



2015-2016

Water Resources Management Report

The Anoka County Community Health and Environmental Services Department (CHES) completed an updated Water Resources Report in late 2014, with the guidance of the Water Task Force. An initial report was completed in 2009. The formation of the Water Task Force occurred under the duties of the Community Health Board (MS 145A) with the 2014 Water Resources Report incorporated into the CHES Community Health Improvement Plan (2015-2019).

The Water Resources Report indicated that local water management can be achieved through the collaboration of county, municipal, and watershed agencies along with state agencies and local community organizations. The Water Task Force interests include preservation of local water resources as well as consideration of opportunities to collaborate in water protection and management. This report identifies current collaboration as well as opportunities for consideration where local agencies may choose to collaborate.

Coordinated Water Management Programs

The Water Resources Task Force has identified that drinking water protection and local water resource sustainability may present opportunities for local agencies to collaborate in managing water. A priority is addressing water sustainability throughout Anoka County and specifically within the communities inside the North and East Metro Groundwater Management Area established by the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the Metropolitan Council of the Twin Cities have combined statutory local water supply planning requirements into a single planning process that satisfies both agency standards. Seventeen of the twenty-one Anoka County communities are required to update their Local Water Supply Plans in the next 18 months. This includes emergency planning and water conservation. Four communities (Bethel, Nowthen, Ham Lake and Linwood) do not operate a public water supply system and are not required to prepare a DNR Local Water Supply Plan. An approved Local Water Supply Plan will also meet the Met Council's local comprehensive planning requirement.

A Comprehensive Planning and Local Water Supply Planning Webinar was hosted by the Met Council on July 21, 2016. The webinar focused on water resources planning requirements of local comprehensive plans. CHES provided a videoconference site for local agencies. Following the webinar, the nine community members discussed options around coordination of local water supply plans that may enhance local programs to protect and sustain local resources.

Community public water suppliers have a primary interest in protecting local water resources and maintaining a sustainable supply. Increased planning and implementation requirements present an opportunity for communities to collaborate in developing their plans in a coordinated manner, supporting local water protection and sustainability goals.

Examples of additional collaboration in 2015-2016 related to water planning and sustainability include:

Smart Irrigation Forum (July 16, 2015)

Through a workgroup, the Water Task Force developed a forum/program to deliver information and encourage participation in using smart irrigation (water efficient) practices to maintain a sustainable, healthy lawn. By understanding how grass plants use water and their ability to tolerate dry conditions participants learned how to maintain turf and efficiently use water. Local irrigation professionals and the U of M Extension Service collaborated with the Water Task Force and community environmental and public works staff in this forum held at Bunker Hills Activity Center.

Enhanced Smart Irrigation and Water Conservation

In 2003, Minnesota passed a law (MN. Stat. 103G.298) requiring that all automatically operated irrigation systems include technology that "*inhibits or interrupts operation of the landscape irrigation system during periods of sufficient moisture.*" A "Smart Irrigation" system improves water conservation and efficient use as it permits residents and property owners to maintain an attractive green landscape.

Minnesota Law requires the installation of smart irrigation controllers. Many homes and businesses do not have or utilize this water-conserving technology. The City of Coon Rapids launched a pilot program in the Spring of 2016 to install lawn irrigation sensors to help reduce water consumption and demonstrate how efficient smart irrigation can maintain lawns while conserving water. Other communities are considering options to conserve local water resources by encouraging residents to efficiently use irrigation water by smart technology that is properly programmed. There are opportunities for communities to collaborate in addressing the efficient use of landscape irrigation that results in conserving water and maintaining sustainable local water resources.

National Mayor's Challenge for Water Conservation 2016 (City of Andover)

Andover Mayor Julie Trude joined with Andover High School students to take the Wyland Foundation Mayor's Challenge for Water Conservation. During the month of April 2016, Andover residents pledged to conserve water through the www.mywaterpledge.com website. When the pledges were compiled from communities across America, Andover won their category (communities with population 30,000-99,999). Andover was reported to have the highest per capita water use in the Twin Cities metro area in 2014.

The National Mayor's Water Challenge for Water Conservation presents an opportunity for other communities to consider. The Wyland Foundation has indicated that they hope that mayors of neighboring communities will take up the challenge to conserve water during the next challenge (April 2017). Such competition to reduce water demand and maintain a sustainable supply and the city of Andover's accomplishment may encourage other communities to promote water conservation.

An opportunity for consideration by communities is the EPA WaterSense Partnership. WaterSense helps people save water with product labeling and tips for indoor and outdoor water use. Products bearing the WaterSense label have been independently certified to efficiently use and conserve water; conserve energy and money; and encourage innovation in manufacturing. A number of local government agencies have utilized state and Metro Council grants to provide water efficient fixtures (i.e. showerhead and smart irrigation controller). Locally, the Coon Creek Watershed District is a EPA WaterSense Partner.

