



Kewaunee County Groundwater Task Force Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 9th, 2016 1:30 PM
Kewaunee County Administration Building
810 Lincoln Street - Kewaunee, WI 54216
Large Conference Room

- 1) **Call To Order** at 1:30 PM by Chairman Luft
- 2) **New Groundwater Task Force Secretary:** Due to increasing demands on her time, Secretary Bonness has asked to be relieved of her GWTF secretarial duties. Chairman Luft appointed Groundwater Task Force member, Dick Swanson to the post of secretary. Chairman Luft asks for consensus on this appointment which was received.
- 3) **Roll Call** – Secretary Swanson. All present except for John Pagel (excused) and Tom Kliman (absent).
- 4) **Approval/Repair of March 9th, 2016 Agenda:** Motion by Aerica Bjurstrom, seconded by Cindy Kinnard. Motion approved unanimously.
- 5) **Approval/Repair of February 10th, 2016 Meeting Minutes:** Motion to approve minutes as submitted by Aerica Bjurstrom and seconded by Cindy Kinnard. Motion carried unanimously.
- 6) **Discuss recent ground and surface water related events or issues.**

A) **USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Kewaunee County Water Quality Improvement Project.**

- a. Davina Bonness indicated she was working with Jimmy Bramblett chief of NRCS in Wisconsin to gather the detailed information on current water quality conditions here in Kewaunee County. This detailed information will be used to develop realistic recommendations regarding goals for improvement in water conditions, soil conservation, etc. Davina reminded the GWTF that this is a two year project and that the NRCS team working in Kewaunee County is on step #2 of 9 steps.
- b. Based on current conditions, the NRCS team must then decide to:
 - *Accept existing conditions
 - * Adjust quality criteria
 - *Develop new criteria
 - *Some combination of the above

All NRCS recommendations need to keep in step with State and Federal Rules.

Example: Most waterways have a designated use and associated water quality standards that are to be preserved or attained.

B) **DNR established five work groups to address Kewaunee County's ground and surface water problems at our August 5th meeting. Members discuss updates from the three active work groups since the February 10th, 2016 Groundwater Task Force meeting.**

- a. Short Term Solutions to obtain clean water for citizens living with unsafe wells. (Davina Bonness, Cindy Kinnard, John Pagel, Dick Swanson, and Ron Heuer are members of this workgroup).

Davina reported that the approved recommendations of the Short Term Solutions Workgroup are to be published by the Communications Workgroup in the very near term. The list of key recommendations will be available for review at the next Groundwater Task Force meeting on April 6th.

- b. Best Management Practices for agriculture in dealing with Kewaunee County's vulnerable areas. (Davina Bonness is a member of this workgroup).

Davina reported that the Best Management Practices Workgroup would meet again on March 17th to finalize their recommendations.

- c. Compliance and enforcement issues. (Davina Bonness and Lee Luft are members of this group).

The Compliance Workgroup recommendations are to be published by the Communications Workgroup very shortly and will be available for review at the next Groundwater Task Force meeting on April 6th.

- d. Communication, getting accurate information to the public and information hub for all other group's recommendations.

Previous meeting date for Communications workgroup was February 11, 2016. Davina reported that the Communications Workgroup has completed the listing of recommendations from the Short Term Solutions and Compliance Workgroups and that these recommendations would be published on the DNR's website.

- e. Alternative Technologies for waste treatment, disposal, and spreading.

Previous meeting: Russ Rasmussen indicated that this group would look at three major areas of agricultural technology:

1. Things being done successfully elsewhere.
2. New and promising technologies.
3. Asking the question; are we implementing new technologies in a timely and proper manner?

C) Update of November 13th/14th and November 20th/21st Private Well Water Test results.

Davina reported speaking with Dr. Mark Borchardt regarding the stratification analysis (well test results reported by the depths of the tested wells). The reports on well test stratification are not yet complete. Davina indicated that reporting the well stratification results is a major undertaking and may not be complete for some time. Planning for the spring 2016 well testing that will involve up to 500 wells in Kewaunee County is moving forward with tentative timing for June or July, 2016.

Davina also reported that some "auto testing" of wells is moving forward so that frequent water tests from a limited number of wells can be taken on a regular basis.

Davina also reported she is working with Dr. Borchardt on virus testing of some wells that have been determined to be unsafe for human consumption. These tests will more definitively identify the source of the contamination.

Davina also indicated that the DNR is looking at conducting more on-farm inspections (at least one per year) and adding more inspectors and conducting more manure hauling audits.

D) Update on clean water access project in Algoma headed by Algoma Public Schools.

Nick Cochart reported that there are approximately 40 families now utilizing the Clean Water Kiosk at the Algoma High School.

Nick also reported three instances of vandalism at the kiosk. The latest incident has damaged the computer screen of the system and the system is now out of operation. A discussion ensued about reporting of these acts of vandalism to the County Sheriff. Nick indicated that he had not reported the incidents and Lee Luft indicated he would contact the Sheriff to inform him of these acts of vandalism. This was done. Additionally, Nick reported that a Kewaunee County CAFO owner, Randy Ebert of Ebert Enterprises had spoken to the Algoma School Board about his objections to a “non local” company (Stonehouse Technologies of Milwaukee) supplying key components of the clean water kiosk. Nick reported that Mr. Ebert’s concerns centered around a non-local company placing what Mr. Ebert said was an advertisement in the Algoma High School newsletter and using its (Stonehouse’s) website to draw attention to the water concerns in Kewaunee County. Nick reported that there is video of Mr. Ebert’s comments circulating on the internet as all Algoma School Board meetings are video taped. Most members of the Groundwater Task Force had not seen the video. Lee Luft said he would forward a copy of the video he had received to the GWTF members. This was done.

