

State of Wisconsin
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
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Tony Evers, Governor
Preston D. Cole, Secretary
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May 27, 2021

Mr. Edward Blazel
Assembly Chief Clerk
17 West Main St
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Mr. Michael Queensland
Senate Chief Clerk
PO Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707

The Honorable Howard Marklein
Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Finance
Room 316 East, State Capitol
PO Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707

The Honorable Mark Born
Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Finance
Room 308 East, State Capitol
PO Box 8952
Madison, WI 53708

Dear Chief Clerks and Honorable Joint Finance Co-Chairs:

Wis. Stat. § 281.34 (7m) directs the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to conduct a study of the hydrology of Pleasant Lake, Plainfield Lake, and Long Lake, and any other navigable stream or navigable lake within a designated study area in the Central Sands Region. The purpose of the study is to determine whether existing and potential groundwater withdrawals are causing or are likely to cause a significant reduction of the rate of flow or water level below average seasonal levels.

The department has completed a report that describes the study the department conducted pursuant to this statutory directive. The report and technical appendices can be found at <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/> search "Central Sands Lakes Study" or <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Wells/HighCap/CSLStudy.html>. The three-year, \$887,000 multidisciplinary study involved collaboration of over 30 state and federal scientists and policy experts. The DNR's outreach included a series of public presentations, a public hearing and public comment period.

The study found that water levels in two of the three study lakes are significantly impacted by groundwater withdrawals and the third lake has the potential to become significantly impacted. In light of these findings, the DNR considered whether specific special measures defined under Wis. Stat. § 281.34(7m)(c) should be recommended to the Legislature. While the DNR does not recommend specific special measures at this time, the DNR does recommend that the Legislature consider the formation of an overarching management framework across the entire Central Sands Region. A water use district, supported with technical assistance from the DNR, could encourage and assist landowners to find collaborative solutions to water quantity issues in the entire Central Sands Region.

We welcome any questions on the study findings or our recommendations and encourage you to contact Adam Freihofer (adam.freihofer@wisconsin.gov, 608-514-6058).

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

Todd Ambros

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for Preston D. Cole
Secretary

cc: Senator Robert Cowles, Chair, Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy
Representative Joel Kitchens, Chair, Assembly Committee on Environment