



Petenwell and Castle Rock Stewards

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The Wisconsin River TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) has 109 stream and river segments and 38 lakes or reservoirs that are impaired due to elevated levels of phosphorus. Too much phosphorus leads to excessive algae growth and the formation of toxic blue-green algae. The Wisconsin River TMDL is a restoration plan that determines the amount of phosphorus that our lakes and rivers can receive and still provide healthy fisheries and quality recreational opportunities. The TMDL development process, through modeling and extensive monitoring data, demonstrated that somewhat less stringent phosphorus targets allow compliance with algae goals for Castle Rock and Petenwell reservoirs while a more stringent phosphorus target is required for Lake Wisconsin.

The Natural Resources Board has approved DNR to take the first step in rulemaking that would establish new target levels of phosphorus for Castle Rock, Petenwell and Lake Wisconsin. If we can get Castle Rock and Petenwell down from the 79 and 109 mg/L phosphorus that they are at now, to the proposed goals of 55 and 53 mg/L phosphorus, respectively, the algae problems will be controlled.

Achieving these goals won't be easy. Implementation of the TMDL will require DNR, DATCP and the county Land Conservation Departments to work with landowners to implement agricultural and non-agriculture best management practices to address phosphorus loadings to our lakes and rivers. It will take trust and partnerships to make a positive change in water quality, and everyone will have to do their part to achieve water quality improvement.