



MARATHON COUNTY GROUNDWATER PLAN FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is a Groundwater Plan?

A groundwater plan identifies the condition of groundwater resources, concerns and considerations for future management of groundwater quality and quantity, and strategies that should be pursued for future management.

Why do we need a Groundwater Plan?

Groundwater is the major source of all water consumed in Marathon County. Understanding the condition and quantity of our groundwater resources, and identifying concerns and strategies to address those concerns, is critical to maintaining quality of life and economic well-being for all of Marathon County. For these reasons, many other counties in our region of the state are taking action to understand and protect this invaluable resource as well.

What is included in the Groundwater Plan Update?

- Sample collection and testing of up to 1,000 private wells.
- Gathering of existing data from municipal water sources.
- Collaborating with the Wisconsin DNR on additional sampling.
- Community outreach and engagement to identify groundwater concerns, strategies for protecting it, and policies that may be considered.
- Development of actions and strategies the region and stakeholders should pursue to protect groundwater into the future.

Will sampling for this effort be mandatory?

No, all testing will be voluntary and only conducted with the landowner's consent. Landowner eligibility will be based on the sampling approach, but if they do not wish to participate in the study by testing their well, they will not be required to do so.

Who will do the testing?

UWSP Water and Environmental Analysis Laboratory (WEAL) and the Marathon County Health Department will be responsible for processing the well water tests. The testing is being funded by Marathon County. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources will also assist with testing in atrazine prohibition areas.

How will my data from well testing be used?

Marathon County will only be summarizing well data trends at a county or regional level. Landowners who opt to have their well tested will need to sign an agreement acknowledging their data will be summarized within the plan, but individual data records are subject to Wisconsin public records law requests.

What will well sampling test for?

At minimum, all samples would be tested for nitrates, dissolved minerals, atrazine and possibly select forms of bacteria. Further, sampling for atrazine in our atrazine prohibition areas will be conducted.

Will wells be tested for PFAs?

Per and polyfluoroalkyl substances (known as PFAs) are not being tested for in this groundwater plan update. Currently, the ability to test private wells for PFAs on a broad scale remains cost prohibitive.

If you are interested in testing a well for PFAs, Northern Lakes Laboratories (715-478-2777) and the Wisconsin State Lab of Hygiene (608-224-6203) are resources to obtain kits and more specific analysis costs.

Why should I have my well tested?

The [CDC](#) recommends checking the mechanical status of a well¹ every spring and testing the water at least annually. The [DNR recommends](#) testing be performed if there is a change in appearance, odor, or taste of your water. According to the [National Groundwater Association](#), testing should be done more frequently under special circumstances, such as a newborn living in the household or family members being diagnosed with certain gastrointestinal illnesses. Owners should also consider potential environmental factors, such as nearby septic system failures or fertilizer applications when evaluating the frequency of testing their water.

How do contaminants get in my water?

Naturally occurring minerals and chemicals, such as arsenic and uranium, can contaminate groundwater, according to the [EPA](#). In agricultural areas, groundwater can become contaminated by livestock and feeding operations, as well as by the application of fertilizers, pesticides, and biosolids from municipal or industrial waste treatment facilities. In industrial and urban areas, volatile organic compounds (VOCs) such as gasoline or solvents, may seep into groundwater. Sewer overflows and malfunctioning water treatment systems can also release contaminants into groundwater.

If I don't want my well tested through the Groundwater Study, what other options are available? OR What if my well was not selected for testing, and I want it tested?

The Marathon County Health Department is State certified to conduct testing for nitrates and coliform/E. coli bacteria. A listing of other Labs certified in bacterial and chemical testing may be found at <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/DrinkingWater/laboratories.html>

AgSource – 715-898-1402
Marathon County Health Department Laboratory- 715-261-1908
U.S. Water, LLC – 715-842-2215
UW Stevens Point WEAL- (715) 346-4490

Wisconsin State Lab of Hygiene offers additional water testing information and locations for testing <https://www.slh.wisc.edu/environmental/water/>

What happens if a landowner gets test results indicating there is a problem with their water?

Marathon County staff and Groundwater Workgroup members would work with landowners to connect them with resources from state and federal programs (whether that is a funding or technical assistance) to treat or repair their wells. Currently, there are a few programs available to landowners to mitigate or repair well water issues, but first they need the well testing data to identify if an issue exists.

How do I get more information?

We encourage interested stakeholders to reach out to Marathon County's Conservation, Planning, & Zoning Department at 715-261-6046 or by emailing groundwater@co.marathon.wi.us. A full FAQ is available at: <https://www.marathoncounty.gov/projects-planning/groundwater-quality>.

¹ Mechanical status means, checking the well visually to make sure the "well cap is tight on the well casing, the well conduit is seated firmly in the cap, and the well casing does not show damage. Additional information on well construction can be found at: https://www3.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/watershed/Documents/wiwellwater101_ver2.pdf.



Mercury Reduction Program

Protecting public health and our environment through mercury education, collection, and reduction programs.

Mercury is a metal found in a liquid state at room temperature. Mercury appears as a silvery liquid that is most well-known for its use in thermometers. Mercury is a **neurotoxin** in humans that affects the **brain, spinal cord, kidneys, and liver**. Young children and women who are or could become pregnant are most at risk. Mercury poisoning can result from exposure to water contaminated with mercury, inhalation of mercury vapors, or from ingesting mercury.

Take Mercury Down a Notch!

1

Be aware of the Effects of mercury poisoning

2

Check your home for any of the products noted in the table

3

Dispose mercury-containing products in a safe manner

4

Educate your friends and family about mercury

Protect yourself and others!
Wrap up mercury-containing items in a sealed plastic container or double bag materials in sealed sandwich

Product	Description	What to Do
Thermometer	Silver liquid in tube	Bring to a Thermometer Drop Off Location (see below)
Alkaline Batteries	Bought before 1990 (check expiration Date)	Acceptable to dispose of in the trash
Thermostat	A non-electric dial-type model for regulation of temperature	Take to the Marathon County Solid Waste Department for safe disposal. You will need to make an appointment at: (715) 446-3101 Extension 100 Typically, residents are able to dispose of these materials without fee, but businesses may need to pay a fee for disposal.
Fluorescent Lights	A long or curved light bulb in the shape of a tube	
Mercurochrome	An outdated antiseptic for cuts and scrapes	
Certain Maze Toys	Older versions of maze-type toys may contain mercury	
Light up or Noisemaking Shoes	Produced between 1991 and 1994 these shoes could contain mercury	
Chemistry Sets	Certain chemistry sets could contain mercury	
Vials/Jars of Mercury	Small containers of mercury that could have been used for ceremonial purposes, as jewelry, or for display	

Thermometer Drop Off Locations

Marathon County Health Department – 1000 Lake View Drive, Wausau (715) 261-1900
 Wausau Fire Department – 606 Thomas Street, Wausau: (715) 261-7900
 Rothschild Municipal Center – 211 Grand Avenue, Rothschild: (715) 359-3660
 Rib Mountain Fire Department – 5901 Hummingbird Road, Wausau: (715) 355-6763
 Schofield Municipal Center – 200 Park Street, Schofield: (715) 359-5230
 Kronenwetter Municipal Center – 1582 Kronenwetter Drive, Mosinee: (715) 693-4200
 Mosinee City Hall – 225 Main Street, Mosinee: (715) 693-2275



To view online, scan the QR code above

Did You Know?
Wisconsin waterways have fish consumption advisories due to mercury contamination