



Kewaunee County Groundwater Task Force Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 4th, 2016 1:00 PM
Kewaunee County Administration Building
810 Lincoln Street - Kewaunee, WI 54216
County Board Meeting Room

The 2016 Kewaunee County Groundwater Task Force membership now includes:

Davina Bonness, Aerica Bjurstrom, Cindy Kinnard, Bob Garfinkel, Tom Kleiman, Andy Wallander, Dick Swanson, Mary Ellen Dobbins, Ron Paider and Lee Luft

- 1) **Call To Order** at 1:00 PM by Chairman Luft
- 2) **Roll Call** – All present except for Davina Bonness, Andy Wallander, and Dick Swanson. All were excused absences.
- 3) **Approval/Repair of May 4th, 2016 Agenda:** Motion by Bob Garfinkel, second by Mary Ellen Dobbins. Motion approved unanimously.
- 4) **Approval/Repair of April 6th, 2016 Meeting Minutes:** Motion to approve minutes as submitted by Tom Kleiman and seconded by Bob Garfinkel. 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. There were no new updates on the NRCS progress at this meeting.

B) DNR established five work groups to address Kewaunee County's ground and surface water problems at our August 5th, 2015 meeting. GWTF Members discuss updates from the three active work groups since the April 6th, 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 new GWTF members and those who had not been present at the April meeting. One of the recommendations to provide county funds for clean water was discussed as this idea originated in the Short-term Solutions Workgroup. Additionally, a suggestion by former GWTF member, Ron Heuer to seek low interest loans for Kewaunee and Door County Residents who need to purchase water treatment systems was discussed. The Great Lakes Rural Community Assistance Partnership in Ohio offers low interest loans (1% interest rate) for those who meet certain income requirements and who need home water treatment due to unsafe wells and residents from Door and Kewaunee County may qualify for these low cost loans. Scott Feldt, Kewaunee County Administrator is working with the Great Lakes Rural Community Assistance Partnership and Mr. Feldt will report back when the process to apply for such low interest loans from the Great Lakes RCAP is available. In the meantime, other low interest loan and grant options from the USDA and the State of Wisconsin for those who have a contaminated water supply may be found on the Groundwater Task Force web page at www.kewauneeco.org.

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

The Best Management Practices Workgroup has now completed their work and their recommendations would be published shortly in concert with the recommendations of the Short-term Solutions Workgroup and the Compliance Workgroup.

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

A listing of the approved recommendations prepared after the last meeting of the Compliance Workgroup was passed out to all new GWTF members present and members who were not present at the April 6th meeting. Many recommendations from the Compliance Workgroup were unanimous. Compliance Workgroup recommendations will be placed on the GWTF web page as soon as they are made available by the DNR Communications Workgroup.

- 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 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.

On May 3rd, the DNR used a press release to report that 30 Kewaunee County wells that had been tested in November of 2015 had been further evaluated for other contaminants. Of the 30 randomly selected wells that had been shown to have unsafe levels of Nitrates or bacteria in November of 2015, 11 wells now tested positive for Salmonella and/or Rotavirus. Cindy Kinnard indicated that she had just been made aware of these new test results and that her Health Department staff had already begun the well contamination protocol of contacting all private well owners within a half-mile radius of the wells that tested positive for Salmonella and/Rotavirus. The DNR also announced that it would pay the cost of testing for those households within the half mile

radius of the wells containing the Salmonella or Rotavirus. These latest test results were part of a program that Davina Bonness had been working on with Dr. Mark Dr. Borchardt of the USDA to more definitively identify other bacteria in private Kewaunee County wells and the sources of any contamination. Cindy Kinnard indicated that the wells that indicated a positive result for Salmonella and/or Rotavirus were found in all parts of Kewaunee County from Carlton to Lincoln townships.

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 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.

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) Groundwater Task Force Reauthorization: Chairman Luft reported that Board Chairman Weidner and the Kewaunee County Board had reauthorized the work of the Groundwater Task Force through April of 2018 or until such time as the Task Force's work is substantially complete.

G) Peninsula Pride Farms: Don Niles, president of Peninsula Pride Farms (PPF) group gave a presentation on the mission of this new organization. Mr. Niles indicated that PPF was based upon another organization, Yahara Pride Farms in Dane County. Dennis Frame who helped design the Discovery Farms Program at the University of Wisconsin will assist PPF. Farm members in PPF come from all of Kewaunee County and Southern Door County and all must submit their Nutrient Management Plans to Dennis Frame for review. Member dairy farms range in size from 60 milking cows to 6,000. Mr. Niles explained that membership in PPF is currently closed to allow Mr. Frame the opportunity to review all the existing Nutrient Management Plans but that membership will re-open in the winter of 2016. Initially PPF will look at water concerns in the Kewaunee and Ahnapee watersheds. PPF will also be working with John Nelson of the Nature Conservancy.

H) Agropur Permit Issues: Chairman Luft passed out information to new members regarding the recent DNR approval for a 250% increase in the flow of Chloride into a tributary of the East Twin River. The East Twin River is already listed as an impaired waterway by the EPA and there are some reports that would indicate aquatic life has already been impacted in this watershed. It would be helpful if the Groundwater Task Force could get definitive information on the health of the aquatic life in the East Twin watershed, especially in those areas near the Chloride emission.

I) Other issues for discussion?

- a. Previously, 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. A mailing may now take on some added importance given the findings of Salmonella and/or Rotavirus in some Kewaunee County wells.
- b. Chairman Luft passed out information to new members 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."
- c. Chairman Luft discussed the possibility of holding evening meetings of the Groundwater Task Force and potentially holding these meetings in locations throughout Kewaunee County. This was a suggestion from Mary Ellen Dobbins at our April 6th meeting. Chairman Luft will list this as an agenda item for our next GWTF meeting in June when those members who were missing at this meeting could have input. It was recognized that not all GWTF members might be able to attend an evening meeting.

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) Aerica Bjurstrom indicated she had posted the final report of the Manure Irrigation Workgroup on the Groundwater Task Force site and a link to the webinar produced by the DNR regarding the findings of the Manure Irrigation Workgroup.

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) Task Force members suggested a new press release be posted to announce the new members of the Task Force. Chairman Luft will complete this new press release as soon as possible.

C. Goal: Task Force member Tom Kleiman suggested the Task Force take on a new goal of providing additional information that would document the process for capping an abandoned well and the resources available to assist those who have an abandoned well on their property or who know of an abandoned well that has not been properly capped. Uncapped abandoned wells can be a direct conduit to groundwater for any contaminants near to them. There was general agreement that this would be a good goal for the GWTF. Some information about proper well abandonment is already on the GWTF web site but the information about resources and funding help is limited and needs to be addressed. A press release was also recommended.

7) **Public Comments:**

- a. Sue Weiser spoke about the good coverage in our local papers regarding the field day sponsored by Peninsula Pride Farms.

8) **Other matters to discuss:**

Previously 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 still needs to follow up with Ms. Dreier to understand if this Groundwater Field Day had been a success.*

- 9) **Set next meeting date:** Wednesday June 8, 2016 at 1:00 PM at the Kewaunee County Administration Building.

- 10) **Adjournment:** Motion to adjourn at 2:10 PM by Tom Kleiman, seconded by Ron Pailer. Motion carried unanimously.