



**PORTAGE COUNTY  
GROUNDWATER CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
CONFERENCE ROOM 5, COURTHOUSE ANNEX  
THURSDAY, JANUARY 8, 2009 - 7:00 P.M.**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Fred Copes, Town of Carson; Kathy Girolamo, Town of Dewey; Mary Kiedrowski, Town of Grant; Tim Zimmerman, Town of Hull; Richard Berndt, Town of Linwood; Sally Ellingboe, Town of New Hope; Fritz Aschauer, Town of Plover; Mike Hinrichs, Village of Amherst; Peter Mallek, Village of Junction City; James Walker, Village of Nelsonville; Paul McGinley, Village of Park Ridge; Sarah Gilbert, Village of Whiting; Joel Lemke, City of Stevens Point

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Richard Filtz, Town of Stockton; Dave Dombrowski, Town of Amherst

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Delbert Anderson, Town of Alban; David Shantz, Town of Buena Vista; Bill McKee, Town of Lanark; Roy Woboril, Town of Sharon; Chuck Bossingham, Village of Plover

**STAFF PRESENT:** Ray Schmidt, Karen Moran

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Louis Molepske, State Representative; Ken Schroeder, UW-Extension; Dave Hyer; Brad Cousineau, Steve Ellingboe, *Our Community Spirit*, Tom Girolamo

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Berndt.

**INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBER(S):** Sarah Gilbert, Village of Whiting

**GCAC MEMBERS LISTING:**

MUNICIPALITY	MEMBERS NAME	MUNICIPALITY	MEMBERS NAME
<b>TOWNS:</b>		<b>TOWNS:</b>	
Alban	Delbert Anderson	Plover	Fritz Aschauer
<b>Almond</b>	<b>VACANT</b>	Sharon	Roy Woboril
Amherst	Dave Dombrowski	Stockton	Richard Filtz
Belmont	<b>VACANT</b>	Stockton Alternate	Edward Anglemyer
Buena Vista	David Shantz	<b>VILLAGES:</b>	
Carson	Fred Copes	<b>Almond</b>	<b>VACANT</b>
Dewey	Kathy Girolamo	Amherst	Mike Hinrichs
<b>Eau Pleine</b>	<b>VACANT</b>	<b>Amherst Junction</b>	<b>VACANT</b>
Grant	Mary Kiedrowski	Junction City	Peter Mallek
Grant Alternate	Scott Provost	Nelsonville	James Walker
Hull	Tim Zimmerman	Park Ridge	Paul McGinley
Lanark	William McKee	Park Ridge Alternate	Christine Neidlein
Linwood	Richard Berndt	Plover	Chuck Bossingham
New Hope	Sally Ellingboe	<b>Rosholt</b>	<b>VACANT</b>
New Hope Alternate	Cathy Derezinski	Whiting	Sarah Gilbert
<b>Pine Grove</b>	<b>VACANT</b>	<b>CITY OF STEVENS POINT</b>	Joel Lemke

**REVIEW/APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 6, 2008:** Correction to municipality Mike Hinrichs represents; motion by Ellingboe to approve the minutes with correction, seconded by Hinrichs. Motion carried.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** Letter from Town of Plover, dated 11/7/08, appointing Fritz Aschauer to represent the Town of Plover on the Groundwater Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC).

**BERNDT READ THE PUBLIC NOTICE:** Members of the public who wish to address the Committee on specific agenda items must register their requests at this time with such comments subject to the reasonable control of the Committee Chair as set forth in Robert's Rules of Order.

**DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION:**

Atrazine Testing Results – Towns of New Hope and Amherst and Villages of Amherst Junction and Nelsonville

Schmidt referred CAC to the *New Hope Area Atrazine* map (the Map). He stated the sampling program was underway in the Fall when CAC had their last meeting. We mailed over 600 letters to individuals in the Towns of New Hope and Amherst and the Villages of Amherst Junction and Nelsonville who lived in areas likely to have atrazine. Of the 600 letters, 160 individuals voluntarily sampled their water. This is a good response, but not as good as in the Town of Lanark where we had almost 50% of those in the moratorium area sample their water. Quite a few people called Schmidt to state they had recreational properties around the lakes in the Town of New Hope they had already closed up for the winter, but they would sample their water in the Spring.

Schmidt stated the light purple, fan blade shaped objects on the map are atrazine plumes from wells found to be above the health standard in the 1990's. If you look at the plumes, you will see they originate with either red diamonds or red dots. Those are either high triazine levels (triazine is a screening test for atrazine), or they might also have high atrazine (the parent compound plus its metabolites). The enforcement standard is based upon atrazine plus its metabolites. If the level of atrazine plus its major metabolites is over 3 parts per billion (ppb), the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) takes action. In this case, they put moratorium areas around wells with water above the enforcement standard.

In the 1990's, we did not have a good idea of the direction of the groundwater flow, but we have a much better idea now. These plumes are based on the groundwater contours we have in the County Geographical Information System (GIS), and they are fairly accurate. You will see they deviate a little; they are not all going in the same direction (not even the ones that are close together). In the upper left corner of the map, there is a small area where the groundwater could actually be going in three different directions. We do not really know with enough detail where that atrazine plume is going. It is not going in three different directions at the same time.

Schmidt said some of the plumes originate from yellow dots. Those are simply wells where atrazine tests were taken after the original one above the health standard. Even back in the 1990's, atrazine was moving through that area, and it dropped below the health standard in some wells. Some of them will have yellow dots, which mean there was a red dot there originally, and the atrazine has already moved past that location to somewhere else. Our sampling program from this Fall has stars on the map. Schmidt likes to use the red/yellow/green color scheme—"red" meaning danger (above the health standard), "yellow" meaning above the preventive action limit (PAL) (below the health standard, but above the preventive action limit – some kind of preventive action is needed, which could be something as simple as continued testing to see if it is going up or down), and "green" is considered to be safe to drink (below the .3 ppb, which is set at one-tenth of the health standard). Many chemicals have enforcement standards (health standards) and the PAL where it is considered safe to drink are generally set at one-tenth of the health standards.

Schmidt stated some samples in the middle of the Map have a red dot underneath a yellow star. This means these wells were tested before and were above the health standard, and now these individual wells (there are five or six of them that show up) are below the health standard. Schmidt does not think this means the atrazine problem went away. He thinks it means groundwater with higher concentrations

of atrazine has simply moved downgradient toward other wells. You never know when we sample an individual well whether the plume is just reaching that well and most of it is still upgradient and will continue to move and impact that well for potentially years, or if we are just catching the trailing edge of the plume and most of it has already passed that well.

Hinrichs questioned whether the plumes drawn on the map actually stop at the stream. Schmidt replied they probably do stop at the river in some cases. Normally, we think of groundwater as discharging to the river. In the case of the Tomorrow River, a shallow plume will probably discharge to the stream. Some of the wells where atrazine was found are fairly deep. In some cases, they penetrated through a distinct clay layer when they drilled the wells, so the atrazine may be concentrated either above that clay layer, in which case it would discharge to the river, or it might be below that clay layer and continue through underneath the stream, for example the Tomorrow River, and eventually impact the Village (?) wells on the east side of the river.

Schmidt directed CAC members to a presentation using the ArcMap GIS software. He explained what he would be displaying for this presentation would not be the same as the map he distributed because some of the red dots are actually covered up by later samples that were either yellow or green. Consider the plumes are still the same. There is a red dot displaying on the map shown on the GIS software screen that is not on the distributed map, because it is in the Town of Sharon over to the west. Another moratorium area is there, and we only had one high sample there for atrazine, much the same as the Town of Lanark. Schmidt pointed out where Sunset, Onland, and Rinehart Lakes are located. Green stars represent sampling we did the past few months where we have safe levels of atrazine.

Schmidt pointed out if you look at the well with the plumes that look like they might be going in three different directions and the associated groundwater contours, the groundwater travels perpendicular to those contours. In the case of the plume pointing southwest from the well, the groundwater would be moving toward the stream. Groundwater associated with the other two plumes is heading in totally other directions. We really do not know which way it is flowing in this case, but Schmidt feels it is important for everybody within a radius of this well to do their sampling, because we do not know if it is going exactly perpendicular to those contours. Those contours are not out there in the sub-surface material; this is just a graphic representation of what is actually there. If groundwater follows the geologic materials, it can meander back and forth like some of the materials laid down by glacial streams.

Schmidt stated the plumes are not just drawn on the map. We actually did some thinking to figure out what the plume should look like. We think this is about the spread you might get from a plume down gradient from an individual well, assuming the plume is fairly narrow to start with. It might spread out about a quarter of a mile, and what the length of the plumes show is about the distance groundwater would travel in 10 to 15 years.

Schmidt stated he uses the GIS system because you only see the big dots and stars when he has it zoomed out, and you can see roads and individual wells when zoomed in. The little green dots do not mean all those wells are okay. It just means there are wells there, and we do not have samples for them. Schmidt pointed out a well on the GIS map that was yellow back in the 1990's, which meant it was above the PAL, but below the health standard. Given the groundwater flow direction toward the lake, you can see where the red star is this year, it is following the same groundwater path and there we have one that is currently above the health standard (that is one of our high wells). Since we do not know where that plume was when it contaminated the first well (the one that is yellow), it may have just been the leading edge of the atrazine contamination. Here we are actually seeing one that is above the health standard. That red star is one that was not contaminated the last time it was sampled. It was below the preventive action limit. Potentially, people have been drinking that water for 10 to 15 years thinking that it was safe, because they had it tested. Now we know at least part of that time it was not safe, and it is not safe now.

Schmidt reviewed a well with a plume that originates on a green dot (indicating that although it was at a high atrazine level initially, it is currently below the preventive action limit). The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) offered owners well compensation fund money, which paid for 75% of the replacement well. The well driller went through about a 40-foot thick clay layer and replaced the driven-point well

(which was above the clay layer) and drilled down into the better quality water. At least to that point, the water in the new well had not contained any atrazine contamination.

Schmidt relayed he had spoken to George Kraft about properties of that clay layer, and George said we were not in a location where we can count on the clay layer being continuous enough to actually provide any long-term protection. He said eventually the contamination will follow the clay layer and then it will move downward and be travelling under the clay layer. The glacial geology we have in Portage County is not boring and plain, nor continuous and predictable.

Zimmerman questioned whether any of the plumes were elevation specific, because most of the wells are not on the same elevation. Schmidt acknowledged this was a great point. All the wells are at different depths. Some wells might be penetrating into water that is below a plume. The plume could be travelling past it up above or below. Some could be over to the side of plumes. plumes generally will stay up closer to the surface of the aquifer, but we know in some cases they will contaminate deeper. The further from the source, the deeper into the groundwater the plume generally will go. We call that laminar flow, because the recharge water will sit on top of the water that is coming through and moving down gradient. Referring to the GIS, back in the 1990's, this well was the first one we found with atrazine in Portage County, and it was the first well replaced. The owners were not happy with their replacement well, because the water was very high in iron. They had great tasting water before the well was replaced, except they could not drink the water because it was high in atrazine. Now they have safe water they can drink, but they do not want to and cannot wash with it. They traded one problem for another.

Schmidt pointed out a well that originally did not have very high atrazine levels. He showed the plume heading to the east southeast. He pointed out other wells in that area that did not have atrazine. He showed another well that had a medium level of atrazine (one that could very well be above the health standard). He pointed to another well that had been above the health standard, but is not today. He pointed out how one can see it is hit and miss.

Schmidt stated we had 160 wells sampled, but it was strictly based on the individual interest of the people who wanted to know their atrazine levels. Schmidt has discussed sending out individual targeted letters as a second approach. The first letter stated, "You live in an area where there is atrazine, and you should test your water because it might be contaminated." He is considering sending follow-up letters to people with wells located in the plumes who have not previously had their wells tested stating, "Your water should be considered unsafe to drink until you get it tested." He hopes this will get their attention.

McGinley questioned how variable Schmidt thought the concentration of atrazine would be if you sampled an individual well once a month. Schmidt responded that a monthly sampling frequency is not common, but he thought there would be some variation. He knows there would be variation if the well were sampled once each year. Schmidt stated that in the 1990's, DATCP and DNR were doing annual follow-up sampling of wells above the health standard and sometimes found the results go up and other times they go down (sometimes a couple of parts per billion).

Schmidt asked Dave Hyer, our local DATCP investigator, to comment on the issue of sampling the same well monthly and what we might find. Hyer stated he is not a scientist and does not know what we would find in the New Hope area. In other types of cleanup projects where he has been involved and consultants are doing frequent sampling (like in the sand plains), you certainly see variation when the water table rises. It might flush new contaminants down, and as the water level changes even a little bit, you see spikes in the level of contaminants in the water, but that is not the same kind of aquifer we have in Portage County.

Schmidt stated he is encouraged by the fact some individual wells that had high atrazine in previous samplings came in with levels considerably lower. He thinks the atrazine is being degraded over time, as we are not finding the high levels of parent compound. It might just mean the real high levels are moving down gradient away from those wells, because we did a lot of sampling back in the 1990's. DATCP and DNR are both interested in our results; they do not have very much of this kind of sampling done on a voluntarily basis in the State.

Hinrichs stated his impression is the newer sampling is lower across the board. Schmidt said that is also his impression. Schmidt wondered whether we sampled enough wells or sampled the right wells to make a general statement. Hinrichs stated if you took an average of all the wells sampled in the 1990's and then all of the recent samples, on average, they would be lower. Schmidt thought they would be lower, but he stated he did not know whether this was representative of the entire groundwater picture. Schmidt stated in the 1990's, samplings about a dozen of the most contaminated wells were replaced with new wells drilled to the proper depth to get low atrazine water, and the old wells were abandoned, so you have taken those real nasty samples out of the mix and have put in some samples that are pristine.

Hinrichs asked if since that time well drillers have been drilling deeper wells as a way to get around high atrazine levels. Schmidt stated some well drillers have actually looked at what was done around the area for atrazine purposes and have tried to get to a similar level as safe wells drilled nearby. One of the well drillers has contacted Schmidt a couple of times when he knows he is in an atrazine moratorium area and asks what depth he should drill to (assuming all other things are equal and he can get deep enough penetration of the aquifer and if the water is good). Schmidt is willing to give anyone this type of information.

Hinrichs asked if there could be a bias in this sampling, because 50% of the wells are new since the 1990's. Schmidt agreed there could be a bias because of the knowledge we have gained and with new wells drilled to different levels. Schmidt stated he knows this is the case in the Woodland Subdivision located in the southwest corner of the map in the Village of Amherst Junction. He stated there were four wells in this subdivision above the health standard. Our recent sampling shows there is one well between the PAL and the health standard, but four wells were replaced with wells at different depths. Schmidt tried to negotiate with DNR to leave those four contaminated wells for sampling purposes, so he could track the plumes, but they were unable to allow it under Statute. Therefore, we do not have any monitoring wells in the plume.

Zimmerman asked if we had any real shallow test wells that are 20 to 40 feet deep versus a well drilled for drinking water that is deeper than 40 feet. He thought the plume would be stronger the closer it is to the surface. Schmidt stated it would be more concentrated the closer it is to the source, but most of the area in this subdivision is wooded. If you have shallow wells, the recharge is going to be very pure, because leaf litter and plants take up a lot of the contaminants. The top soil also prevents the groundwater from getting contaminated. However, upgradient where there is agricultural land from which the atrazine is probably originating, it is moving in that direction. A really shallow well towards the upgradient left side of the map Schmidt displayed will show concentrations of atrazine or whatever pesticides they are using. Schmidt stated he believes there is no longer a lot of atrazine being used in the County, but farmers have not quit farming and are still using something for weed control. Some of the herbicides are not as leachable as atrazine.

Zimmerman questioned whether the atrazine they are using today is more concentrated. Schroeder stated "no" they are basically using the same product, but they are using less of it. Recommendations have been to cut it back, and there is a lot more use of Roundup and other "mode-of-action" chemicals or herbicides. It is still being used in some areas, but it is mixed with other chemicals. It is not used nearly as much as it was years ago. Schmidt stated once farmers found out they were contaminating groundwater (including their own water), they started using other products that were not as soluble and would absorb to the soil. Other pesticides may not have been as effective as atrazine, or as cheap, but farmers did make the switch.

Lemke asked if there is a reason why Schmidt was not generalizing where a plume is likely, rather than making it look like these individual wells are the source. Was it to avoid pinning it on a landowner? Schmidt replied "no, not at all." He explained we do not know where the contamination originated. We do know it is not likely due to a spill. It is likely from field use, but much of that area is farmland (except for certain areas where you are very close to the highest groundwater point in the middle of the circle up in the Town of New Hope where groundwater travels all different directions). That is the only place where you can say this is the source; otherwise, it is just someplace upgradient where atrazine was used.

