

**SOUTHEAST MINNESOTA WATER RESOURCES BOARD
WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
March 5, 2008**

SUMMARY

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:	Rocky Danielson	MDH:	Chris DeMattos
Mower County:	Bill Buckley		Pete Zimmerman
Olmsted County:		Quarry Hill:	Greg Munson
Rice County:		SEMWRB:	Bea Hoffmann
Steele County:			

The program for the **March 10 Board meeting** will include Terry Bovee, Wellhead Protection Planner, MDH, presenting a Wellhead Protection update for the region and Wayne James, President of the MN Onsite Wastewater Association, speaking on the new SSTS rules which will be coming before all county boards. Input was solicited for the May, July, and November meetings, referring to 2008 Workplan Goals. For the **May 12 Board meeting**, Pat Bailey suggested bringing in Ceil Strauss, DNR, to discuss the structure of floodplain ordinances, the relationship between shoreland and floodplain and the “no adverse impact” concept as a tie-in to the April forum on the flood.

Historic documents on the Ironwood Landfill contamination will be coming into our possession from Gary Peterson, former Fillmore Co. Commissioner, via Donna Rasmussen. Ideas for having a documentary made were solicited: contact Channel 2, community college in Austin, MPCA communications staff, WSU mass media, seek grant funding.

Four separate **LiDAR initiatives** are in process: a House bill introduced by Rep. Rick Hanson for statewide LiDAR, FY 2009 appropriations requests through Senator Klobuchar’s and Congressman Walz’ offices, and a PFA application through the MN Recovers Task Force.

Volunteer Nitrate Monitoring Project – Jim Lundy, MDH asked that the following information and requests be related to the Well Network Coordinators:

MDH will enter all your nitrate results into an Access database so please send hard or electronic copies of your sample tracking records to Jim. Jim is using the well information and location forms you send him to:

- 1) Enter the location data into CWI
- 2) If there is a Unique Well Number, verify that it is that well
- 3) If there is no Unique Well Number, assign a UW# to that well
- 4) Assign an aquifer to the well if he has enough information

Jim is adding this new information to the well information forms you sent him. He will then scan the marked-up forms and send them back to you electronically. There was discussion about how the first sampling period went. Some concern was expressed about dropouts. It was decided to invite MPCA staff with experience in maintaining a volunteer network to our May 12 staff meeting. Other questions for MDA staff: How close to the Feb. 25 date does the sample have to be collected to be considered valid? If volunteer participation rates drop, at what point is the sample no longer considered valid? The staff decided that they are not yet ready to do any general PR on the project.

County Straight Pipe Inventory Grants – Bill Buckley, Dean Schrandt, and Donna Rasmussen reported on their county’s proposed workplans:

Mower – received \$40,000 to be used for existing staff and lab tests to look for discharges systems in the Cedar River corridor up to a quarter mile on each side. They will include parcels that are partially in and partially out of the corridor. They hope to complete the work in a 6-month period. Their process will include a parcel search, then a records search of those parcels to find either those with no permit or systems installed prior to 1988. They plan a walking/floating tour of the river and will use the Mower County lab to test any discharges they find. Any discovered ITPH will have 10 months to correct the violation.

Dodge – counting on cooperation in the Salem Creek watershed where there are 140 homes with a suspected 100 failing systems. A fecal coliform study was completed in this watershed and much awareness-raising has already been done with the residents. They will use an educational process through peer groups rather than an inspection with mandatory upgrade. They also plan to test discharges coming out of pipes and tile lines using a new method for DNA fingerprinting that is 80% accurate and that may be used as evidence to show watershed residents.

Fillmore - received \$175,000 for grants to low-income owners of identified ITPH. 550 ITPH systems were identified throughout the county. Half have been fixed. Of the last half, some don’t have the funds to pay for a new system. Fillmore has laid out criteria for eligibility that includes a first screening for Public Assistance or Social Security Disability. If an owner qualifies, 75% of the system costs will be covered or 100% in special circumstances. The county also has the Ag BMP loan program where the county is the lender of last resort.

City of Rushford Sand Point Wells - Chris DeMattos, MDH – Rochester, reported that Rushford had 2 of 3 wells flooded in August 2007. For 19 days no water was available at all and it was one month before drinking water was available. To date they still can’t use #2 well. They cased and grouted Well #4 into the Mt. Simon and that has now cleared of bacteria since they sealed the #3 well which was multi-aquifer. They are now in the process of drilling a new well. The difficulty of cleaning up the city wells led the city to conclude that sewage was introduced to the municipal supply through sand point wells in basements throughout the city and in particular, through sand point wells that were illegally cross-connected to the city water supply. A door to door survey after the flood found about 300 sand point wells of which 190 are now sealed. The state plumbing code prohibits a cross-connection but does not prohibit new sand point wells as long as they are outside the home. For a county to have a stricter code, the county would have to be delegated.

Cascade Meadows Wetland Education Project - Greg Munson, Quarry Hill Nature Center, discussed this new and exciting project on a 100 acre site behind the Rochester Athletic Club. The land contains a branch of Cascade Creek, and an historic, but degraded, wetland that is the only site in Olmsted County with wild rice. The site now has a channelized ditch that drains water from the west. This will be changed to sheet flow with water control structures. The 7-year process will include the building of educational facilities and wetland restoration. There will also be a 12 acre lake outside the delineated wetland area. The project will have an energy and water focus and could serve as a demo site for biofuel production with the building possibly using geothermal heating, photovoltaic, and wind energy sources. There will be on-going monitoring for water quality. Input from all interested parties is being sought and the Zumbro Watershed Partnership has been approached as a possible partner in the endeavor.