

PRIVATE WATER ADVISORY COUNCIL
Kalahari Resort, Wisconsin Dells
Meeting Notes – January 8, 2020

1. Introductions

Council Member Attendees: Liesa Lehmann (DNR), Pete Chase (WGNHS), Gary Kuhn, Steven Tesmer, Mike Hanten, Bill Hanser, Terry Farago, Bruce Walker

Other Attendees: Marty Nessman, Frank Fetter and Bob Gundrum (DNR), Terry Marshall, Rick Peterson, Dennis Crow, Jeff Beiriger, Pete Chase

2. 2020 Advisory Council Membership

New/continuing members – Lehmann shared February 2019 membership list. Eric Schuette has agreed to serve another term as a DNR-appointed well drillers. WWSWA has appointed Scott Haupt to replace Roger Lang.

Proposed change in term end-date – Lehmann indicated that the current December 31 term expiration date doesn't work well with the timing of our January meeting and annual industry meetings. Lehmann proposed to change the term end-date by one month so that member terms end of January 31. This would allow members to attend the January meeting, and industry boards to identify their next appointments at their annual membership meetings.

Decision: Council members support this change. Lehmann will issue an updated membership list to reflect the change.

3. Notes from October 2019

No comments or corrections. Thanks to Clean Water Testing for hosting us.

4. WGNHS Updates

- Central Bayfield County – Chequamegon/Nicolet National Forest study related to expansion of CAFOs, Enbridge Pipeline rebuild, also flooding around Pigeon Lake (primarily a high groundwater issue. Aquila Resources has gotten a renewed permit for exploratory drilling in the national forest.
- SW Wisconsin study – 500 randomly sampled wells, with subsequent follow-up sampling, then statistical analysis to try to get some results.
- Statewide monitoring network ~100 wells with water level data going back to the 1940s, many wells are “abandoned” or former wayside wells (WDOT), many need repairs. Grant applied for repair and 10 additional wells from Appleton Area, and some in western Wisconsin in St. Croix and Dunn Co. Question: do monitoring wells have vermin-proof caps? Answer: yes.
- Finished Dodge County State bedrock mapping and starting on Jefferson County.
- Question: any pursuit of funding for pumping down Long Lake, related to Central Sands Area? Answer: no, not at this time.
- Discussion of high groundwater and lake levels at Crystal Lake, Dane/Columbia County. Reducing lake levels requires reducing aquifer levels a similar amount.

5. DNR Updates

Staffing Updates (Lehmann)

- Sandy Hershberger retired – last day January 6.
- Judy Gifford retiring – last day January 24.

- Madeline (“Maddy”) Fontaine is **part-time** temporary employee covering Sandy Hershberger’s work with compliance reviews for well construction and well filling/sealing reports and sample results. Expect delays and longer review times. Sandy’s replacement not expected to be hired for several months.
- Judy’s: Replacement will be a more data-centered position and will be hired in February or March. Licensing administrative tasks will be done by DNR’s Operator Certification staff. Bob Gundrum is the contact for driller license applications and NR 146 requirements. Question: where to send CE attendance forms that normally go to Judy? Answer: if after January 24, send to Lehmann.
- Steve Janowiak is back in the program as a Private Water Supply Specialist in the LaCrosse office. He’s getting up to speed; doing lots of work with plain folk on NPSV approvals.

Search Well Records (Lehmann)

Lehmann demonstrated a new [Well Records Search interface](#) that anyone can use to search for well construction reports (WCRs). The new interface is available from DNR’s [“Wells” web page](#), by clicking the **Search Well Records** box. New features (compared to the old version):

- One place to search instead of two
- Search by text or by map
- TN’s and NN’s are now included
- Municipal and OTM’s are also included, with location information redacted (well address, latitude/longitude, quarter section and quarter-quarter section are all hidden)
- Pre-1988 well construction reports are included

Drillers who use the Online WCR system to submit reports can log in with a WAMS ID/password and access more advanced features, including search by geology and other options that used to be available on the Well CD. This also includes pre- & post-1988 well construction reports, and full locational information for municipal wells and OTMs. A built-in “sensitive information” agreement will appear at the beginning, requiring the driller to agree to keep the information confidential (similar to the form that drillers signed to get a Well CD in the past).

Contamination Responses (Nessman)

- PFAS – There are private wells with PFAS throughout the state. There have been private well owners that have taken their own PFAS samples and had detections. We are provide temporary emergency water to a house near the study area in Marinette.
- Uranium - There was a public water supply well in the Village of Ridgeland in Dunn County that had a detection of Uranium. The local health department conducted follow up sampling of private and public wells within the village to see if it is more widespread. No results reported yet. Uranium is possibly coming from a fault/fracture system in the area.
- Bacteria/Manure – There have been a lot of manure spills reported this winter due to the wet harvest conditions. There haven’t been many reports of impacted wells lately but there were a couple reported in the northeast this fall.

Licensing (Lehmann/Gundrum)

- **License Applications:** In response to training requirements that go into effect starting January 1st of 2020, several rig operators recently submitted well driller license applications. A rig operator whose license application is submitted prior to the end of 2019 will not be required to complete additional training before being eligible to take the licensing exam. A total of 7 well driller license applications were received in December. Currently there are 34 active drillers on the license applicant tracking spreadsheet of which 14 have reached the point of license exam eligibility.

