



Kewaunee County Groundwater Task Force Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, July 8th, 2016 1:00 PM

Kewaunee County Administration Building

810 Lincoln Street - Kewaunee, WI 54216

Large Conference Room

The 2016 Kewaunee County Groundwater Task Force membership now includes:

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

- 1) **Call To Order** at 1:00 PM by Chairman Luft
- 2) **Roll Call** – Excused absences: Aerica Bjurstrom, Davina Bonness. Chair Lee Luft explained that Tom Kleiman has resigned his position on the Groundwater Task Force. Luft then introduced the newest member of the Groundwater Task Force, Randy Hallet.
- 3) **Approval/Repair of July 8th, 2016 Agenda:**
- 4) **Approval/Repair of June 8th, 2016 Meeting Minutes:** Bob Garfinkel asked for a change to the June 8th meeting minutes to reflect that his letter to Wisconsin's U.S. Senators was in regard to ballast water in Great Lakes tankers. Motion to approve both the June 8th minutes and the July 8th agenda by Andy Wallander and seconded by Mary Ellen Dobbins. 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 was not present at this meeting but had previously indicated that the NRCS continues to make progress on defining the current surface water contamination levels in an effort to set achievable goals for reducing surface water contamination.

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 May 4th, 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).
- b. Best Management Practices for agriculture in dealing with Kewaunee County's vulnerable areas. (Davina Bonness was a member of this workgroup).
- c. Compliance and enforcement issues. (Davina Bonness and Lee Luft were members of this group).

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

Chair Luft passed out copies of the recommendations of the three DNR-Kewaunee County Workgroups. Much discussion followed to include:

- The DNR and the EPA held a joint meeting on Thursday June 23rd at the Luxemburg Expo building. The purpose of the meeting was to update the community on the recommendations of the three Kewaunee-DNR workgroups, e.g. Short-term Solutions, Best Management Practices, and Compliance/Enforcement. The meeting was very well attended with more than 100 citizens and Federal, State and County officials present. The Best Management Practices recommendations may mean rule changes which will

need to be enacted by the DNR.

- Cindy Kinnard is working on securing a grant from the State Department of Health. Nitrates are a big issue.
- County Board member Donna Thomas inquired about the clean water kiosk at the Algoma High School and a lengthy discussion followed regarding one of the recommendations of the workgroups which was to provide clean water to citizens who can't rely on their own private wells. Donna Thomas has asked that the County consider funding more clean water access areas. Information regarding Stonehouse Technologies will be forwarded to Donna Thomas.
- A discussion of the funding of current well testing followed with answers to the question about where funding is coming from for the 2016 well testing. The answer is that this funding is being provided by the DNR.
- Compliance issues were discussed and stepped up spot checking is on-going related to manure spreading activities. Additionally, the Kewaunee County Land and Water Conservation Department is now able to more carefully review the nutrient management plans of the farms required to submit them and sent many back for revisions and corrections.
- One recommendation of the DNR-Kewaunee Workgroups was to provide on-line access to all nutrient management plans for governmental agencies that are responsible for proper plan implementation. Discussion about this issue ensued with the understanding that the state and the county will need to work together on such a project. There was general agreement that ready access to this information for all who need it could be very valuable.
- One of the recommendations was that the county take the lead in sending a letter to all landowners who rent their land for agricultural activities regarding their responsibilities. One Groundwater Task Force member objected to sending such a letter and a lengthy discussion followed. Randy Hallet wanted to know what the vote of the Compliance Workgroup was regarding sending a letter from the county (Chair Luft researched this and the answer was that this recommendation passed by at least a 2/3 majority of the voting members of the Compliance Workgroup). An attempt was made to bring Randy Hallet up to date on the previous efforts to send a county sponsored letter from the Land and Water Conservation Committee.

d. Alternative Technologies for waste treatment, disposal, and spreading.

Davina indicated previously that the first meeting of the Alternative Technologies Workgroup was to be held on Thursday June 23rd. The purpose of this work group is to evaluate new manure treatment/application options that could reduce the impact of manure spreading on ground and surface water quality. This Alternative Technologies workgroup will look at:

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 previously reported that the U.W. Oshkosh Extension has not yet completed the well stratification review from the November 2015 well test data (this is the data that will confirm at what depth the well tests were taken). Ms. Muldoon indicated that reporting the well stratification results is a major undertaking but Davina said that some summer interns may help free up time for completion of the well test data with the corresponding well depths. The summer 2016 well testing that will involve up to 500 wells in Kewaunee County is moving forward with tentative timing for late July, 2016.

Davina has also recently reported that 25.6% of the samples from a recent voluntary well test of 129 households (paid for by the homeowners) showed some form of contamination (high Nitrate levels or bacteria) that would make the water unsafe for drinking/cooking.

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.

- D) Update on clean water access project in Algoma headed by Algoma Public Schools.**
Nick Cochart indicated previously that between 40 and 45 Kewaunee County families continue to use the clean water kiosk at the Algoma High School.

E) Progress on Project Phoenix

Project Phoenix envisions piping or transporting liquid manure to a centralized manure process facility or multiple facilities 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.

Chairman Luft reported at the June Groundwater Task Force meeting that he was made aware by the County Administrator, Scott Feldt that the work performed by the contractor selected to carry out the project Phoenix study was deemed to be “unacceptable” by the Public Service Commission (PSC). The PSC told Administrator Feldt that due to deficiencies in the scope of the work performed by Roach and Associates, the PSC would not pay for this study. Following this news, Roach and Associates submitted an invoice to the County for \$25,000 in payment for the work it had performed to date. In the meantime, the County Administrator and County Board Chairman hired a second firm, Dynamic Solutions, LLC to carry out the project. Dynamic Solutions will have just one month to complete the study but they indicated that they would apply the appropriate resources to get the study done in time to meet an end-of-June deadline.

