

CITIZENS (WOOD COUNTY) GROUNDWATER GROUP MEETING

DATE: Monday, September 21, 2020
TIME: 2:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Teleconference via WebEx

Present: Caleb Armstrong, Ray Bossert, Sandra Cain, Rhonda Carrell, Kyle Christianson (Wisconsin Counties Association), Bill Clendenning, Bruce Dimick, Nancy Eggleston, Gordon Gottbeheit, Tamas Houlihan, Kim Keech, Bill Leichtnam, Jen McNelly, Lance Pliml, Gregg Wavrunek (Congressional Aide-US Senator Tammy Baldwin), Ken Winters, Shane Wucherpennig and Tim Wuebben.

1. **Call Meeting to Order:** Chairman Bill Leichtnam called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.
2. **Public Comment:** None
3. **Speaker: Lance Pliml, Wood County Board Chair – “Nitrates & Counties” and Kyle Christianson, Wisconsin Counties Association**

Wood County Board Chair, Lance Pliml expressed that the Citizens (Wood County) Group has made tremendous headway. Wood County is leading the way in clean water. Lance Pliml introduced Kyle Christianson who is the Director of Government Affairs with the Wisconsin Counties Association.

Highlights of Kyle Christianson, Director of Government Affairs presentation:

- Wood County is leading the way elevating water issues and awareness educating local citizens.
- State legislators are not working together.
- Both Governor Evers and Republicans agree that clean water needs to be addressed.
- Legislators concerns: How do we address clean water? How much money do we spend on water?
- There are a dozen water bills addressing clean water. Water bills passed the Wisconsin Assembly but have not been voted on in the Wisconsin Senate due to the pandemic. 75%-80% of the bills are bipartisan and are expected to pass the Wisconsin Senate.
- COVID-19 pandemic has created panic and uncertainty. Wisconsin legislators probably don't want to spend any money. Clean Water bills are on hold.
- Encourages group to keep water issues elevated.
- No agreements between Wisconsin Assembly and Wisconsin Senate on water concerns.
- Funding needs to be prioritized.

Discussion followed.

4. **Correspondence/Updates:**
Bill Leichtnam shared the following at the meeting:
 - A. River Alliance (Allison Werner) – “Water Bills” are dead. Kyle Christianson presentation provided that the “Water Bills” are on “hold”.
 - B. Southwest Wisconsin Groundwater & Geology (SWIGG) Study Update – A regional water study found evidence of human waste and animal feces in private wells located in southwestern Wisconsin. Group consists of Grant County, Iowa County and Lafayette County. COVID-19 slowed the study progress. Results are expected to be released in 2021. Funding is provided by individual citizens.
 - C. Central Sands Groundwater County Collaborative (CSGCC) – Group is made up of six counties consisting of Adams County, Juneau County, Marquette County, Portage County, Waushara County and Wood County. State funding is on hold due to COVID-19. Grant funds are being applied for. Phase 1 – GAP Analysis (outreach plan). Phase 2 – Implementation (“boots on the ground”).
 - D. “Groundwater council calls for action on PFA’s; nitrate remains top contaminant” handout – Groundwater Council was formed in 1984. Wisconsin Groundwater Coordinating Council’s annual report to the legislature recommends establishing groundwater enforcement standards and continue

to identify sources of the largely indestructible compounds, which have been linked to cancer and other illnesses. Private Wells and municipal wells are contaminated. 17% of private wells are contaminated with coliform bacteria.

- E. "A broader look at water" handout – Nelsonville residents filed a formal complaint to the DNR against Gordondale Farms, a registered CAFO farm. 47% of the wells in Nelsonville exceed the state drinking water standards. Many CAFO permits have expired licenses. DNR relies on CAFO's to self-regulate. Improvement of environment health steps are only the beginning of the long journey back to a sustainable community.

5. **Action Items:**

- A. Environmental Candidates (to support) this election cycle.
Pliml and Clendenning recommended to keep personal political views from the meetings.
- B. Post-election, 2020
Focus on clean water campaign.
- C. Protecting our ground & surface water with or without legislative support
Continue to elevate water issues by educating citizens on clean water.

Roundtable

- A. Bill Clendenning – Share state legislature updates and legislation. Keep politics out of the meetings.
- B. Bruce Dimick – Judge denied key permit for Monroe County sand project. Clean Wisconsin and Ho-Chunk Nation challenged the permits.
- C. Rhonda Carrell – Appreciates that the meetings have resumed. Move in a positive direction.
- D. Shane Wucherpfennig – Positive work continues in the Little Plover River Watershed and Mill Creek 9-Key Element Plan.
- E. Nancy Eggleston – Thank you Kyle Christianson for the updates.
- F. Tamas Houlihan – Wisconsin Potato & Vegetable Growers Association producer-led watershed grant continues project of the Little Plover River Watershed.
- G. Lance Pliml – Keep political heat on the state legislators.
- H. Gordon Gottbeheit – Support our goal of "Clean Water". DNR takes a lot of flack which is due to political decisions.
- I. Ray Bossert – Thank you for the meeting invitation.
- J. Ken Winters – Presentation should touch more citizens.

6. **Announcements of members / visitors (upcoming parallel events / meetings)** Announcements shared throughout the meeting.

7. **Future Speakers:**

October - Rachael Whitehair, UW Madison Division of Extension "Nitrate Reduction"
Possible future speaker – Towns Association

8. **Agenda Items for next meeting**

Agenda items should be submitted to Bill Leichtnam.

9. **Next Meeting – Monday, October 19th, 2:00 p.m. (VIRTUAL)**

10. **Adjourn Groundwater Group Meeting** Bill Leichtnam adjourned @ 3:24 p.m.

Notes by Kim Keech, Planning & Zoning Office