

Benton County Water Resources Advisory Committee
Minutes
Tuesday, March 23 - 1:30 PM
Benton County Commissioners Room - Foley, MN 56329

The Benton County Water Resources Advisory Committee meeting was called to order by Chairman Duane Cekalla at 1:30 p.m. at the Benton County Commissioners Room on Tuesday, March 23, 2010.

Voting members present: Duane Cekalla – Little Rock Lake Association, Craig Gondeck – At-Large, Ken Nodo - At-large, Brian Kaschmitter – Elk River Association, John Bemboom – Township Officers Association.

Voting members absent: Wade Bastian – Benton SWCD Supervisor, Warren Peschl – Benton County Commissioners

Voting members excused: Jim Moshier – Municipalities representative

Others present: Annie Felix – Benton SWCD Water Plan Coordinator, John Henz – City of Sauk Rapids, Phil Votruba – MPCA, Mark McNamara – Benton County Dept. Development, Tiffany Determan – Elk River Watershed Coordinator, Dan Martens – U of M Extension, Laurel Reeves -DNR Waters, Jim McDermott – Emergency Management Director.

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

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Review / Approve Minutes. Motion by Ken Nodo to approve the January 26, 2010 minutes. Second by Craig Gondeck. Motion Carried.

3. Agenda. Motion by Craig Gondeck to approve the agenda. Second by John Bemboom. Motion Carried including addition of information about a workshop on Rain Barrels, Jim McDermott on flooding, delete Pat Gehling Report and Geologic Map top.

4. Reports

a. Jim McDermott – Little Rock Lake Flooding. Handout showed status of Mississippi River at St. Cloud. Flooding on Little Rock Lake due to an ice jam and not due to Mississippi being above flood stage. Parts of Little Rock Lake flood every year for a couple of summer cottages that are located very low on the landscape. This year the lake rose at 4 inches per hour on Friday March 19. Pre-filled sandbags were ready to use and were gone by noon. More were filled in the afternoon. An ice jam makes the water rise faster than you can deal with it. Homes on the flood plain are an issue. Some homes have been raised. Meetings are being conducted this week to work on mitigation plans. Benton County's greatest financial loss related to nature events from year to year is flooding. The ice jam started to let go when the gates on the dam at the paper mill were opened. The state EOC makes decisions about opening the gates. The main gates on the dam were closed after the ice jams shifted and started to loosen up. A few residents did leave.

Comment shared: In 1964 they redid the dam at the paper mill. In 1965 the ice jam backed up 12 feet of water. An open winter created thick ice and a couple of heavy March snowfalls made for a lot of snowmelt. They tried opening the gates and it didn't do much good.

The ice the caused the problems was ice on the river, not ice from the lake.

Comment: Consider installing some ice breakers in strategic places.

Comment: 1997 was the last year there were major ice jams in the same general area.

Question: Will the mitigation plan direct people to call the emergency management service when flooding occurs rather than calling people at the paper mill dam? No, that's a different process. But efforts will be underway to inform people of correct contacts. Efforts will also be made to encourage homeowners to invest in sandbags and make their own preparations and plans. If people live off-sight, they need to have people who check the property and to be ready to take appropriate steps. You can sandbag your house, and then you need a sump pump on the inside because water will come up from underneath.

Question: Does flooding push some of the algae out of the lake? Not significant.

Question: Is funding available to move or raise houses? The mitigation plan will list this as a recommendation. Information will be given about flood insurance.

The County Website has a link to the Mitigation Plan, related meetings, and related ideas.

Craig Gondeck requested recording thanks and appreciation for the response of county agencies for needs last Thursday and Friday.

b. Little Rock Creek TMDL project update – Annie Felix

An updated schedule was circulated.

The Stakeholder committee will work on implementation planning.

c. Little Rock Lake TMDL update – Annie Felix

The deadline is extended out to June 30, 2011. We hope to start getting information from some of the modeling work by the end of the summer.

Question: Will any sampling be done on the lake this summer following high water this spring? Nothing is planned or budgeted.

Question: When it floods like this, what effect does it have on individual sewage treatment systems? Volunteer water quality monitoring will continue twice per month.

