



**SIERRA
CLUB**
FOUNDED 1892

NEWS RELEASE

Sierra Club John Muir Chapter
222 South Hamilton St, Madison, WI 53703
(608) 256-0565 <http://wisconsin.sierraclub.org>

For Immediate Release: January 23, 2012

Contact: Shahla M. Werner, Sierra Club - Chapter Director (608) 256-0565

Bob Van Hoesen, Save Copper Creek, (608) 735-4117

Sierra Club Awards Save Copper Creek Funds, Supports Citizens' Efforts to Block High Capacity Well that Threatens Local Community

Madison, WI – The Sierra Club – John Muir Chapter formally announced today that they are awarding \$11,000 to support the efforts of Crawford County citizens group Save Copper Creek to block a proposed high-capacity well near the Town of Utica, less than 550 feet of a Class 1 trout stream. The owner of the proposed well, Dr. Darrell Long of Ohio, claimed in his application that the well would be used for “emergency” purposes, although his websites and public statements suggested that he intended to sell extracted water for profit. Funds will be used to support legal action and the efforts to educate the media and the public about the potential negative impacts of this project.

The Sierra Club appreciates Save Copper Creek’s tireless grassroots organizing work that has brought attention to this critical issue. Since their formation, Save Copper Creek has gathered over 1,100 petition signatures, garnered extensive media attention, questioned the Environmental Assessment’s ability to protect natural resources, and highlighted the fact that Dr. Long’s property is not zoned for a commercial high-capacity well with the town of Utica. Save Copper Creek’s campaign has brought together a diverse, bipartisan set of stakeholders, from farmers to environmentalists to anglers to local landowners. Although there has been momentum for their cause, it is apparent that the regulatory climate in Wisconsin is becoming increasingly difficult, and this has compounded their need for outside support.

“Although we’ve been pleased to see amendments that remove presumptive approvals for high capacity wells and restore newspaper notices for proposed developments, we are still concerned about the impact of proposals like the Polluters Over People bill (AB 421 / SB 326) to pressure agencies to rush permits and cut the public out of the process on decisions affecting their local natural resources. This is why we felt the need to provide direct support for Save Copper Creek’s critical work.” said Shahla Werner, Director, Sierra Club – John Muir Chapter.

“We have recently learned that Dr. Long intends to proceed with drilling a test well in the near future, and that is why we were so glad to receive the timely support from the Sierra Club to continue building our campaign to Save Copper Creek,” said Group Leader Bob Van Hoesen.

The Sierra Club looks forward to working with Save Copper Creek in the future as we continue to highlight how gutting our state’s water and air protections does nothing to create jobs and everything to jeopardize public participation and the precious local natural resources on which local communities depend. For more information on this issue, contact savecoppercreek@gmail.com or Bob Van Hoesen, 18641 Gays View Road, Gays Mills, WI 54631, or at 735-4117.

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; to practice and promote the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources; to educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment; and to use all lawful means to carry out those objectives. 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.

###