



Kewaunee County Groundwater Task Force Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, August 4th, 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 Pailer, Randy Hallet, and Lee Luft

- 1) **Call To Order** at 1:00 PM by Chairman Luft
- 2) **Roll Call** – Excused absences: Aerica Bjurstrom, Bob Garfinkel, Andy Wallander
- 3) **Approval/Repair of August 4th, 2016 Agenda:** Motion to approve agenda by Mary Ellen Dobbins, seconded by Cindy Kinnard. Motion carried unanimously.
- 4) **Approval/Repair of July 8th, 2016 Meeting Minutes:** Motion to approve the July 8th minutes by Dick Swanson 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 updated the Groundwater Task Force (GWTF) on the continuing efforts of NRCS to define the current surface water contamination levels in an effort to set achievable goals for reducing surface water contamination. This work is on-going and Davina said progress is being made on this difficult and time-consuming part of the process. There will be a NRCS – Kewaunee County Technical Advisory Group meeting on September 22nd.

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.

Davina Bonness and Chair Luft discussed the 64 page report containing the final recommendations of the three DNR-Kewaunee County Workgroups. Letter from DNR Secretary Stepp regarding the recommendations was distributed.

Discussion followed to include:

- Green Bay Press Gazette article with quotes from lobbying groups regarding their efforts to reduce the scope of the DNR-Kewaunee County Workgroup recommendations before public hearings on the recommendations begin. A letter from DBA in opposition to the recommendations was distributed.

Some recommendations were scaled back following meetings with Governor Walker per DBA spokesperson.

- Mary Ellen Dobbins read a letter from a Madison paper confirming the scaling back of the recommendations.
- Cindy Kinnard is working on securing a grant from the State Department of Health. Nitrates are a big issue.

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

Davina indicated that the Alternative Technologies Workgroup continues to meet. 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 and further updates on the July 2016 well testing:

- Davina updated the GWTF on the first round of well testing conducted in November of 2015. Test results as shown by well depth are not yet available. It is necessary to locate and document the well drilling logs for all the wells that were tested and this is a time consuming effort. An additional 30 wells that tested positive in November 2015 for bacteria are now being tested for viruses. Results should be available soon. An earlier test of 30 wells that had tested positive for bacteria in the November 2015 testing showed that 11 of those 30 wells contained either salmonella or bovine rotavirus. Letters were sent to homes in a ½ mile radius of any positive virus or e-coli tests in the initial test of 30 wells and this will be the case again for any positive virus tests from the latest 30 wells that are being tested.
- Davina updated the GWTF on the second round of Kewaunee County well tests that is now on-going. Approximately 400 wells are being tested now for Nitrates and bacteria. Initially 1001 letters requesting home owners to participate in this July well test were mailed and this has resulted in the list of 400 home owners now participating. Wells in areas with 0 to 5 feet of soil will be tested as will wells in areas with 5 to 20 feet of soil and areas with 20 feet or more of soil so it can be determined if a relationship exists between soil depth and well contamination.

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.

Davina reported that the "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. The equipment needed to do the auto testing is being trialed now and hopefully it can be placed in homes in the near future. County Board member Chuck Wagner is one of those who has agreed to in-home auto testing of his well water.

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

Nick Cochart forwarded an e-mail indicating that the clean water project was still actively serving families and he commented as follows, "FYI, we have more wells testing + for e coli in Lincoln Township. I think we may be getting to the point that every home will

have to have a robust water filtration system if you plan to live in Lincoln Township --- truly sad to think about the level of destruction done to our water supply. Nick.

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.

UPDATE: Dynamic Solutions has now completed the project to the satisfaction of the PSC and the funds for the study were provided to Kewaunee County and then in turn to Dynamic Solutions. The Kewaunee County Finance Committee denied the \$25,000 invoice from Dynamic Solutions in July.

F) The DNR and Kewaunee County Land and Water Conservation Department are continuing to conduct on farm inspections and conducting more manure hauling audits. The Land and Water Conservation Department is conducting spot checks/audits of both land applications and the contract manure haulers.

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 had completed a sample 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.

At the August 4th GWTF meeting Chairman Luft indicated he would present the approved East Twin River resolution to the Land and Water Conservation Committee for consideration.

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 from within the Workgroups, e.g. either complete consensus or at a minimum 2/3 majority. This subject was discussed at the August 4th meeting and a draft recommendation/resolution was approved and will be forwarded to the Land and Water Conservation Committee.

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. At our August 4th meeting Cindy Kinnard indicated the grant she had sought for mailing costs had been denied. She will continue to look for grant funding.
- 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/resolution 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 expressed concern that the recommendations of the DNR-Kewaunee County Workgroup that focused on Best Practices and Sensitive Areas were “cherry picked” by Andrew Craig off the DNR and that some key recommendations may not be implemented.
- b. Nancy Utesch discussed educational efforts aimed at improved understanding of well issues and public health.
- c. Lynn Utesch spoke about attending a meeting in Bayfield County regarding CAFO expansions and water concerns. Forty people spoke out against the siting of a major hog CAFO near to Lake Superior while two spoke in favor. Those in favor were a lobbying group and the Farm Bureau.
- d. Sue Weisser spoke about a number of issues to include; an ordinance or resolution from the County Board to support the recommendations of the three DNR-Kewaunee County Workgroups, getting letters to residents regarding the importance of well testing, getting letters to landowners about their responsibilities, establishing a county ordinance that will allow enforcement of the State’s manure application and storage regulations, County Board ordinance to ban aerial spraying of liquid manure, improve well abandonment procedures in Kewaunee County.

8) **Other matters to discuss:** None.

9) **Set next meeting date:** Thursday September 7th, 2016 at 1:00 PM at the Kewaunee County Administration Building.

10) **Adjournment:** Motion to adjourn by Randy Hallet, seconded by Mary Ellen Dobbins. Motion carried unanimously.