Much of this area was in dairy, and they used atrazine as the herbicide of choice. Schmidt repeated that not identifying the source was not to avoid pointing fingers at someone; we just do not know.

### **SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATES:**

**a. Public Involvement/Education Sub-Committee (PIES):** A meeting will be scheduled in March 2009 at the Jensen Center in the Village of Amherst to review the results of the atrazine testing with residents of the Towns of Amherst and New Hope and the Villages of Amherst Junction and Nelsonville. Walker and Ellingboe will make arrangements and place a notice of the meeting in the *Our Community Spirit* newspaper. Berndt requested small posters be printed and placed in some of the small commercial establishments in those communities. Schmidt will invite County Board members who represent these districts to the meeting: Harvey Olson, Jim Zdroik, and Lonnie Krogwold.

Schmidt informed CAC members there will be a meeting in February or March with Town of Lanark residents to review the results of testing in their area. There is also an educational meeting scheduled for March 3, 2009, in the Town of Eau Pleine at which time nitrate testing will be done on-site. Girolamo stated she knows someone from the Town of Eau Pleine area who might be interested in being on CAC.

Schmidt added there will be more atrazine testing. The Town of Lanark was first, followed by the Towns of New Hope and Amherst and the Villages of Amherst Junction and Nelsonville. Next, we will be testing in the Towns of Sharon and Alban. There are two moratorium areas in these Towns. We will conduct similar sampling and follow up with residents. Schmidt is to provide those dates to CAC, so meeting arrangements can be made.

**b. Continuous Assessment Subcommittee (CAS):** McGinley stated members of this subcommittee met and went through the mission and goals and are in the process of revising both. They agreed to meet every other month on alternate months from the CAC meetings. The next meeting is scheduled in February 2009 at which time they plan to go through the database and review all of the collected data. McGinley invited anyone interested to contact Hinrichs, McKee, McGinley or Schmidt.

**c. Groundwater Management Plan and Implementation Subcommittee (GMPIS):** Schmidt stated no meetings were held, but Filtz told him there should be a meeting in February.

### **DISCUSSION: UNLIMITED TOPICS**

Berndt and Schmidt met and discussed future topics for the CAC committee. Schmidt reviewed them, as follows:

1. They discussed assembling a group of people knowledgeable about pesticides. One of CAC's goals was to find out what pesticides are being used and where. It is hoped we can include some of the agriculture people, consultants, and Dave Hyer from DATCP to address this issue. They would also like to look at the use of pesticides on cranberries in Portage County.
2. They discussed putting together a group of people knowledgeable about grants available for groundwater protection and sampling from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the State, local community foundations, and larger foundations and endowments to find more sources for grants.
3. They will be taking the well abandonment ordinance (7.11 Private Water Systems Ordinance) to the Planning and Zoning Committee for a public hearing in February, and in advance of that meeting, we plan to do presentations to the local Board of Realtors, because they are interested in anything that can jeopardize a sale for them. They also are a very good source of information for the community.

4. We need to get well drillers comfortable with the role the County will play in the well abandonment process.
5. They think it is important to get the County Board more involved with CAC. CAC has developed a distance from the County Board over the years. We need to make groundwater a more urgent issue with the County Board.

#### Groundwater Website

Schmidt relayed that Moran has been working on the groundwater website. Information is outdated. Moran handed out a printout of changes to the Portage County Groundwater Citizens Advisory Committee Members webpage and asked CAC members to review their individual contact information and give her any changes, additions, or deletions.

#### Other Topics

Walker questioned whether there have been any medical studies done to relate birth defects to groundwater contamination and a rise or decline of birth defects in the County. Schmidt stated no studies have been done within Portage County. A study was done back in the 1980's on breast cancer in women from aldicarb. We think there may have been a correlation. There have been studies of atrazine and a combination of atrazine and nitrate in groundwater. Schmidt knew of one study in Mexico, but he does not know of any in the United States. It is a very difficult type of study to do, and if it is not done in a controlled area (and Portage County is not), it is very difficult to draw correct conclusions from it.

Berndt asked if Health and Human Services at the Ruth Gilfry Center keeps any records of cases of birth defects. Schmidt did not think they keep track of birth defects.

Walker also asked about last winter's snowpack when the frost never got very deep. When the Spring thaw came, the snow pack was basically absorbed rather than there being a significant runoff. Walker asked if that could have contributed to either cleansing of the groundwater or further concentration of contamination in the groundwater. Schmidt responded that a normal groundwater regime would have contributed a good quantity of recharge. It probably would leach nutrients or pesticides into the groundwater. The soil was so dry going into last winter (and it is again this winter) in some places the snowpack recharge did not even reach the groundwater. It did not even completely saturate the soil, so it probably moved some of the stuff down below what the roots would be able to grab, but he did not believe it had much of an immediate impact. This year (going into December), we had two inches less precipitation for the year than we had in 2007, so we are even dryer this year.

Cousineau questioned if various molecules in herbicide chemicals could be absorbed into tree tissue, so you would have a record in the tree's annual growth rings. Schmidt stated he does not know of anybody who has reviewed this, but it seems the molecules in the plants would be metabolized. Cousineau thought if there was some type of marker in the growth rings, then you could get some type of idea when the molecules were introduced into the surface and then absorbed through the roots. Then each year, you could possibly determine how great or minimal a concentration there was over a period of years. Berndt stated he would contact someone at the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point (the University) in the Forestry Department to see if they have any thoughts on this. Cousineau stated it would be extremely accurate. Hinrichs stated there might be an urban forestry grant available.

Schmidt referred CAC members to a handout dated October 22, 2008, titled *Atrazine Removal Thoughts* from Jeff Mosurinjohn, a resident of the Town of New Hope, which addresses his atrazine removal system. McGinley spoke about some of the workings of that system and its limitations at our last meeting. Mosurinjohn provided additional written information; the handout includes that information. Members should review it for discussion at a future meeting. We will have treatment options in the future.

Schmidt also referred CAC members to a handout titled *Preserve Groundwater: Wisconsin's Buried Treasure*. We received this via e-mail from the Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters. It talks about groundwater quantity, which is a very important issue in Portage County. It lists contacts for other environmental associations. It also mentions Conservation Lobby Day, which is Wednesday, February 25, 2009.

Hinrichs stated we do not get information regarding which pesticides are being spread in the County nor how much. We are not allowed to get the information from the farmer stating how much of each type of pesticide he has purchased. He questioned whether we could at least get information on how much pesticide is sold in the County, which would give us instant knowledge of any new pesticide being widely used in the County. He wanted to know if there are new chemicals coming out that farmers are using, because we could be behind for years not knowing they are out there and a potential issue.

Hyer addressed Hinrichs questions. He indicated the State has the opportunity to review all new pesticide registrations. The EPA reviews chemicals for certain uses, but the State also has a look at them. There was a herbicide named "Balance" the EPA approved some years ago. It looked like it had all the qualities of a leacher like atrazine, and a lot of States approved it for use; but Wisconsin kept it out. Hyer does not think it will ever see use in Wisconsin, so he thinks the level of oversight is good enough that we are not going to have any big surprises when a new herbicide is on the market with the potential to affect groundwater.

Schmidt addressed the issue of how much pesticide is sold for use in Portage County. He questioned whether this statistic is available. Hyer stated the Agricultural Statistics area of DATCP periodically conducts statewide pesticide use surveys and breaks the results down by region. They have good information about exactly which pesticides are being used on which crops. Hinrichs asked if you can take the number of acres countywide and the amount sold and say there is twice as much being sold as we have acres of fields. Hyer stated not on a countywide basis. Schroeder stated it would be difficult to get a fair handle on what was actually used in the County, because there are large distributors in Portage County who sell pesticides beyond County lines.

Zimmerman offered an example of potato farmers who are talking about going to liquid fertilizer instead of solids. He questioned whether liquid fertilizer would have more far reaching consequences than solid. If it is liquid and it rains, would it leach more into the ground than a solid? Schmidt stated it has the potential to, but he thinks they are putting it on in smaller volumes multiple times rather than one larger application that enters the ground slowly. Zimmerman asked if they are doing this in the water. Schmidt stated probably in the irrigation water.

Schroeder stated farmers can now put liquid fertilizer on multiple times rather than all at one time. When you put the big concentration on all at once, the plants do not take it up fast enough. You get the leaching action with the nitrates versus if you split apply to coordinate that application more with the plant growth when the plant has the greatest uptake. They are trying to concentrate the application of nitrogen with that, so we are having a lot less leaching issues. As far as liquid versus dry, they are not putting any more on, and depending on the product, liquid fertilizer can be more rapidly available versus a dry fertilizer that must go through several processes to break down before it does become available to the plant.

Hinrichs stated they have been trying to apply fertilizer so plants get as much of it as possible. Schroeder agreed. With the cost of nutrients today, he would venture to say that the majority of our growers are very conscious about making the best use of their fertilizer. We have had several soil fertility meetings this past Fall due to the fact the product is so expensive. We are doing the best we can from an Extension standpoint to educate growers on how best to use these fertilizers. From what Schroeder has heard, growers are on the same track of not wanting to use more than they need and not wanting to lose it. They live here, and they drink the water. They are up-to-date and conscious about water quality issues.

Zimmerman discussed the fact if you go east of town, between the hills and Stevens Point, farmers grow a lot of potatoes and corn. The City of Stevens Point is looking at options to limit what farmers can apply to their crops that would negatively affect groundwater. This would naturally tend to include fertilizer and herbicides.

Hinrichs also wanted to discuss water quantity as it relates to the amount of irrigation occurring in the County. As a groundwater committee, he feels we must start preaching sustainability. If there are three inches of groundwater recharge per year to an aquifer, you cannot pump out ten inches of water for irrigating each year. He feels this would be unethical. Schmidt stated the actual recharge is probably 14 to 15 inches out of the 30 inches we get of precipitation each year, but we have only been getting 24 to 26 inches of precipitation over the last several years. Schmidt summarized what Hinrichs was saying is it is not ethical to mine groundwater that has been built up over the years. Schmidt agreed sustainability would be a good goal. He stated this is what the Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters is looking at in their initiative, and it would be very consistent with the Groundwater Management Plan.

Berndt asked Molepske if there was anything being considered in Madison on groundwater management, and if he could address issues surrounding the drying up of the Little Plover River.

Molepske introduced himself as our State representative. He was elected to the Assembly in 2003 and was re-elected in November 2008. He serves on the Natural Resources Committee, the Fish and Wildlife Committee, the Insurance Committee, Chairs the Jobs, the Economy and Small Business Committee, and also serves on the Agriculture Committee. He chose to serve on these committees, because they are directly related to what affects his district, especially here where agriculture is one of our major businesses. He stated most of what Berndt just asked is summarized in the *Preserve Groundwater: Wisconsin's Buried Treasure* handout given to CAC members at this meeting. The Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters is a non-partisan group. They do not support a particular candidate, but they do address most of what you are asking about in this document. There will be a very aggressive change in the Wisconsin Groundwater Protection Law that was passed at the beginning of his term in 2004.

Molepske stated the Groundwater Protection group recently concluded most of their work and have published their remarks, which are available at the DNR site. The committee make-up was fairly business oriented. The Law is really the first step. With municipalities now facing huge, multi-dollar fines by EPA if they do not clean up their water due to radon contamination (in the Waukesha area), it has become a big deal. In the Appleton area, they have 20 years of useable groundwater left without serious filtration cleanup like Plover did, and then their property assessments went up 300% to 400%. The idea of "*Buried Treasure*" is real. What the Legislature did in the last session by passing the Great Lakes Compact, and with President Bush recently signing it, was a huge deal. Portage County is in the basin (it is an outlying County), so it is considered a recharge area for the Great Lakes. We have part of our County with groundwater running that way. There is a possibility sometime in the future some residents in our County could be getting Lake Michigan water, but only if we return it to the basin after use. More likely than not, it would be cost prohibitive.

Molepske advised he recently met with Spencer Black who is once again the Chair of the Natural Resources Committee, and there is legislation being drafted. Most municipalities in the State have a Water Department, and they subsidize their Department's revenue by selling groundwater. Here we sell groundwater to the Stevens Point Brewery and the paper mill; they use the groundwater to make their products. It helps put a lot of people to work, but CAC is definitely going to start butting up against these interests: revenue for the City, manufacturing issues, and crop rotation responsibilities. The Agriculture Committee is also looking at this. Secretary Nilsestuen is pushing something called *The Working Land Program*, which will require a much more aggressive way to grow crops in the State, especially where there are environmental problems given the high concentration of pesticides and herbicides in water. They just had a meeting here in Stevens Point a month ago. That initiative is going to be pushed very hard by the Secretary of Agriculture. The idea is to grow the agricultural economy, but do it in a responsible manner.

Molepske stated they did pass a new law, which pretty much pre-empts the local unit of government's control over the siting of large animal operations. The new model for Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOS) is between 2,000 and 5,000 animals. Sitings in the report Molepske receives exceeded this size from Stevens Point to Wausau. There is no wastewater treatment plant required, and the permit is a \$250 one-time fee; this is in contrast to the City, which has huge fees every year. We are probably going to see a push to modify some of these things.

For Molepske, as Chair of the Jobs, the Economy and Small Business Committee, of course, the idea of increased fees, taxes, and regulations is not something that most people are going to be very excited about. People are demoralized by the economy, people are not investing, and there are problems with credit; but he thinks with what is happening in Washington D.C. and the State Legislature, there is a lot of recognition of these problems.

Molepske also stated CAC will have a problem with the fact there is a constitutional right to farm in this State. The agriculture industry is one of our top industries, so farmers are going to be very concerned (as they were in the Great Lakes Compact) when we start talking groundwater. The farming industry and the realtors signed off on the Great Lakes Compact, because we said groundwater was not really what we were looking at. We were only looking at future surface water out of the Great Lakes. This is going to be the rub; and this is where the rubber is going to hit the road. There is a connection between surface water and groundwater. The reason they are highlighting the Little Plover River in this document is because they are going to make an example out of the Little Plover River during this legislative session

Molepske stated that beyond the above topics, the number one issue for the Legislature is going to be the budget—we are anywhere from \$2.5 billion to \$5.4 billion in the red, depending on whether you consider the agency requests of about \$2 billion. It is going to be very difficult; however, grant money is always available. There are options for grants, but it depends on where they are putting the money and where the focus is. Molepske stated he could direct CAC to the right people for grant information.

**MEMBER REPORTS:** None.

**NEXT MEETING DATE:**

The next meeting date is Thursday, March 5, 2009, at 7:00 pm in Conference Room 5 of the Courthouse Annex.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion by Copes; seconded by Hinrichs to adjourn. Motion carried by voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

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Karen Moran, Recording Secretary

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Richard Berndt, Chair

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Date



**PORTAGE COUNTY  
GROUNDWATER CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
CONFERENCE ROOM 5, COURTHOUSE ANNEX  
THURSDAY, MARCH 5, 2009 - 7:00 P.M.**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mary Kiedrowski, Town of Grant; Bill McKee, Town of Lanark; Richard Berndt, Town of Linwood; Sally Ellingboe, Town of New Hope; Fritz Aschauer, Town of Plover; Mike Hinrichs, Village of Amherst; Peter Mallek, Village of Junction City; James Walker, Village of Nelsonville; Christine Neidlein, Village of Park Ridge; Sarah Gilbert, Village of Whiting; Joel Lemke, City of Stevens Point

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Paul McGinley, Village of Park Ridge

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Delbert Anderson, Town of Alban; Dave Dombrowski, Town of Amherst; David Shantz, Town of Buena Vista; Fred Copes, Town of Carson; Kathy Girolamo, Town of Dewey; Tim Zimmerman, Town of Hull; Roy Woboril, Town of Sharon; Richard Filtz, Town of Stockton; Chuck Bossingham, Village of Plover

**STAFF PRESENT:** Ray Schmidt, Steve Brazzale, Karen Moran

**OTHERS PRESENT:** John Edlebeck, Director of Public Works/City Engineer – City of Waupaca; Karl Franzen, Director of Workforce Development -- Portage County Business Council; Ken Schroeder, Portage County Ag Agent; Jerry Walters, President – Village of Whiting, Lynn Markham

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Chairman Berndt.

**INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBER(S):** None

**GCAC MEMBERS LISTING:**

<b>MUNICIPALITY</b>	<b>MEMBERS NAME</b>	<b>MUNICIPALITY</b>	<b>MEMBERS NAME</b>
<b>TOWNS:</b>		<b>TOWNS:</b>	
Alban	Delbert Anderson	Plover	Fritz Aschauer
<b>Almond</b>	<b>VACANT</b>	Sharon	Roy Woboril
Amherst	Dave Dombrowski	Stockton	Richard Filtz
Belmont	<b>VACANT</b>	Stockton Alternate	Edward Anglemyer
Buena Vista	David Shantz	<b>VILLAGES:</b>	
Carson	Fred Copes	<b>Almond</b>	<b>VACANT</b>
Dewey	Kathy Girolamo	Amherst	Mike Hinrichs
<b>Eau Pleine</b>	<b>VACANT</b>	<b>Amherst Junction</b>	<b>VACANT</b>
Grant	Mary Kiedrowski	Junction City	Peter Mallek
Grant Alternate	Scott Provost	Nelsonville	James Walker
Hull	Tim Zimmerman	Park Ridge	Paul McGinley
Lanark	William McKee	Park Ridge Alternate	Christine Neidlein
Linwood	Richard Berndt	Plover	Chuck Bossingham
New Hope	Sally Ellingboe	<b>Rosholt</b>	<b>VACANT</b>
New Hope Alternate	Cathy Derezinski	Whiting	Sarah Gilbert
<b>Pine Grove</b>	<b>VACANT</b>	<b>CITY OF STEVENS POINT</b>	Joel Lemke

**REVIEW/APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JANUARY 8, 2009:** Motion by Walker to approve the minutes; seconded by McKee. Motion carried.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** None.

**BERNDT READ THE PUBLIC NOTICE:** Members of the public who wish to address the Committee on specific agenda items must register their requests at this time with such comments subject to the reasonable control of the Committee Chair as set forth in Robert's Rules of Order.

**DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION:**

Community Committee Partnership Proposal – Leadership Portage County

Berndt introduced Karl Franzen, Director of Workforce Development, Portage County Business Council. Franzen stated one of the programs he coordinates and facilitates is Leadership Portage County (LPC). He provided copies of the *2009-2010 Leadership Portage County* marketing brochure. He explained LPC is a community leadership program and for its first 15 years a class community project was assigned to use the skills and information LPC members acquire during the program. A lot of great projects came out of that approach—the K.A.S.H. (Kids Are Special Here) playground at Mead Park, the Stevens Point Skate Park Committee, and the Young Professionals of Portage County. He did away with class projects and developed a community committee component. He sought out committees that aligned with each of the facets of the community he touches on in the program, such as Legal Committee, Education Committee, and Environment Committee.

Franzen provided copies of his *Community Committee Partnership Proposal* document, which outlines requirements for the program. He feels the community committee component provides increased networking opportunities for participants. He encourages members to pick a committee that focuses on a topic they have no exposure to. Another component goal is to provide an opportunity to explore specific local programs and resources in depth and to form relationships. The final component is to provide a common arena to process leadership information on how committees work in the community as a whole.

Franzen said his committee expectations are very flexible. He likes committees that meet regularly. He understands CAC meets bi-monthly. He stated if CAC decides to partner with LPC, there would be three or four members he would ask us to bring on and accept for the duration of the program, which starts August 17, 2009, and ends May 5, 2010. He asked that LPC participants be treated as adjunct members; whether they are adjunct members would depend on CAC's by-laws. Treating them as adjunct members would encourage them to participate in discussions, ask questions, and give opinions. They would, of course, refrain from voting and any other mechanisms directed at decision making. Franzen would require one person from CAC to serve as a mentor for LPC participants. The mentor should be available to meet with participants during the LPC opening retreat on August 14, 2009, from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Boston School Forest in Plover to provide an orientation for participants who choose CAC as their committee. This will put everybody on the same page as to what CAC's role is, how committee meetings work, and answer any participant questions before they attend their first CAC meeting. As the program moves along, the mentor should touch base with participants to make sure there are no unanswered questions or apprehensions.

Franzen stated he has retained a small community project within this component. He is pretty flexible on what the project would be. He would not ask CAC to develop something new but to assign something CAC is currently working on that LPC participants could take, work on, and bring back for CAC to utilize.

From the LPC participant side, Franzen expects they will attend all CAC meetings. CAC can invite LPC participants to subcommittee meetings or related outside activities. They would not be expected to attend, but he would appreciate the opportunity for them to participate. He would expect them to actively participate in the discussion, ask questions, and learn as much as they can about CAC and the issues they work on. Finally, he expects LPC participants to complete the group project and present the results to CAC. He handles debriefs at LPC sessions.

Franzen expressed his hope CAC would be interested in joining LPC next year. Walker asked for clarification on where the LPC participants come from. Franzen stated it is a very diverse group. LPC participants are adult professionals; this year, they are 1/3 private business, 1/3 public organizations, and 1/3 non-profit organizations. The age range differs every year. He has a mean age of 45 this year. In terms of position, LPC participants include everything from directors of organizations to administrative assistants.

Neidlein questioned how LPC participants would work within the structure of CAC. Berndt responded they would be here to see what we are doing and participate in this as much as they want to. They are not official members of our committee. This would be helpful, because they can go back to their organizations and let them know what CAC is doing. Neidlein volunteered to be a mentor, as she was involved in LPC about ten years ago.

Franzen hopes to have all of his committees aligned by July, present them at the LPC participant's program orientation in August, and give participants a month to think about it. On the first day of orientation, they will select their committee. On the second day, they will receive an orientation. Kiedrowski asked if there was any funding required. Franzen responded "no." They do not receive a per diem. Schmidt stated participants pay to be part of the LPC program. Schmidt asked if Franzen could identify participants by which municipality they live in, because CAC has several unrepresented municipalities. If we could get these people involved, they might be appointed to CAC later on. Franzen stated he does not assign committees. LPC participants select their own committees. He encourages participants to select committees based on interest, but some have to select based on availability and when a committee meets.

Schmidt is scheduled to do a presentation for Leadership Portage County for this year's group the week of March 9, 2009. He can give Franzen an idea of what CAC and its subcommittees do during his presentation.

#### City of Waupaca: Groundwater Friendly Crops in Well Recharge Areas

Berndt introduced John Edlebeck, Director of Public Works/City Engineer for the City of Waupaca. (He mentioned he was a founding Board Member of Leadership Waupaca County and encouraged CAC to support and participate in Leadership Portage County.) Edlebeck is involved in streets, wastewater, water, storm water, all public buildings, all public rights-of-way, as well as a host of other things. His challenge is to stay in touch with water, as well as these other aspects of the City of Waupaca. He graduated from the University of Wisconsin – Madison Civil and Environmental Engineering program in 1983, and he worked in the Chicago area during the 1980's. He was City Engineer for about 13 years in Geneva, Illinois (south of Elgin). He grew up in Appleton, moved back to the area, and has been with the City of Waupaca about 13 years.

Edlebeck congratulated CAC on the time and effort they put forth in dealing with groundwater, paying attention to it, and advocating it to our municipalities to do the right thing and make improvements. He stated Portage County CAC is light years ahead of other counties.

Edlebeck stated he came here to talk about "the Waupaca story"---where they are at today and how they got to where they are. When you talk about wellhead protection and you talk about a municipal utility, it is a business. Our water utility is called an Enterprise Fund; we do not receive any property taxes. We operate only off of our rates. There is no other City money coming in; it is its own little business. They are heavily regulated by the Public Service Commission (PSC). The PSC tells us just about everything we have to do and how we have to operate our system. With sewer, it is a little bit different. It is still an Enterprise Fund, but it lives off the rates, and it is not as heavily regulated as water. It is not just regulated for sampling and testing, but protocol, how you meter, how you test, how you send the bills out, and how many days you have to send them a letter if someone is late. The reason they get into municipal source water protection is not only because they have to, but as a business, it is real dollars and contamination costs money. He toured the Plover Nitrate Removal Facility; it is a very nice, but

costly facility. When he goes in front of the City Council and talks about programs on why they are trying to do things out by their wells, he is trying to avoid the Plover Nitrate Removal Facility. Whether it is nitrogen or some other pollutant or nutrient, there are real dollars involved. In Waupaca, they are spending money to avoid those additional costs. They also want to provide good quality water. By being innovative and spending money up front, you can eliminate the need for some of the more expensive treatment options.

Edlebeck explained the City of Waupaca is right on the edge of the last glacier. They have very sandy soils. If you go east of them, you start to get into veins of clay and then heavy clays. The way their system is set up they have seven wells. Two of their largest wells are about a mile and one-half south of town in an agricultural area. They were built in the 1970's in the Town of Lind. Edlebeck came aboard in 1996, and the townships still were not happy with the City of Waupaca for drilling a well out there. He had to build a relationship with the towns; he is a "neighbor in their neighborhood." He is also a neighbor in a neighborhood that has agricultural businesses.

Edlebeck asked the neighbors if anyone knew what they were protecting their groundwater from. When a farmer puts corn down on sand and applies nitrogen fertilizer, it turns into nitrates. The farmer sees that as a nutrient. He is putting down a nutrient to grow a crop. It is an input to get an output. He is a businessman conducting his business. Edlebeck sees the nitrogen turning into nitrates in our drinking water as a pollutant. Now, it is the exact same process, but is it a pollutant or a nutrient? Different entities have different views on it, but it is the same thing. It is a learning process for him. He does not go around saying they are putting pollutants in our drinking water. He understands it is a nutrient that is needed for whatever the crop might be, and it is something we have to deal with in our drinking water. He realized early on it makes sense to bring forth business deals that made sense for those businessmen.

Edlebeck stepped through "the Waupaca story." They drilled the wells in the 1970's in the agricultural areas. When he came on board in 1996, the two wells in the agricultural area were producing 80% of the City's water, pumping about three million gallons of water per day. The Waupaca Foundry (the Foundry) was using 60% of the City of Waupaca's water to cool their cupolas. The water comes through the Foundry, cools the cupola, and they had their own discharge. This was a lot of water for a small city of 5,000 at the time. The Foundry was using 80% of our water, and we were breaking suction (sucking the air out). We were depleting the aquifer. He spoke with his staff and stated they would not be able to meet average daily demand if one of their wells went out. They told him not to worry, they had it covered. They had a motor on wheels and determined it would take two hours to replace a bad motor. Edlebeck asked what they would do if there was a fire in the control panel. They were shocked, because they had not anticipated that scenario. He explained this was a real possibility, because the equipment was old.

Edlebeck stated the Foundry is using a lot of water. The City of Waupaca is exceeding three million gallons of water a day. If one of their wells goes down, they cannot meet average daily demand, 80% of their water is being pumped out of two rural city wells, Town officials are not happy, and the aquifer is being depleted. We have a history of high nitrate levels on agricultural land. It is corn. They put down 200 lbs. of nitrogen per acre to make sure the corn grows. The first year Edlebeck worked for the City of Waupaca, some farmers put all of their nitrogen down in one shot. If they get a six-inch rainfall, all of the nitrogen would be gone because of sandy soil. Then they would reapply the nitrogen. At that point, he knew he had to pay some attention to this.

Edlebeck said they formed a multi-jurisdictional Wellhead Commission and did a Wellhead Protection Study. They installed eight monitoring wells with three wells per nest (shallow, middle and deep). He asked if anyone knew why they did this? Berndt responded, "to see where the nitrates are." Edlebeck agreed. If you are at 50 feet deep and your corn is 1,000 feet away, the nitrates are going to be up in the shallow area. They are not even going to get to the middle or deep, because they are so close. They realized they needed to spend some time on this and get it right, so they really knew where the nitrates were coming from. They installed a couple of monitoring wells outside the agricultural area to try and get some background levels. They began quarterly sampling—10 ppm (parts per million) is the allowable level of nitrates. Edlebeck began attending township meetings and sharing information and data. Berndt asked if nitrate levels varied much from quarter to quarter. Edlebeck responded they could—quite a bit.

It is a very dynamic process. One of his overriding principles was if he could keep nitrogen fertilizer off the soil, it could not turn into nitrates. The ideas they have brought forward are meant to keep nitrogen from hitting the soil. It depends on where the nitrogen is applied, how the nitrogen is applied, the different types of nitrogen, the amount of rain, when it rains, etc.

Berndt asked how long the City of Waupaca has had monitoring wells. Edlebeck said about 15 years. Berndt asked if there was any predictability as to what would happen five years from now. Edlebeck said it is hard to predict anything. He just knows if he is keeping nitrogen off the soil, it cannot turn into nitrates. This sampling has been very beneficial to them, because they know where the nitrate is coming from. We know what fields and direction to target.

Edlebeck outlined some of the next things they did. They established year-round water use restrictions; this was very controversial. From 12 noon to 7:00 p.m. every day, there are unattended outdoor water use restrictions. He knew if he was going to go to businesses and industries and ask them to conserve, the City of Waupaca had to make a concerted effort to do the same. Some of these things are incrementally very small, but they are the right thing to do. They also constructed two new wells. They got Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Safe Drinking Water Fund (SDWF) loan money. They treated a contaminated city well to remove tetrachloroethylene (TCE). When he came on board, the treatment method was to just run the well 24 hours per day, run it over a rock channel, and aerate the volatile solvent. He ultimately called the Secretary of the DNR and said this did not make sense to him, because it was going to run forever. He suggested they find the plume and pull it out, which they did, and got 10% of their water source back by getting the well back on line.

Edlebeck spoke with local industries about reducing their water use, particularly the Waupaca Foundry. The Foundry had a lot at stake, as they were using 60% of the City of Waupaca's water and paying 60% of our rates. The Foundry understood that and instituted a reclamation/reuse system that cost millions of dollars. They had to add a system with anti-scaling and anti-bacterial chemicals. Now, they use the City of Waupaca's water one and one-half times. The City of Waupaca's water use is down substantially from the 3.3 million gallons per day.

McKee asked Edlebeck to confirm they located the plume with TCE, pulled it out, and extracted the contaminated water. Edlebeck explained TCE floats on top of the water. They knew where the plume was located (under a subdivision) based on a DNR study. They put an extraction well on top of the plume, and within a month, the extraction well produced water within drinking water standards.

Brazzale explained to Edlebeck during the peak of summer the City of Stevens Point is low on water, because people are using a lot of water. If you reduce the amount of water, the municipality will be getting less revenue from water usage. Brazzale asked how to combat this? He also noticed in an article he read the City of Madison is offering a \$100 rebate starting January 1, 2009, to replace old toilets with water efficient or low water usage toilets. Edlebeck stated the City of Fitchburg is actually putting in conservation rates, where the more water you use, the more it costs per gallon, which is the opposite of how most rates are set up.

Edlebeck stated water rates are heavily regulated; when they want to do a rate study, they must call the PSC. They tell you what your rates are going to be. The way your water rates are set up there is a fixed fee charge and a volume charge. The fixed fee charge means everyone pays a fixed fee depending on the size of the meter. As your volume goes up or down, the "volume charge" kicks in. As they reduce their water use, they do another rate study and take this into account. Edlebeck stated it has not caused their rates to go up dramatically, but there probably is some aspect that has been affected.

Jerry Walters, President of the Village of Whiting, commented the reality is regardless of the amount of water you use, you are still paying the same amount of money, but you are using less water. If that is the goal that is being sold, then that is the goal that is being met. Edlebeck restated the City of Waupaca has very little input when they go to look at their rates. The PSC tells them what their rate will be. They look at your revenue and expenses, and you have to have a certain rate of return. He does not worry about the rates; conservation is still the right way to go. We cannot take water for granted.

Lynn Markham asked Edlebeck if he foresees the City of Waupaca going the same route as the City of Fitchburg. He stated he did not know. He is more conservative and will wait and see how it pans out.

Edlebeck stated they visit their top water users every year and conduct leak detection. They test their big meters to make sure their well meters are correct. They change-out existing meters, so there is accurate meter reading. They do leak detection. If it gets above 10%, they hire a leak locating company and fix the leaks. They visit the top 10 to 20 residential water users every year. They knock on their doors and go in their homes, if they are willing to let them in. They install low flow shower heads, toilet tanks, and low flow aerators for free. Industries understand we are trying to do our best and, in turn, work with the City. The City of Waupaca was using 3.3 million gallons of water per day; they are down to 1.8 million gallons per day. Because they drilled two new wells and got an old well on-line, they have cut their water use on their two big wells in the country by 50%. Hinrichs asked if their aquifer recovered. Edlebeck responded it has recovered very nicely.

Walker stated it seems easier to control water usage in a municipality (in an urban area) more so than it is in a rural agricultural area, because the farmers still need to pump water to manage the crop. He asked if there is something in the City of Waupaca plan to address the farmers' use of water. Edlebeck stated he has not gotten into that, but what he has done through the Priority Watershed Program (a grant program which has now dried up) is hire a crop consultant who would work with farmers. Part of this program was to attempt irrigation scheduling with the farmer, give them good information from the local gauging stations, and tell them they do not need to irrigate every other day all the time, but rather use this information to guide them as to when to irrigate. You can e-mail this type of information to them or set them up with a software program. There are things that can be done to give them guidance on when to irrigate and how to minimize their water use. He asked if our irrigation equipment is on timers or clocks.

