

**RESOLUTION
ROCK COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

BOARD OF HEALTH
INITIATED BY



RICK WIETERSEN
DRAFTED BY

BOARD OF HEALTH
SUBMITTED BY

APRIL 25, 2017
DATE DRAFTED

**Establishing a Workgroup to Study the High Nitrates Levels
In Rock County's Groundwater**

1 **WHEREAS**, the level of nitrates in Rock County's groundwater has increased over the past two decades
2 in private and public wells, with over 30% of county wells exceeding the drinking water nitrate health
3 advisory level of 10 mg/L; and,

4
5 **WHEREAS**, it is known that exposure to nitrates by pregnant women and infants can cause serious
6 health problems including methemoglobinemia (blue baby syndrome) and possible birth defects; and,

7
8 **WHEREAS**, the Public Health, Land Conservation, Planning and Development, and UW Extension
9 started meeting regarding this issue in the recent past and saw a need to expand the group to include the
10 following: Committee Chairs from the corresponding County Departments, a representative from the
11 Agricultural Service Sector, two at large County Board members and one Farmer currently working with
12 a research project overseen by UW-Discovery Farms; and,

13
14 **WHEREAS**, this group will be tasked with compiling existing well water nitrate data, evaluating nitrate
15 sources, and researching groundwater nitrate reduction initiatives and strategies being conducted in other
16 parts of Wisconsin and the United States; and,

17
18 **WHEREAS**, this group will function for a set period of time and make recommendations to the County
19 Board from the groups research findings and/or recommend the appointment of an Ad Hoc Committee
20 charged with the development of set of recommendations in a published management plan; and,

21
22 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Rock County Board of Supervisors in session this
23 11th day of May, 2017, does hereby approve the creation of the workgroup for the period
24 of May 2017 through December 2017 for the sole purpose of researching and developing
25 recommendations to decrease nitrates or reduce the rate of increase of nitrates entering Rock County's
26 groundwater system; and,

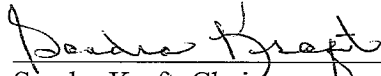
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28 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Chair of the Rock County Board of Supervisors is authorized to
29 appoint members to serve on the workgroup for the term of the project, and is authorized to appoint the
30 Chair of the workgroup. Membership of this workgroup shall include the following representatives: the
31 Chair of the Board of Health, the Chair of the Land Conservation Committee, the Chair of Planning &
32 Development Committee, two County Board members at large, Staff members from Public Health, Land
33 Conservation, Planning & Development, UW Extension, a representative from the agricultural service
34 sector and one farmer currently working with a research project overseen by UW-Discovery Farms.

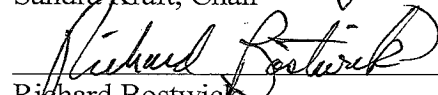
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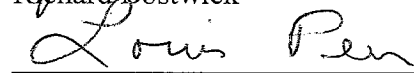
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Respectfully submitted,

BOARD OF HEALTH


Sandra Kraft, Chair

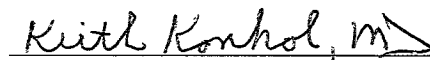

Richard Bostwick

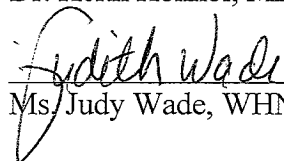

Louis Peer


Linda Garrett


Dr. Kaitlyn Meyers, DVM, MPH


Dr. Connie Winter, DDS

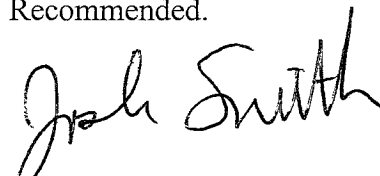

Dr. Keith Konkol, MD


Ms. Judy Wade, WHNP

Eric Gresens, R. PH

ADMINISTRATIVE NOTE:

Recommended.


Josh Smith
County Administrator

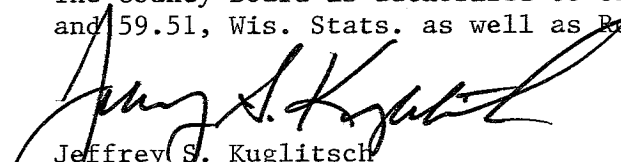
FISCAL NOTE:

Per County Board Rule IV-C, County Board Supervisors who are members of additional special, single purpose or ad hoc committees are eligible for per meeting allowances and mileage reimbursement. Citizen members of such committees shall be eligible for mileage reimbursement only.


Sherry Oja
Finance Director

LEGAL NOTE:

The County Board is authorized to take this action pursuant to sections 59.01 and 59.51, Wis. Stats. as well as Rule IV-C of the County Board Rules.


Jeffrey S. Kuglitsch
Corporation Counsel

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This resolution requests County Board authorization to establish a Groundwater Nitrate Work Group, to allow the County Board Chair to populate it, and appoint a Chair. The Public Health, Land Conservation, Planning and Development, and UW Extension is in the process of researching and collecting nitrate groundwater data in efforts to assist in developing recommendations for decreasing nitrates or reducing the rate of nitrate increase in the groundwater of Rock County. As part of this program development, a Work Group, composed of the Chair of the Board of Health, the Chair of the Land Conservation Committee, the Chair of Planning & Development Committee, two County Board members at large, Staff members from Public Health, Land Conservation, Planning & Development, UW Extension, a representative from the Agricultural Service Sector and one Farmer currently working with a research project overseen by UW-Discovery Farms is being proposed to act in an advisory capacity; will make recommendations to the County Board from the group's research findings; and may recommend the appointment of an Ad Hoc Committee charged with the development of set of groundwater nitrate recommendations in a published management plan.

As part of the Nitrate Work Group conceptual development, staff from Public Health, Land Conservation, Planning and Development, and UW-Extension have acted as an initial vision group with the following preliminary goals for a Nitrate Work Group and possible future Nitrate Ad Hoc Committee:

- Include groundwater protection in smart growth comprehensive plans.
- Encourage wise land-use decisions that will minimize impacts to groundwater.
- Utilize technology such as groundwater flow models for groundwater planning purposes.
- Protect municipal and/or private water supplies from contamination by adopting wellhead protection ordinances and developing source water protection plans.
- Encourage farmers to adopt nutrient management plans and less nutrient intensive cropping systems, particularly in areas that show impacts from fertilizers.
- Develop water conservation strategies and to minimize the impacts of expected increases in water use from population growth.
- Educate community members about the local groundwater resource, its use, current and potential problems, as well as solutions.
- Establish, maintain, and evaluate a data collection, monitoring and analysis program.
- Coordination and cooperation between state agencies, local government, non-profit organizations, and citizens.
- Fill data gaps in well testing programs.
- Develop small scale field project(s) in Rock County to test BMP implementation and impacts on groundwater quality.

