

Water for the Future

Several County Land and Water Conservation Departments, Public Health Departments and County Board Supervisors from Adams, Juneau, Marquette, Portage, Waushara, and Wood Counties as well as Representatives from UW Madison Extension have recently joined together to form the Central Sands Groundwater County Collaborative (CSGCC). This collaboration was formed to meet the present and future needs for safe, high quality, reliable and sustainable drinking water due to our region being uniquely susceptible to nitrate contamination in our ground water because of our sandy soils.

CSGCC representatives have been working toward establishing a plan of action to assure safe drinking water for residents of and visitors to our communities. Goals and strategies of the collaborative include the following:

- 1. Understand current groundwater conditions by developing a sampling strategy to collect baseline water quality information across the Counties in the Central Sands Region. This information will be used to identify areas with elevated nitrate levels. In areas considered "hot spots", further analysis will be conducted to evaluate likely sources of nitrate contamination.**
- 2. Gain a uniform understanding of methods to prevent nitrogen contamination in groundwater based on information from previous studies conducted in the central sands and similar settings.**
- 3. Understand where areas most vulnerable to groundwater contamination exist to guide the development and use of ordinances, practices, and other preventative responses for land use.**
- 4. Develop a unified regional outreach strategy to provide partisan-free education about groundwater conservation and water quality safety to the general public.**
- 5. Create a model structure for regional collaboration on groundwater management that can be applied statewide.**

While the CSGCC is in its very early developmental stages, County Officials and partnering organizations hope to collaborate through collective research, data management, education, and community outreach to address the current and emerging human and environmental health challenges of groundwater management in this region. To accomplish these ends, CSGCC has reached out to our local Representatives, Senators and Legislators for financial support as participating counties alone are unable to completely fund this project. When funding is made available, it is envisioned that additional organizations will be invited to participate and outreach to the public will be sought for insight and comment. Should you have any questions in the meantime or like updates, please do not hesitate to contact your local Land Conservation, Public Health Department or UW Extension offices.