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PFAS in Wisconsin

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WISCONSIN DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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Overview / Executive Summary

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) continues to take a public health-centered approach to address PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) throughout Wisconsin.

During the second half of 2025, the DNR offered assistance to those who are impacted by PFAS and worked to understand how changes in the federal government would impact available resources. Ongoing work by the DNR included sampling for PFAS in drinking water; providing temporary, emergency water to private well owners with PFAS levels in their wells above health recommendations and working with public water systems towards implementation of and compliance with new federal standards.

Looking ahead, the DNR remains committed to monitoring state legislative actions, such as Senate Bills 127 and 128. The DNR also continues to collaborate with other states on learning opportunities to expand the understanding of PFAS and its impacts. Collaboration among levels of government is a dynamic process. Subscribe to the PFAS Contamination in Wisconsin GovDelivery list to receive updates about the DNR's work to address PFAS in Wisconsin.

State Updates And Rulemaking

Groundwater Coordinating Council Released Report To The Legislature

In September, the Groundwater Coordinating Council (GCC) shared its recommendations for protecting and preserving the state's vital groundwater resources in its 2025 annual report to the Wisconsin State Legislature. The GCC includes representatives from Wisconsin's state agencies, academic institutions and other stakeholder organizations who work collaboratively for groundwater management. One of the most pressing groundwater issues identified in the annual report was the continuous presence of PFAS in both public and private wells and their threat to public health and the environment. To address this issue, the GCC recommended updating standards under NR 809 and NR 140 and continued efforts to identify, monitor and research PFAS. More information about the GCC, the annual report and their recommendations is available on the DNR's Report to the Legislature webpage.

NR 140 Rulemaking To Establish Standards For PFAS In Groundwater

The DNR continued rulemaking to update NR 140 Groundwater Standards to incorporate recommendations from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services for six types of PFAS. Information is being gathered for the economic impact analysis of the draft rule. The Bureau of Drinking Water and Groundwater (DG) expects to release the draft economic impact analysis in early spring of 2026.

NR 809 Rulemaking To Update State Standards For PFAS In Drinking Water

The DNR is continuing through the rulemaking process to align Wisconsin's current standards for PFAS in drinking water with the EPA's drinking water standards. During the second half of 2025, the DNR accepted public comments on the economic impact analysis of this draft rule's implementation. DG staff reviewed all public comments submitted during the public comment period and incorporated this feedback into the final rule. In October, DG staff also held a public hearing on the proposed rule during which members of the public provided additional input on the draft rule. The final draft rule will be presented to the Natural Resources Board for approval in January 2026.

Funding Updates

Public Input Opportunities

In September, the Bureau of Community Financial Assistance (CFA) released the final intended use plans (IUP) for state fiscal year 2026 for the Safe Drinking Water Loan Program (SDWLP) and the Clean Water Fund Program (CWFP). Members of the public were able to review and provide input on both of these draft plans in late spring and early summer 2025. The CFA staff reviewed every comment and made changes to the draft plan, as appropriate, prior to finalization of the plan.

Funding from these programs is available to municipalities as subsidized loans for public drinking water system and infrastructure projects (i.e., SDWLP) or for publicly owned wastewater treatment and collection system infrastructure projects (i.e., CWFP). Each year, the DNR prepares these IUPs to identify how funding from these revolving funds may be used and to share how the intended funding aligns with federal requirements for these funds. More information about these loans, including responses to the public comments and project priority lists, is available on the DNR website.

Well Compensation Grant Program

In January, Gov. Evers announced that an additional $5 million of federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds were available to private well owners through the ARPA Well Compensation Grant and the ARPA Well Abandonment Grant programs. Eligible private well owners can use grant funding from these programs to address contamination, including PFAS, drill new wells, install treatment equipment or to fill and seal an unused well. Demand for financial assistance through these programs has been high since Gov. Evers used federal funding in 2022 to temporarily expand eligibility criteria. In the second half of 2025, the DNR awarded over $2.4 million in grants to private well owners to address contamination or to fill and seal a well.

Federal Funding for Emerging Contaminants

In the second half of 2025, the DNR awarded $849,294.23 to three schools, two mobile home parks and one community subdivision. The funding came from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Emerging Contaminants in Small or Disadvantaged Communities (EC-SDC) grant program.

This grant program provides funds for other-than-municipal community (OTM) and nonprofit non-transient, non-community (NN) water systems to address PFAS or manganese contamination. Projects funded by these grants typically include drilling new wells, connecting to existing public water systems or installing treatment to receive a safer water supply. EC-SDC funds have also supported the construction of pump houses, backup generators, and other infrastructure necessary to ensure reliable drinking water access. These types of projects have historically been ineligible for financial assistance through the DNR. Grants awarded during this time show that it costs an average of $142,000.00 to replace a PFAS-contaminated non-community well.

