

### **Willcome Manure Dump-BEPCO statement**

The Big Eau Pleine Citizen's Organization (BEPCO) is working hard to improve the water quality of the Big Eau Pleine Reservoir. When polluted runoff full of nutrients enters our waterways, water quality is harmed. BEPCO recognizes that while the majority of farmers in our area practice good nutrient (manure) management, this is not the case for all.

This spring an intentional manure discharge violation was discovered on the Willcome farm in Marathon County. An estimated 1 million gallons of manure was deliberately pumped from its holding facility directly to the land in an uncontrolled manner over the period of several months. Much of this waste eventually traveled to the Little Eau Pleine River, and likely fueled algae blooms that are harmful to human health and aquatic life.

We feel that the resultant \$500 fine by the Department of Natural Resources was a mere slap on the wrist and is highly inadequate. What is the message that is sent to other would-be offenders, if such an egregious violation of water quality carries such a ridiculously light penalty? BEPCO believes that stiffer fines and stricter penalties for violators need to be handed down to prevent future events like this.