

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

DNR UPDATES

Nate Willis, P.E.
Wastewater Section Manager
Government Affairs Seminar
February 19, 2026



Agenda

- Water Quality Standards Updates
 - Triennial Standards
 - Antidegradation
 - Human Health Criteria
- Guidance Updates
- NR 110 Update
- Facility Planning
- Staffing Updates
- Operator Certification Update
- Switchboard
- NR 101 Fees
- Land Application Site List Report



Water Quality Standards Updates

Triennial Standards Review Workplan (2025-2027)

- Finalized & Sent to EPA in March 2025

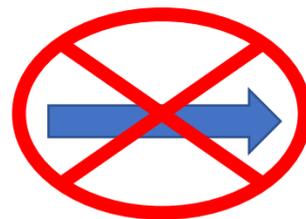
Priorities for this cycle

- Antidegradation Rule Revision and Guidance
- Human Health Criteria
- Biological Thresholds for Streams & Rivers
- Designated Uses/Structure/Process Revision

Antidegradation Rule Revision and Guidance

Policy and procedures to protect surface waters from degradation from new or increased discharges.

- Final Rule published **January 26, 2026**
 - Repealed and recreated ch. NR 207 Subchapter I – Antidegradation
 - Updates or new language created for chs. NR 102, 103, 106, 212, and 216, Wis. Adm. Code
- Delayed implementation date of **July 1, 2026**
- Program implementation guidance being developed
 - Opportunities for stakeholder input prior to public comment period.



Designated Use Revisions

Purpose: considering revising designated uses to include additional protective subcategories and remove outdated information

Key Components:

- Subsistence fish consumption waterbodies
- Wild rice waterbodies

Scope Statement drafted

Anticipate NRB approval and public comment period to open in Spring 2026

Human Health Criteria

Purpose: considering establishing or updating criteria to be protective of human health to the level of currently available science based on EPA's 2015 updates

Key Components:

- Update current criteria statewide
- Add new criteria as needed statewide
- Update exposure factors including subsistence fish consumption rate

Scope Statement drafted

Anticipate NRB approval and public comment period to open in Summer 2026

Guidance Documents



New Guidance in 2026

- [Water Quality Program Policy and Guidance | Wisconsin DNR](#)
 - MDV Implementation
 - Streamlined Variance Procedures for Master Operator Education Hours
 - Permitting Use of Dyes in Surface Waters – update in progress
 - Water Quality Trading – update in progress

NR 110 Rulemaking

- Scope statement for rulemaking approved February 26, 2025
- Technical Advisory Committee met throughout 2025
- Possible revisions include:
 - Facility plan amendment process
 - Abbreviated facility plan contents
 - Pilot projects
 - Consistency with pending 10 States Standards updates
 - Design standards for tertiary treatment technologies
 - Consideration of adaptive management and water quality trading in facility plans for phosphorus
- **Language currently being drafted**
 - Opportunities for public input forthcoming



Facility Planning

- What is facility planning?
 - 20-year plan for future sewerage system/treatment system upgrades
 - Ensures facilities are making infrastructure decisions well in advance of when they're needed
 - Ensures facilities are appropriately-sized for a well-operated plant
 - Ensures most cost-effective options are chosen to minimize impacts on user rates and best use of tax dollars



Facility Planning Amid Regulatory Uncertainty

- Challenges:
 - 20-year ‘roadmap’, but regulations are always changing (managing known unknowns, known knowns, and unknown unknowns).
 - Ex: PFAS, Nitrogen
 - Want to increase capacity, but my facility has “Excessive” I/I, what is that?
 - “Excessive” I/I is explicitly prohibited from being planned for in flows
 - Rule of Thumb:
 - Infiltration: Dry Weather Flow >120gpcd
 - Inflow: Maximum daily flow during a storm >275 gpcd
 - Bottom Line: Does it cost more to treat the I/I than it does to remove it?



Facility Planning Amid Regulatory Uncertainty

- How old is the equipment? How much life is left in the plant?
- What does the permit require? Start with planning limits memo, these are the known regulations (i.e., known knowns)
- Look if any TMDLs are in development for the area (known knowns)
- Look at triennial standards review to get an idea of if there are proposals for additional criteria (known unknowns)
 - NOTE: Compliance schedules allow for planning for upcoming regulations
 - NOTE: Regulations can often linger in the TSR and rulemaking process for years, do NOT make planning decisions around regulations that are not final



Overview of Sequence of Events Prior to Construction of Sanitary Sewer Extensions

Pursuant to federal Clean Water Act § 208 and ch. NR 121 (Areawide Water Quality Management Planning), Wis. Adm. Code

