

Manure on frozen field blamed for killing trout

The Associated Press

Manure spread on a frozen field is blamed for killing dozens of brown trout in southern Wisconsin — just two weeks before public hearings start on proposed new rules that would streamline the process for expanding livestock farms in the state.

The West Branch of the Sugar River, near Mount Horeb in Dane County, had been removed last October from a federal government list of impaired waters, after more than \$900,000 in state and federal grants and thousands of volunteer hours turned a shallow, muddy stream into prime trout habitat.

But officials said Monday that the stream was damaged because a farmer last week spread liquid cow manure on an icy field.

A thaw Friday then sent the waste running into the stream, said Michael Sorge, a water resources specialist with the state Department of Natural Resources who was on the scene. He said the trout were killed by ammonia from the manure.

By late Monday, workers with the DNR had recovered more than 100 dead trout, some as long as 19 inches.

DNR fish biologist Kurt Welke said many other dead fish remain on the stream bottom or stuck under the

Hearings on new state rules for livestock expansions

Proposed rules implementing a new law on expansion of livestock farms and management of manure will be the subject of afternoon and evening hearings at the following sites:

- March 14, Jefferson, Community Credit Union.
- March 15, Green Lake, Heidel House.
- March 17, Richland Center, Ramada White House.
- March 22, Manitowoc, UW-Manitowoc Center.
- March 23, Wausau, Northcentral Technical College.
- March 24, Chippewa Valley Technical College.

Source: Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

banks. He added that much of the manure is still on the frozen ground and could flow toward the stream with another thaw.

"If there is a gradual warm-up in temperature, then there may be a chronic but lesser amount of manure discharging to the river," he said. "A quick jump in temperature may spell trouble in that a major slug could impact the river."