

Good afternoon, my name is Charles Horn and I am a resident of Fennimore Township in Rural Grant County. While not representing any of these organizations in an official capacity, I am a member of Ducks Unlimited, Trout Unlimited, Badger Fly-fishers, Pheasants Forever, The Grant County Outdoor Sport Alliance, the Bloomington Sportsmen's Club and a founding member of Castle Rock Watershed Committee.

I am a retired DNR Conservation Warden and spent most of my 40-year career in southwest Wisconsin. Part of my duties were to enforce water quality and water pollution laws, and I believe this was one of the most important part of my duties, as a discharge that kills off all the fish in a stream does a heck of a lot more damage than the person that catches and keeps one or two extra trout. Wisconsin had a strong reputation for being one of the leaders in environmental protection, including clean water. Unfortunately, this reputation has been diminished in recent years, with the changes in environmental laws, and the lack of DNR staff to adequately oversee the program. As an environmental enforcement officer, I have witnessed first-hand the devastation caused by intentional and unintentional pollutant discharges to our ground and surface water. Some of these spills have resulted in wiping out entire populations of fish and other aquatic life for several miles. Recently, in February of 2016, a corporate farm just up the road from my residence, lost between 100,000 and 500,000 gallons of liquid manure which flowed across my property and eventually into Castle Rock Creek, a world renown trout stream. This incident killed all trout in a significant portion of the stream of which the DNR holds a public access easement, and to this date, few fishermen are utilizing it compared to other sections of the stream and other streams in the area. Trout fishing is one of the activities that makes Fennimore and Southwest Wisconsin a destination location for visitors. The damage caused by the incident not only affected the fish and the fishers who pursue them, but the local businesses which rely on these visitors to support their livelihood. This particular stream has had a lot of habitat work done by the DNR and also a citizen watershed committee, which helped provide over a quarter million dollars in funding for streambank protection projects. This one incident destroyed all the hard work and efforts put into this stream over the years.

There are other issues with our water supply as well. I have lived in my house for over 30 years and during that time, my nitrate levels rose from 3 ppm to 20 parts per million, which is twice the level considered to be safe. I have had to install a reverse osmosis water filtration system to make the water safe to drink. Incidentally, this was done entirely at my own expense, as there is no funding or grant monies available to rural residents suffering from similar situations.

I am also concerned that poor water quality may affect other health aspects as well. My late wife was diagnosed with brain cancer in 2013 and died two years later. There was no family history of brain cancer. Additionally, within a five-mile radius of my house, two other people were diagnosed and later succumbed to brain cancer and several other folks were afflicted with other cancers. Again, these people aren't related so there wasn't a genetic issue. When the frequency of these diseases is this high in a relatively small geographic area, one has to consider potential common causes including groundwater contamination.

What can be done about this? I have always believed that unless you provide possible solutions to a concern, you are just adding to the problem when complaining about it. Therefore, I offer the following suggestions for your consideration;

- 1) A moratorium on new Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations- We have all heard of the manure contaminated wells in NE and now SW Wisconsin. We shouldn't continue to add more potential problems to the landscape until we figure out how to effectively prevent discharges to ground and surface water. Barring this, we should at least establish more stringent site requirements for new manure storage pits. A permit was recently granted in Liberty Township for a huge pit on top of a sink-hole. This is an accident waiting to happen and defies logic and common sense. This affects the local economy and tax base as well, as several residents chose to put their properties up for sale rather than put up with the odor and high potential for drinking water contamination.
- 2) Extend spreading restrictions to all liquid manure spreading-it's not just the permitted operations that are contributing to the problem. Spreading on frozen ground or snow should never be allowed. Immediate incorporation into the soil should be required.
- 3) Require bonding of existing facilities to pay for clean-up. Taxpayers shouldn't have to bear this cost.
- 4) Create a funding source to provide assistance to residences with well contamination issues. Restore the right to clean water.
- 5) Provide adequate staffing to regulatory agencies. Laws which require periodic inspection of sites to help detect potential problems are worthless if there isn't the manpower to conduct these inspections.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak and to recognize and address our water quality issues.