

NATURAL RESOURCES (FORMERLY CONSERVATION)

Support of:

1. A sanitary code for Portage County and the office of County Sanitarian.
2. The League of Women Voters of the Stevens Point Area supports the objectives of the Portage County Groundwater Management Plan, prepared by the Portage County Planning Department in 1988

The League's first study of county government in 1965 and the local survey done as part of the 1966 state conservation study made us aware of serious development and pollution threats to Portage County's environment. Approximately half of county land is unsuitable for septic tank absorption systems due to rock, high water table and heavy soil. With suburbia growing, water quality will become more and more of a concern.

From the beginning, there was great interest in and support for water and land use studies, but other studies which seemed more pressing were adopted. In 1970 League sent a representative to the newly formed environmental group, Portage County Preservation Projects, but she could function only as an observer since we had no position.

In April 1970 a study was adopted: Conservation and use of water, air and land resources in Portage County. Information from a DNR report on Portage County water and sewage treatment showed that several communities were in need of adding or upgrading sewage facilities. We also lacked a flood plain/shoreland ordinance to control development in high water areas. A LWV fact sheet was distributed – "Tips on How to Protect Our Environment Every Day". Qualifications for and duties of a county sanitarian were examined.

Consensus was reached on the above position in November 1970. The position originally called for "the enactment of" a sanitary code, and "the creation of" the office of county sanitarian. League made a statement to the county board as they debated enactment of a county sanitary code.

A Sanitary, Shoreland and Subdivision ordinance adopted by the county board became effective in January 1969. The sanitary provisions regulated only septic systems and wells and there was little enforcement. In November 1970 the county board established the position of County Sanitarian in the 1971 budget. The office was not filled until April 1972 when a Zoning Administrator-Sanitarian was hired. In mid-1973 an assistant was hired to be full-time Sanitarian. The Sanitary Code was completely revised and amended in 1977 to provide a complete environmental health program including an ordinance covering restaurants, etc. Study was started in 1984, continued through 1987 and position was adopted.

NATURAL RESOURCES (SUPPLEMENT)

At the January 8, 1991 board meeting, the support statement formulated after completing League's local study of the Portage County Groundwater Management Plan, was presented. Our support position is as follows:

The League of Women Voters of the Stevens Point Area supports the objectives of the Portage County Groundwater Management Plan.**

1. Identify potential corrective actions, technologies and alternatives to apply in areas already experiencing groundwater contamination.
2. Develop management and regulatory alternatives and recommendations (action program) for implementing groundwater management and protection programs at the County level.
3. Establish, where appropriate, various County departmental policies necessary to implement effective groundwater management.
4. Develop a cooperative network with County municipalities, whereby these municipalities develop appropriate groundwater management strategies for areas outside of County jurisdiction.

**This is from Volume II, Final Draft, prepared by the Portage County Planning Department in 1988.