

Extension geologist helps local governments assess and plan for the impact of the sand mining boom



Local government and citizen groups turned to UW-Extension educators, including Bruce Brown, for objective information on frac sand mining.

Bruce Brown's office last year was often his car. As senior geologist for the University of Wisconsin-Extension's Wisconsin [Geological and Natural History Survey](#) [1], he visited all of the frac sand counties of western Wisconsin.

In less than six months, he spoke to more than 1,000 people in local government and citizen groups on the potential for development of [silica sand resources](#) [2].

"I really appreciate the objective information provided by the Geological Survey - and its timeliness," says Rick Stadelman, Wisconsin Towns Association executive director. "They brought their expertise on frac sand mining to officials all over the state. This is a new and developing subject for local officials. The Survey really filled a need."

Frac sand created a mining boom for Wisconsin that began in 2011 and has expanded in 2012, causing Wisconsin's own gold rush for golden sand. Many residents were wondering if this type of mining could happen in their county. And, if it does, what that would mean to their economy and to their environment.

Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey geologists responded with workshops, meetings and presentations that answered these questions and identified issues that Wisconsin residents care about. The survey continues to provide information to the "sand" counties - to local officials, county conservationists, zoning administrators, towns associations and the general public -- for informed decision making about our natural resources.

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Links:

[1] <http://wisconsingeologicalsurvey.org/>

[2] <http://wisconsingeologicalsurvey.org/silica-sand.htm>

[3] <mailto:askageologist@uwex.edu>