Citizens Water Group
serving Central Sands Region

Meeting Minutes
November 16, 2026, 2:00 PM, Riverblock Auditorium Room 206

1.) The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bill Leichtnam at 2:00 pm.
2.) Public Comments: Bruce Dimick referenced environmental educational opportunities. Chairman Leichtnam will present educational information on the importance of water testing to the RapidsResponse Group in January 6th at 6:00 pm at McMillan Library.
3.) Motion to approve October 19th minutes: Buttke/Hovendick
4.) Correspondence: Chair Leichtnam made CWG members aware of:
-a CSGCC meeting to be held at the Hancock Ag Research Station on 12/7 at 10 am.
-Shane Wucherphennig (Wood County) and Tyler Kunze (Portage County) will be presenting on nitrate related county issues.
-Kayse Beckstrom, Clean Wisconsin Local Partnership Manager, approached Chair Leichtnam about 2027 policy proposals and action items. A request was made for CWG support as Clean Wisconsin lobbies the Wisconsin State Legislature.
5.) CWG membership, by consensus approved the following:
   a) Planning Group, Tim Hovendick and Linda Casper presented a three-page proposal for Winter Farmers Markets along with other community events. A draft of a marketing 3 X 5 card to be distributed to the public. This card contains a QR code that leads to the website and information on water testing along with donation options. A plea was made for support for the Wood County Health Department to utilize their social media page to promote the need for community volunteers.
   b) Volunteers were confirmed for Wisconsin Rapids Winter Farmers' Market at the Moravian Church on 1/23/2027 and the Marshfield Winter Farmers' Market on 2/27/2027. Pending is confirmation of local plumbers who will participate.
   c) Chair Leichtnam will contact 71st Assemblyman, Vinnie Miresse for a future CWG presentation date
   d) Water testing discount coupon proposal is on hold.

"Water Quality Resolution" language will be refined at the December 2nd CEED meeting and presented at the December 15th Wood County Board meeting
6) CWG Water Warriors will be discussed at a future meeting
7) No future agenda items were mentioned
8) Meeting adjourned at 3:37 PM
Present at the meeting: Bill Leichtnam, Bill Clendenning, Russ Perlock, Linda Casper, Wayne Schulz, Tim Hovendick, Bruce Demick, Tom Buttke, Susan Ettner
Virtually: Lance Pliml, Ben Jeffrey
Respectfully submitted by Susan Ettner on November 19, 2026

Wood County
WISCONSIN

LAND AND WATER
CONSERVATION
DEPARTMENT

# CWG Nov. 16, '26 Meeting

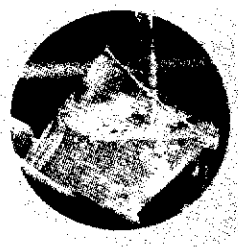
1. Bill Leichtnam
2. Bill Cloudenning
3. Russ Perlock
4. Linda Casper
5. Wayne [illegible] WCB #1
6. Tim Hovendick WCB #5
7. Brian [illegible]
8. Tom Bialka
9. Susie Ethner
10.
11.
12.
13.
14.

VIRTUAL

1. Lance Pliml
2. Ben Jeffrey
3.

River Block, 111 W Jackson Street • Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin 54495• Telephone (715) 421-8475 • Fax (715) 421-8579

clean wisconsin



# NITRATE WATCH®

IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA

Help monitor nitrate contamination levels in your drinking water and local waterways with a free test kit from *Clean Wisconsin* and the *Izaak Walton League of America*

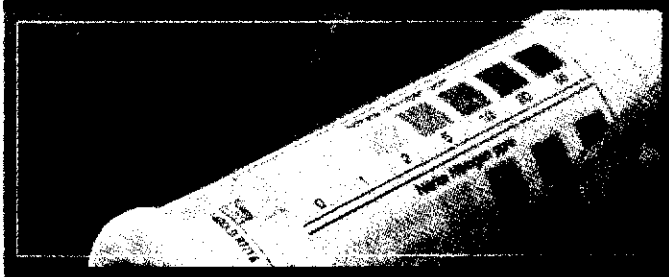
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Nitrate Watch is a crowd-sourced community science project that equips volunteers and partner organizations with free nitrate test strips to monitor their water, share their results, and advocate for solutions. Participants can monitor their drinking water from private wells or water from local lakes and rivers. After testing your water, participants enter their data into an online database, supporting our push for stronger water quality standards, ensuring clean water for every Wisconsinite.

