

Elk River Watershed TMDLs
1st Stakeholder Meeting
March 19th, 2009

24 Stakeholders

6 Staff

A broad array of stakeholders participated in the 1st TMDL Stakeholder meeting on March 19th, 2009. The registration board indicated that there were 24 stakeholders in attendance at the TMDL meeting including members of the Elk River Watershed Association, Big Lake Community Lakes Association (BLCLA), Briggs Lake Chain Association (BLCA), the City of Becker, Palmer Township, Big Lake Township, Minden Township, MN Agricultural Water Resources Coalition, Upper Mississippi River source Water Protection Project (UMRSWPP) Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge, MN Department of Natural Resources, Sherburne County Board of Commissioners, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), Sherburne SWCD board members, and Benton SWCD staff. Eight staff were also present to help answer questions, present materials, and register stakeholders.

The first TMDL stakeholder meeting consisted of an open house with two presentations; one beginning at 6:30 pm and the other at 7:00 pm. The presentations covered Total Maximum Daily Load basics and the Elk River Watershed TMDLs. The open house atmosphere encouraged participants to take time to view the poster boards which described the TMDL process as well as the projects currently being done in the watershed. Stakeholders were able to ask staff questions regarding the projects on a one-on-one basis.

Stakeholders learned what Total Maximum Daily Loads are, why they are completed, which ones are being done in the Elk River Watershed, and just how degraded the water quality is in those surface waters.

Some of the questions that came up were:

Q) Will the project include sampling the river at low flow?

A) The response was that the project will be sampling at a variety of stream flows so that we can identify where and when the violations are occurring most frequently.

Q) Who should someone contact if they see something that they think could be negatively impacting water quality?

A) They can start with contacting Sherburne or Benton SWCDs.

Q) Will paper waste by-product influence bacteria counts in the Elk River below the City of Becker?

A) We will keep this in mind but these bacteria should not influence E.Coli levels.

Q) Will continued monitoring occur upon completion of the TMDL?

A) Yes, this will be part of Adaptive Management

Q) Is the campground off of HWY 25 a possible source of Bacteria to the Elk River during high flows?

A) The project Technical team will discuss this further.