

Central Wisconsin's Disappearing Lakes & Rivers

Central Sands Water Action Coalition (CSWAC)

<http://centralsandswater.org/>



Fig. 1 Pier to nowhere on Hancock's drying Pine Lake



Fig. 2 Long Lake – then (inset) and now

Wisconsin's groundwater is a critical natural resource. Wisconsin's lakes, wetlands, rivers, and streams depend on groundwater. They are fed by the water stored in aquifers – the groundwater. Without groundwater there would be no lakes, streams, or wetlands. No fish, waterfowl, or shorebirds.

Groundwater pumping has exploded in central Wisconsin in the last 20 years. In 2013 statewide, 13,000 high capacity wells pumped 250 billion gallons of water. About 1/3 of that water was pumped in Portage, Adams, and Waushara Counties (1st, 2nd, and 3rd in the state)¹. In Wood, Waupaca and Marquette counties, pumping is also steadily increasing. Every year more high capacity wells are drilled as the number of irrigated acres increases. At the same time lakes and streams are drying up and forests are being destroyed.

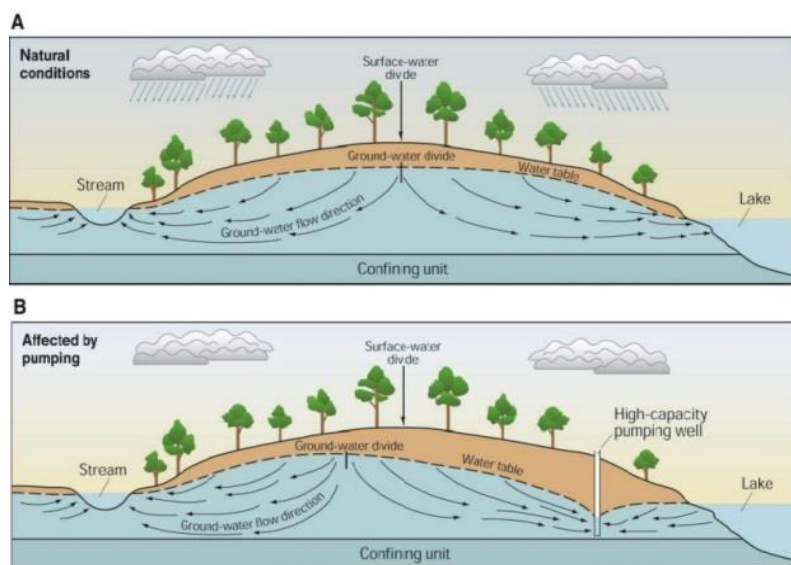


Fig. 3 Lakes, streams, and wetlands are directly connected to, fed by, and dependent on groundwater. When groundwater is pumped by high capacity wells, water is diverted and lake levels, aquifer levels, wetlands, and stream flows go down.

When streams are deprived of groundwater, flow is reduced changing water volumes, temperatures, and fish communities.

source: http://wi.water.usgs.gov/glpf/cn_pmp_divides.html

¹<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/WaterUse/documents/WithdrawalReportDetail.pdf>

Central Sands Waterfront Property Owners Need Fair and Balanced Groundwater Management Laws

Why Should You Be Concerned?

1. 50% of all high-capacity wells in WI are located in the 6 Central Sands counties and more wells are going in monthly.
2. Lakes and streams are declining and disappearing along with the plants and animals that depend on them.
3. Property values will decline for both lakefront and adjacent properties. Counties, towns, and schools all lose when property values decrease.
4. Waterfront homeowners will have little recourse to protect their property rights.

A new groundwater management law is expected soon (fall 2015). Our lawmakers are hearing a lot from those who benefit from groundwater pumping. They need to hear from those of us who take on all the risk when it is over tapped.

Fair and balanced legislation would include the following:

1. Help citizens and natural resources that are currently being impacted by over-pumping in the Central Sands;
2. Prevent problems caused by over-pumping of groundwater in the future;
3. Develop groundwater management and permitting that is based on science;
4. Maintain existing protections for waters and property owners.

