Cedarburg Residents Raise Concerns Over Proposed 13-Acre Private Pond for Exclusive Use of Michael and Stacy Gauthier

TOWN OF CEDARBURG, WI, UNITED STATES, November 7, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A proposal by local business owners Michael and Stacy Gauthier to build a 13-acre recreational pond has sparked heated debate in the Town of Cedarburg, with residents worried about the impact on their wells, property values, and the health of Cedar Creek.

Cedar Creek - A key natural asset in the Cedarburg Community

The Gauthiers, who own Gauthier Biomedical in nearby Grafton, presented their plan to a packed town board meeting on November 5. More than 100 residents showed up with questions about where the water would come from and what happens if something goes wrong.

The pond would stretch along Covered Bridge Road between Kaehler's Mill Road and Cedar Creek Road — running parallel to the popular Covered Bridge Park. According to town officials, the project would draw water from both Cedar Creek and a private well tapping into the same aquifer that supplies surrounding homes.

How Much Water Are We Talking About?
That's where things get murky. Town Engineer Troy Hartjes said the applicants indicated they'd need roughly 25 million gallons to fill the pond. CBS 58 reported the figure could be as high as 35 million gallons over the first nine months of operation.

Michael Gauthier disputes those numbers. In a statement to the News Graphic, he said the pond "will not withdraw 25 million gallons of water from Cedar Creek" and emphasized that his team is "working together with our engineer, the DNR and the town engineer" to ensure full

compliance with environmental regulations.

Still, for residents like Robert Chesney, who's lived on Cedar Creek for 35 years, the numbers don't matter as much as the principle. "Why? So they can go water skiing on their private pond!" Chesney wrote in a letter to the editor. He pointed out that Cedar Creek already drops to minimal depths during summer months. "What is to stop the creek from going dry in the future?"

Save Cedar Creek

Flooding, Wells, and What-Ifs

At the November meeting, resident Edward Cherwink voiced what many were thinking: "I hope and pray that they build it strong enough to stay up there. Is it going to leach out and cause more water problems elsewhere because everybody out there has water problems?"

According to the town, there are 134 property owners within 1,000 feet of the proposed site. Their concerns range from the practical — will this dry up my well? — to the catastrophic — what if the pond breaches during a major storm?

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>
> *Robert Chesney*

Chesney raised another question that's been on people's minds: "What happens when the Gauthiers move or retire? Do they plan to ski forever? Who will monitor the pond?"

A Creek With a Complicated History

The debate is happening against the backdrop of Cedar Creek's troubled environmental past. The waterway is a designated Superfund site due to PCB contamination from Mercury Marine's former Plant 2, which operated from 1951 to 1982. The EPA oversaw a $23 million cleanup that wrapped up in 2018, dredging contaminated sediment from Columbia Pond and Wire and Nail Pond.

While the cleanup addressed legacy contamination, residents worry that altering the creek's natural flow could stir up sediments or concentrate pollutants in unpredictable ways.

What Happens Next
The Town Plan Commission recommended approval of the rezoning needed for the project but stopped short of endorsing the pond itself, instead sending it to the full Town Board for further review.

For his part, Michael Gauthier told the town board the project would "preserve the real nature of the Town of Cedarburg, protect neighbors from further flooding, enhance the environment and create critical habitat for wildlife."

Not everyone's buying it. As Chesney put it in his letter: "Surely, the town board has a responsibility to those property owners rather than to the whims of one family wanting to water ski."

The proposal still requires DNR permits, and the town has requested detailed information on filling plans and water sourcing. No final decision has been made.

Make Your Voice Heard
Wisconsin residents concerned about the protection of our state's natural resources and water systems are encouraged to share their input on this project with state officials. Public comment can help inform the permitting process and ensure thorough environmental review.

Learn more at: Save Cedar Creek

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