

CITIZENS (WOOD COUNTY) GROUNDWATER GROUP MEETING

DATE: Monday, February 17, 2020
TIME: 2:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Wood County Riverblock Building, Conference Room 206

Present: Caleb Armstrong, Bill Clendenning, Bruce Dimick, Nancy Eggleston, Keith Iverson, Kim Keech, Bill Leichtnam, Logan Manthe, Rick Potter, Cecile Stelzer Johnson, Ken Winters and Shane Wucherpfennig.

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

Bill Leichtnam shared that he heard from a retired conservationist at the Golden Sands Resource Conservation & Development Council Inc. meeting on January 16th that residents from Town of Armenia, Juneau County and Town of Port Edwards, Wood County lawsuit may be 5 years before scheduled with Circuit Court. Bill Leichtnam shared that he received a telephone call indicating that the lawsuit may proceed significantly faster.

Bill Leichtnam shared news articles as handouts at the meeting:

 - A. "GOP Bill Would Give Farm Groups More Control Over Wisconsin Livestock Siting Standards"
 - B. "A thinly veiled attempt by polluters to influence unbiased groundwater standards process"

9 out of the 13 proposed bills from Speaker Voss's Task Force on Groundwater Quality are expected to be voted in the Wisconsin Assembly on February 18th.
4. **Status of 13 proposed "water bills" in public hearing/committee before Wisconsin Assembly & Senate**

Bill Leichtnam shared that he follows the Wisconsin Politics website of www.wispolitics.com for Wisconsin political updates. Rick Potter commented that Wisconsin Conservation Voices website of www.conservationvoices.org has updates. Bill Clendenning shared that WisconsinEye website www.wiseye.org is a cable network stream live programming from the Wisconsin State Capitol.

9 out of the 13 proposed bills from Speaker Vos's Task Force on Groundwater Quality are expected to be voted in the Wisconsin Assembly on February 18th. Bill Leichtnam commented that he participated in a hearing in Madison on AB800/SB722 bills supporting the Center for Watershed Science and Education, creating a statewide hydrogeologist position, funding research on phosphorus recovery and reuse, creating grant programs for counties to test wells and provide public education, granting rule-making authority, and making an appropriation. There was no opposition for that bill at the hearing.

The Wisconsin Senate will be meeting into the month of March.

UPDATE 2/18/2020: Wisconsin Assembly approved a \$10 million package on February 18, 2020 of 13 Water Quality Bills designed to combat groundwater contamination in the state. The Senate was not scheduled to vote on the measures until March.
5. **CGG ACTION ITEMS:**
 - A. Recommendations to CEED Committee – Please don't forget that the Citizens (Wood County) Groundwater Group can make recommendations to the Wood County CEED Committee.
 - i. Coordinate with "6 County Water Collaborative" against WCA/MTA effort to advocate legislation that would take local control away with regard to "livestock siting"

AB894/SB808 – Introduced by Senators Marklein, Bernier, Feyen, LeMahieu and Olsen, cosponsored by Representatives Tranel, Tauchen, Kurtz, Novak, Ballweg, Summerfield

and Tusler. This bill makes changes concerning the siting and expansion of livestock facilities giving state government more control over the process and granting agriculture groups considerably more power over changing the standards in the future. Future changes would have to be approved or rejected by a panel of nine stakeholders, five of whom would be chosen from farm groups. The Livestock Facility Technical Review Board created under the bill would be composed of nine people. Five of them would be submitted by the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation, the Wisconsin Farmer's Union, the Dairy Business Association, the Wisconsin Dairy Alliance, the Wisconsin Pork Producers, the Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association. The Wisconsin Towns Association, the Wisconsin Counties Association and the Land and Water Conservation Association would each choose a member. Environmental groups would also get one member on the board.

Discussion followed: Bill is in the process and does not allow for public input. Eliminates opposition. Wisconsin Towns Association, Wisconsin Counties Association and Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association are the minority. County or Town would not have any say on any changes. Some counties have livestock siting ordinances that their counties have adopted and physically have staff that administer those ordinances which then would strip those authorities away. This bill does not have many co-sponsors and is not bipartisan. This is a stand-alone bill and can be vetoed by Governor Evers.

