

**SOUTHEAST MINNESOTA WATER RESOURCES BOARD
WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
May 7, 2008**

SUMMARY

In attendance

Dodge County:	Dean Schrandt	Winona County:	Pat Bailey
Fillmore County:	Donna Rasmussen	MDA:	Mark Zabel
Goodhue County:	Beau Kennedy	MDH:	Jim Lundy
Houston County:		MDH:	Mark Wettlaufer
Mower County:	Bill Buckley	SEMWRB:	Bea Hoffmann
	Justin Hanson	MPCA:	Tim Thurnblad
Olmsted County:	Terry Lee		Laurie Sovell
	Sheila Harmes		Katherine Logan
Rice County:	Jennifer Mocol-Johnson		Norman Senjem
Steele County:	Scott Golberg		Justin Watkins
Wabasha County:	Byron Evers		
	Troy Dankemeyer		

May 12 Board meeting – Ceil Strauss, MN DNR Floodplain Management Hydrologist and Bill Huber, DNR Area Hydrologist, will give a presentation to the Board on the history and structure of floodplain ordinances, the relationship between shoreland and floodplain and the “no adverse impact” concept.

Straight Pipe Inventory Grant Update – the MPCA declined to approve Dodge County’s workplan because it did not include on-site inspections. Steele County did not want to go forward with a project; however, Goodhue County is interested in inventorying several clusters of homes. If their Ordinance Enforcement committee gives the go-ahead, they will proceed to work with us on this project.

Roberd’s Lake SSTS Project - Jenny Mocol- Johnson, Water Planner, Rice County, reported that all their inventory work will be done in-house as they have 6 certified inspectors. 300 parcels are targeted for this July and completion is scheduled for December 2009. Their incentive will be the county septic loan programs as the incentive funds in the grant proposal were denied. A letter will be sent 2 weeks before going door to door. Roberd’s Lake was targeted because it is impaired for excess nutrients.

LiDAR Update, LiDAR workshop – the MN Recovers Task Force has set LiDAR as their #1 priority for unspent funds. If the funding comes through, the DNR would manage the project. Mower County cannot receive the MN Recovers funding as they were not a disaster-declared county in the August 2007 flood, however, the USGS may have some funds for a Mower County flyover.

Volunteer Nitrate Monitoring Network – Mark Zabel, MDA, said that the funding for the widespread testing of pesticides in the region had to be returned to the EPA, however the MDA will do some pesticide testing using their own lab. He will test 14 springs and 15 shallow wells, looking for comparisons between the 2 as far as land use to answer the question, “Are pesticides getting into the ground water and if so, how much is there?” The springs will be in Fillmore, Houston, Winona, Olmsted, and Goodhue Counties. Preferred time to conduct these tests is in August. Mark addressed the issue of data validity in the case of volunteer drop outs. We used the figure of 675 node points based on the variability of previous lab results (Olmsted lab, MDH, and Dodge County data). The amount of dropout we can tolerate is based on the amount of variability in the nitrate concentrations that we see in our results. A wider variability will mean we need more samples to be able to answer the study question

with confidence: What is the overall quality of the water? Mark showed 3 examples of graphs for reporting of results. The type of graph used would depend on the audience, whether it be volunteers, elected officials, mass media, or state agencies. Other suggestions by staff for reporting included:

- one page newsletter and annual report for volunteers
- web site posting of results
- node # and sample concentration
- regional summary
- county-by-county summary
- compare counties to regional data set
- compare regional data set to state data set
- pre-code vs. post-code well results
- average nitrate concentrations by aquifer

Laurie Sovell, Coordinator, MPCA Citizen Stream Monitoring Program spoke on “Sustaining a Volunteer Monitoring Network”. The program has 500 volunteers statewide. Streams may be listed as impaired based on citizen data. Most recruitment is through local staff. 11% recruitment is through articles and press releases. The CSMP web site shows where volunteers are needed. The average rate of participation is 2-3 years. Those who continue beyond that usually stick with the program. Those volunteers who see no variation in results (ex: always getting > 60 cm reading) tend to drop out. Adding on new types of sampling helps maintain interest. A Carlson School of Management study about volunteer sustainability suggested:

- Increase frequency of communications
- Communicate what is relevant to the volunteers such as tie-ins to health
- Educate volunteers about water monitoring
- Send a 1x/year newsletter or email newsletter
- Reports are important
- Bring volunteers together at an annual banquet
- Provide recognition awards (but hats and t-shirts were not motivational)
- Report data on more local scale
- Report how the data is being used locally or regionally; what difference the data is making
- Report comparisons to other data

Additional staff suggestions for sustaining volunteers in our ground water monitoring network were:

- emphasize importance of remaining in network to give a sense of purpose, that the value of data increases over time as trends emerge
- bring people together county by county; also, could bring stream and well volunteers together to talk about wider water issues; give a sense of belonging
- communicate to volunteers that if volunteers with 0 ppm drop out, data could become skewed

Mark Wettlaufer, Source Water Protection Specialist, MN Rural Water Association led a discussion to plan a Wellhead Protection (WHP) Workshop for public water suppliers & local staff. The purpose is to help the public water supply managers carry out their WHP implementation plans by connecting them to their local players and programs. Workshop topics suggested by staff included the nature of recharge and the sensitivity of a karst terrain, appropriations permits and DNR water conservation plans, and ISTS and GIS staff to talk about existing databases, importance of nutrient management plans, chlorine and fluoride issues, Rushford well sealing and well sealing, in general. Mark will return with a draft agenda at our July meeting. December 3 was selected for the workshop date.