

Protect Our
Natural Resources



Watchdog Views

Watershed Watcher's Electronic Newsletter

September 2006, Number 1

Welcome to the first edition of our electronic newsletter. The purpose of this publication is to inform you of environmental action in the upper reaches of the Milwaukee River watershed. The one major action, the proposed West Bend Airport expansion, is **not a done deal!** If this message came to you by mail, please send us your email address.

Watershed Watchers, Inc. is a 501 (c) (3) grassroots' citizen action group dedicated to the protection and monitoring of the watershed. Watchdog, by definition, is a person, or in this case a group of people, who serve as protectors or guardians against waste, loss, or illegal practices. **Watchdog Views** will describe our activities as protectors or guardians of the watershed. Our views and yours will be printed in this newsletter, and we do welcome your views.

Email your contributions: views, pictures, and watershed stories, or send them to Watershed Watchers, P.O. Box 72, Newburg, WI. 53060. Please feel free to share these newsletters with friends and relatives. Because we are excited about this no cost method of communicating, we welcome email addresses.

The Biggest Threat to Our Water Supply

As watchdogs, Watershed Watchers' most important task is to prevent the waste or loss of wetlands, a vital natural resource. Wetlands, through the years, have been viewed as a nuisance to farmers, developers, and road builders. But today they are understood to be a valuable resource for an abundant and healthy water supply. Wetlands recharge the groundwater that supplies our shallow aquifers, and in turn fill our wells. The airport expansion plan would destroy 150 acres of groundwater recharge wetlands, a huge threat to our water supply. The loss of these wetlands would result in the largest single-site destruction of wetlands in Wisconsin since the passage of the 1972 Clean Water Act. The vast majority of the private wells and nine of the ten wells in the West Bend municipal well field pump solely from the shallow aquifers.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) wisely decided an EIS was needed to assess the natural resources in the area of the proposed airport expansion. The firm the FAA chose, Crawford, Murphy & Tilly, is designated as one of the top 25 aviation design firms in the country. Hardly a firm one would expect to conduct an unbiased EIS. This could evolve to another instance where the environment will again be ignored as it was with previous companies, Coffman & Associates and MSA (Mid States Assoc.'s). Way back in 1992 Rust Infrastructure wrote a very complete and accurate report assessing the natural resources in the airport area. Was this report too accurate? It emphasized the environmental assets of the area and seriously considered all the issues. Through these airport planning stages, too many tax dollars have been spent, many on repetitious and redundant activities.

Now even more money will be spent on a necessary EIS. Because it is being contracted to an aviation firm, our participation is essential to monitor the process. The next step is to "scope" out or plan what needs to be accomplished during the EIS, known as the "scoping process."

Scoping Meeting Announcement: Save the date of

October 11, 2006, to attend the first scoping meeting in West Bend at the Claremont Inn, 4:00 – 8:00 p.m. The open-house style meeting will give citizens an opportunity to express their views. If you are concerned about the way your tax dollars are being spent for an unnecessary airport expansion, or concerned about your water quality or quantity, or a possible pipeline to Lake Michigan, this is a time for you to join the scoping process.

Mark your calendar and prepare written comments to present at the meeting or have them ready to hand in for the record.

Electronic newsletter -
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