

# Meeting Wisconsin Water Needs Through Research, Training and Information Dissemination

## BY THE NUMBERS

ALL FIGURES 2020-21



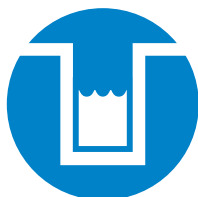
4

average number of research projects funded annually



20

average number of research undergraduate and graduate students supported



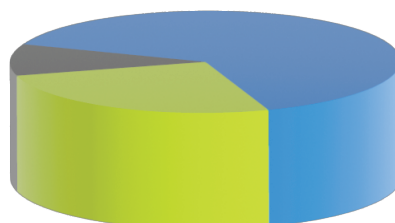
900,000

private wells in Wisconsin



SARA STATHAS

Safeguarding Wisconsin's water quantity, quality and management. Those are critically important responsibilities. For **58 years**, each has been undertaken with science-based rigor by the **University of Wisconsin Water Resources Institute** (WRI) through a federal-state partnership, stepping up to address present challenges and opportunities, along with emerging ones.



WRI FEDERAL COMPETED	26%
STATE OF WISCONSIN	64%
WRI CORE	10%

## FROM DISCOVERY TO APPLICATION **Science Transferred**

**Researching Radium** WRI researchers have noted that there is a background concentration of radium throughout the aquifer that underlies much of Wisconsin. It's a naturally occurring contaminant and can be treated in drinking water, but it first needs to be detected. And then, treatment can be costly. For many years, WRI has funded radium research. Recent findings have shown local water managers they can avoid pumping water with radium altogether if they adjust well casings or alter depths and places where pumping occurs.

**Pursuing PFAS** Across Wisconsin, residents are concerned about the man-made chemicals known as PFAS showing up in their drinking water, soil and the wildlife they might harvest, including fish and deer. These chemicals, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, have long been used in everyday products like clothing, upholstery and cookware. WRI is part of an annual research call that has made understanding PFAS a priority. It also was an organizer for a 2021 workshop that brought together university scientists and state agencies to find common understandings about PFAS and identify what further work needs to be done to protect people from the carcinogenic and other ill effects of the long-lived chemicals.



### Looking for Protection From Mercury

Mercury in the body acts as a neurotoxin, disproportionately affecting the health of children and pregnant women. A WRI researcher has developed a “fingerprinting” technique for determining the sources of mercury in the Great Lakes. It’s a tool, however, that can be applied worldwide to clean up or even stop mercury from getting into waterways and hurting fish, other wildlife, and ultimately, people.

### Knowledge Sharing and Training

WRI supports the Wisconsin Water Library, [waterlibrary.aqua.wisc.edu](http://waterlibrary.aqua.wisc.edu). It houses more than 30,000 water-related volumes, including WRI research reports and valuable wastewater treatment operator manuals vital for training those important community practitioners. WRI also supports the annual meeting of the Wisconsin Chapter of the American Water Resources Association, which brings together more than 200 current and aspiring water professionals for presentations and poster sessions. It’s a meeting that is specifically structured to offer students career development. Finally, WRI produces audio podcasts, videos, newsletters and fact sheets to share knowledge.

**1.2**  
**quadrillion**

gallons of groundwater  
in Wisconsin



**73%**

of state residents get drinking  
water from community water  
systems

**84,000**  
**miles**

of rivers and streams  
in Wisconsin

**15,000**

lakes in Wisconsin



**5 million**

acres of wetlands  
in Wisconsin

