



DATE: November 17, 2023

TO: Marathon County Town Officials

FROM: Laurie Miskimins, Conservation, Planning, & Zoning Director

SUBJECT: Outreach on Water Testing Related to the Groundwater Plan Update

Background

Groundwater is the major source of all water consumed in Marathon County. The condition of our groundwater has implications for agriculture, recreation, businesses, private and municipal well owners, homeowners, and many others. To protect and appropriately manage this vital resource, Marathon County is updating its Groundwater Plan. This involves assessing groundwater quality and quantity within the county to better understand the current condition of our water, identify any potential concerns, and provide data-informed guidance on strategies and policies that may be pursued to manage our groundwater into the future.

This work is in alignment with objective 6.3 of the Marathon County Strategic Plan to “*protect and enhance the quantity and quality of potable groundwater and potable surface water supplies,*” with a stated outcome of updating the Marathon County Groundwater Plan by the end of 2024. To that end, the Marathon County Board of Supervisors approved funding to update the Marathon County Groundwater Plan to support getting 1000 free well samples across the county to inform the baseline on the condition of our groundwater.

Well Water Sampling in Early 2024

Starting in late November 2023, we will be reaching out to a cross-section of residents with private wells in the western, southern, and northern portions of Marathon County. This cross-section has been identified in effort to get representation across soils, geology, and land-use in the County, and also, the residents have a confirmed well-construction report. This is the initial list we have to start with, but residents not on the list, can still contact our office about being added to the waiting list for free testing.

They will be offered the opportunity to receive a **free well water testing analysis in February of 2024**. The free tests include analysis for nitrates, arsenic, lead, manganese, triazine-type pesticides, and in some cases bacteria too.

How Can You Assist?

Share this information at your next meeting and forward this information on to any residents that may be interested in getting their wells tested. If you are personally interested in getting your wells tested, please let us know. You can view a full list of our FAQ's on our website at <https://www.marathoncounty.gov/projects-planning/groundwater-quality>. After we receive the well test results in the spring of 2024, there may be a need for additional outreach (either for more well tests or to discuss results) in certain areas of the County. We look forward to partnering with you to set up these meetings and encourage attendance from your residents.

Questions

We ask that you call or email us at 715-261-6006 or groundwater@co.marathon.wi.us.