

**Murray County Local Water Management Plan Technical Review Committee Meeting  
Minutes January 31, 2017**

The Murray County Local Water Management Plan Technical Review Committee conducted a meeting on Tuesday, January 31, 2017, 10:00 am in Meeting B Room, Murray County Government Center, Slayton, MN.

**Attendees:** Craig Christensen, Meghan Howell, Amanda Strommer, Jason Overby, Doug Goodrich, Dominick Jones, Jean Christoffels, and Ken Bickner

Ken called the meeting to order and identified a list of others who were contacted for the meeting; some of those either submitted written or verbal comments.

Amanda thought the overall priority concern comments from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) were captured very well. She felt there should be action items regarding water conservation, education, and partnering with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and those communities over 1,000 that need to complete a DNR Water Supply Plan; each rural water company has to have their own water supply plans.

Priority Concern 2: Jason noted Lincoln-Pipestone Rural Water (LPRW) contributes funds for a Regional Water Resource Technician position through Pipestone County that helps with wellhead protection measures. This individual works with Pipestone, Rock, Nobles and Lincoln counties, including small towns within those jurisdictions, and is focused on highly vulnerable wellheads, especially those with high nitrates.

Red Rock Rural Water (RRRW) received a DNR permit for a new water source on the Lindstrom property in Murray County. The wellhead protection delineation process has begun and it will be a vulnerable site with natural arsenic in the water, which Dominick is confident they can treat it to meet specifications. Dominick thought RRRW could also contribute to the Regional Water Resource Technician position.

Amanda questioned if Objective 2.4 is to seal five wells per year or a total five for the 10 year plan. Ken commented it is an unambitious goal over the next five years. MDH has information on how to locate abandoned wells that need to be sealed. When a property is connected to rural water, the landowners are encouraged to seal the unused wells; Dominick stated they could provide landowners with the County's well seal cost-share application to help with getting the wells sealed right away. Jason commented the MDH's county well index is less than desirable – nothing matches up – so be very cautious when using their data; LPRW has to site-verify all wells. LPRW provides landowners with funds to seal wells when they connect to rural water, however, if they have livestock facilities, they are encouraged to keep the well since the areas they serve are water poor. If a well is unused for one year, State law requires it to be sealed; would be a good topic for a well seal education piece.

Ken explained these five wells are ones that are not identified by well drillers when they drill a new well, these are ones that no one knows about – a building site bulldozed with a well that was never sealed. Amanda added that there are some wells within the City of Iona, but they are outside the wellhead protection, so the county program could assist with getting these wells sealed.

Under plan accomplishments, Amanda suggested another item to add be that Jean attended the Iona Wellhead Protection Team Meeting; it is appreciated when the County participates in these meetings. Jean added that county staff also participated in the Chandler Wellhead Protection meetings.

Currie received a \$10,000 grant to seal an old municipal well that has to be matched; 130 foot deep well.

Since the interaction of gravel mining and asphalt plants on properties adjacent to wells has not been addressed in the plan, Dominick stated these well sites need to be protected. For RRRW Lindstrom site's, the upstream land is about 160 acres of DNR ground and they will own the land or tie up land for protection. RRRW did a multitude of testing of the waters to find a water source to serve the lakes areas of Murray County.

Existing and abandoned gravel pits need to abide by the regulations and if not in compliance, those regulations need to be enforced, such as containment pads that prevent leaching into the groundwater.

RRRW and a southeast Minnesota rural water company are working with the Freshwater Society to develop a White Paper to determine the correlation between gravel pits and drinking water; it is a proactive thing for the whole Des Moines River valley. Not looking to create more restrictions, but to say these areas need protecting. The timeline for RRRW's wellhead protection is for Part 1 to be completed by July 1<sup>st</sup>, with the second part scheduled for completion about one year later. Dominick stated that communication and education is key to ensuring water quality standards are in place and enforced.

