

*March 10, 2014*

## **Straight River Pilot Groundwater Management Area Planning Update**

The first Project Advisory Team meeting for the Straight River took place on Friday, February 21, 2014. The meeting was held from 9:00 a.m. until noon at the Northwood's Bank Community Meeting Room in Park Rapids, MN.

### **Team Meeting Attendees**

Project Advisory Team members present included: Bonnie Finnerty (MN Pollution Control Agency), Bob Melchoir (Trout Unlimited), Nick David (RDO), Darrin Hoverson (DNR Area Hydrologist), Tod Becker (Becker Farms), Brian Flynn (ConAgra Foods), David Collins (Hubbard County), Julie Kingsley (Hubbard SWCD), Michele Walker (DNR Hydrogeologist), Dan Harsha (Todd Township), Doug Kingsley (DNR Fisheries), Beth Kluthe (MN Department of Health), Janell Miersch (DNR Hydrologist), Tim Crocker (DNR Project Manager).

Also present at the meeting were a number of support staff and DNR leaders, including Greg Nelson - DNR Regional Director, Rita Albrecht – DNR Regional Planner, Kristi Coughlon – DNR Information Officer, and Brian Stenquist – DNR Project Planner, all whom will be actively participating throughout the process.

The meeting was facilitated by Charlie Petersen – Senior Management Consultant, MN Management & Budget.

### **Team Meeting Agenda**

The focus for the first meeting was on the project purpose, process and schedule. Tim Crocker, Straight River GWMA Project Manager, also provided a brief overview about why the Straight River area was chosen to be a Groundwater Management Area and the planning process. This area was chosen for the following concerns:

- There is a high level of groundwater use in the area – an 84% increase in the past 25 years.
- Well sampling indicates nitrate levels are above the drinking water standard of 10 mg/l in some area wells and the City of Park Rapids.
- Groundwater use may be increasing water temperature and/or water levels in the Straight River (a state designated trout stream) and other local surface water features.

Brian Stenquist -DNR Project Planner, presented information about the DNR's Draft Groundwater Strategic Plan. At each monthly meeting of the Project Advisory Team, one of the seven CORE strategies will be presented and discussed regarding how they relate to the project. Brian also discussed the Project Design framework, provided clarification on the role of the Project Advisory Team and presented a draft schedule for the planning process – which should take about a year to complete.

DNR Hydrogeologist, Michele Walker, presented an initial analysis of the proposed working boundary for the Straight River area. The analysis included an overview of the landscape (geology, soils, and water resources), current and projected groundwater use and groundwater dependent surface water features. A figure of the working boundary is available on the project webpage at: <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/gwmp/area-sr.html>.

### **Meeting Outcomes**

Future Project Advisory Team meetings will occur on the third Thursday of every month with the meeting times alternating monthly between 9:00 a.m. until noon and 6:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m.

The Team has been asked to review the Draft Initial Analysis of the Working Boundary document and provide comments before the next meeting.

### **Next Team Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for **March 20, 2014 from 9:00 a.m. until noon**. The meeting location will be at the Northwood's Bank Community Meeting Room.

### **Next Steps**

- The team will review and comment on the Draft Initial Analysis of the Working Boundary document before the next meeting.
- At the next meeting, the team will focus on:
  - the working boundary for the SR GWMA
  - goal and objectives for the SR GWMA Plan
  - current and historic conditions within the SR GWMA relative to the objectives
- Post the update on last meeting and future meeting details on the DNR website (<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/gwmp/area-sr.html>).

### **For More Information**

Individuals interested in receiving meeting notifications and project updates for the Straight River Pilot GWMA can sign up at: [https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/MNDNR/subscriber/new?topic\\_id=MNDNR\\_132](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/MNDNR/subscriber/new?topic_id=MNDNR_132) and entering their email address.

Please visit our DNR website for more information on the Draft Groundwater Strategic Plan and other groundwater related initiatives at: <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/gwmp>.