



Press Release

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Sweet Water Hosts Water Policy Forum on Water Quality Trading, Wisconsin's Phosphorus Regulations, and Adaptive Management

(Milwaukee, WI) A Water Policy Forum will be hosted today, November 14, by Sweet Water and its partners. The forum will address three regulatory tools: water quality trading, Wisconsin's phosphorus standards, and the watershed adaptive management option associated to those standards. It will be held from 1:00 to 4:00 pm at the Great Lakes WATER Institute located at 600 E. Greenfield Avenue in Milwaukee.

"Sweet Water's Policy Committee is pleased to be hosting this forum for information and discussion on these important initiatives. We look forward to engaging the public and agency officials in identifying how we might use these regulatory tools to help us move towards improved water quality in Southeastern Wisconsin," stated Peter McAvoy, Vice President, Sixteenth Street Community Health Center.

The Water Policy Forum will include presentations by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WI DNR), nonprofit organizations, and industry experts followed by moderated panel discussions and opportunity for questions from the audience. David Garman, Dean of the School of Freshwater Sciences, will welcome the attendees.

"We are pleased to bring top experts in the state of Wisconsin to the WATER Institute to discuss these important policy questions," commented Jeff Martinka, Executive Director of Sweet Water. Presenters and panelists for the topic of water quality trading include: Kevin Kirsch, WI DNR; John Kennedy, Green Bay Metropolitan Sewerage District; Dennis Grzezinski, Midwest Environmental Advocates; and Paul Kent, Stafford Rosenbaum LLP.

The presenters and panelists for the second topic of for the forum, Wisconsin's phosphorus water quality standards and the associated watershed adaptive management option, include: Amanda Minks, WI DNR; Melissa Malott, Clean Wisconsin and Dane County Lakes & Watershed Commission; Paul Kent, Stafford Rosenbaum LLP; and Susan Anthony, MMSD.

Closing Remarks will be given by Peter McAvoy, Sixteenth Street Community Health Center and Sweet Water Executive Steering Council. A complete agenda for the Water Policy Forum can be found at Sweet Water's website.

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Sweet Water, the Southeastern Wisconsin Watersheds Trust, Inc., is a nonprofit organization created in 2008 as a partnership of local governments, nonprofit organizations, businesses, academia, and individuals working collectively to improve the water resources in the 1,100 square miles of the Greater Milwaukee Watersheds.

For more information on Sweet Water, visit www.swwtwater.org or contact Jeff Martinka, Executive Director, at 414-382-1766 or by email at martinka@swwtwater.org

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Background on Water Quality Trading and the Adaptive Management Option

Water Quality Trading

In June 2010, as Wisconsin's Natural Resources Board, the appointed policymaking body of the Department of Natural Resources, deliberated on several rules addressing phosphorus water pollution from a variety of sources, the Board directed staff to spend the next year working with stakeholders to develop recommendations on a statewide policy framework for water quality trading. The recommendations were due back to the Board by July 1, 2011, and staff delivered a report containing the requested recommendations on time earlier this year.

The session at the November 14th Water Quality Forum will feature an overview of the recommendations generated by DNR staff and stakeholders, and it will include a perspective from a potential "end user" of water quality trading on how this policy tool could help them achieve their objectives in a cost-effective way. A panel will provide additional perspective on the issue and field audience questions and comments.

Wisconsin's Phosphorus Water Quality Standards and the Watershed Adaptive Management Option

After several years of technical analysis and discussions involving a diverse stakeholder advisory committee, Wisconsin's Department of Natural Resources adopted rules in late 2010 creating numeric water quality standards for phosphorus in Wisconsin's lakes and rivers. The rules directly affect the effluent limits the DNR will enforce in Wisconsin Pollution Discharge Elimination System (WPDES) permits for regulated point-source discharges of phosphorus into Wisconsin waters. They also offer an innovative new approach to managing phosphorus on a watershed scale that can potentially lead to greater improvements in water quality through more cost-effective means than end-of-pipe controls. This approach, known as the Watershed Adaptive Management Option, involves other rural, agricultural, and urban sources of phosphorus in a watershed in shared solutions to phosphorus-based impairments to water quality.

This part of the November 14th Water Quality Forum will focus on the Watershed Adaptive Management Option, covering the policy and legal framework around the option, who the option implicates, and how it could potentially work on the ground in Wisconsin (and Greater Milwaukee) watersheds. A panel will provide additional perspective on the issue and field audience questions and comments.

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