Schroeder responded it varies by grower whether they are automated and how they manage their water. Some growers are working with moisture sensors to help them with their irrigation scheduling. Edlebeck stated maybe Portage County or its townships could offer incentives (or get a grant) to buy down the cost of the sensors. He suggested we provide farmers with a software program that provides data off of the internet. Schmidt advised Edlebeck the UW Extension office actively works with farmers on irrigation schedules. Schroeder stated Extension offers a program titled "Sure Harvest" and also Wisdom software, which use input from the amount of rainfall, and they put in the percent of the crop canopy cover, and based on ET (envirotranspiration) values they can get for their location on a daily basis, put that into the program and know when to irrigate.

Edlebeck summarized they accessed a grant program, worked with their Extension office, hired a crop consultant to work as an intermediary between the City of Waupaca and the farmer, modified how and when fertilizer is applied (side dressing rather than once a year), and changed the delivery method. How fertilizer is applied determines how it will leach through the soil. We know we lose a lot of the nitrogen fertilizer with sandy soil. When you side dress (put down the application three times per year), if you get a big rainstorm you only lose a third of your nitrogen, rather than all of your nitrogen. They used nutrient management on agricultural land within the one-year to five-year recharge area by customizing fertilizing. They go on a farmer's land and do intensive soil sampling. They create a map that shows there is 20 lbs. of nitrogen credit on this five acre piece. They try to convince the farmer if they need 100 units of nitrogen and they already have 20 on their land, they only need to put 80 down. The farmer needs to believe this because if he does not put enough down, he does not get the crop yield. If it works, he is only putting 80 down, not 100 and he saves money because he has less nitrogen fertilizer costs. What do we get? We get less nitrogen on the ground and in the groundwater. We are paying for the information, he gets the yield, and we get less nitrogen fertilizer. Yes, it costs money, but what he is avoiding is a Plover Nitrate Facility.

What will the City of Waupaca do next? They plan to remove elevated gravity fuel tanks to avoid future costs. Edlebeck went back to the City Council after talking to the farmer and convinced the City Council to replace the tanks at City expense. Markham asked if they replaced them with elevated tanks. Edlebeck stated they replaced them with underground tanks with electric pumps. It was either double-

walled or we had a container around it. She asked this question because after the City of Stevens Point had the jet fuel spill at the airport from underground tanks without sensors, they decided to put the tanks above ground so if they leak, someone sees them leaking. He stated he does not know much about underground tanks. He thought there might be a trend to consider above ground tanks, but they just put a whole new system in their airport of underground tanks with sensors. With above ground tanks, you do get to see what is going on, but the tanks are also exposed to the elements.

Edlebeck stated they now pay farmers to haul manure out of the recharge area, because there is nitrogen in the manure. One of our main philosophies is to keep nitrogen off the ground in our recharge areas. One of their popular programs is to pay farmers \$25 per acre to grow non-nitrogen or low nitrogen demanding crops (i.e., soybeans, winter wheat, or alfalfa). The key was to build a relationship with the farmers, and keep cash in their pockets. If it is helping the City of Waupaca, then it is the right way to go. It sounds crazy, but he is avoiding a big expense. This program started at about \$20 per acre eight or ten years ago, and the farmer said he understood what we were trying to do, but he did not have a bean head (used to pick beans) because he was a corn farmer. He would have to pay someone to harvest the beans and it was going to cost him \$20 an acre to custom harvest the beans. He took the money we were paying him and bought a used bean head. It turned out to be a good thing; the farmer got into the bean business, but Edlebeck learned you cannot plant soybeans on soybeans (in rotation) because of disease. They plant soybeans two years in a row and then corn or something else.

The City of Waupaca has a large dairy farm by the airport that is not in a recharge area. Edlebeck tried to work a deal with the dairy farmer to put corn on his land and have the farmer grow alfalfa on city land and make it worth the farmer's while financially, but he could not quite get there because of the sandy soils. The dairy farmer has nice rich clay and the City of Waupaca owns sandy soils.

They also continue to do high-use residential water audits and free retrofits of low flow devices. Schmidt asked if they audit 10 to 20 of their highest residential water users. Edlebeck responded in most cases there is a toilet or faucet leak. They have radio telemetry reads on their water meters. They drive through the City of Waupaca and pick up all the reads. There is a parameter in their software system that if their read is 200% of their average read over the last year, it prints out on a list. His employees then follow up with the high water use accounts. To give you an example, he had a Board meeting last night. In a trailer park, there was a metered leak underneath a trailer---287,000 gallons of water in one month. The City of Waupaca had to charge the owner for the water, because unfortunately she used it; but she was out of the trailer in a nursing home, so it was unoccupied. We gave her credit on the sewer charge, because the water did not go down the sanitary sewer. We gave her a credit on the \$800 sewer bill, but she still had a \$400 water bill. They go after high water users, and they are usually very appreciative because they do not know they have a leak.

Brazzale asked how much the City of Waupaca pays farmers to grow these non-nitrogen/low nitrogen crops each year. Is it thousands and thousands of dollars? Edlebeck stated it is closer to 300 acres per year or \$7,500 per year. Brazzale asked if there was any concern about spending money with the current status of budgets. Edlebeck responded his City Council is very focused on general fund property taxes. These payments to the farmers are made out of the water utility, and the council has been supportive of it. It is actually a separate line item. Markham asked if this line item was taken into consideration when new rates are requested. Edlebeck responded it is part of the budget and included.

Edlebeck stated in 2007, the City of Waupaca was pumping an average of 2.2 million gallons of water per day, and today they are at 1.8 million gallons per day. Businesses are more aware of their water use. Hinrichs asked for the percentage change in residential use versus foundry use. Edlebeck said a lot of this is a few businesses. This is not related to businesses closing; they have not experienced many closings. The Waupaca Foundry production rates are down, which does have an effect, but that just happened recently. He has not analyzed the change in residential use. They have a lot of apartment and multi-family construction, but not a lot of new residential construction in the City of Waupaca. They have only had about 10 new single family homes in the past year. When he does the analysis, there will be residential reduction, but it will be from outdoor water use restrictions.

The City of Waupaca is now less reliant on township wells by 50%. Nitrate levels remain low and groundwater elevations remain high. Year-round water use restrictions are enforced.

What's in the City of Waupaca's future? They recently conducted a brainstorming session with their Wellhead Protection Commission and came up with some ideas. One idea was to have a right of first refusal. They have a signed agreement with a farmer that if he decides to sell his land, the City of Waupaca can possibly buy the land. If they buy the land, they are very aware it is productive agricultural land and for the City of Waupaca to take it and just let it go unused, neighbors might not like that, the township might not like that, and it affects the tax rate. They could plant forest, rent land, obtain grants to set aside the land, lease the land, or resell the land. They could also obtain land use easements and restrict high demand nitrogen crops. They are also looking into buying rights to never irrigate land. There are a lot of possibilities.

Hinrichs asked how many acres they were trying to manage. They are really only focused on the irrigated agricultural land. There are about 500 acres spread between their one-year to five-year to ten-year recharge areas. There is other non-irrigated agricultural land very close to their wells, and they do cropping agreements on those as well (close to 800 acres). Edlebeck had two handouts – (1) *2007-2009 Cropping Agreement for Groundwater Protection Between City of Waupaca, Wisconsin, and John Schroeder* and (2) a letter from John Edlebeck to Gordon Stevens, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Bureau of Watershed Management, dated October 29, 1999, summarizing a list of issues the City of Waupaca had been working on with some of the landowners (farmers) in the Town of Lind who own land adjacent to City water wells.

Schmidt commented we know potatoes and some other vegetable crops take higher nitrogen inputs than corn. He asked if there were many potatoes growing on their irrigated land. Edlebeck stated the farmers talked about potatoes, and he cringed. They grew cucumbers last year, which was between the two. If you grow potatoes for processing, like for McCain's, the processor will dictate what you have to do as far as pesticides and nutrients. Schroeder stated it is oftentimes set up so the grower is responsible for any inputs related to yield, so they deal with the fertility and chemicals for weed control. The processor deals with pesticides—like insecticides. The processor does make some recommendations to the grower. Edlebeck stated if there is a means to interject another crop on a rotational basis, you could make it worth their while to grow it; and they could still commit the acres they have to the canners. Edlebeck asked what nutrients or pollutants we are concerned about in Portage County. Schmidt responded, "herbicides." Atrazine has been a real problem in Portage County over the years. About an eighth of Portage County has an atrazine moratorium. Edlebeck questioned whether we have concerns with septic. Schmidt replied just in local areas where there are subdivisions.

Markham relayed there has been talk of trying to create markets or bring in a processor for lower pesticide crops in Portage County. She questioned whether anything like this has happened in Waupaca County. Edlebeck said he tried to bring in some agriculture purchasers—who do you know buys hay. He asked if we had any large dairy operations. Schmidt replied there is a 600 head cow operation in Nelsonville. Edlebeck said you might be able to work something with the large dairy to grow alfalfa. If farmers are growing potatoes, have a good contract, and it is worth their while, it may be very hard to get them off of potatoes. Schmidt stated farmers can make a couple thousand dollars an acre on potatoes. Edlebeck said another option is to pay them not to farm—their inputs are less because they do not have the fertilizers or the labor, but you have to pay them for their profit. If they are renting the land, it is almost impossible to make that work. Schroeder asked if these are annual payments. Edlebeck responded, "yes." Schroeder stated if they want to do a rotation, which most of our growers need to do, is it allowable for them to grow a year or two years of soybeans, grow alfalfa, and then grow one year of field corn? They do not get paid in the year they grow field corn. Edlebeck stated that was correct. He referred CAC members to his *Cropping Agreement* hand-out. They are very simple, not very legalistic, and they are voluntary. They currently offer three-year agreements.

Lemke asked how they enforce their water use ban. Edlebeck stated during the day, if they see someone, his people will stop and issue a warning. It is more of an issue to let new residents know about the ordinance. They send information in their monthly water bills.

Lemke asked what happened to the well the City of Waupaca lost for awhile due to high nitrates. Edlebeck stated it took them a long time to get the well back on-line with the DNR. The DNR does not have a protocol for how to bring a well back on-line. Lemke asked if it took more than a year. Edlebeck said it took more than a year even though the well was compliant. Lemke asked if it is still fluctuating or pretty steady. Edlebeck stated it is pretty steady at 7 or 8 ppm.

Walters asked how they knew whether someone was using city water or private well water to water their lawn. Edlebeck stated they are required to administer the DNR's Private Well Permit program. They do this by issuing a five-year private well permit at a cost of \$40. At this point, they have 80 or 100 private wells in the City for irrigation. Citizens are supposed to come to his office (and some of them have not), they inspect the well to make sure it meets all DNR requirements, and they have them submit a water sample that is tested for chlorine residual and bacteria. He stated they do not test for nitrates since they have no source for nitrates in the City of Waupaca. All the nitrate problems they have are manmade.

Berndt asked Walters if the problems they were having with nitrates in the Village of Whiting are improving. Walters responded they are not. Edlebeck stated if you have nitrates in shallow groundwater, there is a firm with a program that plants trees with deep roots to pull up the nitrates. The nitrates have to be less than 25 feet deep. If they are 100 feet deep, it does not work. They use fast growing trees like poplars. Gilbert indicated they were Aspen Poplars. Walters stated they do not have nitrates in their shallow groundwater, and they have the first nitrate removal system in the State. McKee asked Walters if the source of his nitrates was Antigo. Walters stated this is where that aquifer comes from. Edlebeck stated his water comes from the northwest to the southeast. All of their water is coming from sand country heading to the wells, and the source of their nitrates is within a couple miles. They have a one-mile recharge area for one year. Schmidt said in Portage County we have a couple of feet per day groundwater flow rate.

Hinrichs asked about the one-year, five-year, and ten-year circles on the recharge map provided on the back of the agenda. Edlebeck stated these were models. He explained what was happening on this map is the water is coming from the northwest, and it is flowing southeast. Water will flow perpendicular to this line. The water is actually being turned in. Hinrichs stated the way he understood it the clusters of monitoring wells were near the wells. Edlebeck stated they were scattered and would go out as far as the five-year circle. They are used to identify where the nitrates are and what depth they are at. Hinrichs asked if they were looking out far enough, so they would have some lead time if there was a problem. Edlebeck acknowledged this to be the case.

#### **SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATES:**

- a. **Public Involvement/Education Sub-Committee (PIES):** Ellingboe reported a public information meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, March 26, 2009, at 7:00 p.m. at the Jensen Center in the Village of Amherst for the Town of New Hope, Village of Nelsonville, Town of Amherst, and Village of Amherst Junction areas regarding the results of atrazine testing. An article was printed in the March 2009 issue of the *Our Community Spirit* newspaper, and the article will also appear in the *Stevens Point Journal* and the *Portage County Gazette*. A copy of the article was handed out at the meeting. She stated the article would also be released to the press. A portion of residents in the Town of New Hope do not receive the *Our Community Spirit* newspaper, but many of the landowners there are members of the New Hope Alliance for Wisconsin Family Forests, so she will e-mail the information to that organization. Schmidt will be presenting the information at the March 26 meeting.

A public information meeting was held Tuesday, March 3, 2009, in the Town of Eau Pleine. Walker stated the observation he came away with from the meeting is the concern a lot of the homeowners, residents, or landowners have, which is they are afraid having their water tested to determine if there is contamination will result in their wells being condemned. They would rather avoid knowing their water is contaminated than having their wells condemned. One of the officials who attended stated there was an older population in the area. The fact there may be up to 75% grant funds available to replace their wells still leaves them accountable for 25% of the replacement cost, which they do not

feel they are capable of handling. There were about nine or ten people in attendance at the meeting. Berndt asked how many wells were sampled. Schmidt replied we had six water samples from the Town of Eau Pleine; one was at 49 ppm nitrate and the lowest was at 2 ppm nitrate. There were five in the 2 to 8 ppm range and one at 49 ppm. Berndt asked what would happen with the 49 ppm well. Schmidt said the owner was working with him to try to determine the source of contamination. Berndt asked whether the fear of having the well condemned was well grounded. Schmidt replied it was not. Schmidt stated in the article he put out for the media it said we were interested in people knowing what was in their water, so they can make an informed decision on whether or not to drink their water.

- b. **Continuous Assessment Subcommittee (CAS):** Hinrichs stated the committee met and reviewed information they currently have regarding water quality and quantities and how much information we are collecting. McKee stated they have been meeting with Schmidt, and the agenda at the meeting included reviewing and evaluating existing data. Next, they will determine parameters of major concern. They will continue to meet during months when there is no CAC meeting, so their next meeting is in April.
- c. **Groundwater Management Plan and Implementation Subcommittee (GMPIS):** This committee has not met.

### **DISCUSSION: UNLIMITED TOPICS**

Brazzale asked if there is anything CAC can learn from Edlebeck's program where they are actively speaking to farmers and contracting with them that we might apply to not only Little Plover River, but some of the surrounding communities.

Schmidt stated CAC could look into initiating a similar strategy. It was one of the programs the Stevens Point/Whiting Wellhead Protection project did in the late 1980's and early 1990's. They went out and actively promoted groundwater friendly crops. They did manure and irrigation management practices with the farmers. In their final analysis of the impacts they had, there was no change seen in the nitrate levels in the ten year period. Since the project closed down in the late 1990's, we have actually seen the nitrate levels in the municipal wells increase. Schmidt feels this is because of the reservoir of nitrate nitrogen that has been in the groundwater for 40 or 50 years. Brazzale thought they could have money built into their rates to pay farmers, so he does not know whether the City of Stevens Point and Villages would be interested in looking into this or if they just want nothing to do with it. Berndt thought this was discussed as part of the Little Plover River project, but the problem they ran into with the farmers is they grow potatoes and corn, so you could not get an off-season in the mix. To pay them \$25 an acre, when they can earn \$2,000 an acre, provides no incentive.

McKee asked how many wells the City of Stevens Point operates. Schmidt responded there are seven wells. The wells are located in the Plover River Valley, south of the airport. They are pretty well protected from agriculture; the closest farms are a mile east. McKee asked where the wellhead protection areas were located. Schmidt responded they are around all of the wells—City of Stevens Point, Village of Whiting, and Village of Plover. Markham asked if there are maps readily available showing the wellhead recharge areas for the municipal wells and what is agriculture and what is irrigated agriculture, so she can get a feel for how much land is in those recharge areas. Schmidt indicated this has been mapped in the past.

