

THE GROUNDWATER COORDINATING COUNCIL

The Groundwater Coordinating Council (GCC) is an interagency group that is directed by law to assist state agencies and the Universities of Wisconsin (UW) in the coordination and exchange of information related to groundwater.

To learn more about groundwater quality and quantity, see the State of the Resource Section of this report. For actions to address groundwater quality and quantity issues, see the Recommendations Section.

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Fiscal Year 2024 Highlights

Highlights include what was new or updated in the last year.

- Five new groundwater research projects were selected for funding by GCC agencies/organizations through the GCC Joint Solicitation process in FY 2025 - two by UW, two by DNR and one by the Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection (DATCP).
- Two groundwater teacher workshops were held in FY 2024. DNR staff worked with the UW Stevens Point - Central WI Groundwater Center and the WGNHS to provide training to more than 20 educators from schools and nature centers. Each attendee received a free groundwater model for their school or facility.
- The GCC met four times in FY24 and discussed a variety of topics at its meetings including:



The GCC brings together staff from over 15 different agencies, institutions and organizations to communicate and work together on a variety of groundwater research, monitoring and data management, educational, and planning issues.

- the WGNHS Southwest Wisconsin Groundwater and Geology (SWIGG) study results
- DNR Marinette (JCI/Tyco) PFAS contamination investigation and site remediation efforts
- DNR geospatial data management coordination efforts
- UW Milwaukee researchers *Investigation of PFAS adsorption by selected Wisconsin aquifer sediments* study
- DNR coordinated study of the *Prevalence and source tracing of PFAS in shallow groundwater used for drinking water in Wisconsin*

Ongoing GCC groundwater coordination activities

Ongoing coordination activities include what the GCC does to manage and protect groundwater on a regular basis. The GCC:

- Brings together staff from over 15 different agencies, institutions and organizations to communicate and work together on a variety of groundwater research, monitoring and data management, educational, and planning issues. (*A list of GCC members and subcommittees is included below*).
- Provides consistency and coordination among state agencies in funding Wisconsin's Groundwater Research and Monitoring Program to meet state agency needs.
- Fosters communication, coordination and cooperation between the state agencies through quarterly meetings (more information can be found in the [GCC meeting minutes](#)).
- Identifies opportunities to collaborate on interagency groundwater data sharing, education and protection efforts.
- Organizes across agency lines on a variety of groundwater-related issues.
- Works with representatives of federal and local agencies to promote communication and coordination of state groundwater activities.
- Promotes efforts to enhance the utility of groundwater monitoring and research funded by the state.
- Coordinates groundwater research funding, through a Joint Solicitation process, that has funded approximately \$20 million in projects over the last 30 years (through DNR, UW, DATCP and DSPS (formerly Commerce)) with more than 500 projects selected to answer essential management questions and advance understanding of groundwater in Wisconsin.
- Coordinates interagency groundwater related activities to avoid duplication and create efficiencies, providing numerous benefits to Wisconsin's taxpayers.

- Sponsors and participates in forums and other outreach events to promote discussion of groundwater issues.
- Ensures consistency in groundwater education, data management and mapping efforts.
- Staffs and coordinates the Groundwater Research & Monitoring Subcommittee.
- Coordinates the Education and Outreach Activities Subcommittee.
- Coordinates the annual groundwater workshops for teachers (jointly taught since 1994 by the GCC Outreach and Partnership Subcommittee members from the DNR, Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey (WGNHS) and the Center for Watershed Science and Education (CWSE) at UW Stevens Point). These workshops:
 - Instruct teachers on using a groundwater sand-tank model and provides additional resources to incorporate groundwater concepts into their classroom.
 - Provide groundwater models to schools and nature centers (since 2001 over 500 groundwater models have been given out and over 950 educators have received hands-on training in using the model effectively).
- Prepares an [annual Report to the Legislature](#) each August on the state of the groundwater resource in Wisconsin.

History and Purpose of the GCC

- In 1984, the Legislature enacted Wisconsin's Comprehensive Groundwater Protection Act, to improve the management of the state's groundwater.
- The Groundwater Coordinating Council (GCC) was created and is directed by s. 160.50, Wis. Stats., to "serve as a means of increasing the efficiency and facilitating the effective functioning of state agencies in activities related to groundwater management. The Groundwater Coordinating Council shall advise and assist state agencies in the coordination of non-regulatory programs and the exchange of information related to groundwater, including, but not limited to,
 - agency budgets for groundwater programs,
 - groundwater monitoring,
 - data management,
 - public information and education,
 - laboratory analysis and facilities,
 - research activities and
 - the appropriation and allocation of state funds for research."
- The GCC's role in facilitating inter-agency coordination includes:
 - the exchange of information regarding:

- Wisconsin's Comprehensive Groundwater Protection (Act 1983 Wisconsin Act 410)
- Wisconsin's Groundwater Protection Act (2003 Wisconsin Act 310)
- the Great Lakes Compact (2007 Wisconsin Act 227)
- the federal Safe Drinking Water Act's Wellhead & Source Water Protection provisions, and many other programs.

FY 2024 Groundwater Coordinating Council Members

- Department of Natural Resources – Jim Zellmer, Chair
- Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection – Robby Personette
- Department of Safety & Professional Services – Bradley Johnson
- Department of Health Services – Dr. Sheryl Bedno
- Department of Transportation – Barry Paye
- Geological and Natural History Survey (State Geologist) – Dr. Susan Swanson
- Governor's Representative – Steve Diercks
- Universities of Wisconsin – Dr. Christy Remucal

Subcommittees

Research & Monitoring

- Geological and Natural History Survey – Dave Hart*(Co-Chair), Maureen Muldoon*
- Department of Natural Resources – Bill Phelps*(Co-Chair), Aaron Pruitt*
- Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection – Ken Potrykus*, Carla Romano*
- Department of Safety and Professional Services – Katie Petzel*
- Department of Health Services – Sarah Yang*, Curtis Hedman*
- U. S. Geological Survey – Andy Leaf*
- UWSP Center for Watershed Science and Education – George Kraft*

* *Member of Standing Joint Solicitation Work Group*

Outreach & Partnership

- Department of Health Services – Sarah Yang (Chair)
- Universities of Wisconsin – Moira Harrington
- Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection – Mark McColloch
- Department of Safety and Professional Services – Travis Wagner
- Geological and Natural History Survey – Dave Hart
- Department of Transportation – Alyssa Barrette
- Center for Watershed Science and Education – Kevin Masarik
- State Laboratory of Hygiene – Jocelyn Hemming
- Wisconsin Rural Water Association – Andrew Aslesen