



SURFACE WATER QUALITY WORKGROUP
Minutes of February 21, 2017 Meeting

Attendance

Present:

Workgroup Co-Chairs: Jim Baumann, Dick Lamers, Paul Zimmerman

Facilitator: Pat Murphy

Workgroup Members: Greg Baneck, Eric Birschbach, Eric Booth, Kevin Connors, Randy Eide, John Exo, Rick Georgeson, Jim Hebbe, Steve Jacquart, Matt Krueger, Scott Laeser, Kriss Marion, Dave Marshall, Amber Radatz, Rachel Rushman, Scott Sturgul, Darin Von Ruden, Laura Ward Good

Recorder: Tracey Arnold

Absent: Kenn Buelow, Dana Cook, Jim Coors, Paul Dearlove, Judy Derricks, Jeff Endres, Faith Fitzpatrick, Greg Fries, Bill Hafs, Angela James, Karl Klessig, Mary Anne Lowndes, Peter Nowak, Steve Richter, Dave Taylor, and John Umhoefer

Minutes

Minutes of November 10, 2016 Workgroup meeting were accepted with one suggested change: On page 5, in the first bullet point under “Comments and Discussion by workgroup members”, in the second line, the word “standards” should be changed to “practices” for clarity/accuracy.

Facilitator Comments

Facilitator Pat Murphy summarized the plan for the day. First, the Points for Discussion provided in the Agenda will be refined and ranked. Then, the top ideas will be used to create action/goal statements, and then strategies toward achieving the goals. Pat emphasized that there is great value and power in the diversity of the group to acknowledge what hasn’t worked and share creative ideas and innovative/different approaches to reaching these goals.

General Discussion

The Workgroup refined the brainstorming ideas from the November meeting by first refining the language of the Points for Discussion, then prioritizing (by vote) on the 6 more significant challenges. The Workgroup then developed objectives corresponding to each of the top 6 challenges, and concluded with a list of strategies toward achieving each objective. As this is a large Workgroup with varied viewpoints, numerous challenges and potential strategies were identified. These notes capture the broader consensus of these ideas.

Below is a full list of the challenges identified by the Workgroup with the associated objectives and strategies:

CHALLENGE 1: Do we have a clear understanding of what is happening “on the ground” and in the water? Can we improve that understanding? Are we doing an adequate job of water quality monitoring and conservation compliance monitoring? How can we ensure reasonable public accountability and transparency?

OBJECTIVE 1: Improve and integrate water quality and land management monitoring processes to ensure public accountability and transparency. “What happens on the land effects our water.”

STRATEGIES:

Action items

- Within 5 years develop and implement adequate measuring systems in 80% of the counties in Wisconsin. This should be a generic system to track conservation implementation at the local level.
- Develop agreements that land management data can be aggregated between agencies.
- Establish a central location where data is available for all agencies
- Set statewide parameters for everyone to use
- Establish a statewide database, like Surface Water Integrated Monitoring System (SWIMS), that everyone has access to and can keep updated
- Offset the cost of monitoring P with technology

Conversation notes

- Make water quality data understandable and available to general public
- Conservation compliance
- Land management and receiving water connection
- Meet water quality goals, what are they?
- How do you measure results on a statewide basis?
- Define what needs to be done on the land to achieve water quality goals
- Number of impaired waterbodies - not all waterbodies have been reviewed, and some can come off the impaired list. [DNR Website: *Over the last two reporting periods, 2014 and 2016, a total of 417 water bodies have been added to the impaired water body list and only 10 have been proposed to be removed.*]

- Water quality has a number of different meanings depending on who is asking
- TMDL projects establish implementation dates
- Ongoing research presents new obstacles we can't forecast
- Is there any baseline data statewide?
- Trends on pollutants going down
- Monitoring is for the public/community
- Monitoring strategies need to be improved, information needs to be presented in a manner that is understandable to the public, and make it available
- Need to know where we are at, but hard to measure that, spend more resources to measure where we are at
- How do we know we are in a worst spot now than 10 years ago, different waterbodies are measured differently?
- Numerous ways to collect data, analysis is a huge staffing and budget constraint
- Land management factors need to be weighed into water quality
- Goals are appropriate but hard to set a broad goal for the whole state
- Suggested goal was by 2050 have no streams impaired by P in the state, something that is measurable
- Federal and state funded projects should have measurable outcomes on a defined timeline
- GIS land information systems were required to do a technology transfer to the state, might be something to look into
- Local departments are always competing for funds, require QA/QC

CHALLENGE 2: It appears that we cannot achieve our water quality goals without increasing public and private investments. How can we mobilize the necessary investments? What level of investment are we willing to make? Who should pay?

