

CITIZENS (WOOD COUNTY) GROUNDWATER GROUP MEETING

DATE: Monday, May 20, 2019
TIME: 2:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Wood County Riverblock Building, Conf. Room #206

Present: Rick Bakovka, Sandra Cain, Rhonda Carrell, Bill Clendenning, Bruce Dimick, Nancy Eggleston, Jason Fuller, Gordon Gottbeheut, Tamas Houlihan, Kim Keech, Gary Krause, Bill Leichtnam, Logan Manthe, Doug Passineau, Rick Potter and Nancy Turyk.

1. **Call Meeting to Order:** Bill Leichtnam called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.
2. **Acting Chair/Facilitator Remarks:** Bill Leichtnam shared that he plans to have meetings follow Roberts Rule of Order and to reduce cross talk.
3. **Public Comment** PACRS members are invited to attend the Town of Rome and Tri-Lakes Management Association, along with the 14 Mile Creek Watershed Joint Committee, hosting its' annual state of our water quality luncheon at the Rome Town Hall on Saturday, June 8th at 11:00 a.m.
4. **Correspondence/Updates:** None
5. **SPEAKER Jason Fuller (Carbon Cycle Consulting) – “Composting Ag Waste”**
Nancy Eggleston reported that Jason Fuller presented at the Land & Water Conservation Conference in Lake Geneva WI. Jason Fuller collaborated with Austria. Austria handles most of their Ag waste by composting. Composting technology installed on small farms and up 11,000 dairy cow farms. Less compost because of Aerobic. Quite promising technology.

Shane Wucherpfennig shared that composting Ag waste facilities can be found on larger dairy farms primarily in the Fox Valley area. The Fox Valley area is 10 years ahead of technology because there are larger dairies. The old style is to compost manure by flushing through pumps and screens settling through channels. Composting Ag waste fined tuned by running it through screen presses similar to a paper mill plant. This new technology is more efficient and a very desirable product. The material is an organic fibrous material. Liquid manure runs off. Solid manure is better environmentally. Ag compost used for bedding, fertilizer or feed dried product. Liquid goes to a Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Jason Fuller gave a brief overview of composting Ag waste:

- A. Manure is 95% water and 5% solids.
- B. Manure Separation Technology simplifies the operation and allow dairy producers to do more with their manure streams.
- C. Liquid manure typically spread in the spring and fall with a minimal window. Short window to handle a year of production. No market.
- D. Aerobic Decomposition versus Anaerobic Decomposition – Aerobic decomposition needs oxygen to survive for life cycle in decomposing organic matter to a relatively stable humus under suitable environmental conditions with no accompanying bad smell. Aerobic decomposition is most common in nature. Anaerobic decomposition does not need oxygen for life cycle and develop compounds including methane, organic acids, hydrogen sulphide and other substances, many of which have strong odors and toxic. Both aerobic and anaerobic bacteria break down organic matter.
- E. Aerobic decomposition recycling. Copying nature and speeding up the process Takes a product from a 3-5 year process to 8 weeks.
- F. Making composting on farms. Composting is nothing new and works every time.
- G. Cows do not eat trees.
- H. Variables are carbon, nitrogen, water (moisture control) and oxygen. The variables allows a process to make it into a processing facility rather than a store, transport and applied mile, which is like liquid manure now. Liquid manure has failed us as a technic to manage our waste stream.

- I. Manure is not a waste but a way of handling it is wasteful. Manure is a resource.
 - J. Cows are a fiber-making machine.
 - K. Separation Technology is expensive. Ag waste run through a press by squeezing to a desirable product.
 - L. Processing versus Storage
 - M. Aerobic hybrid system needs oxygen air exchange with the process taking 8 weeks.
 - N. Carbon base is a fuel source in composting.
 - O. Recycled bedding product.
 - P. Healthier cows. Healthier feed. Healthier feed makes healthier crops. Healthier soil. Magic is in composting manure.
 - Q. Composting is a better tool for agriculture. Environmentally friendly organic material with minimal odor.
 - R. YouTube link: https://youtu.be/YJB_zODGYBM
- Discussion followed.

6. **Bruce Dimick-Report on 3rd (1st public) meeting of Speaker Vos's Water Quality Task Force in Lancaster, WI**

Bruce Dimick reported on the 3rd meeting of Speaker Vos's Water Quality Task Force, which was held on May 8th in Lancaster, WI. Public allowed to comment for the first time. There was not much publicity for the Lancaster meeting. Two elected representatives Rep Scott Krug and Senator Andre' Jacque were not present for the meeting. Approximately 100 citizens in attendance.

Speaker highlights of the Lancaster, WI meeting:

- i. SWIGG Team
 - Shared the Southwest Wisconsin Groundwater & Geological Study (SWIGG)
 - Headed by Ken Bradbury
 - Iowa, Grant and Lafayette Counties are part of the tri-county water quality study.
 - 42% of wells in the tri-county area are contaminated with either excessive nitrates, coliform bacteria or both.
- ii. Organizations represented:
 - LASA (Lafayette Ag Stewardship Alliance) – Supports SWIGG and many water conservation initiatives.
 - Wisconsin Pork Producers – Product hurt by transportation system.
 - UW-Platteville, Pioneer Farm & Discovery Farms – Funding reduced significantly. Most important way to control phosphorus loss is to control soil loss.

