

Groundwater Plan Actions - Quality

*Both quality and quantity

Strategy: Assist private well owners in having their drinking water sampled, abandoned wells sealed, and using appropriate water treatments.

- Water testing of pollutants that present health concerns including but not limited to coliform bacteria, nitrate, arsenic, manganese, lead, or newly identified contaminants of emerging concern.
 - Continue collecting a service fee for the water sampling program.
 - Explore and implement, as appropriate, options to lessen the cost of sampling such as a free program that rotates throughout the county, lower cost options, and/or identifying opportunities to apply for and offer grants.
 - Continue to hold one free private water sampling event each year with partners.
 - Explore and implement options for reminding private well owners to test their well water.
 - Identify methods for residents to test for pesticides.
- Continue water supply testing for the Department of Public Health and Environment's licensed Non-community Transient Public Water Suppliers.
- Explore options for financial assistance for private well water treatment and implement as appropriate.
 - A county program for low cost or free private well treatment done in partnership with MDH who would advise residents on which treatment is needed.
 - Identify opportunities for financial assistance or grants for private well treatment and apply for and promote funding as it is available.
 - Existing loan program for private well repair and replacement in accordance with county policy.
- Continue to work with state agencies and townships impacted by TCE on appropriate mitigation strategies.
- Continue existing abandoned well sealing grant program and expand by identifying and applying for grant opportunities.
- Partner with local units of government to find and seal abandoned wells, if requested.
- Explore options for a coordinated private well data information system among agencies that collect well data.
- Review existing well testing information to evaluate:
 - Vulnerable populations and their access to safe drinking water.
 - Potential hot spots or contamination areas such as nitrates, pesticides, manganese, and arsenic in the county.

Strategy: Participate in PFAS activities and communicate with residents.

- Monitor and participate in MPCA PFAS Blueprint activities.
- Participate in 3M Settlement activities.
- Partner with the state to provide technical assistance and support for licensed Non-community Transient Public Water Suppliers with PFAS detections.
- Assess role in providing PFAS testing for non-residential wells such as but not limited to the county's licensed Non-community Transient Public Water Suppliers.
- Advocate for grant funds to become available for private well owners to connect to city water in areas of contamination.

Strategy: Collaborate with MDH and Public Water Suppliers to protect their water supply.

- Work with the Public Water Suppliers and MDH and determine the county's role in Wellhead Protection Planning and then implement.
- Develop a process to stay informed by MDH and the Public Water Suppliers in the county of proposed changes made by either organization.
- Review and, if necessary, modify the process with MDH and the Public Water Suppliers so that the county is reviewing and providing comments on Wellhead Protection Plans.
- Continue to maintain awareness of drinking water standards as they evolve, and new information becomes available for current and emerging contaminants and will inform stakeholders and residents.
- Maintain awareness of the Special Well and Boring Construction Areas and other contamination plumes in the county.

Strategy: Reduce agriculture related groundwater contamination.

- Continue to support the MDA Nitrate Local Advisory Team in Denmark Township.
- Continue to partner with the Washington Conservation District to support whole farm planning that includes promotion of water quality best management practices (BMPs) and soil health practices*, that reduce pollution from nutrients, pesticides, and other agricultural applications.
- Explore and implement if feasible cost share funding through the Washington Conservation District for agricultural water quality BMPs.

Strategy: Reduce groundwater contamination from chloride.

- Continue to fund one Smart Salt training in the county each year.
- Promote chloride reduction by advocating and incentivizing the replacement of outdated water softeners with new, efficient on-demand water softeners.
- Investigate testing a sample of some collector and/or community septic systems for the concentration of chlorides.
- Work with County departments to minimize salt use on County roads, sidewalks, and parking lots while protecting public safety.
- Encourage cities and townships to develop and implement chloride reduction policies and practices.

Strategy: Prevent pollution by minimizing wastewater impacts on groundwater quality.

- Ensure that subsurface sewage treatment systems in Washington County will be constructed, operated, and maintained in conformance with Minnesota statutes and rules and County Development Code Chapter 4.
- Remove barriers to replacement of failing septic systems by continuing to offer septic replacement loans and low-income grants.
- Identify failing septic systems by enforcing the county's requirement for inspection of septic systems at the time of property transfer to protect groundwater.
- Periodically review and update the SSTS Risk Assessment database and promote it as a tool for land-use planning.
- The county will define its role regarding community sewers and their effect on groundwater.
- Continue administering county SSTS operating permits program.

