

CITIZENS (WOOD COUNTY) GROUNDWATER GROUP MEETING

DATE: Monday, July 15, 2019
TIME: 2:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Wood County Riverblock Building, 111 West Jackson Street Room 206, Wisconsin Rapids WI

Present: Robert Ashbeck, Rhonda Carrell, Bill Clendenning, Bruce Dimick, Nicole Gessert, Gordon Gottbehut, Adam Groshek, Mark Holbrook, Tamas Houlihan, Kim Keech, Maria Lewandowski, Bill Leichtnam, Logan Manthe, Doug Passineau, Rick Potter, Cecile Stelzer Johnson and Nancy Turyk.

1. **Call Meeting to Order:** Bill Leichtnam called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.
2. **Public Comment:** None
3. **Correspondence/Updates:**

Bill Leichtnam shared six articles as handouts at the meeting:

 - A. Public Hearing set on proposed hog farm – There was a DNR public hearing on July 11th in Burnette County of a proposed hog farm CAFO of 7,500 sows and 200 boars. The hog farm expects to double in size in a few years. Concerned citizens have been very vocal about their opposition to the proposed CAFO.
 - B. State Ag Department Seeks Comments on changes to rules for large farms – The state agriculture department (DATCP) is considering changes on how the state regulates large-scale livestock farms. The rule designed to provide local regulation of livestock facilities of 500 or more animals. Proposed livestock siting changes supporting local CAFO control.
 - C. Speaker’s Task Force on Water Quality Public Hearing – The Public Hearing in Stevens Point is scheduled for Wednesday, July 24th at Noon at the UWSP Dreyfus University Center.
 - D. Protecting Wisconsin Groundwater’s – Suggestions from Wood County “Citizens Groundwater Group” revision July 15, 2019 organized by importance.
 - E. County passes resolution to support local CAFO control – Portage County passed an advisory resolution in support of controlling livestock on CAFO’s. Wisconsin’s livestock siting law, local governments are not required to have permits for large livestock operations expanding or new. Portage County’s resolution would allow local governments setting standards and procedures for operations to use.
 - F. Resolution supporting local control for livestock siting – Copy of Portage County’s sample resolution supporting local control for CAFO’s.
4. **SPEAKER - Wood County Board Supervisor Bob Ashbeck – “Nitrogen/Crop Rotation”**

Bob Ashbeck has been a dairy farmer for over 55 years in the Milladore area. Bob Ashbeck shared that all fertilizer labels have three numbers. The first number is the amount of nitrogen (N), the second number is the amount of phosphorus (P) and the third number is the amount of potassium (K). These three numbers represent the primary nutrients. There are two types of crop rotation used in Wood County. North of Wood County (dairy producers) typically uses a 5-year rotation with rotation of alfalfa (0-0-60), alfalfa (0-0-60), corn (6-24-24), soybeans (0-14-24) and corn (6-24-24). South of Wood County (vegetable producers) typically uses a 3-year rotation with rotation of Sweet Corn (6-24-24), Potatoes (6-24-24) and Soybeans (0-14-24). Bill Ashbeck expressed that there should be a zero rotation of nitrogen grown in southern Wood County. A crop suggested would be alfalfa but there is no market for alfalfa. Lawn fertilizer labeled as 10-10-10 used for lawns, gardens, playgrounds and golf courses typically used every year with no break in between. How much damage do we do with fertilizer? Discussion followed.

Discussion highlights:

 - Heavy rainfalls this year caused only half of crops planted in northern Wood County.
 - Fertilizer may need reapplying depending on soil type due to heavy rainfalls.
 - Cost of fertilizer varies year to year.
 - Lawn fertilizer use based on soil test. UW-Extension and UW Forage Lab offer soil testing.

- The best way to select a fertilizer is to have your soil tested. The soil report will recommend a fertilizer grade for your use.
- Nutrient Management Plans will help determine the amount of fertilizer.
- Over fertilizing can damage crop fields.
- Manure comes first then fertilizer.
- Central Sands are studying irrigation application for nitrogen crediting.
- Why do people fertilize lawns?

5. **Further discussion “Ag. Waste/Composting/Other Options”**

Cecile Stelzer Johnson shared her email that she sent to Testin/Krug on composting as a tool to prevent groundwater contamination:

- A. Create a cooperative (county or regional approach) for excess manure waste. Treat manure and compost reselling manure product.
- B. Farmers profiting from excess manure.
- C. Manure is a valuable resource.
- D. Milorganite is human waste composted for lawns.
- E. Job creation for composting manure.
- F. Revenue flow for the farmer.
- G. Deal with manure before there is a groundwater problem.
- H. Rep. Krug thought idea has merit.

Wisconsin Farm Technology Days in Jefferson County is July 23-25 in Johnson Creek. The show represents agriculture with innovations in technology for growing and producing food.

Manure Treatment Technology Expert Panel Report (speaker ideas)

- A. Thermo Chemical Conversion – not aware being used in Wisconsin
- B. Composting
- C. Anaerobic Digestion – used on CAFO sized farms.
- D. Settling
- E. Mechanical Solid Liquid Separation – used in other industries
- F. Wet Chemical Treatment

6. **Wood County Corporation Counsel on CGG By-Laws** Bill Leichtnam and Bill Clendening met with Wood County Corporation Counsel attorney, Peter Kastenholz. Bill Leichtnam shared that Peter Kastenholz insists that you follow Robert’s Rules of Order there is no need for by-laws especially now that there is an elected Chair and Vice-Chair. Wood County citizens can vote on agenda items since the group is a Citizens (Wood County) Groundwater Group.