Motion by Bruce Dimick that the Citizens (Wood County) Groundwater Group totally opposes all provisions in companion legislation AB894/SB808 ("Livestock Siting") and is particularly concerned that this legislation pre-empts local control. Citizens (Wood County) Groundwater Group requests the Wood County CEED Committee and the Wood County Judicial and Legislative go on record opposing this legislation also. We also request that one or both committees put this motion to the full County Board, and if it passes, forward it to all State Legislatures that represent Wood County. Second by Bill Clendenning. Motion carried unanimously.

Resolution will be drafted by the Citizens (Wood County) Groundwater Group and send the resolution to the Wood County CEED Committee for support.

CAFO animal threshold is based on weight and production volume. A 1,400 pound dairy cow is 1.4 animal units. So, it is 1,000 animal units which is equivalent to 750-800 milk cows. Chicken CAFO could be based on 10,000 chickens based on weight and production volume. A CAFO is an animal feeding operation with more than 1,000 animal units. Animal units considered 0-999 is unregulated.

- ii. Wood County Board will be reorganized in April. Discuss the future of the Citizens (Wood County) Groundwater Group at the March meeting. Agenda item for March.
- B. Report of lobbying efforts at Wisconsin Conservation Voters Lobby Day on January 30th – Attendance was fantastic and very informative. Representative Krug was supportive of the 13 “water bills” in the Wisconsin Assembly. Senator Testin was non-committal. Wisconsin Conservation Voters had evaluation forms for those in attendance.
 - Other highlights:
 - Wisconsin Conservationists fully funded.
 - Lead and Water funding – Test lead in water in daycare centers, schools and camps. Set health standards for PFA's and funding.
- C. Future Lobbying? – Possible lobbying for AB894/SB808 livestock bill. Lobby Senator Testin heavily. Members are encouraged to follow the 13 “water bills” through the legislator particularly the senate.
- D. Report on February 4th & 5th WCA “Legislative Exchange” (Madison) – The “Legislative Exchange” is held in Madison every year for county supervisors to have access to state legislators. Governor Tony Evers was a speaker. Bill Leitchnam shared that state legislators Senator Scott Fitzgerald (Senate Republican Majority Leader), Senator Jennifer Shilling (Senate Democrat Minority Leader), Rep

Robin Vos (Assembly Republican Majority Leader) and Rep Gordon Hintz (Assembly Democrat Minority Leader) addressed county supervisors together. A person could clearly see the partisan divide that exists on the state legislator. Bill Clendenning shared that this is his 14th year in attendance, feels this was the best one yet and better than most conferences that they have. Wood County Board representatives were Dist. #12 Supervisor Doug Machon, Dist. #15 Supervisor Bill Clendenning, Dist. #16 Supervisor Lance Pliml and Dist. #19 Supervisor Bill Leichtnam. Bill Leichtnam commented that county legislators work better together than state legislators.

6. **Next Projects:**

- A. Groundwater Protection presentation in area schools (2-3 presenters) – Bill Leichtnam shared that a few years ago Bruce Dimick and himself gave a charter school in Nekoosa a Groundwater Protection presentation. Does anyone have a similar interest to go to any area schools? Bruce Dimick added that this a good idea. Bruce Dimick will draft a letter to area schools districts if they are interested in a Groundwater Protection presentation.
- B. “How to do Water Testing in a Wood County Town” seminar – Town of Saratoga has experience doing water testing in the town. Bruce Dimick shared that attending a town board meeting giving a 15 minute presentation on water testing would be effective.
- C. Coordinate with/assist UW-Extension Natural Resources Educator on outreach event – Shane Wucherpfennig shared that a remake of the Healthy Water/Healthy Soils Workshop field day is planned in early December 2020. The focus and goal of the field day will be on land practices and economic profitability for farmers. Rachel Whitehair will be invited to a future meeting when more planning has been completed.