- **License Renewal** – Liesa indicated that the new Online License Renewal was successfully launched in November. 37% of renewals completed online – no calls for technical assistance, several compliments re: ease of use, speed and reduced cost. Users get a confirmation and can also print their own license card and certificate. Paper forms sent to those who didn't renew online – many errors, especially missing signatures. DNR will continue to promote online renewal and update paper form to reinforce signature requirement. New tool for license holders to search their training record is under development.

Feedback from the council regarding the online renewal process included a suggestion to provide a means to renew multiple individuals at one time instead of each individually. Question: Will it become mandatory to renew online? Answer: no plans at this time.

- **2020 Continuing Education** – Gundrum indicated that the online CE calendar now lists approved continuing education opportunities that have been approved for 2020. Question: where to send attendance verification forms following Judy's retirement? Answer: Send to Lehmann so information can be routed correctly.
- **Exam Updates** – Gundrum stated that a group of DNR staff have formed a License Exam and Study Guide Workgroup. They have completed a review of current exams and are in the process of completing the first draft of study guides for pump installer, well driller and heat exchange driller exams. License exams will be updated to incorporate changes resulting from NR812 revisions and will provide a more focused approach to exam preparation. Target completion date for these tasks is June of 2020 which will make study guides available in time for those individuals who wish to prepare for and take a license exam in August.
- **Rig Operator Training** - There are currently 6 rig operators in various stages of applying for a well driller license, who will potentially need to meet the new 33-hour training requirement in order to be eligible for the licensing exam. The DNR will maintain a list of those seeking to participate and will determine what past training can be applied to meet the new training requirements, and what training is still needed. Taking the training criteria established with the assistance of the WWSA into consideration, training and training providers will be set up to meet the needs of the group.

Compliance and Enforcement Activities (Nessman/Fetter)

- **Compliance (Nessman)**
2019: DNR received 8300 notifications for drilling - down slightly from 2018, probably weather-related. DNR staff completed 1013 core inspections (during activity), mostly well drilling activities, which is about 12.5%. We'd like to get up to 15%, but an open position, maternity leave, etc., contributed to not quite reaching the goal. Last 6 months: 90 variances issued, and 58 landfill variances, 51 NPSV/Springbox approvals for dairy licensing, and 12 hi-cap well inspections.
- **Enforcement (Fetter):**
2019 total NONs issued = 421 - Field violation NONs = 50, Reporting violation NONs = 371
Well Construction NONs = 23, Pump Installing NONs = 13, Fill and Seal NONs = 5, Existing Installation NONs = 5, Licensing NONs = 2, Sampling (non-reporting) NONs = 2
Most common NON is for improper casing height, followed by separation distance, non-approved or missing electrical conduit and non-approved or missing well cap.
Discussion of casing height violations - this sometimes a post-construction landscaping issue. DNR is treating these informally and working directly with the property owners.

Secondary enforcement:

2019 Notice of Violations (NOVs) issued = 8, Enforcement Conferences = 4, Citations = 3

Case #1: citations issued for Property Transfer well inspection without a license, and failure to install a vermin-proof cap

Case #2: citation issued for failure to submit a WCR (23 citable offenses, one citation issued)

NR 812 Revisions (Lehmann/Fetter)

- Remaining Steps and Timeline - The Natural Resources Board (NRB) approved revisions in May 2019, and directed DNR to start new rulemaking to address 3 industry concerns: casing depth in limestone/dolomite, flowing wells, and thermoplastic (PVC) casing. DNR staff met with industry representatives and agreed to resolve 2 issues (casing depth and flowing wells) with language changes in the current rulemaking process, and address the third issue (PVC casing) in a future rulemaking process. DNR returns to the NRB on January 22 to request approval of the language changes, and the final rule revisions are expected to be effective in May or June 2020.
- Training/Implementation Plans – DNR will provide 2 hours on code revision tomorrow and again in the spring for WD/PI/HE. DNR private water staff will get initial training next week. Training also planned for DNR public water staff, delegated counties, and others. Online resources will also commence winter/spring 2020.
- Future Revisions – New Scope Statement for consideration of PVC casing will be reviewed by NRB in February or March 2020. DNR convening a PVC Study Group to include Wisconsin well drillers, to collectively learn about PVC casing issues and inform new rulemaking process.

6. Old Business

Property Transfer Well Inspection form and fact sheets (Lehmann)

Updated form and new fact sheets are now posted for use. DNR sent email to all license holders to notify about availability. DNR plans outreach to realtors about the fact sheets and new Search Well Records tools in late January.

Meeting Length. Suggestion in October that we make council meetings longer - they often run long and are important. What do members think? General consensus to extend meetings to 3 hours.

Decision: Start future meetings at 9:00 am, end at 12:00 noon.

7. New Business

Replacing screens on point wells – DNR considers replacing the screen on a point to be new well construction and the location and other aspects of the point would need to meet the current code. This means that a new well construction report would need to be submitted to the DNR. We are evaluating the code to determine whether this would also require a well notification prior to replacing the screen.

8. Future Meeting Dates

- April 2020 – Madison area
- October 2020 – central Wisconsin