Other-than-municipal community systems are residential public water systems such as apartment complexes, subdivisions and mobile home parks. Non-transient, non-community systems are non-residential public water systems such as schools, day care centers and businesses. These small public water systems have historically been ineligible to receive financial assistance through the DNR.

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The DNR is expecting to award a total of over $3.4 million through the EC-SDC grant program once all applications are processed. The DNR expects to be opening the third grant cycle for this program in early 2026.

The DNR awarded a total of $3,062,160 from the Safe Drinking Water Loan Program's Emerging Contaminants funding to two municipalities, the Village of Pewaukee and the City of Medford. Of the total awarded, half of it was from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law in the form of principal forgiveness, which does not need to be repaid by the municipality. Additionally, the DNR received State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2026 applications from eight municipalities requesting nearly $44 million in funding for projects to address PFAS contamination. The SDWLP Emerging Contaminant funding is expected to be available to municipalities through at least SFY 2027.

The DNR awarded $684,268 from the Clean Water Fund Program's Emerging Contaminants funding to the City of Marinette to replace sanitary sewer and dewater in an area where samples tested above groundwater standards for PFAS. Of the total awarded, over 26% was from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law in the form of principal forgiveness. Additionally, the DNR received SFY 2026 applications from two municipalities requesting over $17 million in funding for projects to address PFAS contamination. The CWFP Emerging Contaminant funding is expected to be available to municipalities through at least SFY 2027.

Sampling

Statewide Surface Water Sampling

During the second half of 2025, the Bureau of Water Quality sampled four waterbodies around the town of Stella, near Rhinelander, for PFAS. Additionally, 12 sites were sampled in the lower Bay of Green Bay as well as Little Lake Butte des Morts. Lake Monona and Starkweather Creek in the Madison area were sampled seasonally to monitor the PFAS concentrations coming from the airport. Sample results are added to the DNR's PFAS Interactive Data Viewer as they become available.

Fish And Wildlife Consumption Advisories

Waterfowl Consumption Advisory Issued for the Bay of Green Bay

In September, the DNR and the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) issued a consumption advisory for ducks harvested on the bay of Green Bay. For lower Green Bay (i.e., from Longtail Point across to Point au Sabel and south to the mouth of the Fox River), the advisory recommends not eating any mallards harvested within this area. For the area from the city of Marinette across to Sturgeon Bay and south to Longtail Point, the advisory recommends eating no more than one meal per month for mallards and one meal per week for wood ducks harvested in this area.

Following wildlife consumption advisories will help prevent the consumption of PFAS-contaminated tissue, which can cause the chemicals to accumulate in the body. The DNR's Consumption Advisories and PFAS webpage has a complete list of PFAS-based consumption advisories in Wisconsin.

Fish And Deer Consumption Advisories Issued In Oneida County

In September, the DNR and the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) issued consumption advisories for fish and deer near the town of Stella. The advisory recommends not eating all fish species from the Moen Chain of Lakes, (including Moen Lake, Second Lake, Third Lake, Fourth Lake and Fifth Lake), Sunset Lake, Starks Creek (upstream to and including Starks Spring) and Snowden Lake. For deer, the advisory recommends not eating muscle (i.e., venison) from deer harvested within 5 miles of the town of Stella town hall more than once per month and to not eat liver from these deer.

Following fish and wildlife consumption advisories will help protect you from consuming PFAS-contaminated tissue, which can cause the chemicals to accumulate in the body. A complete list of fish consumption advisories can be found in the Choose Wisely booklet. More information on safe deer consumption can be found on the DNR's Safely Eating Venison webpage.

Site Specific Updates

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Support to Impacted Communities

The DNR provides significant financial support to communities impacted by PFAS. Between July and December, the DNR provided temporary emergency water to 1,776 residences in PFAS-impacted communities. For the months of July through November, the cost for PFAS temporary emergency water was $255,263.77. Invoices for December were not available as of the publication of this report and are expected to be approximately $60,000. Of the residences receiving temporary, emergency water, 1,616 are in the town of Campbell.

In addition to financial support, the DNR provides technical assistance to staff at public water systems, community officials in PFAS-impacted communities, businesses and private well drillers. The DNR's expertise helps these entities to best assist their constituents and customers as they work to reduce human exposure to PFAS through drinking water. For example, the DNR can help assess a situation's unique circumstances, such as the location's hydrology and water chemistry, and develop steps to minimize exposure that consider those circumstances.

PFAS Contamination in Marinette and Peshtigo

The DNR continued to review JCI/Tyco's actions to investigate and mitigate risks from PFAS contamination in the Marinette and Peshtigo area.

