

## **Project Update: Bonanza Valley Project Advisory Team meeting – February 25**

The Project Advisory Team for the Bonanza Valley GWMA met Wednesday, February 25<sup>th</sup> at the Saboe Levenson VFW Post in Belgrade.

**Project Background:** Groundwater is vital to Minnesota's health and prosperity. Groundwater use in the Bonanza Valley has increased 175% over the past 25 years. Increasing groundwater use increases the risk of overuse and contamination. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is establishing a Groundwater Management Area in the Bonanza Valley area in central Minnesota to ensure sustainable use of groundwater. The first step was to form a Project Advisory Team (PAT) to advise the DNR's development of a plan. The purpose of the GWMA plan is to guide DNR actions in managing the appropriation and use of groundwater within the GWMA over the next five years.

### Agenda Topic

Sections 1 – 4 of the Draft Bonanza Valley Groundwater Management Area Plan was introduced. These sections were in addition to the previously reviewed Section 5, which described DNR actions over the next 5 years.

Meeting participants reviewed the first four sections of the Draft GWMA plan, which includes an introduction (section 1), the description of the GWMA boundary (section 2), the description of the goals and objectives that will guide DNR action in the Bonanza Valley GWMA (section 3) and the status of the GWMA in terms of the objectives (section 4).

### Advisory Team Discussion

The team offered a wide range of thoughts and ideas. DNR will review and consider all ideas from both the advisory team and the public when revising the Bonanza Valley GWMA plan. The following are some of the topics and ideas that were shared:

- When reviewing all water appropriation permits during the first five years of the plan, DNR's first step should be to assure to have sound data and processes in place. Reviews should occur in geographic areas and in a similar time frame.
- Nitrates were a focus of the water quality section of the plan. Attendees asked if there was evidence that links irrigation to increased nitrates. Three studies completed before 1989 show a link. Further question asked if there were any more recent studies. None were known at the time.
- Suggestion to describe the human needs and uses of groundwater use in the Bonanza Valley.
- Attendees offered advice on data and data management, such as assuring good, long term data sets are used in making permit decisions and assuring that data sets accurately describe both buried aquifers and water table aquifers.
- In addition to the current "contested case hearing" process when permit applications are limited or denied, create an "arbitration" option.
- Provide opportunity for local groundwater users to meet and voluntarily adjust groundwater use when rainfall and aquifer levels indicate that conservation would be helpful.
- Increase focus on groundwater conservation and how it might be integrated into permits.
- Drinking water connections were suggested such as more focus in the plan about protection of drinking water from private wells and city water systems. The Crow River was highlighted as part of the source of drinking water for the Twin Cities Metro area.

**Next Meeting**

Wednesday, – 9:00 a.m. – noon at the Central Square Cultural & Civic Center, 105 2nd Ave. NE, Glenwood, MN.

**Contact Information**

Questions about this project may be directed to Mark Hauck, DNR project manager at 320-223-7846 or at [mark.hauck@state.mn.us](mailto:mark.hauck@state.mn.us). For more information on all GWMA's, visit [www.mndnr.gov/gwmp/index.html](http://www.mndnr.gov/gwmp/index.html).

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