

CITIZENS (WOOD COUNTY) GROUNDWATER GROUP MEETING

DATE: Monday, March 15, 2021
TIME: 2:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Teleconference via WebEx

Present: Ray Bossert, Rhonda Carrell, Bill Clendenning, Scott Custer, Bruce Dimick, Gordon Gottbeheit, Tamas Houlihan, Ben Jeffrey, Kim Keech, Matt Krueger, Bill Leichtnam, Jen McNelly, Robert Sorenson, Cecile Stelzer-Johnson, Nancy Turyk, Gregg Wavrunek, Rachael Whitehair, Allison Werner, Shane Wucherpfennig, Tim Wuebben and Don Ystad.

1. **Call Meeting to Order:** Chair Bill Leichtnam called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

2. **Public Comment:** None.

3. **Speaker – Matt Krueger, Wisconsin Land & Water Conservation Association
“Coming Together in Support of Clean Water & Resilient Farms”**

Bill Leichtnam introduced Matt Krueger of the Wisconsin Land & Water Conservation Association.
Webpage link: <https://wisconsinlandwater.org>.

Highlights of “Coming Together in Support of Clean Water & Resilient Farms” presentation:

- Non-profit, not-partisan 501(C)3 membership organization that supports the efforts of county Land Conservation Departments and Land Conservation committees.
- Mission Statement: To protect, conserve, and enhance Wisconsin's natural resources by advocating for and supporting county conservation efforts, for current and future generations.
- Membership organization. 71 of 72 counties are dues paying members.
- Only state that delivers local conservation delivery through counties versus state districts.
- 16 nominated member Board.
- Wisconsin Land & Water Conservation Association has 7 staff members located in Madison.
- Programs: Conservation Awards, Conservation Training, Policy & Advocacy, Technical Standards, Youth Organization.
- Standards Oversight Council is a collaboration of conservation agencies that oversees a team approach in development and maintaining technical standards for soil and water conservation practices in Wisconsin.
- Training Program: Developing a carbon farming pilot program at the staff level. Climate Change resources.
- Goal: More conservation efforts through partners, members and agencies.
- Food, Land & Water: Moving Forward report: Website link: https://wisconsinlandwater.org/files/events/Food_Land_Water_Report_Rev_1.pdf
- Clean Water Initiative: The Dairy Business Association is partnering with Clean Wisconsin, Nature Conservancy and Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association. "Clean Water Initiative" partnership has been on-going for almost 2 yrs. but not widely known to the general public until December 2020. Goal is to make investments in agriculture and conservation. Improve Wisconsin's non-point program. Support and compliance on all farms meeting agriculture performance standards. Ensure clean drinking water. More CAFO's have resulted in more farms with a struggle in for resources. Support current conservation efforts. Vision: Clean water and resilient farms for Wisconsin. Mission: Break down barriers and bring people together to protect and improve water quality, the environment and the future of agriculture. Website link: <https://www.dairyforward.com/page/cleanwaterinitiative>

Discussion followed.

4. **Correspondence/Updates/Handouts/Reports:**

Bill Leichtnam shared the following at the meeting:

- A. Wisconsin Water Week was March 8-12 held virtually. UWSP Speaker Christopher Kucharik topic presentation “Nitrogen, Groundwater Quality and a Changing Climate Intersecting Challenges for

Wisconsin Agriculture” was informative. The last decade (2011-2020) has been 15% wetter than previous decades which has seen a significant nitrogen leaching into groundwater. Agriculture’s long-term reliance on nitrogen to maintain or increase crop productivity over the last several decades has contributed to increased nitrate concentrations in groundwater across Wisconsin. More manmade lakes are being formed 25 miles north of Madison. Nitrates are not being measured in irrigated water. Recommendations: Spread manure in spring and fall, cover crops, fall cover crops have trouble establishing, a higher frequency of extreme rainfall events will make nutrient management more challenging. Legacy nitrogen will be around for the next two generations. Stringent regulations just don’t work.

Additional comments from Vice Chair, Bruce Dimick on Wisconsin Water Week: Broader audience than in person. If using Zoom, it needs to be easier to navigate. 14 Mile Watershed did an exceptional job and presentation on Friday at Wisconsin Water week and doing an exceptional job.

- B. Senate Bill 152 – Legislation to prohibit the sale and use of coal tar-based sealants and high PAH sealant products. This is a statewide ban. Website link: <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2021/proposals/sb152>
- C. In conjunction with River Alliance, there are posters available to encourage people to vote “yes” on the Clean Water Referendum on April 6th. Contact Christie Greening for posters. Clean Water referendum question on the April 6th ballot for Wood County, Portage County and Marquette County. Website Link: <https://voteforcleanwater.com/>

5. **Action Items:**

Tell the stories to the Joint Finance Committee in their virtual public hearings.

Joint Finance Committee 2021-2023 Biennial Budget Public Hearing is on Wednesday, April 28, 2021. Website link: www.legis.wisconsin.gov/topics/budgetcomments.

6. **Roundtable**

- A. Bruce Dimick – There has been a 3 year surplus of water but precipitation has been down 4” since last October. If drought continues soil will look like 8 years ago.
- B. Allison Werner – There will be a letter to the editor in local newspapers regarding the Clean Water referendum question, yard signs and radio promotion.

7. **Announcements of members / visitors (upcoming parallel events / meetings)** Upcoming meetings and events were mentioned throughout the meeting.

8. **Future Speakers:**

April – George Kraft, professor emeritus UWSP. Tentative topic: “What we’ve learned from 30 Years of Groundwater Testing in Portage County”

A suggestion was made to have a local representative from the Wisconsin Farmers Union. Local representative for Wood County, Portage County and Waupaca County is Rachel Bouressa.

Tamas Houlihan will contact Entomologist Russ Groves about speaking to the group in May.

9. **Agenda Items for next meeting**

Agenda items should be submitted to Bill Leichtnam by the second Monday of the month.

10. **Next Meeting** Monday, April 19th, 2:00 p.m. (VIRTUAL)

11. **Adjourn Groundwater Group Meeting** Chair Bill Leichtnam adjourned @ 3:30 p.m.

Notes by Kim Keech, Planning & Zoning Office