

Benton County Water Resources Advisory Committee
Minutes
Tuesday, March 24, 2009- 1:30 PM
Benton County Commissioner Board Room - Foley, MN 56329

The Benton County Water Resources Advisory Committee meeting was called to order by Vice-Chair Duane Cekalla at 1:30 p.m. at the Benton County Commissioner Board Room on Tuesday, March 24, 2009.

Those in attendance include: Duane Cekalla – Little Rock Lake Association, Ken Nodo - At-large, John Bemboom – Township Representative; Annie Felix – Benton SWCD and Water Plan Coordinator, Dan Martens – U of M Extension, Craig Gondek – At-Large, Guy Spence – At-Large, Mike McMillin – Benton SWCD, Jason Weirnerman – BWSR, Steve Marod - DNR Fisheries, Gerry Maciej – Benton SWCD, Pat Gehling – NRCS, John Henz – City of Sauk Rapids, Dave Neiman – MRNA, Chelle Benson – Benton County DOD, Phil Votruba – MPCA, Brian Kaschmitter – Elk River Watershed, Warren Peschl – Benton County Commissioner, Chuck Rau – Benton SWCD, Jim Moshier – Municipalities Rep.

(Three Priority Issues in Comprehensive Water Plan: 1) Groundwater quantity and quality, 2) Development, 3) Feedlots and Nutrient Management.)

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chuck Rau is new member of committee from the SWCD Board. Chuck is from Watab Township and is also part of the Little Rock Lake Association, Rice Sportsman Club, and Pheasants Forever.

2. Review / Approve Minutes. Motion by Craig Gondek to approve the January 27, 2009 minutes. Second by John Bemboom. Motion Carried.

3. Agenda. Motion by Craig Gondek to approve the agenda. Second by Warren Peschl. Motion Carried.

4. Election of Officers

Chair. Duane Cekalla was nominated.

Warren Peschl moved to close nominations and cast a unanimous ballot for Duane Cekalla. Second by John Bemboom. Motion Carried. This is a three year term.

Vice Chair or Associate Chair. Craig Gondek was nominated.

Warren Peschl moved to close nominations and cast a unanimous ballot for Craig Gondek. Second by John Bemboom. Motion Carried. This is a three year term.

Motion by Jim Mosier to delegate the time-keepers task to the vice/associate chair. Second by Guy Spence. Motion Carried.

5. Reports

A. Nutrient Management Meeting

Mike McMillan reported on this workshop that was held on March 19 in Foley. At the meeting Mike told about information obtained in the SWCD Test Plot Project during recent years, how the project works, and discussed best management practices (BMP's) for manure use. Pat Gehling reported

on EQIP possibilities that depend on how Farm Bill budget discussions turn out. Dan Martens reviewed how the U of M Extension corn fertilizer guidelines work. John Pokorney (MPCA) reviewed rules for manure application. 20 people attended. New people indicated interest in the test plot program.

Brian Kaschmitter reported that Mike also talked about nutrient management practices at a tiling company meeting that was held recently.

B. Little Rock Lake TMDL Stakeholder Newsletter

The Newsletter went out about a month ago to people who live in the watershed. It is meant to tell people about work that is going on in the project area and to indicate upcoming events. The newsletter was sponsored by the Little Rock Lake Association. The Rice Sportsman Club might sponsor the next one. It will be published every 6 months or as enough new information is available to make a good report. It will be posted on the SWCD website and the Little Rock Lake Association will likely post it on theirs as well.

C. Little Rock Creek TMDL project update

The technical committee met last Tuesday. The second phase is scheduled to be completed by June 30, 2009. This phase identifies stressors the group believes is causing problems for the cold water fish population. This document guides the next phase of the project. The 3rd phase is to write the TMDL. There will be a stakeholder meeting sometime at the end of May or early June.

D. A question was asked about tires being buried in the road repair project on north end of Mayhew Lake. What effect could this have on the lake - oil running off the tires etc.? Are the tires temporary fill or permanent? Chelle Benson or Warren Peschl will get information from Bob Kosel ... and then:

Bob Kosel happened to stop by later in the meeting. They are using shredded recycled rubber from a recycling facility in Isanti County. It is being used in bridge area where there is some very deep muck. They need to raise the grade of the bridge five feet. The shredded tires are a lighter weight fill that will not settle and lead to maintenance issues as soon as other fill material would. Road construction fabric is placed below and above the shredded tires. Soil is placed on both sides. This will be a permanent placement in embankment. It should not be an environmental issue.

E. Upcoming Conferences

1) Shallow lakes forum conference in Chaska. It is meant to provide information to citizens and agency people who have an interest in shallow lakes. Annie and Tiffany plan to attend.

