

Next Step to Identify Source of Groundwater Contamination in SE Wisconsin Underway

Written by Clean Wisconsin
Tuesday, 26 May 2015 18:14

<http://newiproggressive.com/images/stories/S5/lake-michigan-shore-s5.jpg>



Researchers visited area to collect well water samples, analysis to follow.

CALEDONIA, WI - Throughout the last week, Clean Wisconsin staff and a team of researchers from Duke University and Ohio State University collected well water samples from private residences in southeastern Wisconsin. These samples are part of the ongoing effort to determine why many residents here can't drink their water by identifying the source of groundwater contamination.

"For too long, families and children in this area have been unable to safely drink the water that runs from their faucets," says Tyson Cook, director of science and research for Clean Wisconsin. "With the analyses of these samples, we hope to move toward a better understanding of what's making their water undrinkable."

Heading the team from Duke University was Dr. Avner Vengosh, one of the nation's leading experts on isotope testing, an advanced chemical analysis that looks at individual chemical components and ratios to provide information on the original source. On-the-ground operations were led by Jennie Harkness, a Duke University Ph.D. candidate.

"Southeastern Wisconsin has a significant problem with its groundwater and drinking water," says Katie Nekola, general counsel, Clean Wisconsin. "With Dr. Vengosh's analysis, we hope to hone in on the source so we can start to address the root cause of the water contamination."

This sampling is a more detailed look at water chemistry that follows up on Clean Wisconsin's November 2014 report, [Don't Drink the Water](#), which found unsafe, elevated levels of molybdenum in the area's groundwater. For that report, Clean Wisconsin reviewed molybdenum test results from nearly 1,000 private drinking wells and correlated where unsafe levels were found with possible sources of the contamination. Following the last week's sample collection, a complete water chemistry analysis of each well will be done to provide a better understanding of potential contamination sources.

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Along with Dr. Vengosh's analysis, researchers from Ohio State University will examine the age of the groundwater to look into how long the contamination has existed, and whether it may be the result of human activity or natural sources.

"Unsafe drinking water is a grave concern for residents here, and we are grateful to have the assistance of world-class researchers to dig deeper into problem," says Cook. "Everyone deserves clean, safe water, and this work is critical to making that a reality for the residents of southeastern Wisconsin."

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Clean Wisconsin, an environmental advocacy organization, protects Wisconsin's clean water and air and advocates for clean energy by being an effective voice in the state legislature and by holding elected officials and polluters accountable. On behalf of its 10,000 members, supporters and its coalition partners,

Clean Wisconsin protects the special places that make Wisconsin such a wonderful place to live, work and play. 608-251-7020, www.cleanwisconsin.org.