

**SOUTHEAST MINNESOTA WATER RESOURCES BOARD  
WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

**May 2, 2007**

**In attendance**

Dodge County:	Dean Schrandt	Wabasha County:	Byron Evers
Fillmore County:	Donna Rasmussen	Winona County:	Pat Bailey
Goodhue County:	Beau Kennedy	BWSR:	Mary Kells
Houston County:		MPCA:	Justin Watkins
Mower County:	Bill Buckley		Bill Thompson
Olmsted County:	Terry Lee		Norman Senjem
Rice County:	Jennifer Mocol	WSU:	Ross Hoffmann
Steele County:		SEMWRB:	Bea Hoffmann

**SUMMARY**

**May 14 Board Meeting and Open House** – final arrangements and job assignments were made for the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration following the business meeting

**MPCA Commissioner Moore Letters and Resolution 2007-1** – a letter congratulating the county staff, the Board, and our wastewater educator and facilitators for work with unsewered communities was discussed; a resolution advocating long-term funding for wastewater facilitator services will be brought before the Board at the upcoming meeting.

**County Board Reporting** - because county board agendas are usually packed with pressing business, the staff recommended to the Board that the Executive Director make reports to boards only on an as-needed basis to discuss specific projects.

**Volunteer Nitrate Monitoring Project**

**May 21 Well Network Coordinator Training** – all counties are encouraged to bring their GPS units to the training.

**Delivery of Random Parcel and Baseline Data** - all counties wanted to get the 4 well selection rounds at one time as well as the baseline wells. They preferred to receive this information before the training. Counties will also receive a buffer layer to overlay on parcels.

**Recommend Sampling Schedule/Sample Bottle & Mailer Costs** – the staff decided that we should purchase a better quality bottle that can be washed and reused. These bottles will be purchased through the grant and this avoids the problem of constant reordering. After review of the on-going costs of sampling and a lengthy discussion about sampling times, it was decided to sample 2x/year -- February 23 to get a baseline when the ground is frozen, and June 23 when SE MN usually experiences high rainfall. This recommendation will be forwarded to the MDH and MDA staff for review. It was also decided that rather than transporting Hach nitrate analyzer units to and from the counties, we will use the two units permanently housed in Rochester (MDH offices and MDA offices at the DNR building). The MDH and MDA will be providing a protocol for shipping, storing (holding time and method), and analysis of samples.

**Recommend Use of Publicity** – staff decided not to send out any publicity before contacting well owners to avoid having to turn away volunteers who are not pre-selected through the regional grid. It was decided that all counties should adhere to this decision.

**Development of County Water Quality Databases** – the MDH will develop a water quality database that is linked to the CWI for each county that does not already have one. No indication from MDH as to when this database will be prepared.

**GPS Unit and Software Usability** – all wells will have to be GPS located and recorded with the MDH and counties will have to export this information into a format usable by the MDH. Al Epp will be the MDH contact for this. The county name will need to be in the text file name. They can email the data to Ross or to Al Epp at the MDH.

### **Shoreland Initiative Update**

**New DNR Vegetative Buffer Brochure** – some comments have already been received. Brochure was reviewed by staff and additional suggestions made for improvements. Suggestion made to send the draft brochure to Tabor Hoek, BWSR, for review.

**Fillmore County** – Commissioner Bakke asked that the resolution be brought forward. It will go to the SWCD Board first and then the county board.

**Goodhue County** – began initiative last summer with an SWCD Board resolution and then bringing Grant County staff in for a presentation on their successful program. Beau Kennedy then began going township by township with education and the resolution. Some have been more receptive than others. Goodhue County estimates they have about 1200 unprotected Shoreland acres owned by about 200 landowners.

**Winona County** – Pat Bailey noticed a number of conflicts between the Shoreland buffer requirements and other requirements such as ag chemical setbacks and manure application setbacks. Pat brought this to the county's attention as part of a Conditional Use Permit application process where the manure management plan conflicted with the Shoreland ordinance. Bill Huber, DNR, also sent a letter on this matter. Bill Huber was brought in to discuss these issues with the water plan technical committee. The committee recommended bringing the resolution to the county board but also going to producer groups with the information.

**Olmsted County** – a detailed land cover assessment was presented to the Environmental Commission. It is estimated that the county has 500 acres that do not meet the Shoreland buffer requirements. The Commission unanimously recommended that the County Board change the Zoning Ordinance administration policy of grandfathering non-conforming land cover in the 50-foot Shoreland area to a performance-based policy.

**Leave It to (the) Beaver** - Terry Lee, Olmsted County Water Coordinator, presented a history of the beaver in the United States and made a case for restoration of this species based on the potential benefits to water quality and the general health of the ecosystem. By the early 1500's, the French fur trade was underway and by 1700, the beaver had been extirpated from the east coast. Beaver reintroduction began in 1900. The hydrologic impacts of beaver extirpation include sediment removal, incising of streams, lower water tables, drained wetlands, drier landscapes, high peak flows and low stream base flows. It has been shown that 25% of the beaver population can be harvested without significant population impact. There is a need to change people's perception about the land in stream corridors – that it is not just a strip of land but an ecosystem. This would help the public understand the value of the beaver.