noted the Water Walk around Lake Arrowhead will be held on 9/21/19 as part of the CW Nature Foundation.

11. **Next Meeting**

Monday, September 16th. 2:00-4:00 p.m. @ Wood Co Riverblock Building, Room 206

12. **Adjourn Groundwater Group Meeting** Bill Leichtnam adjourned @ 3:48 p.m.

Notes by Nicole Gessert, Maintenance