Schroeder asked how far out the recharge area extends. Schmidt indicated it goes all the way out to the groundwater divide east of County Road J (north and south). Schroeder stated it is a substantial amount of acreage. Schmidt agreed. Schroeder asked, in Schmidt's opinion, this was something that could conceivably help given the residual levels of nitrates that are already there. Would it make a big difference if we did not use any nitrogen on that land? Schmidt stated the longest flow path we have for the City of Stevens Point, Village of Plover, and Village of Whiting municipal wells is about 75 years from the groundwater divide to these municipal wells. However, even the shorter flow paths of 20 years could

have a substantial impact on those if you start with the closer land and work your way out. Schmidt stated one-quarter of the total land use in this area would be for potatoes; about one-half of the land is agriculture.

Berndt raised one last topic related to the Groundwater Management Plan. Back in March 1989, By-Laws were written regarding the makeup of the Groundwater Citizens Advisory Committee. County Board Resolution No. 85-88-90, dated March 21, 1989, reads...."2. Each member shall be appointed by the unit of government (town and village board, city council) that they will represent and such member cannot be an elected official or staff person of the municipality they represent..." A motion was made by McKee to strike the language "and such member cannot be an elected official or staff person of the municipality they represent." Schmidt reminded CAC this is a County Board Resolution, and it would have to pass through the Planning and Zoning Committee to the County Board. Markham interjected there is a lot of value in having an elected official on this committee.

Brazzale suggested perhaps the make-up of CAC should not be more than a certain percentage of elected officials. The percentage of elected officials could be set so they do not represent a majority of CAC to avoid elected officials running roughshod over a citizens group. Schmidt and Brazzale will work out the language change to this Resolution, run it by Corporation Counsel, and have it available for the next meeting. Kiedrowski questioned whether elected officials should be eligible to vote on CAC. Walker asked if it is possible to add language to have them recuse themselves from any vote and only serve in an advisory capacity. Brazzale stated they would bring back a couple of options for CAC. The potential options will be mailed with the next agenda for members to review prior to the May meeting.

Berndt asked Moran if we are sending the CAC meeting minutes to Planning and Zoning Committee members. She replied not everyone on the committee is receiving the minutes. Berndt asked all minutes be sent to Planning and Zoning Committee members to comply with item number 3 of County Board Resolution No. 85-88-90.

**MEMBER REPORTS:**

Village of Nelsonville: Walker reported no activity for the Village of Nelsonville, but he did see two public information educational reports on the evening news--one regarding the Little Plover issue and the other regarding a water concerns conference. Berndt interjected there was an article regarding the Town of Eau Pleine Groundwater Education Program in the *Portage County Gazette* also. Schmidt said Channel 9 aired a piece on the Little Plover River, which would be on the 6 PM news this evening.

**NEXT MEETING DATE:**

The next meeting date is Thursday, May 7, 2009, at 7:00 p.m. in Conference Room 5 of the Courthouse Annex.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion by Ellingboe; seconded by Lemke to adjourn. Motion carried by voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Karen Moran, Recording Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Richard Berndt, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



**PORTAGE COUNTY  
GROUNDWATER CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
CONFERENCE ROOM 5, COURTHOUSE ANNEX  
THURSDAY, MAY 7, 2009 - 7:00 P.M.**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Dave Dombrowski, Town of Amherst; Rita Walkowicz, Town of Belmont; Fred Copes, Town of Carson; Mary Kiedrowski, Town of Grant; Tim Zimmerman, Town of Hull; Sally Ellingboe, Town of New Hope; Richard Filtz, Town of Stockton; Mike Hinrichs, Village of Amherst; Paul McGinley, Village of Park Ridge; Sarah Gilbert, Village of Whiting

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Richard Berndt, Town of Linwood; Peter Mallek, Village of Junction City; James Walker, Village of Nelsonville

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Delbert Anderson, Town of Alban; David Shantz, Town of Buena Vista; Kathy Girolamo, Town of Dewey; Bill McKee, Town of Lanark; Fritz Aschauer, Town of Plover; Chuck Bossingham, Village of Plover; Joel Lemke, City of Stevens Point

**STAFF PRESENT:** Ray Schmidt, Karen Moran

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Allen Haga, Jr., County Board Supervisor District 15 and member of Planning & Zoning Committee

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Sally Ellingboe.

**INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBER(S):** Rita Walkowicz, Town of Belmont

**GCAC MEMBERS LISTING:**

<b>MUNICIPALITY</b>	<b>MEMBERS NAME</b>	<b>MUNICIPALITY</b>	<b>MEMBERS NAME</b>
<b>TOWNS:</b>		<b>TOWNS:</b>	
Alban	Delbert Anderson	Plover	Fritz Aschauer
<b>Almond</b>	<b>VACANT</b>	Sharon	VACANT
Amherst	Dave Dombrowski	Stockton	Richard Filtz
Belmont	Rita Walkowicz	Stockton Alternate	Edward Anglemyer
Buena Vista	David Shantz	<b>VILLAGES:</b>	
Carson	Fred Copes	<b>Almond</b>	<b>VACANT</b>
Dewey	Kathy Girolamo	Amherst	Mike Hinrichs
<b>Eau Pleine</b>	<b>VACANT</b>	<b>Amherst Junction</b>	<b>VACANT</b>
Grant	Mary Kiedrowski	Junction City	Peter Mallek
Grant Alternate	Scott Provost	Nelsonville	James Walker
Hull	Tim Zimmerman	Park Ridge	Paul McGinley
Lanark	William McKee	Park Ridge Alternate	Christine Neidlein
Linwood	Richard Berndt	Plover	Chuck Bossingham
New Hope	Sally Ellingboe	<b>Rosholt</b>	<b>VACANT</b>
New Hope Alternate	Cathy Derezinski	Whiting	Sarah Gilbert
<b>Pine Grove</b>	<b>VACANT</b>	<b>CITY OF STEVENS POINT</b>	Joel Lemke

**REVIEW/APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MARCH 5, 2009:** Motion by Zimmerman to approve the minutes; seconded by Hinrichs. Motion carried.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** The Groundwater Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) received an editorial titled *Where Will the Water Come From?* by George J. Kraft, which included a copy of a news article from The Portage County Gazette dated April 17, 2009, titled *City begins large sewer project*. This article will be added as a discussion item to the agenda for the next meeting. Schmidt will attempt to schedule Kraft to present this information to CAC.

**ELLINGBOE READ THE PUBLIC NOTICE:** Members of the public who wish to address the Committee on specific agenda items must register their requests at this time with such comments subject to the reasonable control of the Committee Chair as set forth in Robert's Rules of Order.

#### Cranberries – Pesticide and Fertilizer Implications for Groundwater

This presentation was cancelled due to illness of presenter. It will be rescheduled for a future CAC meeting.

#### **DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION:**

##### Leadership Portage County Participants to Serve on CAC

Schmidt reminded CAC members Karl Franzen from the Portage County Business Council had made a presentation at the March 5, 2009, meeting, asking if Leadership Portage County (LPC) participants could serve on CAC in a non-voting role. CAC members agreed to discuss at this meeting whether the LPC members could participate. Hinrichs felt it was a good idea, but he reminded everyone we are to define a project for them to work on. Schmidt stated LPC participants would serve on CAC from September 2009 through April 2010. He indicated we may not want to put them on subcommittees because of the time it would take to bring them up to speed. Schmidt asked whether CAC wanted to incorporate five or six LPC participants into CAC for this time period. If the answer is "yes, then we would have to brainstorm on what project to assign to them. We would have time to decide on a project prior to August when they kick off their new group initiation. They would have their first introduction to CAC in September.

Schmidt stated LPC participants have not done a project within a community committee. They have all worked on projects dealing with statistics and problems within areas they have identified, but they have not had real world contact with people who are already working on issues. Kiedrowski asked what age group the LPC participants represented. Schmidt stated they represent all age groups. Neidlein had previously volunteered to be the mentor for LPC participants, Schmidt reiterated we would have five or six LPC participants who would attend our meetings and be part of our organization. LPC would like their participants to do a project for CAC. They could be part of something we are already doing, or they could do something we want to have done.

Gilbert made a motion to agree to have five or six LPC participants serve on CAC from September 2009 through April 2010. Hinrichs seconded. Motion passed.

Schmidt asked CAC members to forward their project ideas (for the LPC participants) to Moran prior to the next meeting. Moran will send out a reminder with the meeting minutes and agenda. Kiedrowski suggested having them test bottled/treated water from local sources and was asked to submit it as her project idea for the LPC participants.

##### Membership Criteria for GCAC Appointment

Schmidt mailed a memo dated April 22, 2009, regarding proposed changes for CAC membership to all CAC members with the May agenda. This memo outlines specific language submitted to the Corporation Counsel recommending a resolution to the Planning and Zoning Committee and County Board which would allow for local elected officials or staff to serve on the CAC, provided:

“No citizen of the municipality, who wishes to serve, is deemed to be appropriate for appointment by the Town or Village Board or City Council, and,

In order to preserve the citizen nature of the GCAC, a maximum of twenty five percent (six) of the twenty seven potential GCAC members could be local elected officials or staff members.”

Schmidt stated the purpose of the proposed changes is to fill vacant CAC positions and keep active members of CAC (who recently became elected officials). About one-third of the municipalities do not have members appointed at all, and some of the members have very poor attendance, even though they have been appointed by their municipal boards. When the County Board first set up CAC, it precluded any elected local officials from the townships, villages or city, as well as any staff members from the municipalities those people are associated with, from serving on CAC. Recently, McKee from the Town of Lanark has been representing his municipality on CAC even though he is a Town Supervisor. Berndt, our Chair, was just elected to be a Town Supervisor for the Town of Linwood. Under the current language, which has been in place for 20 years and established by a County Board resolution, neither McKee nor Berndt would be allowed to serve on this committee, because it is considered strictly a citizen's committee.

Schmidt stated we have had at least six CAC members elected to local offices, and as such, we have lost some very interested, motivated people from this committee. Schmidt believes if we were able to seat a certain number of elected officials or staff, it would benefit CAC. It will take a resolution of the Planning and Zoning Committee to the County Board to change this. At the last meeting, CAC members requested Brazzale and Schmidt submit suggested language. That language is outlined above and was reviewed with no objections by the Corporation Counsel. The recommended language would allow up to six members of CAC to be elected officials or staff of local municipalities.

Kiedrowski voiced her objection to allowing six elected officials or staff to serve on CAC, stating she would prefer five members, because due to existing vacancies, elected officials on CAC could have a majority vote. Filtz asked if CAC could conduct a mail vote, so all 27 members could vote instead of just those in attendance at the meeting. Schmidt stated he would follow up to see if a mail vote is legal. Haga indicated they had a similar request at a County Board meeting, but they were told you had to be present to vote. Schmidt thought the rules might be different for CAC, because we are strictly advisory to the Planning and Zoning Committee. We have no authority of our own. Gilbert stated the fact we are only advisory to the Planning and Zoning Committee makes this less of an issue. Hinrichs stated he likes the fact citizens make up the “Citizens” Advisory Committee, but if you are elected to office while serving as a citizen member of CAC, you should not lose your position on CAC. In that case, he would be agreeable to keeping the language at a maximum of six elected officials.

Schmidt reminded CAC members the recommended language would allow an elected official only if there was no appropriate citizen within that municipality interested in serving. Haga recommended CAC members vote on the appointment of elected officials. Filtz asked if anyone has contacted municipalities with vacancies on CAC to see if any elected officials would serve on CAC. Schmidt replied “no,” because at this time, we are not allowed to have them serve. Dombrowski suggested contacting the elected officials in municipalities with vacancies and asking them to help fill the openings. Schmidt responded stating letters have been sent each of the last five years, and last year, Berndt called each of them individually. Ads were also placed in newspapers. Ellingboe stated she would rather not turn away someone who is passionate about groundwater; she would add a stipulation that elected officials could be on CAC with the approval of CAC members.

Motion by Kiedrowski to change the language in Schmidt's April 22, 2009, memo to read:

“...a resolution to the Planning and Zoning Committee and County Board which would allow for local elected officials or staff to serve on the GCAC, provided:

No citizen of the municipality, who wishes to serve, is deemed to be appropriate for appointment by the Town or Village Board or City Council, and,

In order to preserve the citizen nature of the GCAC, a maximum of **five** of the twenty-seven potential GCAC members could be local elected officials or staff members, **provided those local elected officials or staff members are approved by current GCAC membership.**"

Seconded by Copes.

Amendment to Motion by Filtz:

"...a resolution to the Planning and Zoning Committee and County Board which would allow for local elected officials or staff to serve on the GCAC, provided:

No citizen of the municipality, who wishes to serve, is deemed to be appropriate for appointment by the Town or Village Board or City Council, and,

In order to preserve the citizen nature of the GCAC, a maximum of five of the twenty seven potential GCAC members could be local elected officials or staff members, provided those local elected officials or staff members are approved by current GCAC membership. **If an appropriate citizen becomes available to serve, the elected official or staff member must vacate his appointment for appointment of the citizen.**"

Amendment seconded by Hinrichs. Motion passed by vote of 6 to 4.

Kiedrowski's motion passed unanimously.

Schmidt recommended CAC revisit this resolution at a future date to address how they would handle the situation where an elected official is on CAC and a citizen comes forward and wants to be a CAC member. Schmidt stated alternates would be subject to the same membership criteria as the members. Filtz asked if a municipality could have two members; Schmidt stated any municipality could have an alternate. Filtz asked if that counted as 12 elected officials or staff. Schmidt stated only one member from each municipality could vote. Schmidt stated he sees a problem down the road if we get into a situation where a municipality can now appoint an elected official instead of an existing CAC member, and CAC may have to accept the elected official, even though a citizen member wants to serve.

Schmidt stated the resolution should not go to the Planning and Zoning Committee until all of these issues are worked through, but the sooner it goes to the Planning and Zoning Committee, the sooner Berndt and McKee, who are elected officials, can legitimately serve on CAC.

#### **SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATES:**

- a. **Public Involvement/Education Sub-Committee (PIES)** Ellingboe stated Schmidt did an excellent job at the Jensen Center in the Village of Amherst presenting information about the atrazine testing completed in the Town of Amherst and Villages of Nelsonville and Amherst. She presented an article from Our Community Spirit regarding Schmidt's presentation. She felt there was a decent turnout. The presentation was very well received by the community. Ellingboe asked if there were any additional education programs planned. Schmidt replied there would be a similar follow-up atrazine testing program in the Towns of Sharon and Alban and the Village of Rosholt in August or September. Schmidt stated he has collected follow-up atrazine samples for the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) from two wells in the Town of New Hope that were high on the screening test. Depending on the results of those tests, DATCP may consider extending the atrazine moratorium area in the Town of New Hope.
- b. **Continuous Assessment Subcommittee (CAS)**: McGinley stated the CAS has met and continues to meet every other month opposite of CAC meetings. They are working their way through the

chemical database with Schmidt's help, focusing initially on nitrates and pesticides. They are trying to determine if they have enough information. They plan to have an agricultural industry specialist at their next meeting to discuss new pesticides. They are also working on the groundwater report. Hinrichs stated they are also discussing recharge and sustainability of the groundwater. He secured data from Wausau on the daily precipitation for 2000 to present plotted against the average annual rainfall, so they can look at the quantity side.

- c. **Groundwater Management Plan and Implementation Subcommittee (GMPIS):** This committee has not met; they are waiting for books.

### **DISCUSSION: UNLIMITED TOPICS**

Schmidt provided a map showing irrigated agricultural land and wellhead protection areas in Portage County, which was requested at the March meeting. The map shows the groundwater divides along the eastern part of the map. Groundwater contours are shown in red and the flow of groundwater would be perpendicular to those red contour lines in any location. Orange crosses on the map indicate where municipal wells are located. The seven orange crosses in the northern area are in the City of Stevens Point. Two orange crosses in the middle represent municipal wells in the Village of Whiting. Four orange crosses in the south represent municipal wells in the Village of Plover. The Village of Plover actually has three wells, but the fourth cross represents potential expansion. The map shows irrigated agricultural land where we have inputs of fertilizer and potentially pesticides, and the groundwater flow from the northeast to the southwest or to the west when you get down to the Village of Plover.

Hinrichs asked if the Village of Amherst has this information; Schmidt stated we have a recharge area established for the Village of Amherst and the groundwater flow direction is very well documented. The County does not have a wellhead protection area for the Village of Amherst yet.

### **MEMBER REPORTS:**

Town of Carson: Copes stated there is very low attendance at his town meetings. He has addressed the need to do a groundwater education meeting, but no action has been taken.

Town of Amherst: Dombrowski announced they have a new Board member and Town Clerk.

