

Resolution on a Central Sands High Capacity Well Permit Moratorium

Whereas, in Wisconsin, High Capacity wells are wells that have the capacity to pump over 100,000 gallons of groundwater daily; and

Whereas, the Department of Natural Resources has the responsibility to issue permits for high capacity wells; and

Whereas, the Central Sands area of Wisconsin, formerly glacial Lake Wisconsin, is defined as the area in parts of Adams, Marathon, Marquette, Portage, Shawano, Waupaca, Waushara and Wood counties where groundwater is stored in highly permeable sand and gravel deposits more than fifty feet deep; and

Whereas, the Central Sands region is characterized by over 800 miles of trout streams and over 300 lakes with most of the streams and lakes highly dependent on groundwater as their primary source of water.

Whereas, permitted High Capacity wells in the Central Sands area have increased to over 2000 wells in recent years, mainly as a result of agricultural irrigation; and

Whereas, the pumping of groundwater from High Capacity wells in the Central Sands has lowered water levels in over fifty lakes by at least a half foot to over five feet in more than fifty lakes;

Whereas, the pumping of groundwater from High Capacity wells in the Central Sands has also reduced flow in over twenty-five streams to the point that fish populations have been reduced.

Whereas, this impact on Central Sands lakes, streams and wetlands has had a serious adverse impact on fish and wildlife habitat.

Now Therefore Be It Resolved, that the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation at its 2016 Annual Meeting held on April 8th and 9th in Wisconsin Rapids, requests that the Wisconsin Legislature enact legislation placing a moratorium on further High Capacity well permits in the Central Sands aquifer until such time as legally enforceable regulations are adopted to restore and preserve lake levels and stream flows in the Central Sands region of Wisconsin.

Submitted by the WWF Environment Committee by:

Jim Swanson, Chair