



Studies Show Trees Are Drying Lakes and Streams?

Have you see the Wisconsin Potato & Vegetable Growers Association (WPVGA) television commercial that claims “studies show trees use more water that irrigated vegetables”?

It turns out to not be the case. Of 13 “studies” cited by WPVGA, only one was done in Wisconsin and most were not done in the USA. Few considered crops at all, and when they did they were usually for crops not grown here. The study trees often do not grow in Wisconsin either. Study climates were frequently tropical or arid.

The single study done in Wisconsin was only for potatoes and did not even consider trees. This study only examined water use during the cropping season and ignored evaporation from off-season cover crops, bare soils, and crop residues. One cited study was done in Spain comparing water use for irrigated citrus trees with irrigated melons and artichokes. (Have you seen many orange trees growing in our woods?) Tree studies done in South Africa and Australia were on eucalyptus and blue gums. (Have you seen many koala bears living in these trees in our woods?)

None of the WPVGA cited studies even looked at field corn, the number one irrigated crop, 40% of which goes for ethanol and 20% for high fructose corn syrup which many people feel is unhealthy.

If trees use more water than irrigated vegetables, as the WPVGA commercial claims, why does the Little Plover River run dry in several places during the irrigation season? Why is it that Long Lake, Huron Lake, Pleasant Lake in western Waushara County and many other lakes and streams in central Wisconsin continue to experience declining water levels? This should not happen, according to the WPVGA commercial, because their members are removing forest lands and planting irrigated vegetables that use less water than trees!

The Wisconsin Potato & Vegetable Growers Association seems to have cherry picked studies from different parts of the world with climate, soils, trees and crops completely different from what we have in central Wisconsin. These do not appear to accurately represent central Wisconsin conditions.

The Central Sands Water Action Coalition supports the use of groundwater for irrigation farming purposes provided it maintains healthy stream flows and lake levels. We draw the line when so many of our lakes and streams are being so severely impacted.

Please follow this link to look at the list of the studies and an analysis of their content: <http://wiswaterguy.com/2015/12/23/do-trees-really-use-more-water-than-irrigated-crops/>

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