

CRANES

Capital Region Advocacy Network for Environmental Sustainability

On behalf of its member organizations and individuals, advocating collaboratively for the environment of the South Central Wisconsin region (eight counties: Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Green, Iowa, Jefferson, Rock and Sauk) toward a high quality of life; an ecologically sustainable and just culture; and, the celebration of the beauty of this place, both natural and built.

VISION

The Capital area's environment, including water, land, and air resources, will be conserved or restored to ensure the region's quality of life and the beauty of this special place, for all who live or visit here, now and in the future.

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

*Earth/Art® Resources
Friends of Cherokee Marsh
Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy
League of Women Voters - Dane County
Madison Audubon Society
Sierra Club - Four Lakes Group
W. Dane Coalition for Smart Growth & Environment
West Waubesa Preservation Coalition*

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6 September 2012

City of Madison Water Utility Board

c/o Tom Heikkenen, staff
Bruce Mayer, Board Secretary

ATTN: Madeline B. Gotkowitz, Board President
Lauren Cnare
P. Mike DePue
Sue Ellingson
Dan Melton
Larry D. Nelson
Doug Voegeli

119 E. Olin Ave.
Madison, WI 53713

Dear President Gotkowitz and Water Utility Board members:

The *Capital Region Advocacy Network for Environmental Sustainability* (CRANES), requests further consideration of a response from Madison Water Utility (MWU) general manager Tom Heikkenen to a query from *Midwest Environmental Justice Organization* (MEJO), in support of which CRANES wrote to the MWU utility board (please see the three attached letters from March 2012).

Mr. Heikkenen's 1 March 2012 letter to MEJO seems to assume that a new mapping and infiltration study is first required. Actually, a dye study was done in the late 1990s. County employees report that it established a rapid hydrological transmission from the western side Lake View Hill (near the former Graedel quarry, off Mandrake Road) to Warner Park. Some of Warner Park lies within the wellhead protection zone of Well No. 7. County employees also report that the dye study results were conveyed to a UW department for archiving.

Given MWU's responsibility for protecting municipal wells, we request that Mr. Heikkenen use public resources to locate the dye study at the UW and then consult as necessary with relevant experts to determine if additional study is needed, sharing the results of these effort with the public. If additional research is indicated, such as a new mapping and infiltration study that takes into consideration wellhead protection for Wells 7 and 13, we request that MWU budget for such a study in FY13. We do not think these basic potable water quality protection responsibilities should be shifted to the public or to other non-City institutions.

Construction of a replacement City water tower on Lake View Hill in the county park will require engineering studies, which perhaps could also be informed by a new mapping and infiltration study.

Mr. Heikkenen's points about the closed well and relocated pumping station are interesting, but perhaps off point. There is a 1989 WDNR letter to the County public works department asking them to abandon this well, taking steps to assure there is no possibility of the well acting as a vertical channel for surface contaminants to enter the aquifer; there is also documentation that the entire 180 foot well was sealed with bentonite (please see attached). Mr. Heikkenen writes that the well has been abandoned, but it is not clear from his letter if this was done in a way that meets present day standards or continues to prevent vertical contamination. Indeed, there have been recent reports that this abandoned well is constantly being monitored, by video cameras or other measures, for groundwater protection reasons, as part of Homeland Security efforts.

We think MWU needs to ascertain if the abandoned well remains a potential passage for conveyance of vertical contamination to the groundwater supply either directly, or indirectly—yet quite quickly—via the cave complex. Such contaminants could thus pollute groundwater pumped for the water tower, or travel to the wellhead protection zones for Well No. 7 and Well No. 13. Rapid conveyance of pesticides via a route that is not exposed to sunlight means these pollutants could make their way to deep aquifers and persist, as has been found in recent studies (not to mention other normally surface pollutants, such as viruses).

Additionally, there are underground service tunnels and water/heating pipes connecting the nearby municipal water tower, outbuildings (garage, nurse's annex) and the sanitarium; possibly these pipes also connect to the former well. Each of these structures provides another potential means for conveyance of surface pollution to groundwater.

Last, we request that Mr. Heikkenen report to the public on the results of MWU's dialogue with City and County Parks personnel about pesticide applications on parkland within MWU's wellhead protection zones. Additionally, since the City is host to several state-owned institutions with large park-like properties, such as the Mendota Mental Health Institute grounds (open to the public) and the Central Wisconsin Center environs (adjacent to a community garden complex, and frequently used by the public), we suggest that this dialogue about pesticide applications be extended to relevant personnel for these properties as well, to determine if there is a potential threat to municipal wellhead protection.

Thank you for this additional opportunity to communicate our concerns. We remain grateful for your continued work to protect the safety of our drinking water supply.

Sincerely, yours



Gary Werner
President, CRANES 2010-12 Board of Directors

cc: Madison Water Utility staff: A Larson, J DeMorett, G Gawenda
City of Madison Alders: D18 A Weier, D12 S Rhodes-Conway
Midwest Environmental Justice Organization: - M Powell; J Powell