Murray County has grandfathered gravel pits that are not operating under a conditional use permit; they are allowed to continue, but if not used for a year or more, then they must go through the permitting process before reopening the pit.

The Geological Study can be added as an objective to priority concern 1 at a cost of \$15,000 for RRRW's share. Dominick feels the document will be good and will be shared with Murray County as a tool when making land use decisions.

LPRW provides a form to landowners when they request to connect to their rural water system, which identifies their ability to connect to the rural water system for their proposed project, whether that be a new home or a livestock facility. Both LPRW and RRRW will provide the County with a shapefile of their water service areas for use at the local level only; both rural water companies will be included on the notification lists for land use public hearings.

Comments were received from Keith Hakeneis via telephone relating to fertilizer regulations, which would have a bearing on both surface water and ground water.

Page 13, need to add "and quantity" to the "Objectives for the goal of improving surface water quality:"

For the Buffer Law, Murray County did not identify any other waters beyond the DNR's buffer map for the county, nor have they decided whether to handle the enforcement of the buffers. Doug noted the "Other Waters" SWCD's are required to identify, should be mentioned within the Water Plan Update; map can be added in a future amendment.

Doug directed Ken to double-check the cited Plans on page 13 for accuracy and content.

Doug Bos, Rock County, verbally suggested to Ken that a local working group could be established to discuss nutrient management on a larger level; how will governmental entities deal with high nitrate levels.

Amanda thought the Plan could identify specific public water suppliers without wellhead protection plans in place, such as RRRW/Lindstrom rural water.

Priority Concern 3: the two specifically listed sites for retention projects are only ones that have received landowner approval; other potential sites were removed and then only mentioned in general terms. A suggestion was received to use the PTMapp to analyze the terrain, which would be beneficial in the development of a One Watershed One Plan for the Des Moines River Watershed, anticipated to occur within the next five years.

Dominick pointed out RRRW, working with the MPCA, will be building a rapid infiltration basin as part of the Lindstrom treatment process. This is where the backwash water would be discharged into a small gravel pit that contains a sand based layer to catch the oxidized iron manganese, which will have arsenic; ultimately it will be land applied per MPCA regulations.

Priority Concern 4: Many comments were received regarding manure management, however, Ken was unsure how to specifically incorporate these comments into the plan because it is already required. There are no distinctions made between manure application, a highly regulated process, or commercial fertilizer application in the plan.

More information on costs, measurable outcomes, and funding sources will be added to the Table of Staff and Financial Resources or the Implementation Plan. Objectives 1.23.1, 1.23.2 and 1.23.3 will be removed because they specifically identify projects without landowner approval.

Amanda noted there is funding available from the Minnesota Groundwater Association Foundation, for specific groundwater education, which may be well suited for the Southwest Minnesota Environmental Fair or possibly the Prairie Ecology Bus.

Dominick questioned whether the identified Objectives 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3, will be relied upon by the County for land use decisions once this plan is adopted. Jean commented the County's Comprehensive Land Use Plan update was just recently adopted and they will now commence land use ordinance reviews to ensure compliance with the Plan. She added that being this Water Plan has specific objectives tied to land use, that this plan will also be used in the ordinance reviews. Dominick specifically wanted to ensure defined areas of "sensitive" and "vulnerable" are identified and protected. Amanda will forward to Jean a governmental entity link where they created a wellhead protection overlay district to incorporate with land use decisions.

Amanda also encouraged inclusion of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan update adoption, and how ordinance reviews will be conducted to ensure compliance with both the Land Use Plan this Water Plan update. Jean commented that when the County reviews the ordinances, they could conduct a feasibility study of the wellhead protection areas to determine if there are particular uses that need to have special regulations applied in those areas such as gravel mining/asphalt plants or even manure management.

If there are objectives for reclamation of specific gravel pits in the plan, the County would be able to apply for cost share dollars.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean M. Christoffels  
Water Plan Task Force Secretary  
Murray County Environmental Services