Village of Amherst: Hinrichs congratulated Rita Walkowicz from the Town of Belmont for coming to our meeting; he felt CAC needed a member with a farming perspective. The Village of Amherst is putting in a nitrate treatment system for municipal well number 1. They are building a new Village Hall, because the present Village Hall is going to be converted into a nitrate treatment center using stimulus money.

Town of Hull: Zimmerman said the Town of Hull has passed a law restricting the use of phosphorous for fertilizer for lawns, but the farmers are exempt from the restriction. The City of Stevens Point is also planning a new well in the middle of the Boy Scouts area (Camp Fletcher).

Town of Stockton: Filtz noted the Town of Stockton had a cleanup of oil, garbage, and tires this past weekend, which was a positive thing. It keeps the Town cleaner and the groundwater cleaner.

Village of Park Ridge: McGinley stated the Village of Park Ridge got into a groundwater discussion last month, because there is a parking lot being constructed in the Village and the stormwater management team designed a system where the stormwater is going to go into an area and infiltrate through some sand and organic material.

Town of Grant: Kiedrowski reported they have a new town supervisor; Kiedrowski spoke about groundwater quality for about 15 minutes at their annual meeting.

Town of New Hope: Ellingboe stated they held an informational meeting addressing the atrazine testing

results.

Village of Whiting: Gilbert shared that as of last Tuesday, the Village was nearing an agreement with a paper company to purchase an area near the Village wastewater treatment plant for a small amount of money (\$1). That property would house wells currently on the Green Circle Trail that need to be capped. The Village is working with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to get this done. The new wastewater treatment plant is now on-line.

Haga asked who citizens would go to if they had problems with their water. Schmidt stated his office would handle this. Haga asked what authority or power Schmidt's office had to help a person. Schmidt stated he has no authority or power to help. He can contact the DNR, DATCP, or CAP Services for assistance. Haga felt it would be beneficial to set up a group with authority to cut through the red tape and get something going for people who need relief immediately. Perhaps a small amount of money could be set aside for emergencies (\$5,000 or \$10,000) to get water tied into their houses.

**NEXT MEETING DATE:**

The next meeting date is Thursday, July 9, 2009, at 7:00 p.m. in Conference Room 5 of the Courthouse Annex.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Meeting adjourned by Ellingboe at 8:52 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Karen Moran, Recording Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sally Ellingboe, Chair Pro-Temp

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



**PORTAGE COUNTY  
GROUNDWATER CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
CONFERENCE ROOM 5, COURTHOUSE ANNEX  
THURSDAY, JULY 9, 2009 - 7:00 P.M.**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Rita Walkowicz, Town of Belmont; Mary Kiedrowski, Town of Grant; Bill McKee, Town of Lanark; Richard Berndt, Town of Linwood; Sally Ellingboe, Town of New Hope; Fritz Aschauer, Town of Plover; Richard Filtz, Town of Stockton; Paul McGinley, Town of Park Ridge

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Kathy Girolamo, Town of Dewey; James Walker, Village of Nelsonville; Sarah Gilbert, Village of Whiting

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Delbert Anderson, Town of Alban; Dave Dombrowski, Town of Amherst; David Shantz, Town of Buena Vista; Fred Copes, Town of Carson; Tim Zimmerman, Town of Hull; Mike Hinrichs, Village of Amherst; Peter Mallek, Village of Junction City; Chuck Bossingham, Village of Plover; Joel Lemke, City of Stevens Point

**STAFF PRESENT:** Ray Schmidt, Jamie Phillis

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Steve Hahn, Tom Lochner, and Jennifer Stewart and Ken Schroeder – University Extension (UWEX)

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Berndt.

**INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBER(S):** Rita Walkowicz, Town of Belmont, attended the May Groundwater Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting, but has now been officially selected by the Town of Belmont.

**GCAC MEMBERS LISTING:**

<b>MUNICIPALITY</b>	<b>MEMBERS NAME</b>	<b>MUNICIPALITY</b>	<b>MEMBERS NAME</b>
<b>TOWNS:</b>		<b>TOWNS:</b>	
Alban	Delbert Anderson	Plover	Fritz Aschauer
<b>Almond</b>	<b>VACANT</b>	Sharon	VACANT
Amherst	Dave Dombrowski	Stockton	Richard Filtz
Belmont	Rita Walkowicz	Stockton Alternate	Edward Anglemyer
Buena Vista	David Shantz	<b>VILLAGES:</b>	
Carson	Fred Copes	<b>Almond</b>	<b>VACANT</b>
Dewey	Kathy Girolamo	Amherst	Mike Hinrichs
<b>Eau Pleine</b>	<b>VACANT</b>	<b>Amherst Junction</b>	<b>VACANT</b>
Grant	Mary Kiedrowski	Junction City	Peter Mallek
Grant Alternate	Scott Provost	Nelsonville	James Walker
Hull	Tim Zimmerman	Park Ridge	Paul McGinley
Lanark	William McKee	Park Ridge Alternate	Christine Neidlein
Linwood	Richard Berndt	Plover	Chuck Bossingham
New Hope	Sally Ellingboe	<b>Rosholt</b>	<b>VACANT</b>
New Hope Alternate	Cathy Derezinski	Whiting	Sarah Gilbert
<b>Pine Grove</b>	<b>VACANT</b>	<b>CITY OF STEVENS POINT</b>	Joel Lemke

**REVIEW/APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MAY 7, 2009:** Berndt noted one correction under #5, “Berndt read the public notice...” should read “Ellingboe read the public notice...” Motion by Kiedrowski to approve the minutes with corrections; seconded by McGinley. Motion carried.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** None

**BERNDT READ THE PUBLIC NOTICE:** Members of the public who wish to address the Committee on specific agenda items must register their requests at this time with such comments subject to the reasonable control of the Committee Chair as set forth in Robert’s Rules of Order.

**Cranberries – Pesticide and Fertilizer Implications for Groundwater**

Berndt introduced two guests, Steve Hahn, a cranberry grower, and Tom Lochner, Wisconsin Cranberry Growers Association (CGA).

Schmidt stated one member asked him to research the impact of pesticides and fertilizers from cranberry operations on groundwater. A map was shown of where cranberry operations are located in the County. Most are in the Towns of Grant and Plover, some are in the Town of Pine Grove, and some older operations are in the Town of Eau Claire. There has been approximately a doubling of cranberry acreage in the County since the year 2000. The Groundwater Management Plan (GWMP) does not address cranberries, because they were a small crop and little was known about cranberries and groundwater in the State at the time the GWMP was updated. Schmidt did research and received resources from Ken Schroeder, Portage County Agriculture Agent. Cranberry growers put on very small amounts of fertilizer, unlike potato operations. The pH of the soil is low where cranberries are grown, because if the pH is too high, the crop will not grow. Organic matter content is high and traps nutrients that would otherwise go down through the soil and into the groundwater.

Schmidt referred to the map and a particular marsh in the Town of Eau Claire that has been around since before the Lake DuBay dam was built over 100 years ago. They are in the process of renewing the beds. It is one of the older wetland-style cranberry marshes. The newer marshes are not being built in wetlands as much, but rather in uplands where there is more drainage. Schmidt referred to some newer marshes on the map and how they converted irrigated agricultural fields to establish the marshes. It takes quite a bit of earth moving and investment to build the beds. The beds have to be perfectly level so, at harvest time in the fall, they can be flooded, and the cranberries will float to the surface. Cranberries are not always in water, only when flooded for harvest and through winter. If cranberries get too wet, they will have fungus problems, and the crop will be lost.

Berndt asked what type of fertilizer is used for the crops. Hahn replied the formulation is low in nitrogen. Crops are spoon fed a little each week, depending on the season. There are managers watching crops to determine when, or if, any fertilizer is necessary. Lochner stated nitrates are not used. Cranberries are self-limiting; if too much nitrogen is applied, excessive vine growth will occur. If a grower is trying to sell vines, or plant material, that is fine, but most are trying to sell the fruit. Also, if there is too much nitrogen, it will affect the quality of the crop. Phosphorous is used in small amounts. The Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) designed for growers has a standard set of five pounds per acre per year. Growers will use more or less depending on how the season is going, what the crop looks like, and other management decisions. In terms of how phosphorous is applied, if a lot of aluminum or iron is in the soil, the phosphorous will bind up rather quickly. The CGA has spent the last six or seven years working with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) on NMP’s for cranberry operations. The process took a lot of research to determine the plant needs and working with growers to develop individual NMP’s for their operations. Right now there is about 75% of acreage in the State under an approved NMP. Cranberry growers are encouraged to write their own plans. Approved plans are written by either the grower or a consultant and approved by NRCS staff.

Schmidt referred to the map and pointed out ponds on each of the operations, which is where the water comes from to flood the beds in the fall for the harvest. With the older wetland operations, there was a

stream flowing through, and a dam would be constructed to flood the bed. When they did not need the beds flooded anymore, they would take the dam out. The flooding water would then flow into the surface water and cranberry operators were accused of contaminating surface water. Upland cranberry operations do not show groundwater contamination like the contamination shown in surface water from wetland operations.

Filtz asked what the percentage of wetland and upland operations there are in the County. Schmidt replied there are approximately 90% upland cranberries. There are quite a few beds being built this year.

McKee asked if there are a number of irrigated or pivot wells for cranberries in the County. Schmidt replied there is not, but Portage County has the highest number of center pivot irrigation wells in the State, on a per square mile basis. Cranberry operations have certain timing issues for when they can and cannot apply pesticides. Insecticides cannot be used during pollination, because they need bees to pollinate the crop. Since it is a food crop, there can be no chemicals on the crop for a certain time period before harvest. It seems the potential for groundwater contamination from cranberry operations is minimal. McKee asked if the ponds used for flooding the crop were groundwater ponds and if there were any wells associated with the operations. Schmidt replied "yes," they are groundwater ponds, and some operations do have high capacity wells to pump out of. Lochner stated high capacity wells may be used for sprinkling for frost protection.

Lochner stated flooding is done twice per year, at harvest time and in the winter. The winter flood is done because vines will be starting to set their fruit buds for the next year's crop, which is exposed to the weather during winter. When the first cold snap occurs, beds will be flooded to encase vines in ice to protect the fruit bud over winter and into spring. Flooding is a major water usage. The problem in using groundwater from wells is that the water is warm; whereas, water in reservoirs is chilled. Traditional wetland marshes in the State utilize large surface water reservoirs. If there is a stream coming in, a reservoir will be created from it, or tap into surface water. That water will be used for flooding and irrigation. Irrigation is done for crop needs and to protect the plants from frost, which can occur throughout the growing season. Generally, it is 10-15 degrees cooler in the marshes than it is in town. Most growers are installing recovery systems to put water back into reservoirs. Some growers are sharing water by passing it down stream into the neighbors' reservoir. The CGA looked at groundwater and contamination a few years ago and did not find it to be a concern.

Filtz asked if there were any tests done on wells upgradient or downgradient to a cranberry operation. Lochner replied a groundwater study was done upgradient and downgradient on one marsh, and it came up with zero detects. Filtz asked if there are organic cranberries. Lochner replied there are few organic cranberry marshes, because they are a challenge. They need to make more pesticide applications as organic growers than as conventional growers.

McKee asked what the growth perspective is on new marshes. Lochner replied last year they worked with handlers that suggested more than a million more barrels of fruit were needed. Approximately 4.3 million barrels were harvested last year. There may be 4,000-6,000 acres more in production in the next three to five years. This year, there may be 1,500 new acres Statewide. The area Schmidt referred to on the map is attractive to growers, because those areas do not require permits for wetlands and also for the supply of water. There are growing markets internationally, which means about 30% of crops are being sold overseas, compared to only 5% ten years ago. Craisins (dried cranberries) have become more popular, as well as other food products, not just juices. The market of the future needs to be projected and planned out. Hahn stated what is planted this spring will produce a crop in three years, but will not go into full production for five years.

Schmidt asked how long a cranberry bed can be used. Hahn replied there are some 100 years old that have been restored. After 20 to 30 years, they should be restored. The vines can be cut down and sold or disposed of. If a cranberry bed does not take, that is it for the year; you cannot start over. Lochner stated from August through harvest; growers are actually finishing off this year's crop, and taking care of the vine to grow healthy fruit buds for next year. If there is vine damage, it can affect production for a number of years. Hahn stated if the bud is harmed in any way, the stem is done. If conditions are right in

the spring, they may produce. Filtz asked how long a vine will produce. Lochner replied it will produce indefinitely, as long as it is managed properly. Filtz asked if there was a website to reference. Lochner replied the CGA website is [wiscran.org](http://wiscran.org), and it should link to the University of Wisconsin (UW) site. Rutgers University also has cranberry information.

Schmidt asked if cranberries are susceptible to atrazine. Hahn replied it has never been used on cranberries. Schmidt stated there have been high atrazine levels in the groundwater in some areas of the County, and he thought when irrigating, or frost proofing the vines, it may cause some harm. Filtz asked what pesticides are used. Lochner replied all CGA growers use an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program, which is developed by the UW. Some were using organo phosphates, but have lost those. More selective newer chemistries are coming on for control. Restrictions have been placed on harvest intervals, such as not being able to harvest for a certain number of days after an application. Insecticides may be used to control earth worms, and herbicides may be put on in the spring. Generally, half of the label rate is put on. There is not a lot of pesticide use with growers. The UWEX website has a listing of cranberry pesticides.

Berndt asked why some cranberries are white and others are red. Hahn replied they are the same; all red cranberries were white at one time. It just depends on when they are harvested. Lochner stated there are no artificial colorings with cranberry products. As they ripen, the berries go from green, to a white stage, and then red. Filtz asked why in earlier years cranberries were being dumped on fields. Hahn replied there was over production back in 1999 and 2000. Lochner stated we were in an over supply situation; at that time, cranberries were 12 cents a pound, and today, they are 50 cents per pound. The Federal Marketing Order can restrict the amount of fruit being delivered to market. That is the first, and only, time it has happened.

Berndt and the Committee thanked Lochner and Hahn for their time. Hahn stated it is easier to show how the operations work than to explain it. He would be happy to show Schmidt, or anyone, around a marsh.

#### **DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION:**

##### George Kraft Article, "Where Will the Water Come From?"

Schmidt stated last summer there were discussions about a Groundwater Quantity Summit because of the quantity problems occurring in our area. Unlimited water usage is no longer possible, like people are used to in the State. Plans started for a summit with major water users and the local government with municipal water supplies, but they have not gotten the meeting put together yet. The idea was presented to the Committee last year. George Kraft put this article together because the City of Stevens Point was starting a large sewer project to extend the sewers and with that was anticipated growth. Filtz stated when Kraft was at the Committee two years ago, his slides showed fewer high capacity wells than there are now.

McKee asked if quantity is more of an issue now than quality. Schmidt replied he would not say that, but quality has been an issue for so long there are programs in place. Whereas, groundwater quantity is an emerging issue the State has only been addressing for the last five years or so. There have been recent concerns with groundwater quantity and the Little Plover River (LPR) drying up. Climate change may have something to do with groundwater quantity issues, since we are seeing more dry years. McKee stated the LPR has had a lot of publicity, but Boelter Lake does not have a drop of water in the depression. Many lakes are down. Filtz stated in the Town of Stockton, some wells have gone dry. Schmidt stated traditionally, Portage County has had fairly good quality shallow groundwater. People could go out and tap the groundwater with a driven point well. It has been found that groundwater quality is not as good as it used to be in the rural areas and now quantity is an issue. Quality is still a major issue. About 1/3 of the wells in the County exceed the health standard for nitrates, which is up about 25% from 10 years ago.

Filtz stated his well was at 30-35 parts per million nitrates. He had it tested and was told it would cost a fortune to treat it. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Health Departments advised him not to drink his water, and he had to have a new well installed. The new well is about 176 ½ feet deep, with

16 ½ ppm nitrates, and last year his nitrates were almost at 20 ppm. The concern with a deeper well is the quality of water, or hitting radioactivity.

McGinley stated Kraft is finishing a study on lake levels in Portage County, so it may be of interest to the group. It has everything in a groundwater flow model including lake levels, development, and water use in the County. Schmidt stated it can be a future agenda item for the Committee.

McKee asked if there was a count on high capacity wells and what the rate of growth of those wells is. Schmidt replied high capacity wells can be plotted out to get statistics. The number of new irrigation wells increased rapidly from the early 1970's through the mid-1980's, and then it tapered off.

#### Leadership Portage County Participants (LPC) to Serve on GCAC

Berndt stated, previously, the Committee discussed the possibility of having LPC members come to the GCAC meetings to participate, and to come up with a project for those individuals to help with. This would be an educational opportunity for LPC members. Berndt and Schmidt met to discuss a potential program for LPC members. A summary of ideas received from CAC members was distributed to the Committee.

