



Kewaunee County Groundwater Task Force Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 6th, 2016 1:00 PM

Kewaunee County Administration Building

810 Lincoln Street - Kewaunee, WI 54216

Large Conference Room

- 1) **Call To Order** at 1:00 PM by Chairman Luft
- 2) **Roll Call** – Secretary Swanson. All present except for Davina Bonness, Ron Heuer, Nick Cochart and Aerica Bjurstrom- all were excused.
- 3) **Approval/Repair of April 6th, 2016 Agenda:** Motion by Cindy Kinnard, seconded by John Pagel. Motion approved unanimously.
- 4) **Approval/Repair of March 9th, 2016 Meeting Minutes:** Motion to approve minutes as submitted by John Pagel and seconded by Dick Swanson. Motion carried unanimously.
- 5) **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 previously that 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 was excused from the April 6th GWTF meeting and consequently there were no new updates on the NRCS progress.

B) **DNR established five work groups to address Kewaunee County's ground and surface water problems at our August 5th meeting. GWTF Members discuss updates from the three active work groups since the March 9th, 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 were members of this workgroup).

A listing of the approved recommendations prepared after the last meeting of the Short Term Solutions Workgroup was passed out to all GWTF members present and discussed. Many recommendations from the Short Term Solutions Workgroup were unanimous. Short Term Solutions Workgroup recommendations are to be placed on the GWTF web page soon.

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

At the March 9th GWTF meeting, Davina reported that the Best Management Practices Workgroup would meet again on March 17th to finalize their recommendations. Chairman Luft reported that after speaking with Davina, the Best Management Practices Workgroup has now completed their work and their recommendations would be published shortly.

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

A listing of the approved recommendations prepared after the last meeting of the Compliance Workgroup was passed out to all GWTF members present and discussed. Many recommendations from the Compliance Workgroup were unanimous. Compliance Workgroup recommendations to be placed on the GWTF web page soon.

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

Davina reported to Chairman Luft that the Communications Workgroup now has all of the recommendations from the Short Term Solutions, Best Practices and Compliance Workgroups and that these recommendations would be compiled and published soon 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?

Davina reported to Chairman Luft that the Alternative Technologies Workgroup has not met as yet.

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

Luft reported speaking with Maureen Muldoon of the U.W. Oshkosh Extension regarding the November 2015 well test data. Ms. Muldoon indicated that the reports on well test stratification are not yet complete. Ms. Muldoon indicated that reporting the well stratification results is a major undertaking and may not be complete for some time due to some incomplete well data regarding depth, casing, etc. Planning for the spring/summer 2016 well testing that will involve up to 500 wells in Kewaunee County is moving forward with tentative timing for June or July, 2016.

Previously, Davina 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 previously that 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 provided an update for Chairman Luft to report that since the installation of security cameras, there have been no further incidents of vandalism at the new water kiosk. Nick also provided an update that there are now approximately 40 families utilizing the Clean Water Kiosk at the Algoma High School.

E) Progress on Project Phoenix

There were no updates on Project Phoenix. Project Phoenix 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 for re-sale as a

“green fuel.” A five month study on the feasibility of this approach was funded for Kewaunee County by the Public Service Commission.

F) Other issues for discussion?

- a. Cindy Kinnard and Chairman Luft discussed the idea of sending a letter to well owners to encourage well testing. Cindy indicated mailing costs could be a concern for her Department. Health Services could request the additional funds or there is a potential to obtain donations.
- b. Chairman Luft discussed an April 1st presentation by Kewaunee County resident and research scientist, Gerald Pellett before the UW Stevens Point Extension Conference 2016 Wisconsin Lakes Partnership Convension. Mr. Pellett’s presentation tracked surface water sampling over three years from Kewaunee County’s major waterways and the findings that levels of Nitrate, Phosphorus and other contaminants are increasing.
- c. Chairman Luft led a discussion on the recent DNR approval of a permit for Agropur to increase Chloride discharges by over 250% into a tributary of the East Twin River. This increase from 1,300 lbs. of Chloride per day to 3,280 lbs. per day will occur due to the expansion of the Agropur plant and the DNR’s ruling that the increase is justified due to “important social and economic development” in Kewaunee County. In total 599 tons of Chloride will now enter the East Twin River water system. No elected officials from Kewaunee County were consulted by the DNR as to the impact this higher discharge would have on an already impaired waterway.
- d. John Pagel spoke about the recently formed Peninsula Pride Farm organization and their efforts to improve education related to enhancing soil quality, reducing erosion, and reducing the impact of farming on ground and surface waters in the Door-Kewaunee Peninsula. Chairman Luft has invited Don Niles, president of Peninsula Pride Farms to speak in greater detail about this new organization at the May 4th GWTF meeting. Chairman Luft passed out a reprint of a local news story highlighting the creation of the Peninsula Pride group.
- e. Extending the charter of the Groundwater Task Force was discussed. Renewal of the GWTF charter for a period of time is very likely. Chairman Luft will have more information to report following the County Board’s reorganization meetings.
- f. Chairman Luft passed out information about recent studies at the University of Buffalo, New York showing that hormones and antibiotics persist in cattle manure even following advanced treatment. This information could impact both ground and surface water quality. The study indicates “One of the messages of our work is that even anaerobic digestion, an advanced treatment, doesn’t totally remove these chemicals which may pose a danger to the environment.”

6) 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 Short-term Solutions Workgroup and Compliance Workgroup should be completed soon.

- 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 - *Updated recommendations from all three workgroups is pending release by the DNR Communications Workgroup.*
- c) Map of Kewaunee County showing areas with most unsafe wells. *Davina to obtain and post. Now Complete.*
- d) Others? *Well abandonment Protocol – Now complete.*

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

Mary Ellen Dobbins: Mary Ellen asked for evening meetings so more residents could attend. Mary Ellen thought that the DNR or DBA could assist with mailing costs for a letter from the Health Services Department to all Kewaunee County well owners.

Bill Iwen: Bill thanked Gerald Pellett for all his work to compile the many years of water testing. Bill indicated that Kewaunee County Water Action Volunteers have been asked by the DNR to help with water testing again in 2016. Bill also mentioned the subject of “Water Quality Trading” or using credits from one company or organization to allow another organization to add to its pollutant emissions.

Tom Reczek: Tom talked about Lake Michigan water pollution and the sources of that pollution and what impact that pollution has on our groundwater and on water systems that draw water from Lake Michigan. Tom spoke about the Dead Zones in the bay of Green Bay and Lake Michigan and wanted to know what the GWTF could do to improve those concerns.

Mick Sagrillo: Mick said he supports continuation of the Groundwater Task Force and said thank you to all the members of the GWTF for the work done to date. Mick said he wants the Board to approve an extension of the GWTF and that Nitrates are elevated in many parts of the County’s ground and surface waters.

8) 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.*

9) **Set next meeting date:** May 4th, 2016 at 1:00 PM

10) **Adjournment:** Motion to adjourn at 1:50 PM by Cindy Kinnard, seconded by Dick Swanson. Motion carried unanimously.