

New Approach = Citizen interactions and Less Citations

To ensure the long term function of a private on-site wastewater treatment system (POWTS), periodic maintenance is required. In addition, Marathon County's Private Sewage System Ordinance as well as state administrative code require system maintenance and reporting. In the fall of 2019, the POWTS maintenance program will be expanded to include all landowners with systems installed prior to July 1st of 1980. This will impact many landowners who may have never been part of the maintenance program.

With this in mind, the Marathon County Conservation, Planning, and Zoning (CPZ) department determined it needed to try a new approach in reaching out to these landowners. In the past, pumping notices were mailed out in batches followed by final notices. If compliance was not achieved, a citation was issued to gain compliance. This annual method was traditional and became the norm for years. While 98-99% of citizens met the deadlines and stayed in compliance, there were still more citations issued than CPZ preferred and the number of citations increased yearly. With the expanded maintenance program, CPZ realized that the citation issue would be compounded.

The new approach involved sending notices followed by personal visits, calls, and attention in an upfront effort to gain compliance. After a few personal visits or phone calls, it became clear that by talking to people, presenting a personal kind, respectful approach, an increased level of POWTS maintenance could be achieved, with less need for citations. The result of the new approach has made great gains. In the past, the number of maintenance citations have been averaging between 60 and 70, out of thousands of systems. This is still a low number, but by presenting a personal upfront approach by phone, visit and additional creative mailings, the POWTS maintenance citations have dropped to less than 5 for 2018. WOW those are results worth sharing!

This new approach has enhanced the POWTS program and improved relations with citizens of the county while diminishing the overall work load of multiple departments and our court system. CPZ is encouraged by the new team approach and is looking forward to continued positive results, while protecting and enhancing the quantity and quality of surface and ground water.

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Greetings and Happy 2019!

The beginning of a new year is a good time to reflect on where we have been, what we have accomplished and where we are going. In 2018, the Conservation, Planning, and Zoning Department reached many people and developed many new relationships. With our efforts to implement the uniform addressing system, develop new metallic mining regulations, and engage farmers and waterfront property owners in water quality discussions, CPZ staff had countless conversations and helped to build understanding of what we need to do together to make Marathon County a better place. Yes, some conversations were challenging and not everyone is pleased, but we continue to work with all involved, striving to be honest, kind, and respectful.

The upcoming year will provide us many opportunities to increase our communications and presence with the towns. We hope to forge/ enhance new, deeper relationships and provide assistance to all towns with county zoning and those wishing to join county zoning. This will involve working with town boards and planning committees to facilitate the decision making process. We will support the efforts of EPPIC (Eau Pleine Partners for Integrated Conservation) and the lake groups to implement safeguards to protect our water resources. We will work with property owners with failing private onsite wastewater treatment systems (POWTS – aka septic systems) to help them obtain financial assistance for installing new systems. We will also complete the implementation of uniform addressing and work with towns to develop a cooperative system to maintain the new system into the future.

As always, we look forward to working in partnership with you to ensure Marathon County has healthy people, a healthy economy, and a healthy environment, today and tomorrow. Best wishes for the New Year!

-Becky Frisch, CPZ Director

New Marathon County Zoning Administrator

Marathon County has selected Dominique Swangstu as the new Zoning Administrator. Many of you may be familiar with Dominique (Dom), as he was the zoning technician this past summer and construction season. Dom did a great job this past construction season administering the zoning ordinances and he shows great promise in moving forward with CPZ to assist in protecting the natural resources of the County as well as striving to provide the best services to our citizens and residents. Dominique holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point in Natural Resource Management with an emphasis in Land Use and Conservation Planning. We are excited to have Dom on our Team! Congratulations Dom!



To more efficiently deliver CPZ's newsletter to you, and reduce costs, issues are available electronically. To receive the link to the electronic newsletter, please send an email to cpz@co.marathon.wi.us with "CPZ newsletter" in the subject line. Current and previous issues are available on CPZ's [webpage](#).

THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION, PLANNING AND ZONING'S MISSION is to protect our community's land and environment because the economic strength and vitality of our community is dependent on the quality of our resources.

Through leadership, accountability, community engagement and collaborative partnerships we promote thoughtful and deliberate use of resources and innovative solutions to ensure Marathon County has healthy people, a healthy economy and a healthy environment today and tomorrow.