



**SIERRA CLUB**  
JOHN MUIR CHAPTER

NEWS RELEASE

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## Water for All, Now and Into the Future

STEVENS POINT — Today citizens, local officials and scientists gathered at Iverson park in Stevens Point to highlight the environmental and public health impacts of Wisconsin's failure to adequately and fairly our water resources. Stevens Point is at the epicenter of the water withdrawals; this region has experienced the periodic drying of the Little Plover River, the disappearance of Long Lake, the death of the fisheries at Wolf and Pickerel Lakes and loss of recreational assets like the Wolf Lake beach. [The Sierra Club-John Muir Chapter released white paper \*Water for All, Now and Into the Future\*, which looks at water supply concerns across Wisconsin.](#)

"In Central Wisconsin, no issue has brought us together or divided us more than water issues have. The quality of our future depends on finding a reasonable balance across all sectors and purposes for water," said Portage County Executive Patty Dreier.

"Groundwater pumping always lowers water levels in aquifers, lakes, and wetlands and as well as the flow of streams. It's a matter of degree - a little pumping causes a little lowering, a lot of pumping causes a lot," stated George Kraft, Professor of Water Resources and Director of the Center for Watershed Science and Education with the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point.

"Reasonable people might tolerate one or two or three inches of water lowering on their favorite lake, but when we start talking one or two or three or four feet, well, that's another matter," Professor Kraft continued, "in the Central Sands, large amounts of concentrated pumping have substantially impacted many lakes and streams. These impacts were already predicted by scientists 50 and 60 years ago, who advocated that groundwater pumping be managed considering how profound we want those impacts to be. We still haven't gotten to groundwater pumping management in our state."

"It is All Connected!" said Francie Rowe, Professor of Biology at Edgewood College. "Too often we approach water quantity and water quality as two separate problems. They are different, but linked. Water drawdown of lakes, streams, and wetlands is not just about water loss, it is also about what comes next: polluted drinking water, habitat loss, disruption of fisheries, and significant economic loss to local communities," she explained.

"In fact, we are moving backwards," said Bill Davis of the Sierra Club. "Despite warnings from scientists, the Republican led legislature passed a bill relating to high capacity wells that will exacerbate the problem here and in the rest of the state," concluded Davis.

The Sierra Club-John Muir Chapter will release two additional white papers in the next two months related to water concerns like factory farms and energy infrastructure impacts on water. Two reports have been released, one in March and one last week about other drinking water concerns, including lead pipes. All reports can be found online at [sierraclub.org/Wisconsin](http://sierraclub.org/Wisconsin).

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*Founded in 1892 by John Muir, the Sierra Club is America's oldest, largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization. The Sierra Club's mission is to explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth. The Sierra Club – John Muir Chapter is made up of 15,000 members and supporters working to promote clean energy and protect water resources in Wisconsin.*