7. **Prep for Speaker Vos’s Task Force on Groundwater Quality (July 24, Stevens Point) and “Action Items” thereafter**

The Speaker’s Task Force on Water Quality Public Hearing in Stevens Point is scheduled for Wednesday, July 24th at Noon at the UWSP Dreyfus University Center. Water lab tour scheduled for late morning.

Speakers:

- Portage County (Jen McNelly, Water Resource Specialist and Lindsay Benaszkeski, Public Health & Environmental Specialist)
- USDA-Agricultural Research Service (Mark Borchardt, Research Microbiologist, Program Director, Laboratory for Infectious Disease)
- Water Well Association (Michael Hanten, Lab Director/General Manager at Clean Water Testing & WWA Board Member)
- Central Sands Water Action Coalition (George Kraft, Professor Emeritus of Water Resources at UW Extension & UWSP)
- Farmers of Mill Creek Producer Led Group and Wood County Land Conservation (John Eron, Lead Farmer and Shane Wucherpfennig, Wood County Land Conservationist).

Bruce Dimick reported that he attended Speaker Vos's Water Quality Task Force in Racine County on July 11th. Speaker highlights of the Racine County, WI meeting:

- i. Organizations represented:
 - UW System – Requesting \$28 million to launch a water program statewide on UW campuses.
 - DATCP Agricultural Chemical Cleanup Program – Spills have diminished. Fertilizer tax used to fund program.
 - Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District
 - Water Counsel Alliance for Water Stewardship
 - Racine County Initiative – Promoted no-till and cover crops.
- ii. Citizen comments:
 - Governor Evers proposed \$12.4 million in county conservation offices reduced by Joint Finance Committee to \$9.4 million.
 - Governor Evers proposed \$40 million to remove lead pipe lateral pipes in Milwaukee but eliminated from the budget.
 - Senator Vos commented that he does not like wetland protection that interfere with hot real estate deals.
 - Farmer promoted no-till and cover crops. Grant money needed to finance education to farmers.
 - PFAS – Nothing done
 - Residents oppose WE Energies discharging more mercury by a factor of 3 in Lake Michigan.

Tamas Houlihan shared the Speaker Vos's Task Force on Groundwater Quality will be in Tomahawk on Tuesday, July 23rd. He will be a guest speaker representing Wisconsin Potato & Vegetable Growers Association.

Bill Leichtnam shared that the "Protecting Wisconsin Groundwater" suggestions from Wood County Citizens Groundwater Group prioritized by importance reduced from 36 ideas to 29. The "Protecting Wisconsin Groundwater" document will be shared and presented to Speaker Vos's Task Force on Groundwater Quality meeting in Stevens Point.

8. **Update on MOU w/ AGC (Juneau Co Board action) & status of bottled water distribution and RO System Installation** Logan Manthe reported that 36 residences called the hotline between June 13th and July 11th about questions about water delivery or installation of systems. 34 residences were distributed bottled water. 66 access agreements signed. 48 wells under 30 ppm referred for plumbing installation. They changed plumbing firms so they are no longer working with Alliant Plumbing to install those RO Systems. 19 RO Systems have been completed using test strips by the homeowner with follow-up for an official test with the Health Department as soon as possible. Targeted outreach will continue.

The three entities testing water are AECOM from Stevens Point, Wood County Health Department and EPA. Sue Kunferman is compiling test results of all three entities. Wood County is working hard for the citizens. When will the best practices start? MOU is in place for 4 years. There are three technologies available for nitrates above 28 ppm. All three technologies are in the testing phase with none approved.

9. **"Membership Growth" & "Outreach Activities" (Making our influence felt)**
Bill Leichtnam commented that there are four citizen groundwater groups in Wood County. The three citizen groups are:
 - A. Groundwater Guardians (Marshfield area)
 - B. Protect Wood County
 - C. Saratoga Concerned
 - D. Citizens (Wood County) Groundwater Group

Bill Leichtnam suggested sponsoring an evening program on “Protecting Your Groundwater” in central Wood County. A suggestion made was to have the new Natural Resources Educator position once hired organize the “Protecting Your Groundwater” program. Suggested speakers: Sue Kunferman and Shane Wucherpennig.

Other possible outreach activities:

- Portable water testing lab at a community event
- Traveling road show
- Public and Private Schools
- Central Wisconsin State Fair
- Town Association Meeting

10. **Future Speakers to invite** Bill Leichtnam will continue to look for speakers.

Suggestions for speakers:

- James Reese (Mauston Farmer) – December/January meeting
- Green Fire

11. **Roundtable**

- a. Nancy Turyk – Wood County Agricultural and Household Clean Sweep is Saturday, September 7th from 8:00 a.m.-Noon at the Saratoga Town Hall at 1116 State Highway 73, Wisconsin Rapids.
- b. Rick Potter – Saratoga Community Water Testing, Saratoga Town Hall, August 3rd (pick-up water sample bottles) and August 4th (return filled water sample bottles), 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

12. **Announcements of members / visitors (upcoming parallel events / meetings)** The Speaker’s Task Force on Water Quality Public Hearing in Stevens Point is scheduled for Wednesday, July 24th at Noon at the UWSP Dreyfus University Center. Other upcoming events announced throughout the meeting.

13. **Next Meeting**

Monday, August 19th. 2:00-4:00 p.m. @ Wood Co Riverblock Building, Room 206

14. **Adjourn Groundwater Group Meeting** Bill Leichtnam adjourned @ 4:04 p.m.

Notes by Kim Keech, Planning & Zoning Office