Strategy: Address pollution potential from industrial operations, mining, and historically contaminated sites.

- Continue to track, review, and comment on Environmental Impact Statements, Environmental Assessment Worksheets, and Alternative Urban Areawide Reviews.
- Evaluate the need for a solid waste and household hazardous waste/agricultural chemical management assistance program.
- Recognize and acknowledge the county's hazardous waste licensing role by:
 - Continuing to enforce Washington County Ordinances that regulate the proper collection storage and disposal of hazardous waste.
 - Identifying and evaluating businesses and other non-residential entities served by SSTs that generate or potentially generate hazardous waste.
 - Providing outreach assistance and education related to SSTs and non-community water supplies at non-residential entities.
- Work with Public Works and Administration to develop a process to review and provide comments on mining permits that includes professional engineering as well as hydrological review and analysis.
- The county will explore options to identify when and where movement of contaminated soil is occurring and evaluate a process to monitor this activity under existing solid and hazardous waste regulations.
- The county will continue the following with respect to landfills:
 - The county supports Minnesota Rule 7001.3111 "Additional Siting Requirements for Certain Landfills that have not Received a Permit before January 1, 2011."
 - The county will continue to review and provide comments on any proposed landfill operations within the county to protect groundwater.
 - The county will review and comment on any proposed statute or rule changes from the state with regards to landfill operations to protect groundwater.
- The Washington County Groundwater Plan supports the work of the Washington County Solid Waste Management Plan to implement activities for an integrated solid waste management system that is protective of groundwater.
- Continue operation and promotion of the County Environmental Center(s) for disposal of household hazardous waste.

Strategy: Implement a land spreading program that is protective of groundwater.

- Explore collaboration and partnerships with local WMOs and the WCD on review of land spreading permitting by the county for the beneficial use of byproducts that are land-spread as soil amendments.
- Establish a sharable data management and mapping system to track proposed sites for land application of wastewater treatment plant biosolids to reduce the risk of direct human exposure to waste or contamination of groundwater.
- Advocate that the MPCA evaluate and effectively regulate land spreading of septage to avoid adversely affecting public health.
- Develop and implement educational resources for residents regarding land spreading of septage.

Strategy: Manage stormwater to prevent groundwater pollution.

- Find opportunities to partner with the WCD and WMOs to convert turf grass and annual vegetation.
- Continue to implement the Washington County Stormwater Program to prevent pollution to surface and groundwater.
- Follow the MPCA Stormwater Manual and any guidance from MDH for safe placement of infiltration basins.
- Encourage partners to implement stormwater best management practices that are protective of groundwater.

Groundwater Plan Actions - Quantity

*Both quality and quantity

Strategy: Expand understanding of groundwater and surface water connection in the county.

- Support research and modeling to increase understanding of the surface and groundwater connection and how it impacts groundwater availability and contaminant flow.
- Partner with the WCD and watersheds to support efforts for soil health. *

Strategy: Promote and implement water conservation and efficiency efforts.

- Explore funding opportunities for water conservation and efficiency and work with partners to create, promote and/or expand programs. (including but not limited to, moisture sensors for irrigation systems, water efficient appliances, and water leak detection projects)
- Identify opportunities for water use audits and implementation of water conservation and efficiency projects on county-owned property.
- Continue supporting rain barrel sales offered through the Department of Public Health and Environment.

Strategy: Support research into direct injection of aquifers and infiltration.

- Support work done to determine where infiltration can be done safely.
- Support research, and if can be done safely, the implementation of the Aquifer Storage and Recovery method.

Strategy: Protect, preserve, and restore resources that support groundwater dependent ecosystems.

- Continue to fund WCD's administration of the Wetland Conservation Act through the BWSR Natural Resource Block Grant.
- Partner with WMOs and the WCD to protect and improve groundwater quality, temperature, and quantity, in areas that provide groundwater to wetlands, fens or trout streams.

Strategy: Support and encourage safe and feasible water reuse.

- Support work done to determine which water reuse methodologies are safe for public health and their implementation.
- Increase landscape storage and retention of water for reuse.
- Support work done to develop a safe use for treated industrial and commercial containment water from pumping.
- Support agencies exploring development of diversified grades of water (non-potable for non-drinking uses).

Strategy: Regularly update and share water quantity related data.

- Support and encourage agency water supply modeling and groundwater database that can be used to identify areas at risk for depletion, areas for storage for future use, predict aquifer levels and trends.
- The county will compile water usage data and update annually.
- Encourage regular and consistent data updates to Atlas 14.

