

# Metro MAWD Meeting Minutes

*“Metro MAWD” is the Metro Chapter of the  
Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts*

**7:00 PM, Tuesday, January 21, 2014**

## **Capitol Region Watershed District**

### **Attending:**

#### Board Members

Joe Collins, Capitol Region  
Mike Thienes, Capitol Region  
Mary Texer, Capitol Region  
Bill Olson, Minnehaha Creek  
Len Kremer, Lower Minnesota River  
Marianne Breitbach, Prior Lake Spring Lake  
Byron Westlund, Coon Creek  
Pat Preiner, Rice Creek  
Jill Crafton, Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek

#### Staff and Guests

Ray Bohn, MAWD  
Jim Haertel, BWSR  
Mark Doneux, CRWD  
Eric Evenson, MCWD  
Cliff Aichinger, RWMWD  
Tim Kelley, CCWD  
Mike Kinney, PLSLWD  
Terri Yearwood, DNR  
Paul Putzier, DNR  
Brian Nerbonne, DNR  
Gwen Willems, RCD

### **I. Call to Order**

- a. Chair Thienes called the meeting to Order at 7:04 PM. Attendance was taken and introductions were made.
- b. The Agenda was amended to move Item III. Special Reports ahead of Item II. Agency Reports. Motion by Mary Texer, second by Pat Preiner, to approve the Agenda as amended.

### **III. Special Reports - N&E Metro Groundwater Management Area, Paul Putzier Minnesota Department of Natural Resources**

Mr. Putzier gave an introduction and provided context for Groundwater Management Areas (GWMA). He stated his presentation would focus on:

- What is a GWMA and why the N&E Metro
- DNR’s Approach to creation of GWMA
- Process/Common Questions
- Coordination with WSD/WMO/CDs

He then reviewed GWMA in the state being the North and East Metropolitan Area, Straight River and Bonanza Valley. He then reviewed and discussed the working boundary for the North and East Metro (N&E) GWMA. The Goals of the GWMA are to:

- Manage Waters of State to meet sustainability goals, and
- Protect natural resources that rely on water.

Water appropriation permitting is triggered at 1 Million Gallons/Year. There are over 8,000 high capacity permits in State with 300 permits in N&E. The goal of permitting is to be tracking groundwater use. Mr. Putzier then outlined the DNR Monitoring Network for groundwater, Ecological, Surface Water and Climate. He the outlined DNR's responsibility under Statute 103G.287, that when establishing limits (permits) DNR must consider the sustainability of the use, including:

- Current and projected water levels in aquifers.
- Water quality,
- Protection of ecosystems, and
- Future generations to meet their needs.

Mr. Putzier then reviewed the draft Strategic Plan for the Groundwater Management Program. The program includes a Management Approach, Management Objectives, and Management Strategies. The program is for both statewide groundwater management and GWMA's. Mr. Putzier then described the key elements of what a groundwater management is.

- A plan for DNR that informs DNR's permit decision process for specific geographic area,
- The Plan is informed by State-wide Strategic Plan
- Connecting hydrogeologically related users
- Increased understanding of thresholds within area
- The Plan is a set of specific actions (short & long term) to meet sustainability goals
- Increased resources and information in areas of high use and where other resources at risk
- Greater predictability for permit decisions

A question was asked about the DNR is developing a GWMA in the north and east metro area. Mr. Putzier responded that there is a serious problem and that the problems related to rapid growth in groundwater use, aquifer levels, impacts to surface water resources (streams, wetlands and lakes), future growth estimates, contaminated groundwater and water use or the lack of conservation.

DNR's approach is to focus on sustainability, improve information, engage stakeholders and increase predictability. The sustainability objectives of GWMA plan include:

1. All aquifers are within sustainable thresholds
2. All hi-cap appropriators of groundwater have required permits
3. All permitted groundwater users employ water conservation practices
4. All aquifers are without water use conflicts and well interferences
5. Permitted groundwater uses do not adversely impact protected and valued resources
6. Permitted groundwater uses do not adversely impact water quality

Strategies and actions for GWMA Plan include how DNR will:

1. Heighten the priority given to groundwater
2. Enhance the information available for decisions
3. Improve management of appropriation permits
4. Improve compliance with permits and regulations
5. Improve communication and education
6. Effectively address challenges in areas of high use
7. Promote water conservation practices

Mr. Putzier reviewed the GWMA Plan process. The process includes:

1. Advisory Team Formed – 18+ DNR & Others
2. Monthly meetings of Advisory Team to review DNR s work on the GWMA plan

3. 9-14 month process to a Draft GWMA Plan
  - a. Understand current situation in GWMA (Objectives)
  - b. Develop Actions/Plan (Strategies for Action)
  - c. Implementation plan
4. 2- 3 Months Specifically for stakeholder reviews and comments in the summer/fall of 2014
5. Adaptive Management: Plan review/update on scale of every 5 years
6. Process is Open to public throughout (Transparency)
7. Regular Updates available through the internet

Mr. Putzier reviewed some answers to common questions.