Bill Leichtnam commented that the 72nd Alice in Dairyland Abigail Martin was on Channel 7 at noon on February 17th giving a cover crop demonstration. The cover crop demonstration showed the difference of heavy rain water on bare soil versus a cover crop demonstrating the advantage of cover crops. Video presentation found at <https://www.wsaw.com/video?vid=567944542>.

- D. Other “outreach” event planning – Shane Wucherpfennig added that there is a resolution to extend county-wide nitrate water sampling from Land & Water Conservation Department 2019 budget into 2020. The county approved nitrate well water testing in 2019 for \$8,500 which came from contingency. The Land & Water Conservation Department is at 40% of their goal and have approximately \$4,100 remaining. The resolution passed the CEED Committee on February 5, 2020. The resolution is expected to be approved by the Executive Committee and Wood County Board on February 18th.

UPDATE 2/18/2020: Wood County Board resolution to amend the Land & Water Conservation Department 2020 budget – function for the purpose of carrying over funds for the County-wide nitrate sampling effort of private wells. Motion carried unanimously.

7. **Future Speakers:**

- A. March – Lance Pliml (Wood County Board)
- B. April – Open

Wood County Supervisor Lance Pliml has agreed to be a speaker at the March 16th Citizens (Wood County) Groundwater Group meeting. Wisconsin Senator Jerry Petrowski has been contacted but has not responded.

C. **Roundtable**

- A. Bruce Dimick – Vote tomorrow - Wisconsin Primary is February 18th.
- B. Cecile Stelzer Johnson –
 - February 20th – Portage County Groundwater Citizen Advisory Committee meeting
 - February 22nd – Raging Grannies singing at the Wisconsin State Capital
 - February 29th – Our Wisconsin Revolution at Labor Temple in Madison from 1:00-4:00 p.m.

- C. Shane Wucherpfennig – Feel free to promote the free county-wide nitrate water sampling. Land & Water Conservation Department has been following the 13 proposed “water bills” before the Wisconsin Assembly & Senate. Introduced new employee, Caleb Armstrong. Educational efforts this summer: 9-Key Element Watershed Plan, No Till & Cover Crops, Water Quality Practices, School Groundwater Program and Prairies & Pollinators.
- D. Caleb Armstrong – Excited to share skillsets with Wood County.
- E. Nancy Eggleston – Town of Armenia meeting is on February 19th at 6:00 p.m. at the Armenia Township Hall.
- F. Rick Potter – Welcome Caleb Armstrong. Senate bill SB808 will be voted on February 17th.
- G. Ken Winters – Will free water testing be available in Juneau County? Nancy Eggleston shared that kits will be available this summer.
- H. Keith Iverson – A person can’t beat the taste of well water. Built a house near Wilderness Park installing a point well. There wasn’t a nitrate test taken at the time the house was built. A bacteria test was completed. Installed a new well a couple of years ago. Nitrate test for his house revealed 35 ppm nitrates. Health Department and Armenia Coalition nitrate test revealed 27 ppm. A shallow well located in his pump house on his property revealed .0017 ppm.

Shane Wucherpfennig commented that the science is unknown about groundwater. Shallower wells could be better as water runs through soil quicker. High nitrates didn’t happen overnight. Nitrate reduction will take decades to fix. Water runs slowly through the ground. It is unknown where water flows through the soil but they suspect water runs towards the river.

- D. **Announcements of members / visitors (upcoming parallel events / meetings)** Upcoming events announced throughout the meeting.

- E. **Agenda Items for next meeting**

The next regular Citizens (Wood County) Groundwater Group meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 16, 2020 at 2:00-4:00 p.m. at Wood Co Riverblock Building, Room 206.

Agenda Items:

- A. Speaker: Lance Pliml (Wood County Board)
- B. Discussion/Action to retain Citizens (Wood County) Groundwater Group as advisory to CEED Committee.

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

Notes by Kim Keech, Planning & Zoning Office