S. NR 108.03(1) = No person may commence, or cause to be commenced, construction of any reviewable project until final plans and specifications for such project have been reviewed and approved by the DNR

Proposed FPs and plans & specs. to DNR must be complete

Sanitary Sewer Service Area (SSSA) Plan Review

Sewerage System Facilities Plan Review

Sewerage System Final Plans & Specs Review

Construction

S. NR 110.08(4) = all approvable sewer system facility plans must be in conformance with approved SSSA plans

S. NR 110.06 = all construction plans shall be in conformance with an approved facilities plan

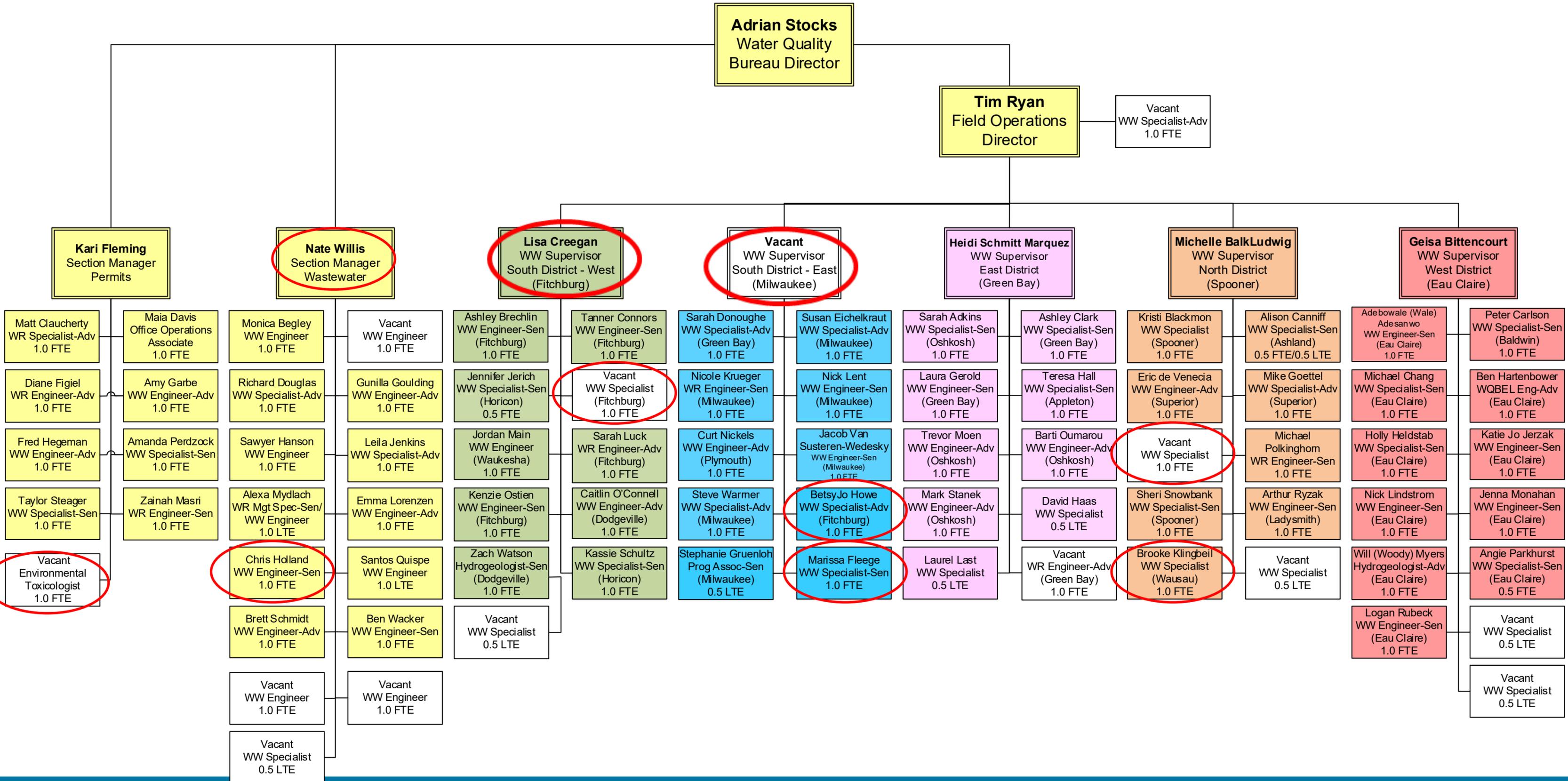
Some CWF Loan Numbers...

