

**Dearborn County Water Quality Management Plan Update  
Advisory Committee  
April 12, 2010  
Summary of Discussion**

**ATTENDED BY:**

Committee Members:

Randy Turner	Mike Rozow	Ralph Thompson	Dan Lansing
Margaret Minzner	John Grace	Mark McCormack	Steve Renihan
Rita Cutter	Jennifer Hughes	Jim Deaton	Steve Lampert
John Getzendanner	E.B. Seitz	Mel Davis	Paul Grimsley
Andy Bischoff	Bill Neyer	Duane Drockelman	Chuck Hail
Christina Swafford	Heather Wirth	Floyd Ogden	

OKI Staff:	Bruce Koehler	Robert Lakeberg	Jane Wittke
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Guests:	Steve Canter	Raymond Rodmaker	Robert Starks
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Presentations were given at the meeting about the project scope, schedule and the advisory committee's role; the approach to point source issues and to nonpoint source issues; the preliminary analysis of water quality data; and the preliminary analysis of population and land use trends as an indication of future needs for wastewater treatment. (Point sources are pollution sources from a defined point such as an outfall of municipal or industrial wastewater; nonpoint sources are diffuse pollution carried by storm runoff, snow melt and wind, including soil particles, fertilizer, fecal material from failing septic systems, pesticides, road salt and debris from paved areas.)

**In a group discussion about Dearborn County water quality issues, those attending responded to the following questions and raised the following points and issues:**

**--How important is water quality to the future of Dearborn County?**

It affects the quality and safety of life.

Taste and smell issues are a nuisance.

There are economic benefits from recreational activities such as fishing tournaments.

It is important to agricultural operations such as watering crops and feeding livestock.

Surface water quality affects groundwater quality, and the cost of treating drinking water.

Water resources attract industries such as distilleries and alternative energy.

The Oxbow is preserved to help maintain groundwater quality. It serves as the aquifer's kidney.

**--What concerns do you have about water quality issues in Dearborn County?**

There is concern with over-fertilization of crops and lawns.

There are many failing septic systems which are expensive to update. It is hard to determine whether these updates or collection system expansions are the best way to deal with the problem.

Many pharmaceuticals end up in the water system either by flushing them directly into the system or via human waste.

A lot of water quality improvements go unacknowledged or unnoticed.

An increasing population increases loading of pollutants. Is there adequate treatment capacity to accommodate this?

Are we treating water adequately in proportion to how much we use?

Can we go beyond bare minimum treatment standards?

We need new sewage collection lines in the northern part of the county.

Water providers and wastewater treatment providers are two different groups.

There are many needed collection system upgrades.

What is the status of wetlands in the county?

Our water is too cheap, which makes conservation less of a concern.

It is easier to expand drinking water systems than sewage collection systems. The latter is much more expensive.

Do we want the resource to be available to our children and their children many years down the road?

Exfiltration (sewage leaking out of a pipe) is a hidden problem that can affect groundwater.

We need to educate our young people about water conservation.

We need to be aware of the interactions between surfacewater and groundwater.

**--Do you see any obstacles to addressing water quality management in the county?**

There is a lack of funding.

There is especially a lack of funding for septic systems and alternatives to them.

There is a lack of affordable technology that performs better than septic systems.

There is public fear and concern over infringement on personal and property rights. For example, some people would rather spend money on a new pole barn rather than on an upgraded septic system.

There is a lack of support for health department enforcement activities.

There is a lack of cooperation among all the parties involved.

Existing ordinances need improvement.

Groundwater quality is an unseen problem. People need to be educated on this issue.

Political activities and jurisdictions can be a barrier.

**--(Besides those organizations represented on the advisory committee) what organizations are involved in water quality management in the county?**

There are some private water companies.

The public as a whole greatly determines the quality of water in the county.

**--Is the public aware of/concerned about water quality issues in the county?**

More people would participate if they knew how. If we give people the opportunity and information needed they will become concerned.

Most people don't realize the phosphate problem that we have.

The majority of people remain uninvolved until a disaster occurs.

Education in the schools will pay dividends later.

**--How do we attract people to the meeting on May 10<sup>th</sup>?**

Have a radio announcement. The Eagle (99.3 FM) is a popular station.

Place an ad in the local newspaper.

Send people postcards if there's enough of a budget to do it.

Post something on the Dearborn County website (dearborncounty.org).

Offer free drinks and hotdogs at the meeting.

Have a TV ad on channel 19 (FOX WXIX); the Soil and Water Conservation District has a contact.

Distinguish between agricultural and urban communities and recognize they have different interests and concerns.