Berndt suggested LPC members be active in the nitrate testing of water wells in their township, or if they live in an area on municipal water, they could be assigned to a township. LPC members would be given an introduction session to propose methods of the testing program, reasons for testing, and results. The LPC member's task would be to get well water samples for testing by the Planning and Zoning Department; there would be no fee for testing to the well owner. LPC members would have an opportunity to meet rural residents and find out their attitudes on groundwater, or any other conditions. CAC has a program to speak with specific townships about their problems with groundwater. This may be an opportunity for LPC members to educate well owners and be educated by well owners. There would be a survey for LPC members to have completed by well owners, and each member would obtain a certain number of samples every month. Filtz stated details on the survey provided to well owners would be of concern to him. Some people do not want to know if their water is good or not. Berndt stated the questions would need to be worked out to be meaningful and simple.

Berndt stated Mike Hinrichs had a suggestion on a Water Budget and how much rainfall actually gets into the groundwater. If a farmer has a 40-acre field and he gets 10 inches of rain, how much groundwater can he use on a sustainable basis for irrigation?

McGinley suggested LPC members coordinate a forum on the future of Portage County groundwater ("Groundwater Summit"). This would be an interesting project with a lot of work. It would also give LPC members the opportunity to meet with municipal officials and be out in the community talking to people about groundwater.

Ellingboe suggested helping plan and publicize an informational meeting that includes water testing, which ties into other topics previously mentioned. They are in a leadership program, so it would be beneficial to tap into the qualities of their class. They need to look at options as well, and see what fits their own ideas. Surveying, finding out what is going on with groundwater in the community, and looking at the municipalities not represented here for feedback are some ideas.

Kiedrowski suggested having LPC members research where bottled water is coming from, such as, is it pure water, groundwater, or tap water.

Berndt asked if the Committee would like to choose one or two of these ideas for LPC members. McGinley replied it may be a good idea to make it their (LPC members) preference and see what type of project they may be interested in. Schmidt stated LPC members will be at CAC in September, and there should be background information on the five or six members chosen for CAC by the end of August. Berndt suggested having a meeting with those members before the September CAC meeting to go over some ideas. Ellingboe stated Christine Neidlein had offered to mentor the group, because she went through the LPC program. Berndt asked if CAC wanted to meet with members as soon as they are

available to go over ideas. Information can be sent out to CAC members regarding a meeting date, and those who want to be involved can attend the meeting. Schmidt asked if the Committee has picked one or two ideas to give to the group at the time of this meeting. Berndt replied “no,” we can give all the ideas to the group at that time to see what they are interested in. Filtz stated about half of the ideas given can be combined together. Schmidt suggested the Committee think about these six ideas some more and get about five or six Committee members together to pick one. Berndt stated the Committee shall do that.

### **SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATES:**

a. **Public Involvement/Education Sub-Committee (PIES)** Schmidt stated PIES previously discussed having more information available on the internet. Recently, wells have been added to the County’s online mapping. Anyone can go to online records, pull up aerial photos from online mapping, and locate wells by clicking on active layers (well construction). The wells will show up in blue and can be clicked on for more information. There will be more well information put on the website in the future, but it is unknown if water quality information can be added. Some realtor groups have helped develop what information should be put out on the website and are actively using the information. Portage County is the first in the State to have well construction information on their online mapping. This is one way to get well information out to the public, so they can check on their own wells, or surrounding wells. There are a lot of driven point wells with no information, or well reports. About 20% on the site have good well construction information, another 30%-40% have some construction information, and 30%-40% do not have any information. The Portage County website is [www.co.portage.wi.us](http://www.co.portage.wi.us), Online Records, and Online Mapping.

Berndt asked where the Well Abandonment Program stands. Schmidt replied he is trying to figure out how to raise some funds to implement the program.

b. **Continuous Assessment Subcommittee (CAS):** McGinley stated there was an interesting meeting in June regarding the chemical database and limited pesticides. A knowledgeable agricultural industry individual, Joe Nagel, attended and the current list of pesticides used on agricultural crops in the County was worked through. Berndt asked if pesticides are spelled out as to what can and cannot be used. McGinley replied his impression is most people are using generally the same list. It is listed by crop. The next meeting will be on the state of Portage County Groundwater Report.

c. **Groundwater Management Plan and Implementation Subcommittee (GMPIS):** Filtz stated everyone received a copy of the plan via CD today and hopefully will have time to review it. They hope to get all the Subcommittee chairs together in the future to discuss what direction to go. Schmidt stated he will make himself available for the meeting, whenever members want to schedule it.

### **DISCUSSION: UNLIMITED TOPICS**

Berndt asked if everyone received the email on nitrates. Copies of the email were distributed to the Committee. Schmidt stated the email outlined the latest advice on nitrogen in drinking water from the Wisconsin Division of Health. If your nitrate level is 10 ppm, nobody should drink it for the long term. In the past, advice had been given that levels of 10 ppm were acceptable for normal healthy children or adults. The County will be taking, and giving, this new advice.

Berndt introduced Jennifer Stewart from the UWEX and asked what her position is. Stewart replied she is the Community Development Educator. The UWEX has moved to the Ruth Gilfry Center.

### **MEMBER REPORTS:**

Schmidt stated there is no committee member from the Town of Pine Grove, but a Pine Grove resident him regarding his nitrate sample that was 67 ppm. His property is located about ½ mile southeast of the settlement of Bancroft where the groundwater is shallow. Schmidt spoke with the DNR and the Department of Agriculture regarding the property and they sent him testing bottles. Schmidt took samples

and shipped them to Madison where they will do an analysis for free. Samples were taken from the gentleman's well, which was 35 feet deep, and samples were taken from an upgradient well ½ mile away, which was 75 feet deep. There were minimal pesticides in those wells even though nitrate levels were high. The lab also tested for nitrate in both wells, and his well had dropped within one month from 67 ppm to 37 ppm and the upgradient well was at 24 ppm. There is quite a bit of contamination and some follow-up testing in Bancroft is anticipated. Hopefully, a grant will be received to do testing, and people will be notified of the issue.

Berndt asked how the well could change in one month's time. Schmidt replied nitrate can vary quite a bit and chances are, when the first sample was taken, there could have been a slug of nitrogen fertilizer that hit the groundwater from afield upgradient of the well.

Walkowicz stated she informed people she was on this Committee, and some told her they do not want any interference on their farm or property. They do not want their water tested or anything to do with groundwater. Some have a few junk cars or animals on their property and are afraid of big government coming in and wiping out everything they own. Filtz stated people should want to know what is going on with their groundwater and see if there is anything they can do to improve it, instead of watching it get more polluted. Walkowicz stated "yes," but people are afraid they will be told they cannot farm, drink their water, or even live there. They may feel since the property has been in the family for hundreds of years, and if their relatives were not harmed from drinking the water, then it will not harm them either.

**NEXT MEETING DATE:**

The next meeting date is Thursday, September 3, 2009, at 7:00 p.m. in Conference Room 5 of the Courthouse Annex.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion by Kiedrowski; seconded by McKee to adjourn. Motion carried by voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jamie Phillis, Recording Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Richard Berndt, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



**PORTAGE COUNTY  
GROUNDWATER CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
CONFERENCE ROOM 5, COURTHOUSE ANNEX  
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2009 - 7:00 P.M.**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** David Shantz, Town of Buena Vista; Fred Copes, Town of Carson; Dennis Meis, Town of Dewey; Mary Kiedrowski, Town of Grant; Tim Zimmerman, Town of Hull; Bill McKee, Town of Lanark; Richard Berndt, Town of Linwood; Sally Ellingboe, Town of New Hope; James Walker, Village of Nelsonville; Paul McGinley, Village of Park Ridge; Christine Neidlein, Village of Park Ridge Alternate; Sarah Gilbert, Village of Whiting; and Joel Lemke, City of Stevens Point.

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Fritz Aschauer, Town of Plover; and Richard Filtz, Town of Stockton.

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Delbert Anderson, Town of Alban; Dave Dombrowski, Town of Amherst; Rita Walkowicz, Town of Belmont; Mike Hinrichs, Village of Amherst; Peter Mallek, Village of Junction City; and Chuck Bossingham, Village of Plover.

**STAFF PRESENT:** Ray Schmidt and Jamie Phillis.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Cindy Mews, Kelly Scharbarth, Sharon Jakusz, and Justin Hoerter - Leadership Portage County (LPC); Jennifer Stewart and Ken Schroeder - University Extension (UWEX); and Bruce Stewart.

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Berndt.

**INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBER(S):** Berndt stated Bill McKee, Town of Lanark, has become an official member and introduced the new official member from the Town of Dewey, Dennis Meis.

**GROUNDWATER CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (GCAC) MEMBERS LISTING:**

<b>MUNICIPALITY</b>	<b>MEMBERS NAME</b>	<b>MUNICIPALITY</b>	<b>MEMBERS NAME</b>
<b>TOWNS:</b>		<b>TOWNS:</b>	
Alban	Delbert Anderson	Plover	Fritz Aschauer
<b>Almond</b>	<b>VACANT</b>	Sharon	VACANT
Amherst	Dave Dombrowski	Stockton	Richard Filtz
Belmont	Rita Walkowicz	Stockton Alternate	Edward Anglemyer
Buena Vista	David Shantz	<b>VILLAGES:</b>	
Carson	Fred Copes	<b>Almond</b>	<b>VACANT</b>
Dewey	Dennis Meis	Amherst	Mike Hinrichs
<b>Eau Pleine</b>	<b>VACANT</b>	<b>Amherst Junction</b>	<b>VACANT</b>
Grant	Mary Kiedrowski	Junction City	Peter Mallek
Grant Alternate	Scott Provost	Nelsonville	James Walker
Hull	Tim Zimmerman	Park Ridge	Paul McGinley
Lanark	William McKee	Park Ridge Alternate	Christine Neidlein
Linwood	Richard Berndt	Plover	Chuck Bossingham
New Hope	Sally Ellingboe	<b>Rosholt</b>	<b>VACANT</b>
New Hope Alternate	Cathy Derezinski	Whiting	Sarah Gilbert
<b>Pine Grove</b>	<b>VACANT</b>	<b>CITY OF STEVENS POINT</b>	Joel Lemke

**REVIEW/APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JULY 9, 2009:** Motion by Ellingboe to approve the minutes, seconded by McKee. Motion carried.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** None

**BERNDT READ THE PUBLIC NOTICE:** Members of the public who wish to address the Committee on specific agenda items must register their requests at this time with such comments subject to the reasonable control of the Committee Chair as set forth in Robert's Rules of Order.

Presentation: Lakes, Streams and Pumping in Central Wisconsin (George Kraft)  
George Kraft was unable to attend, so the presentation was postponed until the next meeting.

Introduction of Leadership Portage County Participants (LPC)

Christine Neidlein, Village of Park Ridge, stated LPC is a class of about 30 people who want to get more involved in their community. It takes place from September to May and each month the day focuses on something different, such as business, human services, education, or environment. One component of the program is the participants are to embed themselves into different organizations within the community to find ways to get involved. These four participants have decided to find out more about groundwater. They are: Justin Hoerter, Delta Dental; Sharon Jakusz, Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Portage County; Kelly Scharbarth, Baker, Tilly, & Krause a CPA Firm; and Cindy Mews, Portage County Child Support. These participants will attend the regular GCAC meetings and, if schedules allow, they may attend subcommittee meetings. If there is an educational event in any municipality regarding groundwater, they may be able to help in a volunteer capacity or attend for informational purposes. Hoerter is from the Village of Whiting; Jakusz, Town of Stockton; Scharbarth, Village of Plover; Mews, City of Stevens Point. If a GCAC representative or alternate is needed for any of those municipalities, please keep these people in mind. Schmidt stated there currently is not a Village of Plover representative attending the meetings, so Scharbarth is welcome to consider becoming a representative after she has completed her LPC class. Walker asked if a subcommittee is holding a meeting and wanted to invite LPC members how they would contact them. Neidlein stated she will give Schmidt and Phillis the LPC group contact information and they will get the information to GCAC members.

Discussion: LPC Project

Schmidt stated the project GCAC has chosen for the LPC group is relating to education. There will be citizen contact with private well owners who may not have the information needed to decide whether or not their water is safe to drink. The area they will initially focus on is the Town of Stockton. The crops grown on the sand in this area need a lot of nutrients and pesticides in order to grow a viable crop. Statewide, about 10% of private wells, and less than 10% of public wells, have nitrates above the health standard of 10 parts per million (ppm). Here in Portage County between 30-35% of wells and 40-45% of the population have drinking water with nitrates above the health standard. Based on groundwater flow, it is known where rainfall soaks in, how it picks up contaminants, and delivers it to downgradient wells. Most drinking water in Portage County comes from within one mile upgradient of the well.

The LPC group will be focusing on wells downgradient from areas where high nitrate water has been found in the past. They may also be taking water samples and completing a survey. The Towns of Stockton, Plover, and Buena Vista will be the focus because those areas have the greatest health risk. There will be one-on-one meetings to complete surveys. The LPC group will be given a set of names, addresses, and phone numbers to make contacts with people who had high nitrates in the past or are downgradient from those high nitrate wells. The survey is in draft form, if anyone has a suggestion.

Mews asked what the timeline is to start and finish the project. Schmidt replied they could start by the end of September, but there is no project timetable, it may take all year. Neidlein asked if residents will be aware this is happening. Schmidt replied not individually, but through their town boards and media.

Scharbarth suggested a question to add to the survey, 'Do you know what to do if you have a problem with your groundwater,' and she asked what would someone do in that situation. Would they place filters on their water tap? Schmidt replied one option is to treat the tap drinking and cooking water are coming from. High nitrate water is fine for bathing and laundry. In the past, the Division of Health advised high nitrate water was a hazard

to infants, and pregnant or nursing women. Now, because of uncertainties associated with consumption of high nitrate water, they recommend that nobody drink it long term.

Mews asked if they will be given sample bottles or will they refer citizens somewhere. Schmidt replied they will be given bottles to collect samples and a free nitrate test will be offered. The test could be run at the people's homes by LPC volunteers, but Schmidt would prefer the samples be brought to him and he will run the samples for the sake of consistency. The sample can be used as an introduction to having their water tested at a lab, if the result is high enough, and they will be given information on how to do so. If the sample is low enough, they may feel comfortable not having further testing. There is a correlation between high nitrate levels and other chemicals in the water. Mews asked how many residents, or samples, would the Committee like them to get. Berndt replied five per month. Schmidt stated there are more out there than we can hope to deal with.

Berndt suggested meeting with just the LPC group to explain the project in more detail and provide them with sample bottles. Schmidt stated this will give the group a chance to think of questions for the survey. This is a good way to get groundwater concern built up in the public. Individual maps for each township can be provided by Schmidt, showing the nitrate levels, groundwater flow, and other things found in groundwater, such as pesticides. Schmidt referred to the map where the nitrate levels are broken down; 2ppm is the Preventative Action Limit (PAL). Ideally, when sample results are higher than the PAL, the reason is not from natural sources, but from human induced contamination. The Health Standard is 10ppm. Mckee asked if Schmidt is saying without man there would be no nitrate contamination. Schmidt replied there is some natural nitrate, but generally it is less than 1ppm.

McKee asked the LPC group if they had any knowledge of groundwater issues or if this is all new to them. Scharbarth replied she grew up in Amherst and remembers people coming to take groundwater samples at their home. She wanted to join this Committee because of the Little Plover River (LPR) situation and the watering situation. Schmidt stated the speaker tonight, George Kraft, was going to deal with groundwater quantity in central Wisconsin. Kraft is the Governor's representative on the Groundwater Advisory Council dealing with High Capacity Well (HCW) Legislation and had a meeting in Madison that conflicted with tonight's meeting. He should be present for the November meeting.

McGinley asked if there is an estimate or a percentage of what most people do to resolve a nitrate problem. Schmidt replied most people will either buy bottled water or put in a reverse osmosis system, but this system has cartridges that need to be changed. The only way to know the cartridge needs to be changed is to test the water. Berndt asked if there is State aid for constructing a new well. Schmidt replied, if high pesticide concentrations are found in a sample, they would be eligible, but nitrate and bacteria contaminations are exempt from funding. It is called the Well Compensation Fund (WCF), which gives about 70% of costs back for a replacement well. Richard Filtz, Town of Stockton GCAC Representative, had almost 40ppm nitrate in his well and possibly other contaminations. He drilled a new well and the WCF paid \$9,000 toward the new well and Filtz had to pay \$4,000. Mews asked if these chemicals are used anymore. Schmidt replied in some parts of the County they do not allow the use of atrazine, they are called Atrazine Prohibition Areas and consist of about 50 square miles. These areas are still susceptible because atrazine may be used outside and can flow into the area.

