



UPDATE: DNR HOLDS PROJECT ADVISORY TEAM MEETING

The Project Advisory Team (PAT) for the Straight River Groundwater Management Area (SR GWMA) met on Thursday, June 11, 2015 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:

Project Update—Tim Crocker

Time Crocker, DNR Hydrologist Supervisor provided an update on the project. Three pilot projects are underway in the state and DNR is striving to have consistency among the three plans, while recognizing individual differences among the three areas. The plans are evolving as review occurs. In the process, DNR is building good relationships with our partners in water use and policy. After receiving PAT comments, DNR will revise where necessary and post online for wider public review. PAT members will also be able to provide additional feedback during the public comment period.

Review of Draft SR GWMA Plan

Two questions helped guide the discussion about the draft plan:

1. From your perspective, were there elements, ideas or information missing, unclear or incorrect?
2. What would you suggest be changed, added or removed before the draft is circulated more widely?

The team reviewed the major changes that have been made in the plan. PAT members worked through the plan section by section to identify areas that needed clarification or corrections. Several suggestions were offered for making the plan more readable and understandable. These comments are representative of the discussion:

- The document could be strengthened if information on current agriculture irrigation conservation measures were expanded.
- The section that describes the SR GWMA is too generic. It should be more descriptive.
- There are some graphs for static water levels, but not for historical flow rate graphs and there are no water temperature graphs to show seasonal average temperatures. An annual hydrograph would show when the trout stream is most vulnerable.

- It is difficult to evaluate volumes because they are described in different ways, for example flow rates are described as cubic feet per second and gallons per minute. An information section describing the different ways that we measure water flow and usage would be helpful. The goal is to use consistent values to communicate clearly.
- A list defining the acronyms that are used would be helpful.

Meeting Conclusion and Summary

A PAT member commented that, "I'm very impressed with the work put into the document and the changes from previous documents. It is appreciated."

Brian Stenquist, Ecological Water Resources Communications Specialist expressed the gratitude of the DNR and the Commissioner's Office for everyone's attention and work on the plan.

DNR will post the draft plan for review and DNR will receive comments. The DNR will hold public meetings in Park Rapids for community stakeholders in late summer.

The next PAT meeting will be in September, date and location to be determined.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information on this project, please contact Robert Guthrie, MNDNR Project Manager at 218-732-8960, ext. 224 or Robert.guthrie@state.mn.us. You can also [visit the DNR webpage](#).