2) The Minnesota Waters Group will have their meeting May 6-8 in Rochester. Research information and project information is shared related to all kinds of water resources.

F. LCMR – Requests for Proposal

Annie shared information related to requests for proposals due by May 1 and listed the general work areas for consideration. This might be a source of dollars for specific items in the water plan at some point.

Gerry Maciej shared that SWCD looks at a lot of grants. They prefer to apply for grants that provide technical assistance money along with project dollars so staff time is supported along with the work. SWCD would like to follow priorities identified in the Water Plan.

6. Feedlot Delegation Discussion – Wrap-up

Annie Felix and Mike McMillan provide a Map of Registered Feedlots by Size, a Map of Registered and Unregistered Feedlots, and MPCA fact sheets on inventory and registration of feedlots.

The Registered Feedlots map is made from data obtained through the MPCA registration process. The “unregistered” feedlots on the map are from a windshield survey done a few years ago. The MPCA “registered feedlots” includes 72 from 0 to 50 animal units, 73 from 51 to 99, 95 from 100 to 199, 48 from 200 to 299, 27 from 300 to 999, and 1 at 1000 or more. People might register for more AU than they actually have to allow room for changes they might make.

Most registered feedlots are inventoried at the Category II level. Most that are registered at the Category III level have probably worked with SWCD/NRCS office.

People like to register feedlots because they hope this keeps option open for the future plans. It also helps to make sure agencies have a way to know the feedlot is there in case people are applying for building permits nearby. People hesitate to register, perhaps wanting to avoid dealing with more government and related costs.

Money is an issue related to delegation.

Delegated counties try to do site visits on a 4 year schedule because registration for feedlots is renewed every 4 years.

The committee’s goal was to review history of past consideration and current pros and cons and to determine whether it was good to recommend that the county board would assume delegation status.

Duane read the pros and cons that were listed in the minutes of the last meeting.

Ken Nodo moved to recommend to the County Board that the County would be become a delegated county. Second by _____ . Motion Carried. It was suggested that the WRAC committee chair bring it to the County Board. Duane asked Annie to prepare a letter that he would sign.

7. Private Pesticide Applicator’s Training Presentation – Dan Martens shared a sampler from the presentation materials used for Private Pesticide Applicator Training. He highlighted some of the concepts and content related to environmental issues.

8. Action Plan Priorities – Members were asked to select 2 action items from the Water Plan to work on in 2009. Annie tabulated the results and reported them to the group.

1st Place

Feedlot & Nutrient Management Goal 1, Objective 1, Action item g) Addressing non-compliant farms.

Some studies indicate a small percent of surface water contamination comes from manure resources. Livestock producers know a lot about making good use of manure nutrients. It was suggested that if we were a delegated county, the person should not create more grief for people who have registered and are making an effort to take care of things. Look at other places first.

2nd Place - tie

Development Goal 3, Objective 1, Action item b) Incorporate water resource education into a county-wide newsletter.

Project questions: Who would do it, how funded, what kind of content.

2nd Place - tie

Groundwater Goal 1, Objective 1, Action item d) Establish a groundwater quality data base.

MPCA has a data base for surface water called STORET. A question was asked as to whether it is too late to incorporate a similar tool for storing groundwater data. Someone shared that the county should have water resource information before approving plats in some cases.

There is a well index database that includes information provided by well drillers and maybe other information sources. State geological survey people were very interested getting samples from test well drilling done near Foley recently.

The next steps might be identifying what's being done and who would benefit from this.
Motion by John Bemboom to refer this discussion to groundwater work team. Second by Warren Peschl. Motion Carried.

3rd Place – tie

Development Goal 1, Objective 1, Action item b) Contact agencies (DNR, County Parks, Extension Service, others) to identify & compile list of existing inventories of rare/critical/vulnerable water resources

3rd Place – tie

Development Goal 1, Objective 1, Action item e) Create sensitive areas management plan using the resource concern areas and priorities developed in d) & list compiled in b)

Next Steps – The Committee agreed that the 1st place item – Noncompliant farms was being addressed adequately, so no further action was needed at this time. For the next meeting it was suggested that the committee split into the 2 subcommittees – Groundwater Subcommittee and Development Subcommittee - as was done during the planning process. Annie reviewed subcommittee membership; the new members will need to pick a subcommittee to join. Each Subcommittee will focus on the selected priority concerns.

9. Next meeting:

May 26, 2009 1:30 at the Benton County Commissioner's room.

10. Adjournment. Motion by Craig Gondek to adjourn. Second by Ken Nodo. Motion Carried. Adjourned at 3:16 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dan Martens, Secretary

Approved by:

Signature: _____ Date: _____
WRAC Board Chairperson