1. GWMA's provide enhanced evaluation criteria for DNR permitting process, not new authority for hi-cap wells
2. All permitted users are part of the GWMA Plan, not just cities. Approximately 300 permits in N&E Metro
3. Non-permitted water use within a GWMA will continue to be evaluated. This is a new authority for DNR.
4. DNR will respect the unique situations of developing and developed cities
5. DNR understands the existing commitments to water supply infrastructure cities have and the long lead times required to make changes to these systems, if needed
6. Conservation will play a larger role in permitting evaluations
7. Those holding permits will be reminded that permits can be amended – appropriation limits are not rights received ‘forever’
8. Some permits may be amended as a result of the evaluations
9. DNR applies the same statutory authority to all appropriations state-wide, whether in a GWMA's or not. However, GWMA's have advantage of greater level of understanding and detail leading to predictability and sustainability

Mr. Putzier noted that GWMA's can stimulate innovation including:

1. Conservation
2. Conjunctive use – seasonal patterns
3. Shared systems
4. Leak detection
5. Stormwater management
6. Re-use
7. “Minimum management practices” for agricultural production

The question was asked about what the role of watershed districts will be in GWMA plans. Mr. Putzier stated that they are critical partners in sustainable groundwater management, GWMA Plan aims to compliment work and plans of these and all organizations with water responsibilities, WDS have specific and direct impact on groundwater sustainability through:

1. Water quality protections
2. Protecting and enhancing groundwater recharge
3. Education and Outreach

There was a lengthy discussion about the various and possible roles of watershed Districts in groundwater management and GWMA plans. The consensus in the group was that the DNR should reach out to more watershed districts to get involved in the North and East GWMA planning process.

Mr. Putzier said that you can sign up for updates on the DNR or by giving him a call at 651-259-5692. The group thanked Mr. Putzier for his presentation.

## **II. Agency and Association Updates**

### **A. BWSR Update, Jim Haertel**

Jim Haertel of BWSR gave the agency report noting there are now three Board Conservationist's in the metro area. The Clean Water Fund had three times the requests with 244 applications (\$52 million in requests) with only \$17 million available. The Targeted Watershed program in 2014 – 2015 will only have \$12 million available. There were 25 applications received, 8 in metro, 17 outstate with 12 Projects moving forward, four in the metro and eight outstate. The selected watersheds will be announced in April. BWSR may fund 3-6 watershed in 2014 and 3-6 in 2015. BWSR looks to coordinate Clean Water Fund (CWF) and Targeted Watershed Programs. Sixty five percent of CWF funding is going to the Metro. Budget Based Request (BBR) will be done again in 2014 with programs opening in April.

### **B. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) Updates**

No Report at this time.

### **C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Updates, Terri Yearwood**

Terri Yearwood of DNR gave the agency report stating that the DNR is now hiring for Aquatic Invasive Species field staff for the 2014 field season.

### **D. Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts (MAWD) Updates, Ray Bohn**

Ray Bohn gave the MAWD Report. Ray stated that the MAWD legislative breakfast is March 19-20. This year there will be a half day event on the March 19<sup>th</sup>. The morning will be the regular MAWD Board and ADA meetings and in the afternoon there will be an Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) workshop co-hosted by MAWD and Minnehaha Creek Watershed District.

The next MAWD Board planning meeting is January 30, 2014 in St. Cloud. Topics for this year include the bonding bill, RIM funding, developing priorities and a MAWD legislative policy sheet. Mr. Bohn stated that the summer tour will be in Stillwater and will be co-sponsored by the Carnelian Marine St. Croix, South Washington and Brown's Creek Watershed Districts. The Tour will be on June 18-19. The next Local Government Roundtable meeting will be on January 29, 2014 at 10 am at the offices of the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC). Mr. Bohn said he will be meeting with State agencies regarding the role of watershed districts in groundwater management. The role could include developing a local framework for groundwater implementation. Mr. Bohn stated that he will be working on the sales tax reform bill to provide tax exempt status for watershed districts.

### **E. Administrator's Update**

No Administrator's Report was given.

**F. Met Council**

No reports at this time

**IV. Action Items**

**A. Approval of the Minutes from October 15, 2013.**

Motion by Mary Texer, second by Jill Crafton, to approve the October 15, 2013 Metro MAWD minutes as amended. Motion carried.

**V. Unfinished Business**

**A. Education**

**B. Permitting & Regulations**

**C. Governance**

No discussion

**VI. General Information**

**A. Roundtable Discussion – Current Issues, Trends and Topics, All**

No discussion

**VII. Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Metro MAWD will be Tuesday, April 15, 2014, 7:00 – 9:00 PM, CRWD Offices. Steve Robertson from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) will be at the next Metro MAWD meeting presenting MDH “Guidance for stormwater infiltration in wellhead protection areas”.

**VIII. Adjournment**

Motion by Mary Texer second by Jill Crafton to adjourn. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Doneux, Administrator  
Capitol Region Watershed District