



UPDATE: DNR HOLDS PROJECT ADVISORY TEAM MEETING

The Project Advisory Team (PAT) for the proposed Bonanza Valley Groundwater Management Area (GWMA) met on Wednesday, Nov. 19 at Heritage Square Cultural and Civic Center in Glenwood.

Project Background: The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is responsible for permitting high volume groundwater users, for collecting information on groundwater resources, and for providing technical assistance that supports groundwater conservation. The DNR is taking steps to establish a Groundwater Management Area in Bonanza Valley.

AGENDA TOPICS:

Introduction

DNR supports the use of groundwater for agriculture, industry, municipal water supply, and a variety of other important uses. State law requires DNR to ensure that the use of groundwater is sustainable.

Groundwater use in the Bonanza Valley has increased significantly over the past twenty-five years. DNR is concerned that we may be at risk of overusing groundwater in some parts of the Bonanza Valley, which would not be sustainable.

Review of Section 5 (DNR actions) of the Bonanza Valley GWMA Plan

A high-level review was done of **Section 5: Actions DNR will take to achieve the Objectives in this GWMA**. After reviewing Section 5, PAT members broke into small groups to discuss the draft in more detail. The small groups came together and responded to three questions. The questions were:

- 1) What are your first impressions of the draft?
- 2) What items appear to be missing?
- 3) What should be added or changed?

Advisory Team Discussion

Initial responses to the questions from the advisory team members and members of the audience included the following:

1. The plan needs more specifics;
2. It should be reasonable and fair to all water users;
3. DNR should emphasize communication including better maps and explanations of data;
4. DNR should consult with local groundwater users in decision making;
5. DNR should better define baseline data and 'negative impacts';

6. Include more information on groundwater recharge and the effects of tile drainage and groundwater conservation practices;
7. Include better explanations of how sustainability thresholds will be set for rivers, lakes and wetlands.

NEXT MEETING OF THE PROJECT ADVISORY TEAM (PAT)

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Dec. 17 – 9 a.m. – noon at the American Legion Club, 770 W. State Highway 23, Paynesville.

The team will continue to review and discuss the draft of Section 5 that was distributed at the November meeting.

The Advisory Team meetings are open to the public and time is provided for attendees to offer comments and ideas.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Questions about the Bonanza Valley project can be directed to Mark Hauck, DNR project manager, at 320-223-7846 or mark.hauck@state.mn.us. More information is also available on the DNR website, www.mndnr.gov/groundwater.