E) Progress on Project Phoenix

Ron Heuer provided an update on the selection of a consulting firm, Roach and Associates to conduct a Public Service Commission funded feasibility study of the potential to treat liquid manure and capture the methane gas for resale as a green energy source. Five companies provided bids for this consulting project. Ron explained that Roach could not complete the study without some additional assistance from another firm that may have more experience with the technology involved in capturing and processing methane gas. Administrator Feldt will be charged with negotiating with Roach and Associates to select a partner firm to complete this study and remain on budget. The Phoenix Project envisions piping or transporting liquid manure to a centralized manure process facility in Kewaunee County where the methane gas would be captured, cleaned and compressed.

F) Other issues for discussion?

Davina spoke about Erin Hoff, the new Kewaunee County Land and Water Conservation Department Specialist. Davina reported that Erin is very well versed in the SNAP+ program and has already been a huge asset to the department in reviewing nutrient management plans.

Davina also spoke about testifying in Madison in front of a legislative committee considering a bill sponsored by Joel Kitchens that would increase the funding and availability of well compensation for citizens whose wells are unsafe for human consumption. This bill was ultimately not approved by the Wisconsin legislature.

Ron Heuer brought up the question of the Groundwater Task Force charter and the need for renewal of our one year term. Ron indicated he would cover this issue at the County Board meeting on March 15th and seek a temporary extension of the GWTF charter until such time as the newly seated County Board could meet to consider this issue.

7) Discuss progress in achieving approved Groundwater Task Force goals.

- A. Goal:** Groundwater Task Force will establish a website that will provide a “one stop” source for updates on Kewaunee County’s ground and surface waters. **Champions: Cindy Kinnard and Aerica Bjurstrom.**

- a) Update on web site development by Aerica Bjurstrom and Cindy Kinnard. Postings of Press Release #3 (Interview with Supervisor Chuck Wagner) and Press Release #4 (Algoma Clean Water Kiosk Instructions) are now complete.
 - b) Aerica and Cindy discussed working on changes to improve user's ability to bring up reports and other data.
- B. **Goal:** Groundwater Task Force will publish no less than one press release per month to update Kewaunee County residents on the activities of the Task Force, County, State, and Federal entities working to improve groundwater and surface water in Kewaunee Co. **Champion: Lee Luft**

Proposed News Releases

- a) Well Test Results by soil depth. *Information is not yet available for posting.*
- b) Final Recommendations of the Short Term Solutions and Compliance Workgroups - *Lee to work on this for April meeting.*
- c) Map of Kewaunee County showing areas with most unsafe wells. *Davina to obtain and post.*
- d) Others?: *Well abandonment.*

8) Public Comments (3 minutes per person – 20 minutes total)

Bill Iwen: Bill thanked Davina for helping to arrange the presentation of Ray Archuleta from NRCS to speak on soil health. Bill also mentioned how perk tests could be used in conjunction with NMPs. Bill also talked about how reports on high capacity well use at large farms was inaccurate, e.g. a fraction of the expected usage for the cattle herd sizes on these farms. Bill said he was talking to the DNR to try to get more accurate numbers.

Donald Poore: Don talked about his well contamination issues and getting more information from the Kewaunee County Health Department. Don also wants maps showing soil depths throughout the county. Davina indicated she could provide the soil-depth to bedrock maps. Don also asked questions about the upcoming well tests to be conducted by Mark Borchardt of the USDA and the University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh.

Sue Weisser: Sue asked questions about the requirements for the safe abandonment of old/unused wells. Davina, Cindy and Lee provided a response to these questions.

Jodi Parins: Jodi thanked Davina for arranging to have Ray Archuleta speak here in Kewaunee County. Jodi suggested we invite Mr. Archuleta back for another presentation to allow more members of the agricultural community to attend. Jodi also asked about grants for well testing e.g. available grants, etc. Ron, Davina and other members of the Task Force responded to this question. Jodi also asked that the GWTF write a letter in support of the new Clean Water Kiosk to the Algoma School Board and Stonehouse Technologies. Ron and Lee and all agreed to provide a letter of support. *Lee will put together a draft of such a letter and provide it to the GWTF in time for the next meeting.*

9) Other matters to discuss:

Lee discussed an event held in Portage County in December of 2015. Portage County Executive Patty Dreier hosted a Groundwater Field Day for State Legislators on December 4th, 2015 to talk about the groundwater issues there from the perspective of many county stakeholders. *Lee will follow up with Ms. Dreier to understand if this Groundwater Field Day had been a success.*

10) **Set next meeting date:** April 6th, 2016 at 1:00 PM

11) **Adjournment:** Motion to adjourn by Dick Swanson, seconded by Nick Cochart. Motion carried unanimously.