

Clean water benefit meal set April 2 in Rock County

Ruling will help local officials statewide protect water from CAFOs

State Supreme Court justices will soon decide a case affecting local water protection statewide, and citizens pressing for protections are seeking public support.

At issue is a landmark ruling affirming small town powers to condition permits for huge livestock operations. An appeals court upset the ruling last year, yet the Wisconsin Supreme Court has decided to review their decision.

Rural southern Wisconsin citizens who've pressed 10 years for water protections now appeal to the public for help with the case. They've set a benefit meal with music and a citizens' rally for Saturday, April 2, at the American Legion Hall, Hwy 213 south of Hwy 11, in Orfordville.

A meal of local food includes Santa Fe Chowder, DaVal's bison meat tacos and vegetarian tacos with Scotch Hill spinach, and Sassy Cow ice cream and will be served from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. Donations will defray citizen and town legal expenses. Their battle could protect all state water from pollution and preserve local control for enforcing clean water, health and public safety rules.

At issue are findings of scientists who uncovered nitrate-polluted wells, field tiles and a creek, attributed to a Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation that has grown to 5,000 animal units in Magnolia Township. A soil and water scientist of 25 years in Wisconsin, where agency samplings of hundreds of creeks have shown less than 2 ppm nitrate average, called pollution from the huge dairy operation in Magnolia the worst he's seen in his professional work.

Benefit meal proceeds April 2 will go to attorneys representing the Green Rock Citizens for Clean Water, Green Rock Audubon Society and the Town of Magnolia. This is the first court test of a 2004 state law that stripped all local leaders in Wisconsin of rights to deny permits to large-scale livestock facilities.

Rural residents and their town officials in south central Wisconsin are preparing an appeal with attorneys Christa Westerberg, Peter McKeever and Glenn Reynolds. They saw 3 appeals court judges reverse their victorious circuit court ruling last year.

If successful before the Supreme Court, the ruling will strengthen all local elected leaders' abilities to protect rural residents' health and safety. It will establish legal precedent, affecting both case and administrative law, which large-scale concentrated animal feeding operations are using to proliferate in this state.

Donations of any amount for the Clean Water Protection Suit can be made to Green Rock Audubon Society or the Town of Magnolia. Checks can be mailed to Graceann Toberman, Magnolia Town Clerk and Treasurer, 13343 W. County Hwy B, Brodhead, WI 53520.

Donations for the legal defense can also be made at the benefit meal Saturday, April 2. You may RSVP or send checks to Green Rock Audubon, c/o Linda Adams at Brodhead Packages Plus, 1021 1st Center Ave., Brodhead, WI 53520 / bpackages@frontier.com For more information, contact Tony Ends at 608 897-4288 / tony@scotchhillfarm.com