Drinking Water Protection (Public Water Supply)

The coordinated Municipal Wellhead Protection Planning Group is an example of collaboration around water protection. In 1997, municipal public water suppliers determined that new Safe Drinking Water Act requirements to plan and implement source water protection (wellhead protection) is best achieved through collaboration between municipal suppliers. The Anoka County Municipal Wellhead Planning Group was formed by ten city councils to utilize resources together in the preparation of wellhead protection plans. Upon completion of wellhead plans in 2010, municipal water suppliers determined to continue their collaboration in implementing common elements of their wellhead protection plans together.

The members of the Anoka County Wellhead Protection Planning Group entered into a new agreement to implement the common elements of their wellhead protection plans. In January 2011, eight cities (Anoka, Blaine, Centerville, Circle Pines, Fridley, Lexington, Lino Lakes and Spring Lake Park) formed the Anoka County Municipal Wellhead Protection Group. In July 2014 Andover and St. Francis joined the Group. CHES acts as a non-voting facilitator to the group.

A priority for each member of the Anoka County Wellhead Protection Group is locating and sealing unused (abandoned) wells within their Drinking Water Supply Management Area (DWSMA) or Wellhead Protection Area.

Coordinated efforts of the Wellhead Protection Group include:

Well Sealing Workshop (April 15, 2015)

The Wellhead Protection Group sponsored a workshop for local officials (e.g. building officials, utilities, community development, parks and highway dept.) that included Minnesota Department of Health Well Management Program staff. The workshop covered well construction standards, disclosure of wells at the time of property sale, techniques for locating abandoned wells and well sealing requirements (by a licensed contractor only).

Well Sealing Cost-Share Grant Program

Members of the Wellhead Protection Group (Blaine, Circle Pines, Lexington and Lino Lakes) obtained a Source Water Protection competitive grant (October 2014) to encourage residents and property owners within their wellhead protection areas to seal unused (abandoned) wells to protect the quality of the municipal well from pollution. The municipalities established a system to accept and approve applications for cost-share grants. Anoka County acted as the fiscal agent for the group to receive the state grant and disburse the cost-share grants approved by each city. 23 wells were sealed using the grant funds.

Sealing Your Well (YouTube video)

Members of the Wellhead Protection Group collaborated with the Minnesota Department of Health to produce a video that is posted on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-iuRi1DNrbo>) presenting state requirements to seal unused wells. The Wellhead Protection Group is using this video to encourage property owners to remove potential drinking water contaminant sources from their wellhead protection areas.

Drinking Water Protection (Private Wells)

There are approximately 25,000 private home and cabin wells in Anoka County serving over 80,000 residents. The safety of drinking water from these private wells is the responsibility of the homeowner. Since 1972, CHES has provided water testing and consultation to private well owners. During that time, over 20,000 water tests have been performed by Anoka County. CHES has around 600-700 water tests completed each year.

In 1999, CHES and 14 municipal and county agencies launched the **Well Water Wise** program to encourage private well owners to maintain their well water system in good working order and annually test the safety of their drinking water. Each year cooperators join to promote Well Water Wise week (the first full week of May) that is celebrated as Drinking Water Week by the American Water Works Association (AWWA). Well Water Wises week compliments the AWWA program to offer services to private well owners helping them to protect their drinking water as well. 150 water samples were tested during the WWW promotion week in 2016.

Outreach & Education

Anoka County's outreach and education programs are typically associated with required activities of each agency. The Water Resources Report and Water Task Force have challenged local agencies to define outreach beyond the limits of a single program or agency. Through collaboration a multiplying effect is possible to have greater impact on residents, property owners, businesses and institutions.

- **Know The Flow Website**

Through collaboration with the Wellhead Protection Group and the Water Task Force - a countywide water website (www.KnowTheFlow.us) was established in 2012. Know The Flow website provides local event and water related information to support local agencies (e.g. Anoka County Wellhead Protection Group, Anoka Conservation District, municipal recycling and environmental programs and watershed management programs) in their mission to protect and management local water resources and environmental health.

- **Metro Area Children's Water Festival**

In 1998 the seven metro counties developed a water education program for fourth-grade students that meets state education benchmarks in water education. The Metro Area Children's Water Festival (www.MetroCWF.org) remains an annual program supported by metro counties as a means to educate the next generation. The Festival is held on the last Wednesday of September. Classrooms are registered for a drawing that selects six (6) classes from each of the seven counties. A total of 44 classes participate in the festival that makes space available for home school students as well. In 2016, 200 children from the Anoka County area participated in the Water Festival.

The 2014 Water Resources report is available at:

<https://www.anokacounty.us/DocumentCenter/Home/View/5631>