



GROUNDWATER NITRATE WORK GROUP
Monday June 7, 2021 @ 8:30 AM
Harmony Township Conference Room & ZOOM MEETING

Minutes

1. **Call Meeting to Order.** Chair Sweeney called the meeting to order at 8:35 am.
Members present: Rick Richards, Wes Davis, Pat Mullooly, Rich Bostwick and Al Sweeney.
Members Excused: Dave Rebout and Lou Peer
Others present: Rick Wietersen, Scott Fleming, Andrew Baker, and Chris Newberry
2. **Approval of Agenda.** Chairman Al Sweeney made a motion to discuss items 5 and 6 together as one item. Rick Richards moved the agenda as amended, seconded by Wes Davis. **Motion Carried.**
3. **Approval of Minutes from January 19, 2021 meeting** Rick Richards moved the minutes for the January 19, 2021 meeting as presented, seconded by Wes Davis. **Motion Carried.**
4. **Communications, Announcements.** None
5. **Action Item: Resolution Directing Rock County Staff to Explore the Feasibility of Creating Program to Address Nitrate Mitigation in Rock County's Ground Water (Previously tabled by Land Conservation Committee pending possible recommendation from Nitrate Work Group).** Davis moved to open discussion seconded by Bostwick. Motion carried. Discussion began by reminding everyone the resolution is for staff to explore the creation of a program to offset the costs of high nitrate mitigation for private well owners. Discussion was also had about testing, equipment, and funding. Bostwick made a motion to amend line 32 in the resolution to add "or American Rescue Plan Act as a secondary funding source." Seconded by Sweeney. **Motion Carried, Resolution Passed to Recommend Approval to LCC.** Following approval it was noted that when the Land Conservation Committee (and Public Health) takes action on the Resolution the timeline for competition of study should be amended from July 1 to December 1.
6. **Discussion regarding possible use of American Rescue Plan Act funds for Groundwater Nitrate Initiative activities.** Item was included in above discussions. Andrew added that there are key areas that the Act targets. For purposes of this group it may include things such as watershed planning and infrastructure related to water quality. It is unclear if that includes private wells and possible treatment related to nitrates or other water quality concerns. There are no funding options for conservation practice installation, only watershed planning, which is already being done in Rock County. Primarily target toward municipal well water quality. Final rule is due around July 15th. Additional federal guidance should be provided.
7. **Discussion about funding/cooperation for Groundwater Nitrate research at the County Farm.** Baker brought up partnering with UWEX, DNR, and USGS on funding and research with new nitrogen reduction models. Weiterson will follow up with partnering. Discussion was had on nitrogen reduction models being used by farmers in the public sector. Mullooly talked about two

models he knows about. Discussion was had about using the ATC funds to cost-share practices instead of funding research. Newberry and Baker were tasked with identifying priorities for cost-sharing with ATC funds along with continuing to look at research options associated with cost-shared practices.

8. **Well Sampling-Update.** Wietersen updated the group on the well sampling on and near the County Farm. Wietersen indicated that the monitoring well elevations are dropping and had dropped 20". Flow is steady and remains NE to SW. The 3 transient community wells are also stable over the last couple of months. Nitrate levels in the downstream wells are going down slowly. The upstream well nitrates are dropping faster.
9. **Status of 9KE and NWQI Plan Development.** Newberry gave an update to the timetable of the plan. Newberry noted he has had to set aside the 9KE plan for a while to work on NWQI plan. Newberry indicated he has submitted the NWQI plan to the NRCS in May. He is awaiting feedback from the reviewers.
10. **Producer Led Watershed Group Development - Update.** Newberry indicated the Farmer on the Rock has not held a meeting since December. FotR did host a field day in mid-April at Rebout's farm. Farmers of the Sugar River did invite FotR to a field in May in Green County.
11. **Consider Reimbursement to County Farm Lessee for Installation of Cover Crops.** The committee discussed reimbursing the County farm renter for planting cover crops. Andrew noted that the requirement for cover crops is not in the lease, but is in the approved Conservation Plan. The committee recommended the reimbursement of 50% as was previously discussed by the group when the Initiative was started. Approval is conditioned on installed cover crops on the entire farm north of Hwy 14, has indicated in the Conservation Plan. The committee also recommended amending the farm lease to add the cover crop cost-share and a maximum payment per year along with planting dates and the use of other funding sources (such as EQIP).
12. **Next Meeting Date, Time, and Location (Avoid Second and Fourth Tuesday Mornings).** Date and time was tentatively set for Monday August 9, 2021 at 8:00am in person at the Town of Harmony conference room.
13. **Adjourn.** Pat Mullooly moved to adjourn the June 7, 2021 meeting of the Groundwater Nitrate Workgroup at 10:01 am, seconded by Rick Richards. **Motion Carried.**

Respectively Submitted,

Chris Newberry
Conservation Specialist IV

Minutes are not official until adopted by the Groundwater Nitrate Workgroup.