Award-winning hydrogeologist speaks on threats to drinking water

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Maureen Muldoon, award-winning associate professor of hydrogeology at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh has a homecoming of sorts whenever she returns to Door County, Wisconsin.

The county was a central component to her 1999 doctoral thesis, a study of the “hydrogeologic characterization of Silurian dolomite limestone of Door County.”

This time, Muldoon will return to present “Threats to Your Drinking Water,” a program sponsored by the Door County Environmental Council (DCEC) at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 16, at Crossroads at Big Creek, 2041 Michigan St., Sturgeon Bay.

Since receiving her doctoral degree from UW-Madison, Muldoon has worked exclusively in studying the dolomite limestone of the Niagara Escarpment in northeastern Wisconsin. She has taken a special interest in how water travels and interacts with local geology and how those features affect the transmission of pollutants in the water.

“The recent contamination of wells from failed septic systems in Door County can be linked to one thing: how polluted water can travel long distances in our county’s fractured limestone,” said Jerry Viste, DCEC’s executive director.

“It’s good timing that we could get an expert of Dr. Muldoon’s standing to come to our county right now. A lot of people are very concerned about the health of their wells,” Viste said.

Muldoon’'s presentation will take a special focus on how residents can look after their own drinking water supply and precautions they can take to assure their water is safe.

Muldoon won the American Society of Testing and Materials Standards Development Award for “Standard Guide for the Design of Ground-Water Monitoring Systems in Karst and Fractured-Rock Aquifers.” Her numerous scientific papers have been widely published throughout the U.S.

She is very active in the study of drinking water problems in Door County, including membership in the Karst Task Force, which examined the “brown water incidents” in Brown County in 2006-2007. She also is a frequent collaborator with our county soil and water’s Bill Schuster.

The Door County Environmental Council is a 38-year-old not-for-profit organization dedicated to preserving Door County’s environment for the generations to come. DCEC programs are free and open to the public.

Visit DCEC on the Web at www.dcec-wi.com.

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