Question: Will DOD be checking systems related to this? Not unless problems are identified. Tanks used now are water tight.

c. Elk River Watershed Association – Tiffany Determan

2009 Year End Report was circulated.

Highlights.

Elk River Watershed TMDLs. A Public Meeting will be held in May or June when consultants will have information ready to share.

Intensive Watershed Monitoring for Mississippi River-St. Cloud Watershed. Phase 1 started spring 2009. The goal is to identify any needs for more focused work.

The stakeholder group might meet after one of the WRAC meetings.

e. Mississippi River Renaissance

The group is applying for an LCMR grant. One part is to put together a tool kit for best management practices and the second is for implementing practices.

f. NRCS – No Report

g. County Geologic Map – Mark McNamara – No Report

h. Rain Barrels – Carl Hoffman, Extension Horticulture Educator for Stearns and Benton Counties, will conduct a workshop on Rain Barrels on Monday March 29 at 7 p.m. in the Benton County Commissioner's Board Room.

5. DNR Water Appropriation Program - Laurel Reeves

Water Supply Management & Resource Evaluation

Water Law is based on riparian rights modified by the concept of reasonable use. You have a right to use water relative to the rights of other landowners. It is not strictly a matter of who was there first. The law includes an assurance of supply for listed uses. MN Statute 103G.265

Water Supply Management Tools

Permits established in 1937 for 10,000 gallons per day or 1 million gallons per year. There are about 7,000 permits, 900 public water supply permits. The process involves water use priorities, water use reporting, resource protections, conflict resolution, and conservation

Priority 1. Domestic water supply 2. Consumptive use less than 10,000 gallons per day 3. Ag irrigation and processing agricultural products 4. Power production 5. Consumptive uses in excess of 10,000 gallons per day 6. Non-essential uses – lawn watering, car washing, etc

Ethanol production relative other water uses is relatively small in the state as a whole. Issues are looked in local individual situations.

Permitted users are sent an Annual water use data sheet.

There is a permitted volume and the use is usually less. This allows for flexibility so permits don't have to be continually amended.

Question: How is irrigation water used recorded? Irrigators have to have a metering process, hours of use, or a logical process for calculating use. It is an honor system, basically. Disparities appear to be pretty small.

Reporting your annual use renews the permit from one year to the next.

DNR monitors water use, surface water monitoring and groundwater monitoring.

Ground water monitoring roles:

MDA – Pesticides and Fertilizer, shallow wells intercepting the surface of the water table

MDH – Public Water Supply

MPCA – Chemical releases, Industrial pollutants

DNR – Quantity focus: Water supply/availability, Recharge/infiltration

Consumptive vs Non consumptive use: Consumptive is not returned to the source. Water taken from a river and returned to a river would be Non-consumptive use.

In Minnesota you can't pump water from a well and put back into the aquifer.

RESOURCE PROTECTION LAWS

Watching for situation where pumping can reduce groundwater flow to streams and potentially draw water down from the stream.

Thresholds are set at 50% for modifying pumping and 25% for stopping pumping.

DNR Historical Aquifer Tests.

There is a protocol for testing pumps related to capacity and surrounding uses.

Well interference: One water use impacts others.

Water use conflict: Multiple water demand is greater than the supply.

Creating Water Use Management Areas
Water Conservation Programs

Water Supply Plans required for public water suppliers serving more than 1000 people.

Water Rate Structures. By 2013 communities need to have an increasing pricing structure for increasing water use. You have to have a graduated rate in place if you are going to add a well and if you are increasing your use before 2013.

Land Use Plans and Economic Development Planning can be closely related to water resources.

A quote in the presentation: “It is hazardous when technical judgments are made by citizens and value judgments are made by scientists and technicians.”

Data Analysis, Water supply plans, Well interference, Availability & Sustainability

6. 2010 1st Quarter Reimbursement Claim Forms – turn in

7. Next meeting:

May 25, 2010, 1:30 at the Benton County Commissioner’s room.

8. Adjournment. Motion by John Bemboom to adjourn. Second by Ken Nodo. Motion Carried. Adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dan Martens, Secretary

Approved by:

Signature: _____ Date: _____
WRAC Board Chairperson