

CITIZENS (WOOD COUNTY) GROUPWATER GROUP MEETING

DATE: Monday, April 15, 2019
TIME: 2:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Wood County Riverblock Building, Conf. Room #206

Present: Rick Bakovka, Rhonda Carrell, Bill Clendenning, Bruce Dimick, Rick Georgeson, Gordon Gottbeheut, Adam Groshek, Mark Holbrook, Kim Keech, Bill Leichtnam, Logan Manthe, Doug Passineau, Rick Potter, James Schuerman and Cecile Stelzer-Johnson.

1. **Call Meeting to Order:** Bill Leichtnam called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.
2. **Public Comment** None
3. **Correspondence/Updates:**
 - A. Bruce Dimick reported that there are 11 public informational meetings scheduled for Speaker Vos Water Quality Task Force. Citizens are unable to comment or participate. Bruce Dimick has attended two of the meetings in Madison so far. Rep Todd Novak is the chair of the committee and Rep Katrina Shankland is the Vice Chair. Rep Scott Krug and Senator Patrick Testin are both on the committee. Rep Katrina Shankland emphasized that a goal of this committee is that science based research legislation should be the result of this Task Force.

Highlights of the Task Force meetings held:

- i. March 20th (Madison) – The following Wisconsin departments were represented:
 - Department of Natural Resources – CAFO issue with respect to clean water. It is a low estimate that 42,000 private wells exceed 10-ppm nitrate levels in the state. Nutrient Management Plans are not really for water protection and are for maximizing yields.
 - Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection – Emphasized using the right size amount of fertilizer keeping track of inputs so you do not over fertilize.
 - Department of Health Services – 10% private wells have been tested so far. The big issues are lead, nitrates, bacteria and PFAS.
 - Wisconsin Geological & Natural History
- ii. April 3rd (Madison) – The following organizations were represented:
 - Wisconsin Farm Bureau – They would like funding restored to UW-Madison for agriculture research and support as well as funding reinstated for county conservation offices.
 - Wisconsin Farmers Union
 - Clean Wisconsin
 - Wisconsin Land & Water Department
 - Wisconsin Corn Growers Association
 - Wisconsin Water Quality Association

Additional comments: NR151 needs tailored to specific geographical areas. Senator Mark Miller stated that local control should be on a watershed basis. Rep Katrina Shankland shared that local control needed for communities not adequately protected by state statute. UWSP Water Testing Department and Kevin Masarik frequently mentioned in a positive light. Wisconsin Conservation Voters shared that manure is a big problem and that there should be no spreading on frozen ground state wide.

Discussion followed.

Bill Leichtnam mentioned that if anyone is interested to attending the May 8th meeting of the Speaker Vos Water Quality Task Force in Lancaster to contact Bruce Dimick.

- B. Bill Clendenning commented that he is on the Town of Grand Rapids Waters Committee.
- C. Town of Sigel would like a copy of the Town of Saratoga ordinances.

- D. Bill Leichtnam shared the “Groundwater Wisconsin’s Buried Treasure” pamphlet, three articles and a draft letter from Shane Wucherpfennig at the meeting:
- i. Groundwater Wisconsin’s Buried Treasure – Informational brochure on groundwater and wells.
 - ii. Buffalo County – A significant amount of liquid manure spilled into an unnamed Buffalo County stream on 4/12/19. DNR officials are working to determine the impact. Little Bear Creek is a Class-II trout stream.
 - iii. Gaps in Federal and State Laws Leave Private Well Users Vulnerable to Drinking Water Contamination – There are 45 million US residents who rely on private wells for water. Minnesota Department of Agriculture adopted a “groundwater protection rule”. Town of Saratoga mentioned in the article that the town could require a person engaged in the land application of manure to propose measures to remediate high nitrate levels.
 - iv. 2019 Assembly Bill 21 – This bill requires the DNR to administer a program to provide grants for the testing of privately owned wells. The bill makes changes to the Well Compensation grant program currently administered by DNR.
 - v. Letter from Shane Wucherpfennig to Wood County Town Board Chairperson’s –This letter is currently in draft form. Wood County Health Department will review and revise before mailing.

4. **SPEAKER Rick Georgeson – PACRS**
“Successful Engagement with the Ag Community”

Rick Georgeson gave a brief overview of the progress on Petenwell and Castle Rock Stewards (PACRS):

- A. River Alliance of Wisconsin, DNR and County Conservationists from Adams and Juneau Counties formed Petenwell and Castle Rock Stewards (PACRS) in 2007.
 - B. PACRS mission is to improve water quality and recreational experience on the Petenwell and Castle Rock lakes of the Wisconsin River.
 - C. PACRS collaborates with conservation groups, state and local agencies, individuals, businesses, and property associations in Adams and Juneau Counties.
 - D. PACRS brought the politicians to the lakes showing them green water and impaired water quality.
 - E. \$150,000 per year for 5 years from the State of Wisconsin budget to fund the cost of a water quality study on the Wisconsin River. This is called a TMDL (total maximum daily load) which measures the nutrients that is flowing from major contributories in the Wisconsin River.
 - F. Petenwell has five sites that the goal is to reduce to 54 ppm.
 - G. Shares information with UWSP. A key member of the agriculture community is missing.
 - H. Former Wisconsin DNR Secretary Cathy Stepp blown away by what citizens can do.
 - I. Healthy Soil/Healthy Water Workshops - 50% of attendees were agricultural producers.
Take away from workshop: Bring the lake users to the farm and bring the farmers to the lake.
We are not the problem. We are the solution.
 - J. Formed farmer led councils. Farmer helping farmer. There 24 farmer led councils in the state.
 - K. Till (conventional farming) and no till farming demonstrations held.
 - L. Every partner makes a change. Big changes will happen. Thanking farmers for what they do.
 - M. Healthy soil. Healthy water.
 - N. There is a hum in Wood County among the agriculture community for no-till farming practices.
 - O. PACRS next meeting will be Friday, April 26th at Shipwreck Bay, N7265 Schacks Road, Mauston.
- Discussion followed.