CWF Deadline was 09/30

- 73 facility plans approved from 10/01/2024 - 09/30/2025
 - 93 applications, 104 projects
 - 53 CWF related plans and specifications arrived between 9/18 and 10/3
- \$508,956,102 in SFY26 requested funding from 87 municipalities
 - Last year: \$523,767,878 requested from 77 municipalities, 86 applications for 96 projects.

DNR Wastewater Staffing Updates





Operator Certification



Operator Certification Contacts

- Wastewater and Drinking Water (Jordan Schutz)
 - Hotline: 608-261-6300
 - Email: DNROpCert@wisconsin.gov
- Septage and Landfill (Taylor Schutz)
 - Hotline: 608-267-2300
 - Email: DNROpCertSeptage@wisconsin.gov
 - Email: DNROpCertLandfill@wisconsin.gov

Operator Certification Contacts

Regional office	Coordinator name	Counties of responsibility
DNR - South Central Region 3911 Fish Hatchery Road Fitchburg WI 53711	Jordan Main Jordan.Main@wisconsin.gov 608-535-0368	Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Grant, Green, Iowa, Jefferson, Lafayette, Richland, Rock, Sauk
DNR - Southeast Region 1155 Pilgrim Rd Plymouth WI	Curt Nickels Curtis.Nickels@wisconsin.gov 920-893-8530	Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Sheboygan, Walworth, Washington, Waukesha
DNR - Northeast Region 225051 Rib Mountain Dr Wausau WI 54401-3336	Brooke Klingbeil brooke.klingbeil@wisconsin.gov 715-495-1336	Brown, Calumet, Door, Fond du Lac, Green Lake, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Marinette, Marquette, Menomonie, Oconto, Outagamie, Shawano, Waupaca, Waushara, Winnebago
DNR - West Central Region 1300 W Clairmont Ave Eau Claire WI 54701	Nicholas Lindstrom Nicholas.Lindstrom@wisconsin.gov 715-492-1787	Adams, Buffalo, Chippewa, Clark, Crawford, Dunn, Eau Claire, Jackson, Juneau, La Crosse, Marathon, Monroe, Pepin, Pierce, Portage, St. Croix, Trempealeau, Vernon, Wood
DNR - Northern Region 225051 Rib Mountain Dr Wausau WI 54401-3336	Brooke Klingbeil brooke.klingbeil@wisconsin.gov 715-495-1336	Ashland, Barron, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Florence, Forest, Iron, Langlade, Lincoln, Oneida, Polk, Price, Rusk, Sawyer, Taylor, Vilas, Washburn

Upcoming OpCert Exams 2026

Exam Date	Exam Location	Exam Postmark Deadline
3/11/2026	Rhinelanders	2/12/2026
3/12/2026	Fennimore	2/12/2026
3/24/2026	Green Bay (WRWA)	2/24/2026
5/27/2026	Rice Lake	5/1/2026
5/28/2026	Plover	5/1/2026
5/29/2026	Madison	5/1/2026
7/14/2026	Green Bay	6/18/2026
7/15/2026	Plover	6/18/2026
7/16/2026	La Crosse	6/18/2026

Upcoming OpCert Exams 2026

Exam Date	Exam Location	Exam Postmark Deadline
9/22/2026	Rice Lake	8/27/2026
9/23/2026	Fennimore	8/27/2026
9/24/2026	Waukesha	8/27/2026
10/13/2026	Green Bay (WWOA)	9/15/2026
11/10/2026	Rhinelanders	10/15/2026
11/11/2026	Plover	10/15/2026
11/12/2026	Madison	10/15/2026

Operator License Renewals

- Complete continuing education requirements
 - Email DNROpCert@wisconsin.gov if you have shared credits
- Submit renewal materials
 - [Training History Report](#) (signed)
 - Renewal Fee
- Renew by mail or using the [Online Renewal Portal](#)
- Postmark renewal materials on or before license expiration date to avoid late fees

Switchboard Changes

Maia Davis – access requests and helpdesk

dnrwwswitchboard@wisconsin.gov



NR 101 Fee Notification Letter

- March 1st: Notification of Environmental Fee letter will be available on Switchboard
- Authorized Representatives, Facility Operator, and Billing Contacts must be current
- Notification emails will be going out shortly
- Edits/corrections can occur directly through Switchboard
- DMRentry access
- DNRWYNR101BILLING@wisconsin.gov

Land Application Site List

- NEW! Switchboard "Approved Site Report"
 - Permittees can now access and print their current report

Land Application Reports (52/55 forms)		2 Forms	2 Forms overdue			
Current Approved Site Report						
Reporting Period	Frequency	Status	Due Date	Filename	Actions	



IN MEMORIAM

CONNECT WITH US



/WIDNR



@WDNR



@WI_DNR



/WIDNRTV



"WILD WISCONSIN:
OFF THE RECORD"