UPDATE:Mr. Roach appeared before the Kewaunee County Finance Committee at its meeting on July 7th to state his case for payment of the \$25,000 invoice. After Mr. Roach’s presentation and extended discussion by the Finance Committee a motion was made and approved by a 3 to 2 vote of the Finance Committee not to recommend payment of the Roach and Associates invoice. Administrator Feldt and Corporate Counsel, Wisnicky were to notify Mr. Roach of the decision of the Finance Committee.

- F) The DNR and Kewaunee County Land and Water Conservation Department are continuing to conduct on farm inspections and conducting more manure hauling audits.**

G) Resolution in support of a new aquatic life test of the East Twin Watershed:

Background: Agropur Permit Issues: During the May 4th Groundwater Task Force meeting, 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 DNR reports and other citizen 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 higher Chloride emissions. At the June 8th Groundwater Task Force meeting, Chairman Luft asked for a vote to authorize the

Chairman to prepare a Resolution asking the Wisconsin DNR to thoroughly evaluate the aquatic life of the East Twin River and the un-named tributary to the East Twin River that receives the effluent from the Agro-Pur plant. A motion was made to authorize Chairman Luft to prepare such a resolution for the approval of the Groundwater Task Force by Dick Swanson and was seconded by Andy Wallander. The vote to approve creation of a draft resolution was unanimous from all members present.

Chairman Luft did complete a draft resolution for consideration by the Groundwater Task Force at the June 8th meeting. The task force recommended several changes and additions with Chairman Luft incorporated into the revised recommendations/resolution.

At the July 8th meeting a motion was made by Andy Wallander and seconded by Bob Garfinkel to have the Kewaunee County Corporation Counsel review the revised recommendations and place them into the appropriate Kewaunee County resolution format. The vote in favor was 7 to 1. Motion carried.

H) Consideration by the task force of a resolution in support of the DNR-Kewaunee County Workgroup recommendations. Chairman Luft asked the task force members to consider whether to issue a recommendation to the Land and Water Conservation Committee to support those recommendations of the three DNR-Kewaunee County Workgroups that has significant majority support e.g. either complete consensus or at a minimum 2/3 majority. To be discussed at the August meeting.

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 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.

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) Cindy Kinnard indicated that the final report with all the recommendations of the three DNR-Kewaunee County Workgroups had been posted to the Groundwater Task Force web site.

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) Posting of the final version of the recommendation regarding new testing of the East Twin River that is to be sent to the Land and Water Conservation Committee.
- c) If approved publish recommendations in a resolution format in support of the DNR – Kewaunee County Workgroup recommendations.

7) Public Comments:

- a. Mick Sagrillo requested that the recommendation for funding of clean water for citizens be brought to the full county board. Mick is also upset with the septic system issue raised by task force member Randy Hallet. Septic system problems have been reviewed and are thought to contribute only very modestly to Kewaunee County's water contamination (less than 1%).
- b. Sue Weisser: Sue Weisser a statement at the July 8th GWTF meeting. The key points Sue Weisser mentioned are as follows:
 - Board resolution in support of the recommendations of the three workgroups.
 - Board resolution banning spray irrigation of liquid manure.
 - Board ordinance requiring letter be sent to all land owners who rent agricultural land regarding their responsibilities.
 - Board resolution giving the Kewaunee County Land and Water Conservation Department the authority to enforce all state rules and regulations regarding manure spreading. Door County's Chapter 23 Ordinance could be a great model.
 - Board authorization of monies to provide clean water to Kewaunee County citizens living without safe drinking water.
 - Authorize implementation of the Great Lakes Rural Community Assistance Partnership loan program to help families living without clean water install water treatment systems.
 - Work to implement or enhance well abandonment procedures.Sue then reiterated a quote from Representative Joel Kitchens, "Don't sit back and wait for the DNR to save the day, it's not going to happen. We need to take a lot of this on locally." Sue also provided a quote from Representative Scott Krug (from the areas of Wisconsin being impacted by thousands of high-capacity wells), "It's a big problem (water) and challenge. The challenge is to be active, involved, and loud."
- c. Nancy Uttesch indicated that she would like to see NASA scientist Gerald Pellet invited to speak to the full county board on the results of the testing done over the past three years of the water quality/contamination rates in the East Twin, Ahnapee and Kewaunee River systems.

In closing, Lee Luft addressed the issue of the number of "cows" and "cattle" in Kewaunee County. Luft acknowledged that he may have mis-spoken at the June 23rd EPA/DNR meeting in Luxemburg when he said that Kewaunee County now has 98,000+ cows. A more accurate statement would have been, we have 98,000+ "cattle" of which about half are full size milking cows and the remaining half are replacement cattle, heiffers, calves, etc. Luft apologized for any confusion and will work to see that he stresses the fact that the county has 98,000+ cattle and that not all cattle are full size cows.

8) Other matters to discuss: None.

9) **Set next meeting date:** Thursday August 4th, 2016 at 1:00 PM at the Kewaunee County Administration Building.

10) **Adjournment:** Motion to adjourn by Randy Hallet, seconded by Ron Paider. Motion carried unanimously.