5. **Update on MOU w/ AGC & status of bottled water distribution and RO System Installation (monthly conference call)**

Bill Leichtnam updated the committee that there was a teleconference on April 11th. Bill Leichtnam shared written communication from Peter Kastenholtz (Wood County Corporation Counsel) to Sue Kunferman (Wood County Health Department). The AGC was asked about the water testing which will follow dual tracks. Wood County has 23 new water tests. 155 water samples were collected as of April 12th with 27 above the state drinking water standard of 10 mg/L for nitrates. Bill Clendenning asked who is paying for the water testing and if Wood County reimbursed. Fourteen individuals participated in the teleconference.

MOU is a voluntary agreement. AGC made a verbal agreement to fund 50% of the study matched by the Wisconsin DNR. Distribution of water is important. The next teleconference meeting will be held on May 9th in the Wood County Health Department Sue Kunferman office. The teleconference meetings held monthly for the first 6 months. The April meeting will be month four. Rhonda Carrell asked if the 155 water tests that were brand new water tests or follow-up water tests. Logan Manthe reported 153 new water tests and 2 follow up water tests of the 155 water tests sampled.

6. **Planned JOINT MEETING of Wood, Juneau & Adams County and 4 new counties (Land & Water, Health Department Committees meeting Thursday, April 25th in Adams County)**

Bill Leichtnam shared that on Thursday, April 25th there will be a closed meeting in Adams County. The purpose of the meeting is a joint strategy for all eight counties on how to work together on water issues planning together. Future meetings will be open to the public.

7. **CGG Recommendations to CEED (“Action Items”)
Recommendations to full County Board, Legislature & Governor (Should we forward 30+ list of ideas to Wood County Board thru CEED?)**

Bill Leichtnam stated we must take action. What are our next action steps? Where do we go from here? Politicians received the 30+ list of ideas.

Motion by Rick Potter to provide the 30+ list of ideas to the Wood County CEED Committee. Second by Rhonda Carrell. Discussion followed.

The consensus of the committee was to review the list at the next Citizens Groundwater Group Meeting in May before sending to the Wood County CEED Committee.

Motion by Rick Potter to table providing the 30+ list of ideas to the Wood County CEED Committee and to review the list at the May meeting before sending to the Wood County CEED Committee. .

8. **“Membership Growth” of CGG among farming community**

Bill Leichtnam commented that we have to attract the farming community to assist in groundwater protection. Adam Groshek feels that farmers are doing best conservation practices and maybe feel that this is not a priority. Mark Holbrook asked how many meetings/farm events/seminars that there are that the Citizens Groundwater Group could attend to educate the farming community. Cecile Stelzer-Johnson commented that Nutrient Management Plan regulations are not working for water quality issues.

9. **“Outreach Activities” of CGG (Ideas & Report)** Discussion at next meeting.

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

May – open

June – open

Suggestions for speakers: Sara Botham, UW Madison

11. **Roundtable**

- A. Bruce Dimick – Encourages everyone to contact your elected officials on Senator Vos Water Quality Task Force and collectively engage in this issue.
- B. Cecile Stelzer-Johnson – The way the water goes is that it leaves the land and goes into the ditches. When you have land, you will have a low area. Trees and other materials that are damaged have the chippers come to get rid of it, which then goes to the dump. The dump fills up with these materials. Are the farmers willing to spread the materials in the ditches as a buffer to create good soil?
- C. Bill Clendenning – Portage County Groundwater meeting is April 22nd.
- D. Gordon Gottbeheit – Inaudible on audio recording.

- E. Doug Passineau – Buffer is a great idea and be enforced. This is a huge problem for the Highway Department.
- F. Rhonda Carrell – Appreciates the approach that the PACRS organization is doing. The representation from the Town of Saratoga has not met the farmers in a positive manner like the gentle approach that the PACRS have.
- G. Rick Potter – Attended the Conservation Congress in Pittsville. Free water testing will be available at the Energy Fair on June 21st – 23rd. Town of Saratoga annual meeting is on April 16th. Legal counsel will be at the meeting to explain where they are at from a legal standpoint with an update on the Wysocki proposed Golden Sands Farm.
- H. Bill Leichtnam – Citizens Groundwater meeting needs to elect an acting Vice Chairperson. This will be on the agenda for the May meeting.
- I. Adam Groshek – John Eron is the Weed Commissioner for Wood and Portage Counties. John is working on the wild parsnip issue.

12. **Announcements of members / visitors (upcoming parallel events / meetings)** None

13. **Next Meeting**

Monday, May 20th, 2:00-4:00 p.m. @ Wood Co Riverblock Building, Room 206

14. **Adjourn Groundwater Group Meeting** Bill Leichtnam adjourned @ 3:58 p.m.

Meeting Notes by Kim Keech, Planning & Zoning Office