OBJECTIVE 2: Increase public and private investments to protect and improve water quality.

STRATEGIES:

- Establish full funding for cost share projects
- Increase public awareness, Increase funding for water quality projects
- Increase outreach to private sector, pursue in-kind investments from private business and funding organizers
- How to engage policy makers to fully fund projects?
- Price the water quality goals accurately
- Put dollar figures on benefits once we achieve goals
- Expand conservation easements
- Continue to grow the number of multiple discharge variance, use funds available now
- Provide outreach to legislators to go through a TMDL plan training so they understand
- Talk about successes more as a way to receive funds
- Get more boots on the ground, hardest dollars to receive
- Funding for UWEX

CHALLENGE 3: How can we increase participation in conservation implementation? What are the key barriers to participation and compliance? Are compliance incentives adequate? Should we consider others? What is the role of citizen-led projects?

OBJECTIVE 3: Increase participation in continuous water quality protection/improvement efforts.

STRATEGIES:

- Encourage information sharing and outreach – attend our conference!
- Engage urban landowners on what they can do to help
- Create a generation that values conservation practices (school programs, shovel-ready projects)
- Locally led processes, farmer/watershed based
- Detach regulations and technical service
- Establish method for farmers to know how much P is leaving property without it becoming public record (Snap Plus)
- Do a better job of cost analysis (conservation practices vs profitability)
- Allow experimentation and potential failure without public knowledge, as could take years to figure out how to make conservation practices work correctly. Mitigate financial risk to farmers for trying something new
- Explore news ways to reward conservation practices, green-tier example

CHALLENGE 4: How can we focus on the most serious resource concerns? Are we pursuing the most cost-effective solutions? Can we do better? (How can we ensure that we are getting good “value” for conservation dollars?)

OBJECTIVE 4: Focus water quality protection and management on high-impact problems and practices that meet the most serious or relevant resource concerns while ensuring we are getting good value for conservation dollars.

STRATEGIES:

- Use tracking system to focus efforts
- Tackle high risk issues, use technology to help
- Price results from previous projects to help prioritize future projects
- Similar to vets hiring process, target impaired water projects
- There are impaired waters that nothing has been done with, use locally targeted projects
- Continue to identify critical waters and practices that are high impact

CHALLENGE 5: How can we mobilize the creativity and resources of private business, including dairy and food supply chains, cooperatives, bankers, entrepreneurs, farm supply businesses, and farmers themselves, to achieve conservation goals? How can we increase public understanding and support?

OBJECTIVE 5: Encourage the creativity and resources of private business to achieve conservation goals.

STRATEGIES:

- Talk to private companies to see value in labeling water-friendly farms (example milk)
- Talk to business regarding surface water quality - make contact and keep developing the relationship (example 3M)
- Keep water in front of people, make sure they know what you're doing to keep it clean, show them the benefits and why it's important
- Yahara Pride has a large agricultural business support group
- Public outreach about the importance of clean water
- Create public demand for businesses that use clean water practices
- Expose key stakeholders to water issues
- Encourage financial institutions to buy into conservation practices, bring them to the table, show them examples both pro and con
- Demand-driven solutions

CHALLENGE 6: To what extent should we focus on "nonpoint source" vs. "point source" discharge reduction? Farm vs. urban "nonpoint source" reduction? Are we pursuing a fair and cost-effective strategy? How do we do better? TMDL?

OBJECTIVE 6: Pursue a watershed based, cost-effective strategy that includes both nonpoint source and point source discharge reduction.

STRATEGIES:

- Reform water quality trading administrative easy
- Make sure all parties are at the table when discussion, open communication between point source and nonpoint source
- Increase support of resources, administrative, more boots on the ground
- Raise awareness - conferences, tours, education
- Develop a point source map in each watershed--DNR's Pollutant Load Ratio Estimation Tool (PRESTO) is a system that does this. Central database to identify point sources, SWIMS, has some of this data too
- Be able to identify the different pollutants within your watershed, data rich subject but can't find it easily
- Understand groundwater is a key part
- Evaluation based on watershed, HUC 12 is manageable size
- Relative cost between point source and nonpoint source, put a dollar amount

Adjournment

By unanimous consent, the meeting was adjourned.