



Kewaunee County Groundwater Task Force Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 7th, 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:

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** – All members present.
- 3) **Approval/Repair of September 7th, 2016 Agenda:** Motion to approve agenda by Ron Paider, seconded by Randy Hallet. Motion carried unanimously.
- 4) **Approval/Repair of August 4th, 2016 Meeting Minutes:** Motion to approve the August 4th minutes by Mary Ellen Dobbins and seconded by Randy Hallet. 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. There will be a NRCS – Kewaunee County Technical Advisory Group meeting on September 22nd in Luxemburg to help set quality criteria.

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.

UPDATE: U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin hosted a roundtable discussion on August 17th with presentations by Robert Kaplan - EPA District 5 Administrator, Jimmy Bramblet USDA's NRCS State Conservationist, and a representative from the U.S. Geological Survey. Senator Baldwin committed to keeping up-to-date on the efforts of the state and federal agencies in dealing with the ground and surface water contamination issues in Kewaunee County. EPA Administrator Kaplan indicated that specific action to help citizens with unsafe groundwater would occur soon.

Cindy Kinnard reported that she was successful in securing a grant from the State of Wisconsin for the mailing of a letter to all Kewaunee County residents with a private well advising them of the water safety concerns and informing them of the steps to take if testing indicates the well owner has an unsafe water supply.

A letter to all Kewaunee County well owners was one of the recommendations of the DNR-Kewaunee County Workgroups.

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

Davina indicated that the Alternative Technologies Workgroup continues to meet with the next meeting on September 22, 2016. 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) Don Niles, owner of Dairy Dreams Farm and president of Peninsula Pride Farms gave a presentation on the “Water Well” initiative. Mr. Niles gave a summary of the Peninsula Pride Farms program to offer free bottled water and to pay a share of the cost for water treatment systems when a well owner’s water tests positive for e-coli bacteria in Kewaunee County and Southern Door County.

D) Presentation by Steve Tatro of T.I.P., Inc. of Custer, Wisconsin regarding manure irrigation.

Steve Tatro and a representative from T-L Corporation, a major supplier of manure irrigation equipment, provided a power point presentation regarding the latest advances in irrigation including center-pivot manure irrigation. The presentation described today’s irrigation systems which can be programmed to provide customized application rates over varying soil conditions. Additionally, today’s systems can be programmed to avoid certain areas such as flow channels or waterways. During the presentation several advancements in the equipment were discussed and demonstrated. These advancements include: new programable nozzles that emit a droplet size spray which is less likely to drift during applications, drop hoses operating under low pressures (under 12 PSI) that can apply liquids close to the surface or even within the canopy of the crops to further reduce the opportunity for drift. Automatic shut-offs can also be employed on today’s systems that will cease applications when wind speeds increase or wind direction changes. There was general acknowledgement that these new methods would be an improvement over today’s liquid manure application methods due to the ability of the plants that remain on the fields to take up the nutrients and the fact that less liquid needs to be applied during any one application if the applications are done over the course of the growing season versus just one or two yearly applications. There was however some concerns mentioned that these added safety features are at present not mandated and that manure irrigation can be done under today’s permitting with a high pressure center pivot system and without drop hoses, droplet nozzles or automatic shut-offs. Still, it was acknowledged that the advances being made do recognize some of the key objections to manure irrigation and if fully incorporated these new systems represent key advances over most current methods.

E) 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 second round of Kewaunee County well testing conducted in August of 2016. This round of testing for approximately 400 wells follows

the November 2015 test of 320 Kewaunee County wells. Results from the August 2016 testing are not available as yet but are due to be released soon. Wells in areas with 0 to 5 feet of soil were tested as were 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. The well water test results from November 2015 categorized by well depth are not yet available as 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 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.

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

There were no new reports on the Algoma water access project.

G) Progress on Project Phoenix

Project Phoenix envisions piping or transporting liquid manure to one or more centralized manure processing facilities in Kewaunee County where methane gas would be captured, cleaned, and compressed for re-sale as a “green fuel.” A study off the feasibility of this approach was funded for Kewaunee County by the Public Service Commission. Release of the final Project Phoenix report as prepared by Dynamic Concepts, LLC. was not released to the public as of our September 7th GWTF meeting. NEW UPDATE: The final Project Phoenix report has been released to the public and can be found on the Kewaunee County website (www.kewauneeco.org) under the “Public Notices” tab. Partial implementation of the project as envisioned by Dynamic Concepts would require a capital investment of approximately \$116 million while full implementation would require \$188 million according to Dynamic Concepts.

H) 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.

I) 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 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 at their next meeting on September 13th. Chairman Luft to report back on the action(s) taken by the Land and Water Conservation Committee.

J) **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 provided to the Kewaunee County Land and Water Conservation Committee on September 13th for their review.

K) **Other issues for discussion?**

- a. A discussion regarding the possible adoption of State manure runoff regulations (NR-151) by Kewaunee County was held. Davina Bonness expressed reservations about moving forward with the adoption of NR-151 as a county ordinance as it could impact the Land and Water Conservation Department's current relationship with the farming community and potentially require additional staff for enforcement. Bonness indicated that at present the Land and Water Conservation Department is generally granted good access to most of the farms in Kewaunee County and that significant progress is being made to identify and reduce the potential for runoff. Additionally, there are to be some changes to NR-151 especially in areas with vulnerable geology and that it may be wise to understand the scope of those changes before adopting NR-151 as a county statute. There was informal consensus of the Groundwater Task Force that the issue of adopting NR-151 as a county ordinance should be tabled until the expected changes in NR-151 are known and/or conditions warrant.
- b. Davina indicated that the EPA would continue to have a presence in Kewaunee County (walkovers and flyovers) going forward.

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) Chairman Luft indicated he would work on a news release before the end of the year to recap the progress being made on several fronts relative to water well test results, updates on the two active resolutions and more.

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.
- d) Posting of August 2016 well testing results.

7) Public Comments:

- a. Bill Iwen spoke about concerns with center pivot spraying of liquid manure and the air emissions/odors that would result. He also spoke about manure applications just prior to rain events.
- b. Sue Weisser spoke about a number of issues to include; the comments from Nick Cochart of Algoma Schools regarding more wells in Kewaunee County being confirmed as unsafe, the actions of the Peninsula Pride Farms to help those with unsafe e-coli test results, the concern for well owners who have unsafe levels of nitrates, support for a resolution from the County Board to back the recommendations of the three DNR-Kewaunee County Workgroups, and establishing a county ordinance that will allow enforcement of the State's manure application and storage regulations.
- c. Mick Sagrillo expressed a similar concern to that of Bill Iwen regarding spray application of liquid manure and the potential for unsafe air borne pathogens and odor. Mick felt this was a public health issue and that he was aware of 9 homeowners who may be leaving the area due to odor issues. Mick talked about the \$12,000 that the Town of Lincoln spent to prepare the spray irrigation ban for their township and felt other townships should act soon while Towns still have the authority to ban this practice.
- d. Lynn Utesch spoke about the Peninsula Pride water treatment funding as a first step but not a cure for the water contamination in Kewaunee County. Lynn said we need to spread the current volume of manure over many more acres.

8) Other matters to discuss: None.

9) **Set next meeting date:** Wednesday October 12th, 2016 at 1:00 PM at the Kewaunee County Administration Building.

10) **Adjournment:** Motion to adjourn by Randy Hallet, seconded by Dick Swanson. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting ended at 2:30 PM.