**Groundwater-Level Monitoring Network**

Wisconsin’s groundwater-level monitoring network has been operated jointly by the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey (WGNHS) and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) since 1946, working in close cooperation with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). As of June 2018, this network consists of 92 long-term monitoring wells, two spring gaging stations and project-specific, limited-term monitoring wells. The long-term 92 permanent wells and two spring gaging stations, or “Core Network” are located in 45 of Wisconsin’s 72 counties. This Core Network provides a consistent, long-term record of fluctuations in water levels in shallow and deep aquifers. The project-specific wells are supported with funding from various groundwater studies across the state and are generally only operational over the lifetime of an active groundwater study. These project wells provide valuable data and are often considered for addition to the Core Network if selection criteria are met.

Water levels collected from the network help scientists and managers evaluate effects of well pumping, the response of groundwater levels to drought or increased precipitation and effects of land-use change on groundwater resources. These data are also routinely used in the development of regional groundwater flow models, as long-term water-level measurements serve as reliable calibration targets.

In FY 2018, due to increasing reliance on network data to meet its Water Use program needs, DNR greatly expanded its funding and management support of the Core Network. On a day-to-day basis USGS and WGNHS continue to support the evaluation and maintenance of the monitoring network, aid in data collection, interpretation, and provide information to public and private clients through dedicated webpages. WGNHS provides a general overview of the monitoring network at https://wgnhs.uwex.edu/water-environment/groundwater-monitoring-network, and USGS maintains an interactive portal for viewing and downloading data at https://waterdata.usgs.gov/wi/nwis/gw.

In FY 2019, DNR committed $100,000 to the Core Network and provided additional funding of $65,000 to USGS to install monitoring equipment on 21 short-term project wells in support of the Central Sands Lakes Study.

In FY 2019 WGNHS received a 2-year grant from the USGS National Ground-Water Monitoring Network (NGWMN) program in the amount of $198,089. This grant, which continues through July 2020, seeks to repair 16 monitoring wells, replace three damaged wells, and install a new well in Langlade County. Improvement efforts also include compilation of historical well records, well borehole evaluations, and well integrity testing as needed to complement existing information for each well.