#### GCAC Membership Criteria Changes

Berndt stated a County Board Resolution stated elected municipal officials could not be on the Committee. GCAC has asked the Planning & Zoning Committee (P&Z) to allow a certain number of elected officials to sit on GCAC. Schmidt stated P&Z passed a resolution onto County Board to allow up to 20% of GCAC to consist of elected officials, with the rest of the members being citizens. The maximum number of elected officials, or staff, would be five. There is a provision that if a citizen member steps forward to be on GCAC, and the municipality feels they are appropriate, then the elected official would have to step down from GCAC. Of the 27 municipalities, there have been times when GCAC has been down to only 15 members. In order to keep membership up, get more ideas, and get more of the County represented, GCAC advised the County Board to allow some elected officials. Berndt stated the resolution was approved by both P&Z and County Board.

**SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATES:**

- a. **Public Involvement/Education Sub-Committee (PIES)** Berndt stated they have not met in a few months and asked those involved to meet for a few minutes after tonight’s meeting to set a date.
- b. **Continuous Assessment Subcommittee (CAS)**: McGinley stated they are working on two topics: revising the pesticide analysis recommendations and drafting a summary of what is in Portage County groundwater. CAS will bring their projects to GCAC when completed.
- c. **Groundwater Management Plan and Implementation Subcommittee (GMPIS)**: Schmidt stated Filtz informed him GMPIS is moving forward with getting members looking at the Groundwater Management Plan, strategies, and goals on how to advise the County Board on groundwater policies. Richard Filtz is the chair of GMPIS and anyone is invited to join.

**DISCUSSION: UNLIMITED TOPICS**

No discussion.

**MEMBER REPORTS:**

Town of Hull: Zimmerman asked if Schmidt received any calls regarding groundwater levels. Schmidt stated he has; the Town of Hull is concerned that the City of Stevens Point is drawing too much water out of their municipal wells and lowering groundwater. Zimmerman asked about the progress of the Stevens Point project of installing a well in the Boy Scout land along the Plover River. Schmidt stated the City will put a well there in the future; they placed a test well and had plenty of groundwater flow with minimal manganese and iron. Lemke stated the project has been bid out. In regard to drawdown levels, there is a faster recharge rate in that area than anywhere else. This location is on Plover Heights Road off State Highway 66, east of the airport.

Village of Whiting: Gilbert stated she missed the meeting where they spoke about wells. Schmidt stated the LPR workgroup spoke of water quality from the treatment plant. It is near drinking standards and good enough for mills to use for paper production rather than pulling groundwater from wells.

Town of New Hope: Ellingboe reported there have been a series of meetings regarding New Hope lakes through the Portage County Lakes Planning staff. The next meeting is September 29, 2009 at the Central Wisconsin Environmental Station and George Kraft will be speaking on groundwater levels and the effects of groundwater pumping on local lakes. A small amount of Eurasian Water Milfoil was found in Sunset Lake. They are also looking at overdevelopment issues around Rinehart Lake.

Village of Nelsonville: Walker reported they had a deliberation on agricultural irrigation wells and their effects. Groundwater is not an unlimited resource, a lot of wells are put in and they pump a lot of water out.

Town of Dewey: Meis reported when the US Highway 10 project took place, there were three quarries put in. They are waiting to see the effects these quarries have on wells. Some of the neighboring water has been cloudy and it is unknown whether it is from blasting or dewatering, it does clear up after a while.

**NEXT MEETING DATE:**

The next meeting date is Thursday, November 5, 2009, at 7:00 p.m. in Conference Room 5 of the County Annex.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion by Walker; seconded by McGinley to adjourn. Motion carried by voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jamie Phillis, Recording Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Richard Berndt, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



**PORTAGE COUNTY  
GROUNDWATER CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
CONFERENCE ROOM 5, COURTHOUSE ANNEX  
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2009 - 7:00 P.M.**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Rita Walkowicz, Town of Belmont; Dennis Meis, Town of Dewey; Tim Zimmerman, Town of Hull; Bill McKee, Town of Lanark; Richard Berndt, Town of Linwood; Sally Ellingboe, Town of New Hope; Fritz Aschauer, Town of Plover; Peter Mallek, Village of Junction City; James Walker, Village of Nelsonville; Paul McGinley, Village of Park Ridge; Christine Neidlein, Village of Park Ridge Alternate; Sarah Gilbert, Village of Whiting; and Joel Lemke, City of Stevens Point.

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Fred Copes, Town of Carson; and Mike Hinrichs, Village of Amherst.

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Delbert Anderson, Town of Alban; Dave Dombrowski, Town of Amherst; David Shantz, Town of Buena Vista; Mary Kiedrowski, Town of Grant; and Richard Filtz, Town of Stockton.

**STAFF PRESENT:** Ray Schmidt and Jamie Phillis.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Cindy Mews, Kelly Scharbarth, Sharon Jakusz, and Justin Hoerter - Leadership Portage County (LPC); Ken Schroeder - University Extension (UWEX); George Kraft, and Justin and Lynn Isherwood.

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Berndt.

**INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBER(S):** None.

**GROUNDWATER CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (GCAC) MEMBERS LISTING:**

<b>MUNICIPALITY</b>	<b>MEMBERS NAME</b>	<b>MUNICIPALITY</b>	<b>MEMBERS NAME</b>
<b>TOWNS:</b>		<b>TOWNS:</b>	
Alban	Delbert Anderson	Plover	Fritz Aschauer
<b>Almond</b>	<b>VACANT</b>	Sharon	VACANT
Amherst	Dave Dombrowski	Stockton	Richard Filtz
Belmont	Rita Walkowicz	Stockton Alternate	VACANT
Buena Vista	David Shantz	<b>VILLAGES:</b>	
Carson	Fred Copes	<b>Almond</b>	<b>VACANT</b>
Dewey	Dennis Meis	Amherst	Mike Hinrichs
<b>Eau Pleine</b>	<b>VACANT</b>	<b>Amherst Junction</b>	<b>VACANT</b>
Grant	Mary Kiedrowski	Junction City	Peter Mallek
Grant Alternate	Scott Provost	Nelsonville	James Walker
Hull	Tim Zimmerman	Park Ridge	Paul McGinley
Lanark	William McKee	Park Ridge Alternate	Christine Neidlein
Linwood	Richard Berndt	<b>Plover</b>	<b>VACANT</b>
New Hope	Sally Ellingboe	<b>Rosholt</b>	<b>VACANT</b>
New Hope Alternate	Cathy Derezinski	Whiting	Sarah Gilbert
<b>Pine Grove</b>	<b>VACANT</b>	<b>CITY OF STEVENS POINT</b>	Joel Lemke

**REVIEW/APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 3, 2009:** Schmidt made a correction to the spelling of Rinehart Lake. Motion by Zimmerman to approve the minutes with correction, seconded by McGinley. Motion carried.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** None.

**BERNDT READ THE PUBLIC NOTICE:** Members of the public who wish to address the Committee on specific agenda items must register their requests at this time with such comments subject to the reasonable control of the Committee Chair as set forth in Robert's Rules of Order.

Discussion: LPC Project

Schmidt explained the LPC members are taking water testing attitude surveys using parts of the Towns of Stockton and Buena Vista. A free nitrate test is also being offered. Six surveys have been returned and of those samples taken, four of the six were below the nitrate standard. Most of those sampled are upgradient from irrigated agriculture. Schmidt went through a summary of the survey answers. The Public Information Education Subcommittee (PIES) can use these results for education needs in these areas. It is anticipated to receive about 25 surveys and samples from each LPC member throughout the year.

Kelly Scharbarth, LPC member, stated she may have some difficulties collecting all the samples from her list since most of them are farmers. None of those she met with seemed too concerned with their groundwater. They may be aware there is something wrong with it, but it tastes and smells fine, so they think it is alright.

Schmidt will send the press release to the media again, maybe every month or so. Schmidt has received calls from people who want to participate in the survey and have their water sampled.

Presentation: Lakes, Streams and Pumping in Central Wisconsin (George Kraft)

George Kraft stated a few years ago he spoke to the Committee about low water levels. The Little Plover River (LPR) had already dried up a few times. Grants have been received from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to look at water levels more closely, because other lakes have dried up. Kraft's presentation focuses on what is causing these lakes, streams, and rivers to dry up; climate fluctuation or pumping?

Kraft stated there was a water debate in Wisconsin during the 1940's and 1950's where legislative records were compiled. There was a problem then with a lot of pumping directly out of lakes and streams for irrigation. In the 1940-50's it was much drier than today. There came a time when there was too much pumping directly from streams and drying them up. The Attorney General got involved and said that could not be done anymore. With technology, improvements, and the need for water, high capacity wells (HCW) were developed. Within a 10-year period there were 100's of HCW in the State and today there are approximately 3,000 HCW.

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) recently came out with a report listing Portage County as the number one county in terms of pumping groundwater. Dane County is number two, Waushara County three, and Adams County is four. The largest part is the irrigation, but there is also the localized industrial, some domestic, public, and livestock uses. Portage County wells pump approximately 43 billion gallons per year.

The LPR has dried up every year since 2005 in the summer and winter months. Long Lake and Stoltenberg Creek dried up, and Pickerel Lake water levels are down as well, but it is not all due to pumping. The growers adjacent to the LPR have now become its life support. During the summer periods they pump water into the LPR so the fish stay alive, but it is not a sustainable situation.

Schmidt asked what impact the residences spread out along the LPR have on the groundwater. Kraft replied it is miniscule, most domestic well use ends up going out a septic system and back into the groundwater. Lemke asked if the domestic use includes municipal water use. Kraft replied yes. Mallek asked the range of recharge from irrigated wells. Kraft replied USGS claims about 90% ends up in the atmosphere and 10% back to the aquifer. Justin Isherwood asked what the impact would be if treated water would be returned to an aquifer. Kraft replied it could essentially zero out the municipal impact on waterbodies.

McKee asked if the Legislature was considering regulating HCW. Kraft replied yes. McKee asked for clarification on the delivery system of a HCW. Kraft replied a HCW can deliver more than 70 gallons per minute. It does not matter how or when the water is coming out if that amount is used.

The Committee thanked George Kraft for his time.

Discussion: High Capacity Well Legislation Progress

Schmidt provided the Committee with some handouts regarding two different meetings held on the HCW Legislation. The October 1, 2009 meeting focused on regional water management. The last legislative package enacted into Statute required any HCW be at least 1,200 feet from outstanding or exceptional resource water, which has not been successful. At least a mile or two is required to see no impact from HCW on the surface waters (from depleting the groundwater). Legislators are looking at Groundwater Attention Areas and the different types of approaches. An area was recognized to be a Groundwater Attention Area, because not enough had happened to call it a Groundwater Management Area. In other words, the groundwater had not dropped 100 feet yet, which was the criteria for a Groundwater Management Area set in Statute. If some areas were to drop 100 feet, they would be completely out of water.

The October 7, 2009 meeting was specifically on HCW and the existing regulatory framework. The hydrogeological analysis of all HCW was also discussed. In the late 1990's, all municipal water suppliers were required to have Wellhead Protection Plans so they could manage their recharge areas and prevent pollution in those areas. Increasing the groundwater protection distance for HCW to 4,000 feet instead of 1,200 feet was also discussed because 1,200 feet does not fit all situations. One area may need one mile and another area may need two miles to prevent depletion. They feel they are giving most of what everyone wants, which is not the case. It is more about what the resource, well user, or the sustainable groundwater need. Sustainability is a concept the Legislature is struggling with.

The last Statute in 2005 stated all HCW will be regulated, but it also said all existing HCW were allowed to continue pumping for a 10 year period. This provided a time period (to study the issues), which we are five years into. Back before the 2005 Legislation was passed, they were only concentrating on the adverse environmental impact in the areas around Brown County and southeastern Wisconsin because the groundwater had been drastically impacted there. Now that they have dealt with those areas, they will be looking at other environmental impacts in Portage County such as the LPR situation.

Schmidt stated members of the Legislature were here a few weeks ago and it was pouring rain and the LPR was flowing. It was hard to explain how it would be dust on the bottom in a week, but they saw the picture. The farmers have been using this water for free and developed their agricultural process based on that, which means the water cannot just be taken away from them. The municipalities have placed their wells near the LPR thinking they could use all the water they wanted for free, but they are also helping deplete the aquifer. The public and the environment are getting what is leftover and end up paying the cost. The Legislature has to figure out how to balance the situation. Maybe everyone taking water out of the ground should pay for it one way or another.

McGinley asked if the Committee drafted a resolution, what would be the timing. Schmidt replied if a resolution was developed, and reviewed at the January Committee meeting, it may go to County Board in February.

Update: Well Abandonment Program

Schmidt stated the concept of Well Abandonment was brought to this Committee and received support. A presentation on the program will be taken to the Portage County Chapter of the Wisconsin Town's Association on November 16, 2009 for support. It could go to the Portage County Planning and Zoning Committee for a public hearing as early as November 30, 2009 to pass the Ordinance and adopt the program for Portage County.

The DNR is requiring the County to be responsible for the abandonment program in all areas, but the County has stated in their Ordinance those municipalities with their own Well Abandonment Ordinance, and all municipalities with public water supplies, will continue to take primary responsibility within their area as they already do. Portage County will basically take the unincorporated areas and any of the Villages with private wells that do not have Well Abandonment Ordinances. Another issue is a previous provision in the Ordinance that some County Board Supervisors did not agree with. The provision stated if there was a well contaminated above the drinking water standard the County could order it to be abandoned. The County was not planning on applying that provision to nitrate nitrogen, but legally the Ordinance provision did allow for Portage County to require the abandonment, so the provision was taken out. The County is going to let the DNR take control over any well deemed to need abandonment because it is above the health standard for any chemical, including nitrate.

McKee asked if there are any wells the County will deem to need abandonment. Schmidt replied the County will look at all of the wells that have been replaced to see if the old well was abandoned. Every old well is a potential for contamination; if they are not needed, they should be abandoned. In 2009, DNR started sending letters to everyone who has not reported a well being abandoned when it was replaced. The County will take the wells from 2008 back to when the records began, figuring there to be approximately 2,000 unabandoned wells. Schmidt has been in contact with some real estate agencies in the County and they are interested in helping with the program as they view properties.

McKee asked what the average cost would be for abandoning a residential well. Schmidt replied it depends on the type of well and the material used. A four or six inch drilled well would need bentonite chips and the cost for those could be \$100 or more depending on the depth and diameter. It is fairly reasonable and cheap insurance, to abandon the old well, because that will protect the new well. Aschauer stated it could get a bit more costly when making sure the well is clear of pumps and pipes. They need to come in with a rig and make sure the hole is clear to the bottom and then it can be abandoned. If things need to be cleared out, it can cost more money.

**SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATES:**

- a. **Public Involvement/Education Sub-Committee (PIES)** Walker stated they met at the end of the last Committee meeting and addressed the issue of bottled water, since people have the option to use bottled water instead of a filtration system if they have contaminated water. Questions were raised such as where does bottled water come from, who produces it, what products are sold locally, and is bottled water better than tap water. Wisconsin produces Bottled Drinking Water Laboratory Analysis Report annually since June 1997, which is available on the internet. Walker provided the Committee with the report from fiscal year 2008. The report focuses on 11 or 12 companies within the State that produce bottled water. The Legislature mandated that this report be done because there was so little control over what the consumer could expect from bottled water. Anyone could run water into a plastic bottle and market it because there were no standards. Currently, all of the bottled water tested for this report did meet drinking water standards. In regards to chemical leaching in plastic bottles, if the bottles are left in a heated location for long periods of time, then chemical leaching may occur. Placing water in a plastic bottle will not automatically lead to the leaching unless the bottles are put in microwaves routinely. PIES discussed the County website for groundwater being updated and developing a technique for keeping it up to date to educate the public.
- b. **Continuous Assessment Subcommittee (CAS)**: McGinley stated they are still working on two projects. One is updating the pesticide list. They are working with the State to get a refined list of the pesticides sold in the County and combining the lists. The other project is the State of Portage County Groundwater Report. They will try to have something ready by the next Committee meeting on these issues.
- c. **Groundwater Management Plan and Implementation Subcommittee (GMPIS)**: No report.

**DISCUSSION: UNLIMITED TOPICS**

Berndt stated he saw an article in the paper regarding the Wisconsin River being the dirtiest river in the State.

**MEMBER REPORTS:**

No reports.

**NEXT MEETING DATE:**

The next meeting date is Thursday, January 7, 2010, at 7:00 p.m. in Conference Room 5 of the County Annex.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion by Walker; seconded by McGinley to adjourn. Motion carried by voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jamie Phillis, Recording Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Richard Berndt, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date