



UPDATE: DNR HOLDS PROJECT ADVISORY TEAM MEETING

The Project Advisory Team (PAT) for the Straight River Groundwater Management Area (SR GWMA) met on Thursday, February 26, 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:

Review of Sections 1-5 of the SR GWMA Plan

Review and discussion continued on the Draft Plan, Sections 1-5. These Sections include:

1. Introduction
2. Boundary and Area Background
3. Goals and Objectives
4. Status of the Area
5. DNR Actions

Members were asked to work in small groups to respond to three questions, 1.) What initial impressions or questions arose in your mind? 2.) Were there elements, ideas or information missing, unclear or incorrect? 3.) What needs to be changed, added or removed before the draft is circulated more widely?

Responses and additional questions were shared in the large group. Initial responses varied from viewing the draft as positive to viewing it as confusing and needing considerable editing. Comments were made about desired corrections, additional content and editing needed.

Members suggested that more information about water quality and public health is needed. Clarification is needed in some tables. It would be helpful to include a statewide or regional chart of water use as a comparison tool and an illustration of how area land use and habitat have changed over time. It was pointed out that some information is incorrect or stated incorrectly.

Additional areas that members suggested need to be changed, added, or removed:

- More information on water conservation is needed, especially in the agricultural irrigation section.
- More explicit descriptions of ecological thresholds that will determine harm are needed.
- Additional information on nitrate sources and how or who addresses nitrates.

- Information about stream flow loss, temperature increase should be better described.
- Conservation is widely accepted as an implementation strategy with a high likelihood of acceptance, yet very little detail is provided in Sections 1-4 on conservation strategies.

It was noted that state agencies have been asked to provide addendums to the plan. It is expected that MN Dept. of Health, Pollution Control Agency and Dept. of Agriculture will all provide agency specific comments.

Wrap-up

We will send out the plan and post it online for public review in April. Evening public meetings in April and May will be held to provide opportunities for further public comment. The PAT will not meet in April and May unless needed or requested. The goal is to complete the plan by July.

NEXT MEETING OF THE PROJECT ADVISORY TEAM (PAT)

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 26, 2015 at 9:00am-12:00pm at the Hubbard County Courthouse, Park Rapids, MN. The PAT will continue review of the Draft Straight River GWMA Plan and provide feedback to the DNR.

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](#).