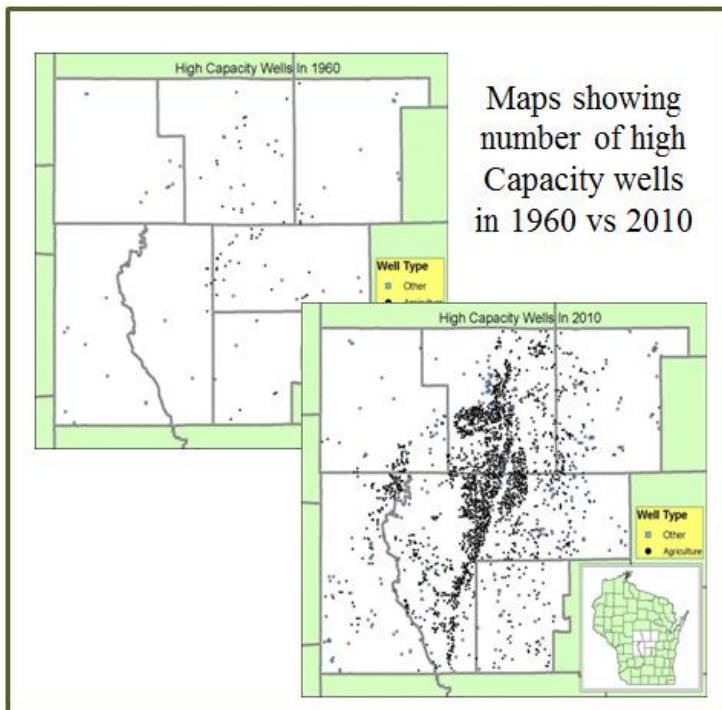


Fig .4 High capacity wells in the Central Sands have exploded in the last 20 years

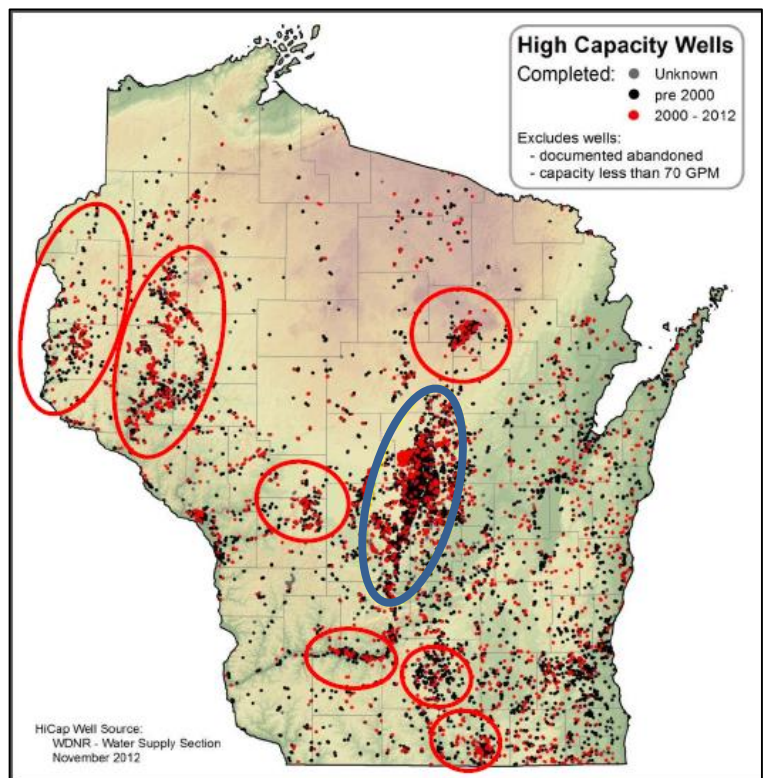


Fig. 5 High Capacity wells in WI as of 2012. Red circles denote "hot spots"; Blue circle identifies the Central Sands region