## CLEAN WATER HUB

The Clean Water Hub is a collaborative tool for tracking water quality in local streams, lakes, and drinking water. Share your local nitrate results to help address contamination across the state.

Be sure to enter Clean Wisconsin as your organization when you submit your results.



*Your participation can make a real difference! Request your free nitrate test kit today:*

CLEANWISCONSIN.ORG/NITRATEWATCH

## NITRATE POLLUTION

$NO_3^-$

Nitrate is a form of nitrogen—a vital element for all living things and in a farm-heavy state like Wisconsin, it's commonly added to fields through fertilizer and manure to boost crop growth. But too much nitrogen leads to problems. Excess nitrate easily leaches into groundwater, especially in areas with sandy soils or cracked bedrock that allow water to flow quickly underground—without filtering out pollution.

## HOW TO TEST YOUR WATER

1. SELECT SOURCE
2. DIP
3. COMPARE

Learn to test your water in three easy steps. Request a free nitrate test kit by visiting the website link above.

## Nitrates in Drinking Water

When nitrates contaminate drinking water sources, it can cause significant health impacts, resulting in up to an **estimated $80 million in healthcare costs every year in Wisconsin.** Exposure to high levels of nitrates in drinking water has been linked to various health risks. These include increased risk of:

Colorectal cancer, Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, Thyroid disease

Blue Baby Syndrome: reduced oxygen in infant blood, which may lead to serious illness and potentially death

Birth Defects: Increased risk of spinal cord, brain, and skull malformations in newborns

## Nitrates in Surface Water



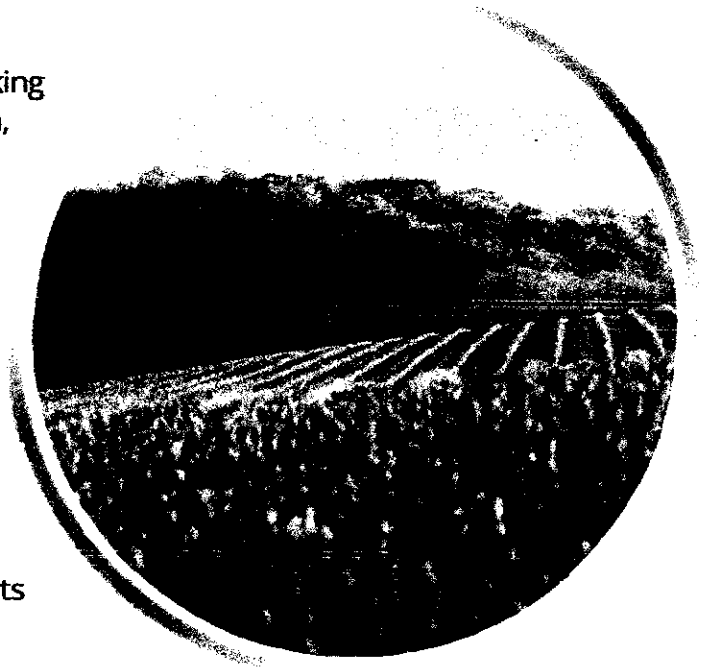
Nitrates contribute to the occurrence and toxicity of algal blooms in Wisconsin lakes that harm aquatic life and impair recreation.

Harmful algal blooms can cause health complications like liver disease, abdominal pain, headache, sore throat, nausea, diarrhea, pneumonia and hepatitis.

Excess nitrates can reduce water quality by increasing algae growth rates, which can then harm fish and aquatic life by decreasing the oxygen levels in the water.

## Our Advocacy

- ☑ Expand eligibility and increase funding for drinking water testing, contaminated well compensation, and county conservation staffing.
- ☑ Increase funding and resources to promote farming practices that reduce nitrate pollution.
- ☑ Advance statewide source-water protection efforts to protect public water systems from nitrate contamination.
- ☑ Expand statewide surface water sampling efforts to identify areas most impacted by nitrate contamination.



Link to "Nitrate Watch" webpage

wisconsin

*Learn more about actions we are taking and ways you can help!*

cleanwisconsin.org/nitrate

<https://www.cleanwisconsin.org/monitor-water-contamination-with-nitrate-watch/>