

Protect Wisconsin's Drinking Water

Flowing beneath the ground we walk on is the water that sustains our farms, businesses, and tourism industries. This groundwater is also the main source of drinking water for most Wisconsinites. It goes without saying that the quality of that water is directly related to the health of Wisconsin citizens and our quality of life.

In large parts of Wisconsin, especially in the so-called 'karst' areas, the land above our freshwater is quite porous. When manure or industrial sludge is spread on that land, it can get into cracks and holes in the ground that act as direct tunnels to our drinking water. Drinking 'brown water' has already sickened Wisconsin citizens, causing stomach cramps, nausea, diarrhea, and chills. . In some communities in northeastern Wisconsin, unsafe levels of this pollution have been found in over 50% of the wells tested.

Families whose wells have been contaminated have incurred medical bills and lost wages while spending time securing safe water for their families and dealing with the illnesses. Adding insult to injury, those families then had to pay for the cost of drilling a new, deeper well with no guarantee that the well would not be contaminated by manure once again.

Wisconsin's regulations governing the land application of waste are among the weakest in the Midwest. While some industries use our land as a dumping ground, others are even importing industrial waste from other states. For the health of our citizens and the long-term sustainability of our industries, Wisconsin needs regulations that adequately protect all of our land and the groundwater beneath it from careless waste disposal practices.

Solution

To prevent the contamination of groundwater and drinking water in at-risk regions around the state, legislators must enact legislation that will:

- 1) Create a "Carbonate Bedrock Management Area" for Kewaunee, Door, Calumet, Manitowoc and Brown counties, in which the application of wastes to land is restricted or prohibited based on the risk of contamination to groundwater;
- 2) Create criteria for developing Management Areas for other karst regions where conditions call for it;
- 3) Enable counties or the Department of Natural Resources to map and classify all lands statewide upon which waste is applied based on the risk of groundwater contamination;
- 4) Strengthen the existing regulations covering the land application of industrial and municipal wastes around the state.

Results

Creating a special management area and strengthening environmental standards for waste spreading will:

- Provide the framework for landscape-specific pollution standards that protect groundwater supplies that could eventually be used in other areas of the state.
- Prevent dangerous public health problems and added expenses that result from contaminated wells.
- Help ensure that Wisconsin is no longer a dumping ground for other states' industrial and municipal waste.

**Let your legislators know you want to Protect Wisconsin's Drinking Water-
Join us for Conservation Lobby Day 2009 on Wednesday, February 25th!**

*For more information about **Conservation Lobby Day** or this issue, visit www.conservationvoters.org, or call (608) 661-0845 with questions or to receive a copy of the **Wisconsin Conservation Priorities 2009-2010** in the mail.*
