



# JEFFERSON COUNTY

## LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT

311 S Center Ave, C1050  
Jefferson, WI 53549  
[www.jeffersoncountywi.gov](http://www.jeffersoncountywi.gov)

Phone: (920) 674-7110  
Fax: (920) 674-7114

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Patricia Cicero, Director, Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department, 920-674-7121 or [patriciac@jeffersoncountywi.gov](mailto:patriciac@jeffersoncountywi.gov)

### **Public Meeting on Jefferson County Groundwater Quality Study**

The Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department, in collaboration with the Health Department and Planning and Zoning Department, worked with the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point Center for Watershed Science and Education on a groundwater study for Jefferson County. The study involved collecting data on a variety of important well water concerns to better understand the quality of the groundwater throughout the County and use the results to educate landowners about their drinking water.

Specific wells were chosen to represent the variety of Jefferson County soils, geology, land use, and other factors that can influence water quality. There were 828 samples collected and analyzed for the following constituents: nitrate-nitrogen, chloride, pH, hardness, conductivity, alkalinity, arsenic, lead, copper, calcium, magnesium, sodium, potassium, sulfate, phosphorus, zinc, iron, and manganese. Some tests are important to health (arsenic, nitrate, and manganese), while others indicate if there will be scale, taste, color, or odor issues.

Jefferson County is hosting a presentation on the groundwater study results on Monday, April 7 at the UW-Extension building, 864 Collins Road, Jefferson. The presentation on the study results will start at 6:00 pm and will be given by Kevin Masarik, Director of the Center for Watershed Science and Education. Attendees will learn about groundwater basics, well construction, test results (including those with human health implications), groundwater quality in Jefferson County, and improving your water quality. Jefferson County staff will also be on hand to explain the next steps related to education and outreach on groundwater issues.

Doors will open at 5:30 pm so that the public can obtain educational handouts and information on well water testing. At the event, citizens can also have their private well water screened for nitrate. To take advantage of this screening, samples should be collected within 24 hours of being screened and the following procedure should be used: use a clean glass or plastic bottle/jar, take sample from the main drinking water source, run the faucet for 5-10 minutes on cold at full flow before collecting a sample, do not touch the bottle/jar to the faucet.

Arsenic is naturally occurring in the soil and bedrock of some groundwater systems. Long-term exposure to arsenic in drinking water of greater than 0.01 mg/l can increase the likelihood of

certain cancers. Seven percent of the wells that were tested in this study exceeded the health standard. Wells in two towns – Ixonia and Watertown – had higher arsenic levels than the Jefferson County average, though averages for both towns were still below the health standard: 0.0084 mg/l in the Town of Ixonia and 0.0078 mg/l in the Town of Watertown. Given these results, citizens who reside in the Towns of Ixonia and Watertown can sign up for free arsenic testing of their private wells. Citizens in those towns should complete the following survey to have a staff from the Jefferson County Health Department contact you: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/wellwater-arsenicJC>. Those contacted by the Health Department will either pick up their free arsenic tests at the April 7<sup>th</sup> presentation or at the Health Department offices.

The final report of the groundwater study, link to an interactive online dashboard of results, and other information on the groundwater study can be obtained by visiting Jefferson County's website (<https://www.jeffersoncountywi.gov/>) and entering "groundwater" into the search box in the upper right corner. For more information on the groundwater study, please contact Patricia Cicero, Director of the Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department, at 920-674-7121 or [patriciac@jeffersoncountywi.gov](mailto:patriciac@jeffersoncountywi.gov).

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