

Water Resource Protection

The Citizens of Northwest Wisconsin Request

An increase or realignment of staffing within the DNR to ensure oversight and compliance with existing regulations that protect our water resource rich area.

Background

Water-related resources in Bayfield County are an important economic driver as well as critical to quality of life. These resources include 962 inland lakes, Lake Superior, streams, rivers, wetlands and six nationally designated areas (more than any other place in the State of Wisconsin) including: Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, Iron River National Fish Hatchery, North Country National Scenic Trail, St. Croix National Scenic Riverway and Whittlesey Creek National Wildlife Refuge). These high quality natural resources resulted in 702 jobs and \$53.8 million dollars spent by visitors to our region in 2014.

Reduction in DNR staffing has hindered the ability to protect and manage the water resources in our area, and changes in Water Management Specialist duties has resulted in longer wait times for service.

Reduced staffing has impacted Bayfield County. For example, the current closest Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) Specialist is located in Black River Falls, and has 77 CAFOs to monitor in a 15 county territory. Regional staffing reductions have slowed down permit processes impacting water, rivers, fisheries, forests and wetlands. Given Bayfield County's dependence on tourism dollars, it is very important that adequate regulatory support from the DNR be provided to help protect our County's vital water resources and ensure compliance with applicable regulations.



Photo: UW-Extension, Bayfield County