JCI/Tyco's current remedial actions include a groundwater extraction and treatment system (GETS) and surface water treatment for two ditches draining surface water into Green Bay. The DNR reviewed and responded to JCI/Tyco's GETS Progress Report #5, Ditch B Report #12 and Ditch A Report #13. These remedial actions have lowered the concentration of PFAS in surface water, but the concentrations were still over regulatory standards on many occasions. JCI/Tyco submitted a report in November to document its work to expand the GETS. The goal of the GETS expansion is to further limit the migration of PFAS contamination in the groundwater and surface water. The effectiveness will be evaluated in future Progress Reports.

JCI/Tyco also continues to install deep private drinking water wells to replace private wells in an area of the groundwater contaminant plume designated the Potable Wells Sampling Area (PSWA). As of December 2025, JCI/Tyco had installed 139 deep wells and has agreements to complete seven more.

PFAS Contamination in the Town of Campbell

The town of Campbell completed its first municipal well in November. This well draws water from the Mt. Simon aquifer, which is separated from the upper contaminated aquifer by a layer of rock. The town is continuing to work with staff from UW-Madison, U.S. Geological Survey and Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey to monitor the impacts of this well on the aquifer and model groundwater flow. An island-wide advisory for private wells continues to allow the DNR to provide temporary bottled water to 1,596 homes. More information about ongoing efforts to address PFAS in the Town of Campbell is available on the Town of Campbell website.

PFAS Contamination in Dane County

The Dane County Regional Airport (DCRA) and Wisconsin Air National Guard (Air National Guard) continue to work to understand and address PFAS at the airport. The Air National Guard has completed their first phase of site investigation field work and is working on a community involvement plan. The first phase site investigation has been submitted to the DNR. The next stage of investigation is not anticipated to begin until approximately Fiscal Year (FY) 2030. DCRA has conducted approximately six to eight months of a pilot remedial action for groundwater at Darwin Road and the DNR anticipates data from these efforts to be submitted for review. More information about PFAS and the airport is available on DCRA's website.

Town of Stella Updates

Additional Private Well Sampling For PFAS Offered In Oneida County

The DNR continues to offer private well PFAS sampling to full-time and seasonal residents of Oneida County. This sampling is offered to a targeted number of private drinking water wells in the townships of Crescent, Newbold, Pelican, Sugar Camp and Pine Lake. Those who choose to participate in this sampling effort will receive their private well's sample results and any recommendations from the DNR.

This project began in July 2025 and will run through early 2027. Eligibility letters are being sent to homeowners in batches to accommodate laboratory capacity. Therefore, not all residences will receive notification of sampling availability at the same time. Well owners can submit questions to DNRDGOneidaCountyPFAS@wisconsin.gov or 888-626-0605.

In spring 2026, the DNR will compile the results of this sampling effort and make a summary available on the DNR's PFAS Contamination in the Town of Stella and Oneida County webpage. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provided the funding to allow for this additional private well sampling.

Surface Water Sampling

The Bureau of Water Quality sampled four new surface water sites near the town of Stella during 2025. These sampling results have been combined with the results from previous sampling efforts to provide an expanded understanding of PFAS in surface waters around the town of Stella. All of these results have been posted on the DNR's PFAS Interactive Data Viewer.

Fish And Wildlife Consumption Advisories

The DNR issued PFAS-related consumption advisories for deer harvested within 5-miles of the town of Stella town hall and fish harvested in the Moen Chain of Lakes, Sunset Lake, Starks Creek and Snowden Lake. The DNR's Consumption Advisories and PFAS webpage has a complete list of PFAS-based consumption advisories in Wisconsin.

Town of Stella Public Meeting

In October, the DNR was invited to attend a town of Stella public meeting to share information about PFAS in drinking water and soil with town residents and surrounding community members. Staff from the bureaus of Drinking Water and Groundwater, Water Quality and Remediation and Redevelopment attended the town meeting.

Federal Coordination and Superfund

The DNR continues to assist the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) with their Superfund Site Assessment-related activities near Town of Stella.

The DNR recently completed a Preliminary Assessment (PA) and a site inspection (SI) and is in the process of completing an Expanded Site Inspection (ESI) on behalf of the EPA. These actions were conducted to support the EPA's evaluation of whether the PFAS contamination in the town of Stella qualifies for listing as a Superfund site on the National Priorities List (NPL). The DNR takes these steps when a site may meet the criteria to be included on the NPL and the DNR may not have sufficient resources available to ensure that the contamination is adequately investigated and remediated. If the site becomes a Superfund site, EPA is likely to search for and may pursue potentially responsible parties as part of the Superfund process. The DNR also continues to share information and coordinate with the EPA regarding PFAS contamination in the town of Stella.

The PA, SI and ESI are early steps in the overall Superfund site listing process. Next steps, following completion of the ESI, include development of a Hazard Ranking System score to determine if the site is eligible, based on the overall site risk, for listing on the NPL. The final decision on whether the site qualifies for the NPL and will be added to the federal Superfund Remedial program will be made by the DNR and EPA. The entire process of listing a site takes several years.