Citizen input comments:

- Current law does not protect their rights to clean drinking water.
- Retired DNR employee shared that a CAFO lagoon upstream from his home overflowed. The lagoon overflow contaminated a Class A trout stream near his house and destroyed it. His nitrates went from 3 ppm to 20 ppm for his well water.
- Cover crops supported by many farmers.

What about Wood County? What are we doing? Portage County recently completed audit of their well water resources that effectively covered 88% of the county. Wood County has not done an audit. Wood County Land & Water Conservation Department is in the process with financing established. In Portage County, 24% wells tested greater than 10 ppm.

Nancy Eggleston shared that she will be a speaker for Speaker Vos Water Quality Task Force meeting in the Mauston/New Lisbon area (location to be determined) on June 12th. Bill Leichtnam mentioned that Bruce Dimick is unable to attend the May 29th meeting of the Speaker Vos Water Quality Task Force in Janesville. Anyone interested in attending the Janesville meeting should contact Bill Leichtnam. The Stevens Point meeting for Senator Vos Water Quality Task Force tentatively scheduled for late July.

7. **Update on MOU w/ AGC & status of bottled water distribution and RO System Installation (monthly conference call)** (Conference call notes submitted by Nancy Eggelston.)
Nancy Eggelston updated the committee as to the monthly conference call that was held on May 9th. Residents participated in both AECOM sampling of their wells for nitrate, or chose to self-test with samples analyzed at the Wood County Health Department. The bulk of this activity occurred in the first two weeks of April. AECOM sampled 314 wells and there were 166 self-samples during this period. Of the total 480 nitrates test that were run 106, or 22% had nitrate levels exceeding the Nitrate Standard of 10 mg/L. Combined results from May 2018 testing and the current testing program tests covered 584 residences in the Armenia and Port Edwards agricultural corridor. Of the 584 homes tested, 149 had an unsafe level of nitrate, or approximately 26%. Those with water samples exceeding the drinking water standard of 10 mg/L nitrate are eligible to request bottled water from the Armenia Growers Coalition. Confirmatory sampling will be done for these families. If the result is above 10 mg/L, the homeowners will be eligible for the installation of a point of use reverse osmosis (RO) system. The Armenia Growers Coalition will provide the treatment system. Some seasonal residents still intend to sample as they return to their properties during the summer months. Approximately 900 residents invited to participate in this most recent testing. Another effort will be made to reach those who have not yet tested for nitrate in this agricultural corridor. There was also discussion on treatment for those with nitrate levels exceeding the capability of the current reverse osmosis system that is being installed. The Department of Safety and Professional Services, Bureau of Technical Services provided three potential options for these homes. One is an anion exchange unit but this would potentially allow any lead or copper in the plumbing to leach into the drinking water making it a poor option. Another option is an RO system with utilizing higher pressure, or a distillation system. The high-pressure unit is not yet certified. The distillation unit is certified but not as convenient. An AGC representative will contact DSPS to explore these options further. Those with RO systems installed will be encouraged to use nitrate test strips to monitor the treated water from their RO systems to make sure they are operating properly. To date, seven RO systems installed, and 17 more have work orders for future installation.

The DNR has the research project ready to go and they have secured half of the funding needed. Jim Wysocki of AGC would not commit to funding this research project while on the MOU teleconference. An answer on whether or not they will help fund the project is needed by May 17th. Nancy Eggelston has not heard if funding has been secured.

8. **“Action Items-CGG Recommendations to CEED Committee, full County Board, Legislature, Governor (Review list of 36 ideas to clean our water)**
Bill Leichtnam commented that the item to be moved to the June meeting to be discussed. He encourages everyone to review and rank the handout “Steps needed to Protect Wisconsin Water”.
9. **“Membership Growth” & “Outreach Activities”**
Bill Leichtnam encourages membership growth by attending meetings. “Steps needed to Protect Wisconsin Water” should be the groups focus for outreach activities.
10. **Future Speakers to invite** Bill Leichtnam commented that there would not be any speaker at the June meeting so the group can discuss the “Action Items” CGG recommendations to CEED Committee, full County Board, Legislature, and Governor (review list of 36 ideas to clean our water).

June – None

July – Well Water Viewer by Bruce Dimick

Green Fire AV presentation in next coming months. Green Fire is a group of DNR officials and college professors.

11. **Nominations for Chair, Vice-Chair, and Facilitator**
Agenda item moved to the June meeting.
12. **Roundtable**

13. **Announcements of members / visitors (upcoming parallel events / meetings)**
Various upcoming events and meetings announced throughout the meeting.
14. **Next Meeting**
Monday, June 17th, 2:00-4:00 p.m. @ Wood Co Riverblock Building, Room 206
15. **Adjourn Groundwater Group Meeting** Bill Leichtnam adjourned @ 4:03 p.m.

Meeting Notes by Kim Keech, Planning & Zoning Office