



**Groundwater Nitrate Work Group
Monday March 18, 2019 @ 8:00 am
UWEX Conference Room
Janesville WI**

MINUTES

1. **Call Meeting to Order:** Chair Sweeney called the meeting to order at 8:06 pm.

Members Present: Nick Baker, Rich Bostwick, Colin Byrnes, Wes Davis, Pat Mullooly, Chris Murphy, Lou Peer, Dave Rebout, Rick Richard, Al Sweeney, Tom Sweeney and Rick Wietersen.

Members Excused: None

Others Present: Scott Fleming; Producer: Dave Gundlach; UDSA-NRCS, Nick Zupan; Public Health: Anne Miller; LCD: and Matt Otto; USDA-NRCS.

2. **Approval of Agenda:** Rich Bostwick moved the agenda as presented, seconded by Lou Peer. **Motion Carried.**
3. **Approval of Minutes from the January 21, 2019 meeting:** Rich Bostwick moved the minutes for the January 21, 2019 meeting as presented, seconded by Lou Peer. **Motion Carried.**
4. **Communications:** Wes Davis discussed the WLWCA Conference noting Tom Sweeney and Rick Wietersen made a presentation on groundwater quality and how Rock County is developing a process to combat the document high nitrates. Also, Wes Davis noted Assembly Speaker Voss's Legislative Groundwater group will hold 12 sessions across the state.
5. **Discussion with Matt Otto, USDA-NRCS Initiative Coordinator, National Water Quality Initiative Program:** Matt Otto introduced himself and discussed the USDA-NRCS National Water Quality Initiative. This program is a targeted approach to funding in the new farm bill. Source water (groundwater) is allocated 10% of the overall funding under this program. NRCS will identify a partner to work in a HUC 12 or smaller watershed. A new requirement for the National Water Quality Initiative, be it surface water or groundwater, is the development and approval of a watershed plan, aka a 9ke (Nine Key Element) plan. This plan can be developed after a grant and a contract is funded from UDSA. There are currently two active contracts in the state, Waupaca County and Oconto County. Critical site need be addressed through the plan. As part of the program, the partner must identify the number of years for project installation and funding needed to achieve the goals of the proposal. Matt closed by saying a proposal must be drafted and forwarded to NRCS state office for consideration,

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once the proposal is accepted, then NRCS will draft a contract for the financial assistance to commence. Chris Murphy asked if multiple watersheds can be included in a proposal. Matt stated he believes so. Pat Mullooly stated he would like to contain a proposal to one area, specifically Turtle Creek. Al Sweeney asked Matt Otto if monitoring funding would be available. Matt stated he doesn't believe so, and stated DNR might be the place to request funding for monitoring. Nick Backer stated that two areas of interest are developing, Turtle Creek and La Prairie Stoney Brook. Dave Gundlach asked for an explanation on the difference between a drainage district and a watershed. Chris Murphy and Anne Miller described the difference. Rick Wietersen requested the timeline for grant proposals and funding. Matt Otto explained that this program is in the pilot phase and proposal will be open for later this spring and funding will occur in the fall. The 9ke plan can be drafted over two years. Chair Sweeney thanked Matt Otto for attending today's meeting and asked if he would keep in touch with Tom Sweeney regrading updates on the pilot program.

6. **Monitoring Well Sampling Update.** Rick Wietersen updated the committee regarding the monitoring of the observation wells. Rick noted that his staff were not able to draw samples from the wells in February due to the weather. The water turned to slush as it approached the top of the well. To save the sampling pump, Rick called off the sampling. Rick Wietersen continued stating the static water elevations in the observation wells continue to increase.
7. **Update on the DNR Proposed Project.** Rick Wietersen stated there are no new developments regarding DNR projects.
8. **Cover Crop Conference – Discussion.** Wes Davis opened the conversation stating that Al Sweeney, DuWayne Fenner, NRCS, Tom Sweeney and he attended the conference. The weather was quite difficult for driving, but made it safely to Stevens Point and back. Tom Sweeney at this point noted that conference was clearly one of the best he has been to. Most of the programming/workshops was led by producers, not agency staff. Agency staff filled in on research being conducted in a few workshops. Tom Sweeney recommends attendance at this conference. Al Sweeney noted he has attended the conference for the past few years and has come away with a wealth of knowledge that is applicable to his own operation.
9. **Landowner Meeting – Discussion.** Nick Baker stated that 25 producers attended the meeting held at the Craig Center. Tom Sweeney welcomed the crowd and proved an opening statement. Rick Wietersen and Tom Sweeney provided a Power point presentation regarding the state of Rock County's groundwater quality specifically regarding Nitrates and the Rock County's Groundwater Nitrate Workgroup efforts to decrease the amount of nitrates from entering the groundwater. Nick Baker continued with discussions regarding the potential development of a producer led watershed group(s) for the three watersheds, being Blackhawk creek, La Prairie Stoney Brook and Turtle Creek. Discussion from producers spoke of testing irrigation wells and crediting nitrates, other projects. One producer had his wells tested prior to the meeting. All wells test above the PAL of 10 mg/l. Nick closed the discussion and referenced the producer led watershed groups operating in the area, Dodge County, Yahara Pride and the Sugar River groups.

**Groundwater Nitrate Work Group
March 18, 2019 Meeting Minutes
Page 3**

10. **Next Meeting Date, Time, and Location.** The next meeting date was set for 8:00 am, Monday, March 18, 2019 and will be held at the UWEX Office Conference Room.

11. **Adjourn:** Rick Richard moved to adjourn the January 21, 2019 meeting of the Groundwater Nitrate Workgroup at 9:07 am, seconded by Rich Bostwick. **Motion Carried.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Thomas Sweeney
County Conservationist

Minutes are not official until adopted by the Groundwater Nitrate Workgroup

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