



Nebraska Wellhead Protection Network

Monday – October 24, 2016
11:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Platte West Treatment Plant
21212 West Q Street
Omaha, NE

Present:

Sara Brock – The Groundwater Foundation (GF), Brian Bruckner – Lower Elkhorn Natural Resources District, Ryan Chapman – Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ), Whitney Colbert – NDEQ, Glenn Dostal – HDR, Nancy Harris – NDEQ, Russ Iwan – Metropolitan Utility District (MUD), Cindy Kreifels – GF, Jon Mohr – LakeTech Consulting, Justin Nelsen – Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Sam Radford – NDEQ, Becky Schuerman – Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS), Pam Sorrell – League of Women Voters, Cynthia Tiedeman – League of Women Voters, Paul Woodward – Papio-Missouri Natural Resources District

Cindy Kreifels (The Groundwater Foundation) – Called the meeting to order, welcomed those present and went over the agenda.

ROUND ROBIN NOTES:

Metropolitan Utility District – Russ Iwan discussed MUD’s lack of zoning authority for the wellfields of both Platte West and Platte South. He is working with Cass, Sarpy, and Douglas counties to develop a multi-county wellhead protection overlay district. MUD hopes to do the same with Saunders County in the future.

Tracey Christensen noted that the annual water quality report is available online as well as in print (upon request).

Lower Elkhorn Natural Resources District – Brian Bruckner talked about Wayne’s wellfield which is 7 miles north of the city. Major concern is the lack of zoning regulations. Northeast Nebraska has several livestock facilities producing a lot of concentrated waste. The NRD has efforts to focus on groundwater quality by ramping up regulations regarding phase change requirements. Pierce County, a part of the Bazile Groundwater Management Area, is challenged by high nitrates. There is a need to ramp up regulations within the three NRDs in the Bazile area. It is a struggle for Creighton to provide water to their community.

LakeTech Consulting – Jon Mohr reported on the 2014 Wilbur project which centered on a source water protection plan to reduce nitrates. Soil sampling is going well in the area and many acres of row crops have been converted to alfalfa. Incentives are in place for spring only fertilization. Jon is also working

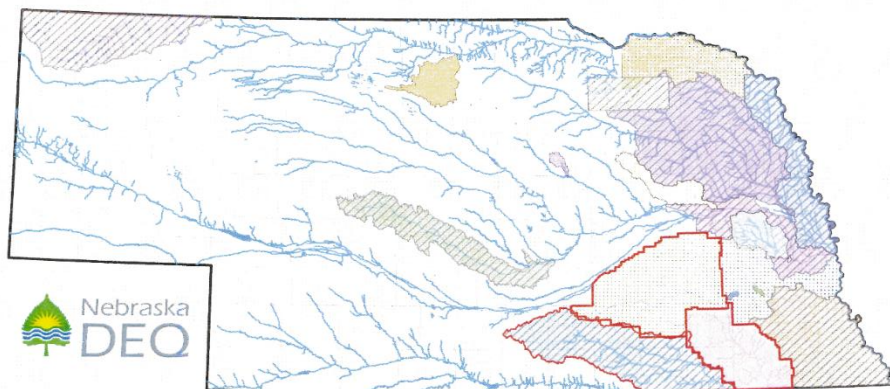
with Auburn on a drinking water protection plan. It will be modeled after Hastings' plan. Ohio has started proper abandonment of wells. He is also working with Little Blue, Lower Big Blue, and Nemaha NRDs on drinking water protection plans.

Papio-Missouri Natural Resources District – Paul Woodward reported that his district is currently working to update their groundwater management plan. In this district, 97% (~750,000) of people are on municipal water, 3% (~20,000) people are on domestic wells. Blair and MUD are the only places utilizing Missouri River for drinking water. To solve the problem of nitrate hotspots in the area, they are redoing their groundwater management plan to include soil and well sampling, stakeholder meetings, and incentives. The communities of Homer and Omaha have groundwater management plans in place and they are working towards getting additional communities to adopt a plan. AEM flights are being conducted in order to have more specific information to improve the wellhead protection plan.

HDR Consulting -- Glenn Dostal shared Hastings Utilities as an example of a community with high nitrates that is doing several good things to address the problem. Discussed the connections between nitrates and uranium – nitrates can mobilize geologically stable uranium, which has caused some tests to cross the 10ppm threshold. Agricultural communities in the Little Blue and Big Blue NRDs have been helpful in allowing monitoring (over 95% of identified sampling sites allow annual sampling). They are working with Dr. Karrie Weber to study the subsurface flow and remediation.

NDEQ – Ryan Chapman is trying to aggregate contaminant data to come up with mean nitrate levels for townships/regions and create a GIS shapefile for easy visual comparisons. This should assist in the unification of groundwater management plans and best management practices including groundwater management phases. Nationally, Watershed Management Plans are based on surface waters (a result of the Clean Water Act) to address nonpoint source pollution. Nebraska gets \$1.5-2 million to do

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watershed management projects. The 319 guidance indicates that management plans must come before dollars will be allocated for action projects. After a six year process, the Bazile watershed management plan is the first in the nation to be based on groundwater. The big challenge here will be showing results.

Sam Radford reported that the Bazile project now opens 319 dollars for watershed management plans where a clearly indicated groundwater/surface water interaction is made. Source Water Program funds are reserved for small communities (<10,000 people) who prove financial need. Source Water funds can pay for planning. There is \$100,000 available for projects. Osmond's wellhead protection plan was recently approved increasing the number of communities with an approved plan to 112. NDEQ, GF, and JEO are exploring the idea of expanding the risk management training to be more extensive and available statewide. These workshops should help to establish a statewide campaign on nitrates, will include a wide array of partners, and utilize a unified message.

Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services – Becky Schuerman recently attended the Association of State Drinking Water Administrators conference. The conference focused on the challenges in Flint, Michigan and included topics such as testing in communities, public health and the necessity for education. EPA indicated that the lead and copper rules will be updated to prevent additional incidents from happening. A huge challenge for the country is aging infrastructure. Even if cities replace all lead water lines to the main, many lead lines from the main to the house will remain which is the responsibility of the homeowner to replace. An education program with some type of incentive program will be needed to get these pipes replaced. EPA is taking a stronger stance on currently regulated contaminants as well as looking to add new contaminant regulations (UCMR4). Nebraska also has some areas with high concentrations of iron and manganese. Currently there is no state mandated regulation.

The Groundwater Foundation – Cindy Kreifels reported that the Groundwater Foundation's National Conference will be held in Boise, Idaho on October 24-26, 2017. Groundwater Guardian and Green Site designations next month for approximately 75 GG teams. A lot of activity this fall for the Hydrogeology computer software modeling program at Science Olympiad tournaments.

Sara Brock, an intern with The Groundwater Foundation, mentioned her work of interviewing Groundwater Guardian teams.

PRESENTATIONS

Russ Iwan presented information about the Metropolitan Utilities District's Platte West Treatment Plant's wellhead protection plan. See attached PowerPoint for details.

Tracey Christensen presented marketing and outreach efforts of the Metropolitan Utilities District. See attached PowerPoint for details.

TOURS

Kevin Tobin led the group on a tour of the Platte West Treatment Plant and the wellfields.