



UPDATE: DNR HOLDS PROJECT ADVISORY TEAM MEETING

The Project Advisory Team (PAT) for the Straight River Groundwater Management Area (GWMA) met on Thursday, November 20, 2014 in Park Rapids.

Project Background: The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is establishing a Groundwater Management Area in the Park Rapids area to enhance its ability to make better decisions on groundwater appropriation permits. The DNR shares responsibility for managing groundwater resources with public sector partners, as well as with individuals and businesses that use groundwater. The DNR is responsible for permitting high volume groundwater users, for collecting information on groundwater resources, and for providing technical assistance that supports groundwater conservation.

AGENDA TOPICS:

Review of the SR GWMA Plan outline and objectives: Tim Crocker, DNR

Project manager, Tim Crocker presented a review of the planning process.

DNR supports the use of public waters as a renewable resource that benefits communities, agriculture, economies, the environment and healthy citizens. The agency has an important role to play in regulating the quantity of water use through appropriation permits. In the Straight River GWMA, groundwater use has increased significantly over the past 25 years. This has raised concerns about current and future impacts on the Straight River, an important trout stream in NW Minnesota; whether there is a relationship to nitrate contamination of municipal and private wells, and availability of water to sustain and grow the local economy. The Straight River GWMA planning process is designed to focus on sustainability, improve information, engage stakeholders and stimulate innovative approaches to these challenges.

Review of Section 5 (DNR actions) of the SR GWMA Plan

Tim provided a high-level overview of Section 5 - **Actions DNR will take to achieve the Objectives in this GWMA**. After reviewing Section 5, PAT members were asked to answer three questions. 1.) What general impressions or questions arose in your mind as you were reading the draft? 2.) Were there any actions you expected to see, but were not in the draft? 3.) Are there any actions you suggest we add to the draft?

Advisory Team Discussion

In response to the questions, members noted that there are few details on how actions will be carried out and generally actions are not specific and measurable. Some suggested that the project is perhaps too ambitious. The timeline and sequence of actions are not identified. With limited resources, we need to prioritize and do the crucial actions first. Members wanted the plan to reflect specific thresholds and an explanation of how thresholds will be developed and applied. In particular there is a desire that the plan reflect equitable and fair treatment for all water users.

NEXT MEETING OF THE PROJECT ADVISORY TEAM (PAT)

The next meeting is scheduled for December 18, 2014 at 9:00am-12:00pm at the Park Rapids Public Library, 210 1st St W, Park Rapids, MN 56470 (library phone 218-732-4966). At the December meeting PAT will continue review of the draft plan.

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

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information on this project, please contact Tim Crocker – DNR Project Manager at 320-616-2450, ext. 232, tim.crocker@state.mn.us. You can also [visit the DNR webpage](#).