

# PFAS Overview – Town of Stella & Surrounding Areas

## Background

- PFAS contamination identified in the Town of Stella, WI.
  - DNR coordinating a separate meeting with Moen Lake homeowners.
  - Expanded monitoring now includes multiple Oneida County townships.
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## DNR – Drinking Water & Groundwater (Mark P.)

- **Initial Sampling**
    - First sample: July 2022.
    - October 2022: 20 additional wells tested → 18 exceeded DHS recommendations.
  - **Expanded Sampling**
    - 3-mile radius around Stella and part of Sunset Lake.
    - Ongoing effort with DNR & US EPA in **Crescent, Newbold, Pelican, Pine Lake, Sugar Camp** (similar land use).
    - Homeowners in expanded areas will receive letters from DNR.
  - **Well Testing Results** (as of June 20, 2025)
    - 241 wells tested (in/outside Stella).
    - 88 above DHS guidelines ( $\geq 20$  ppt).
    - Feb 19, 2025: Revised advisories → 14 additional wells.
    - Current status:
      - 85 wells: health advisories.
      - 39 wells: below DHS recommendations but still PFAS detected.
      - 114 wells: non-detects.
  - **Key Notes**
    - Shallower wells show more risk due to PFAS characteristics.
  - **Resources for Well Owners**
    - DNR Well Recommendations.
    - **Well Compensation Grant Program:**
      - 29 awards issued: 25 replacement wells, 4 treatment systems.
      - Treatment options: Reverse osmosis, Ion exchange, Granulated activated charcoal (most common in Stella).
      - 11 wells showed significant PFAS reduction, 3 required additional secondary treatment.
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## DNR – Waste Program (Fred Hegeman)

- PFAS linked to industrial sludge applied from paper mills.
  - **Legacy contamination** – occurred before PFAS regulations/testing.
  - Interim sludge management strategy developed for municipalities.
  - Ongoing learning about facility emissions and PFAS sources.
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## EPA

- Determining site eligibility and responsible parties.
  - In Fall 2025 and early 2026, will collect environmental samples in addition to those already collected.
  - Formal designation determination expected by **2027**.
  - Long process, can take years, not months
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## DNR – Remediation

- **Sept 26, 2025:** DNR issued 2 responsibility letters.
  - Documentation available on **BRRTS website** (includes EPA site inspection report).
  - Cleanup follows **NR 700 process** (practical remediation steps).
  - **Landowners, farmers, and residents will NOT be pursued** for PFAS contamination.
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## DHS – Health & PFAS Overview

- **Health Effects:**
    - Elevated cholesterol.
    - Decreased birth weights.
    - Pregnancy high blood pressure.
    - Some compounds linked to liver damage, reduced vaccine immune response.
    - Some PFAS classified as carcinogens.
    - PFOA and PFOS are most studied.
  - PFAS are synthetic – not naturally occurring.
  - **Regulatory Actions**
    - Standards developed for 6 compounds (20 ppt PFOA/PFOS).
    - Updated health advisory levels → 4 ppt.
    - Hazard index approach explained.
    - Groundwater health guideline = 4 ppt.
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## Fish & Deer Advisories

- **Fish:** Moen Chain, Snowden Lake, Sunset Lake, Starks Creek.
  - **Deer:** Do not eat deer liver; limit muscle meat to 1 meal/month within 5-mile radius.
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## Blood Testing (ATSDR Guidance)

- **Benefits:** Compares to national levels, recognition of possible effects, reassurance.
  - **Limitations:** Cannot predict outcomes, expensive, different labs give different results.
  - **DHS Position:** Not recommended at state level; best used in large studies.
  - **Tools:**
    - **Blood Level Estimation Tool** (links groundwater → blood level estimates).
    - **Clinical Management Tool** for providers.
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## Reducing PFAS Exposure

- **Garden:** Avoid using contaminated water for produce.
  - **Recreate safely:** Limit ingestion of water, not absorbed easily through skin.
  - **Home:** Frequent cleaning/dusting.
  - **Diet:** Limit fish/game from advisory areas.
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## UW–Madison (Amy) Research

- 10 years of PFAS biomonitoring in rural WI.
  - Proposal to NIH for Stella-area study (pending funding).
  - Study details:
    - Free PFAS blood and environmental testing (water, dust, air, produce, eggs).
    - Non-targeted PFAS also tested.
    - Testing repeated every 2 years.
    - Outcomes: PFAS effects on lipids/cholesterol (lipidomics).
    - Participants compensated, results confidential.
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## Community Q&A Highlights

- **Study Enrollment:** Sign-up at public meeting.
- **Lake Remediation:** No current methods proven; still developing.

- **Urinalysis in study?** Not included but possible future addition.
- **Blood Testing by Health Dept?** Not feasible; rely on research studies.
- **Who can join study?** All Stella + adjacent townships; whole households welcome.
- **Spreading Moratorium?** Not required by law currently.
- **Crop Testing (potatoes/cranberries)?** DATCP jurisdiction; limited bandwidth.
- **Moen Chain surface water:** Chosen due to groundwater flow direction.
- **Testing cost (private wells)?** ~\$350–\$400.
- **Root cause of Stella contamination?** Linked to Ahlstrom & Wausau Paper (responsible party letters issued).
- **PFAS in food chain?** Deer, fish, produce uptake confirmed; more studies needed.
- **Swimming risk?** Low (PFAS not absorbed through skin). Main concern: ingestion.
- **Future testing?** Depends on EPA funding; Stella + 5 townships included.
- **Funding:** \$125M state PFAS trust fund not yet released. Advocacy encouraged.
- **Long-term outlook:** Decades (similar to Superfund sites).
- **Fish Guidelines:** “Do not eat” level now at 40 ppb (down from 800 ppb historically).