

February 13, 2013

**INVITATION FOR PUBLIC TO ATTEND OPEN HOUSE ON GROUNDWATER STUDY
IN WESTERN CHIPPEWA COUNTY**

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The Chippewa County Dept. of Land Conservation and Forest Management will host an informational meeting with the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey (WGNHS) and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to explain a five (5) year study that is being conducted to evaluate the impact of industrial sand mining and irrigated agriculture in western Chippewa County.

The open house and informational meeting will be held at the Bloomer Middle School on Tuesday evening, February 26, 2013. Informational displays will be open from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. A formal presentation will be provided by WGNHS and USGS research scientists from 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. with opportunities for questions. The public is welcome and encouraged to attend.

The project has been developed in response to citizen concerns about the possible cumulative impacts of new sand mines and irrigation on local groundwater and stream levels.

Project partners include Chippewa County and a diverse group of stakeholders, including several industrial sand mining companies, the Wisconsin Farmers Union, Trout Unlimited, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and local citizen representatives.

Project goals are to:

- Collect hydrogeologic data to characterize the existing groundwater flow system.
- Build a pair of soil-water and groundwater flow models to evaluate the impacts of current and future water use on the hydrologic system.
- Use the soil-water and groundwater model results to explain how groundwater aquifers and connected streams are expected to respond to stressors such as drought, changes in landscape topography, and increased pumping rates.
- Provide results to project stakeholders and the public on a regular basis through informational presentations and a final report.

“This study seeks to provide sound scientific information to support informed decision-making”, says Mike Parsen, hydrogeologist with the WGNHS. “The results will be of direct value to the public, mine operators, farmers, and local units of government.”

Results of the study will be shared as they become available on an annual basis, and are expected to benefit other areas of western Wisconsin with similar geology and sandstone deposits.

A full copy of the study proposal is available online at the Chippewa County website, as posted under the Dept. of Land Conservation & Forest Management: www.chippewa.co.wi.us/lcfm.

For additional information, contact Mike Parsen, hydrogeologist with the WGNHS at mjparsen@wisc.edu, (608) 262-9419, or Paul Juckem, hydrologist with the USGS at pfjuckem@usgs.gov, (608) 821-3845.