

UPPER BIG BLUE NRD

WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLAN AND VOLUNTARY INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT PLAN

One District, Two Plans, One Water



Minutes from Stakeholder Meeting 4

November 27, 2018
7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Upper Big Blue NRD Office
319 E. 25th St.
York, NE 68467

Attendees

See attached attendance sheet

Agenda

1. Welcome provided by Steve Wolf, JEO Consulting Group

- We are starting to see how your feedback is directly shaping the goals and objectives for each plan. Reminder that there will be two plans at the end of this planning process.
- In review of past meeting minutes, several concepts emerged and serve as major themes of both plans:
 - Local management
 - Need for education
 - Ensuring future water supply

2. Discuss/Review Draft Goals and Objectives facilitated by Steve Wolf, JEO

The stakeholders collectively reviewed, discussed, and modified the draft goals and objectives that, with permission from the group, were assembled by the project team based on stakeholder discussion, technical expertise, and review of other relevant plans and existing rules, regulations, and policies in the District. The stakeholder group's revised draft goals and objectives, including tracked changes, are provided in Attachment 2.

Key points of discussion during review of VIMP draft goals and objectives

- Quality is connected to these, but part of WQMP.
- Need to enhance "land literacy" or focus on all types of natural resources, not just water.
- We should focus on targeted public outreach.
- We could do a better job of reaching technical advisors.

In Partnership With

- Stakeholder group should also be invited to participated in NRD and NeDNR's joint annual activity.
- We should include action items related to forecasting.

Key points of discussion during review of WQMP draft goals and objectives

- "Partnerships and collaboration" seem to be a theme of both plans.
- Is industrial use considered domestic or should that be added to Goal 4?
- "Wellhead protection" would be better for action item rather than in objective.

3. Stakeholder Discussion

- How do you see your (the stakeholder) involvement? Do you see your efforts in the plan?
 - Impressed by the effort that has gone into the plan.
 - Happy about wetland incorporation.
- The nature of the NRD is more voluntary regulations and controls but they are trying to develop a relationship with regulators. It will be interesting to see how flexible NeDNR will need to be.
 - This process, and the involvement of state agencies, seems to have a different spirit, more cooperative, than that other agencies.

4. Stakeholder Research Assignment

- *Conservation Choices* brochure and VIMP Controls handout provided and explained by Adam Rupe, JEO.
- Stakeholders are to review brochure and handout, and bring to next meeting any ideas, thoughts, or questions about the materials.

5. Stakeholder Roundtable

- I see verification of things we are doing, almost like a "license to carry on" with the education, land restoration prototypes and other things we all are working on.
- This exercise has been worthwhile, but I wish I was more optimistic about its effectiveness, particularly with municipalities.
 - The voluntary approach is what will fly, and that has been front and center of our conversations so far.
- We've been making good progress. This is a good process. Reflecting back, NeDNR and NRD used to be at each other's throats for water management. We've come a long way, but we've still got a way to go.
- This is great progress. It's good we're talking about this. It's important that the NRD has expanded its reach and is about more than just groundwater. This is also a good revisit of the pressure of water.
 - It would be a good action item to revisit goals and objectives, and current policies, with stakeholders every five or so years.
- This is coming together nicely. These plans will be effective and useful to find and pursue funding.



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- I like everything we're doing. I was very impressed with this.
 - Education has and will be important. I would love to see more availability and attendance of rainfall simulator. Motivate people to learn and be interested.
 - Water and soil conservation will take care of quality.
- It comes down to this: we're making progress working together. For a small community to address nitrates, an increase of \$45 per month is a lot. It'd be great to work together to prevent and eliminate this.
 - What's the social equitability of water problem? We need to develop a culture that is literate of this.
- I'm impressed with all the work that been done. Aside from nitrates, the quality around here has really improved over the years, including in the creek near me.
- What you're/we're doing is great. This is ahead of the curve. Keep doing what you're/we're doing.
- It can be scary to wonder if this will make a difference, but it's like planting a seed. We just have to do it. The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago. The next best time is now. If we continue communicating, we can do this.

6. Stakeholder Roundtable

- A question was posed to the stakeholder group: what do you think about banning fall fertilizer?
 - It is not a best management practice. I'm against fall application. Other methods, like fertigation, are more effective. There is likely a lot of need for education. Would like to see more research on how fall applications effect yield.
 - Is there data on how many acres are fall fertilized?
 - Answer: No specific fall data, Last year 70% of fertilizer is preplant. Currently looking into the economic benefits of post plant. Most people are over applying by 60 to 70 lbs.
 - Can never address N issues until all N is applied post plant.
 - Fertigation has its own risks that can be worse than fall application. Disease and directly injecting contaminates into groundwater.
 - Why are nitrates so high in this area?
 - Answer: Subsoil and leaching rate.
 - Very little fertilizer happened this fall, but not sure how all the fertilizer will get applied this coming spring unless the weather is perfect. The fertilizer needs are too great to only do it in the spring.
 - Education is huge. Educate don't regulate. Show farmers how they can raise more bushels by breaking up the applications.
 - We have to find a way to reduce N or be okay with dealing with the consequences.
 - Has to have economic push, in the present, or farmers won't change.
 - Fertigation is a logistic issue. Hard to apply enough N and get the timing right. Also difficult for people to get enough product from co-op.
 - How to get N fertilizer to non-irrigated acres? Maybe, reduce the amount that can be applied in the fall.
 - How to you enforce?



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- N is no longer the limiting yield factor.
- Cropping mix is different, far more corn now. So it could be that the number of acres of corn is possibly the issue, not fall fertilizing.
- Part of the logistics is the need for innovation.
- We can't pass the buck any more. We have to make the change now.

Next Meeting Date

- January 14, 2019 at 7 p.m.

