RESOLUTION

ROCK COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

RECOMMENDING MODIFICATIONS OF WISCONSIN ADMINISTRATIVE RULE NR 210 TO IMPROVE SURFACE WATER QUALITY AND ADDRESS PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERNS WHEN SEWAGE IS NOT REQUIRED TO BE DISINFECTED SEASONALLY

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) allows through administrative rule NR 210.06 that sewage treatment plants in Wisconsin do not have to disinfect sewage wastewater from October 1 through April 30th each year unless dates are modified by in an individual site Wastewater Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (WPDES) permit; and

WHEREAS, sewage discharged without disinfection can have E. coli levels of around 10,000 colony forming units per 100 milliliters of water which poses a significantly greater public health risk than the maximum 126 units of E. Coli proposed in the NR 210 rule revisions during periods of required disinfection; and

WHEREAS, E. coli is a serious public health concern and efforts to minimize E. coli and other communicable diseases from surface waters used for recreational purposes is a significant step toward improving public health; and

WHEREAS, the Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District discharges about 40 million gallons of effluent each day into the Badfish Creek which account for over 50% of the total flow in this water body and this discharge eventually ends up downstream in the Yahara River and the Rock River; and

WHEREAS, winter base flow water testing by the Rock County Public Health Department over several years has consistently indicated high levels of E. coli in the Badfish Creek and Yahara River during periods of non-disinfection of wastewater; and

WHEREAS, the Badfish Creek and Yahara River are popular recreational water bodies that receive significant recreational use that result in potential human exposure to impacted waters during the periods of non-disinfection of sewage wastewater; and

WHEREAS, the ultraviolet (UV) disinfection technology utilized by many wastewater treatment plants could be utilized for extended periods of time, or year-round, to significantly improve the water quality of the Badfish Creek and Yahara River and reduce potential adverse public health impacts; and

WHEREAS, the Rock County Public Health Department and Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District are cooperating to share data and are mutually interested in improving water quality discharged to Rock County.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Rock County Board of Supervisors duly assembled this 21st day of October, 2018, in accordance with Wisconsin State Statute 32.05, does hereby approve forwarding recommendations to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to make modifications to NR 210 to address potential public health impacts that occur when recreational waters are receiving non-disinfected sewage wastewater, with specific concerns being the Badfish Creek and Yahara River which receive a high ratio of wastewater to normal base flows.
RECOMMENDING MODIFICATIONS OF WISCONSIN ADMINISTRATIVE RULE NR 210 TO IMPROVE SURFACE WATER QUALITY AND ADDRESS PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERNS WHEN SEWAGE IS NOT REQUIRED TO BE DISINFECTED SEASONALLY.

Page 2

Respectfully submitted,

BOARD OF HEALTH

Louis Peer, Chair

Dr. Connie Winter, DDS, Vice-Chair

Vijaya Somaraju, MD, MPH

Dr. Katrina Meyers, DVM, MPH, FACP

Judith Wade, WHNP

Eric Gresens, R.Ph

Vicki Brown

Danette Ryans

Craig Genzle

ADMINISTRATIVE NOTE:
Recommended.

Josh Smith
County Administrator

FISCAL NOTE:

This resolution is advisory only and has no direct fiscal impact on Rock County operations in and by itself.

Sherry Oja
Finance Director

LEGAL NOTE:

Advisory only.

Richard Greenlee
Corporation Counsel
- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY -

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) Wastewater Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (WPDES) permits do not require that sewage wastewater be disinfected from the months of October through April each year. When recreational waters such as the Badfish Creek and Yahara River receive non-disinfected wastewater in large volumes compared to the normal stream flow, water quality impacts from E. coli bacteria and other communicable diseases are likely. The Badfish Creek receives over 40 million gallons of sewage wastewater each day which is more than the normal base-flow of that stream. The Rock County Public Health Department has confirmed through routine testing over several years that E. coli levels in the Badfish Creek and Yahara River are significantly elevated in these periods of non-disinfection of sewage, resulting in potential health impacts for recreational users of these waters.

The Badfish Creek and Yahara River have become increasingly popular for recreational activities such as canoeing, kayaking, fishing, and hunting. The level of these activities has grown annually and do occur throughout the year, not just in May through September.

The ultraviolet disinfection technology utilized by many wastewater treatment facilities could be utilized for longer periods of time, or even year-round, resulting in a significant reduction in potential exposure of recreational water users to communicable diseases, including E. coli.

The Rock County Public Health Department and Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District are cooperating to share data regarding this issue with mutual interests of improving water quality.

This resolution recommends that the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources take into consideration the adverse impacts that not disinfecting sewage discharge has on the water quality of the Badfish Creek and the Yahara River and that they take steps to reduce this impact to acceptable public health standards by extending the period in which sewage is required to be disinfected.