Groundwater Plan Actions - Governance

Strategy: Collaborate with other levels of government.

- Continue the Washington County Water Consortium and explore additional options for collaboration with partners on data-sharing, idea-sharing, and collaboration on water resources issues.
- Continue to monitor and participate with White Bear Lake court order and its effects.
- Continue to participate in the DNR's North and East Metro Groundwater Management Area work group, monitor activities, and ensure the county's needs are represented.
- Support any needed updates to the County Geologic Atlas Part A and the Hydrogeologic Atlas Part B.
- Participate and track coordinated wellhead protection efforts with MDH and Public Water Suppliers.

Strategy: Support and create regulations that improve and protect groundwater quality and quantity.

- To maximize local public health protection and support to private well owners, explore the option of becoming a delegated well authority under MN Statute 103I.111. In the event a delegated program is stood up, consider a well testing requirement at time of property transfer.
- Support limited liability legislation for salt applicators and support best practices to reduce chloride contamination from road salt and water softeners.
- Support updates to the plumbing code that safely allows for water reuse.
- Support laws that require private well testing and treatment at time of sale for nitrate, lead, arsenic, or other emerging contaminants.
- Support legislative changes requested by communities that allow them to charge rates that support reuse and conservation investments.
- Monitor requests for groundwater appropriation and advocate for limiting any groundwater exportation.
- To promote a sustainable water supply, the county supports LGUs in including the following in their development codes and regulations:
 - Reuse options and requirements.
 - Infiltration requirements that align with state and watershed rules and guidelines.
 - Identify and preserve regional recharge areas with partners.
 - Encourage incorporation of soil health and seed mix requirements.

Strategy: Advocate for more grant funds to support access to safe drinking water for all residents.

- Support and encourage expanded grant programs by the state that allow for well testing, monitoring, and treatment for private well owners.
- Advocate for grant funds to become available for private well owners to connect to city water in areas of contamination.

Strategy: Support and create county programs which improve and prioritize groundwater protection.

- Continue to implement the county's Land and Water Legacy Program, under the direction of the county board, which seeks to protect and improve the quality of rivers, lakes, streams, and groundwater resources through the acquisition of land or interests in land via conservation easement.
- Invest in and support the restoration and enhancement of the county's protected lands to promote improved water quality and increased water quantity.

Groundwater Plan Actions – Water Education

Strategy: Inform and educate targeted audiences on how to protect the quantity and quality of groundwater.

- Continue to support elected official education through Workshop on the Water and other opportunities.
- Educate property managers, businesses, homeowner associations, and public works officials on proper salt use.
- Continue realtor education classes on well water, septic systems, household hazardous waste and other topics that impact groundwater.
- Share well testing and water quality information, resources, and funding opportunities with businesses and institutions.
- Promote best practices with respect to proper disposal of solid and hazardous waste to businesses and institutions.
- The county will continue to use the Washington County Water Consortium to educate partners and residents.
- Develop and promote education for targeted audiences on climate change adaptation and mitigation in addition to groundwater and surface water interaction.
- Continue coordination with the East Metro Water Resources Education Program on water education messaging for targeted audiences.

Strategy: Inform and educate residents on how to protect the quantity and quality of groundwater.

- Continue to educate residents on proper disposal of pharmaceuticals and promote the use of the County Drop Box.
- Continue to educate residents on proper disposal of household hazardous waste and promote the use of the County Environmental Center(s).
- Continue to educate residents on the importance of properly sealing abandoned wells and promote the County Abandoned Well Sealing Grant and Cost Share Programs.
- Develop and promote education for residents on climate change adaptation and mitigation in addition to groundwater and surface water interaction.
- Work with East Metro Water Resources Education Program, MDH, and DNR to coordinate education of residents on fish consumption concerns related to PFAS and other contaminants.
- Develop tailored messages for private well and/or septic system owners on maintenance, testing and other practices that protect public health.
- Coordinate with water suppliers, MDH, and others to provide consistent information and messaging to residents on drinking water standards.
- Continue to educate residents on how to use best management practices to minimize contamination of groundwater caused by the use and storage of fertilizers, pesticides, and salt.
- Continue support of the Metro Children's Water Festival.
- Ensure educational information is available in multiple languages and accessible formats.
- Support, continue, and expand resident education on water conservation and efficiency practices.
- Diversify and expand current conservation and groundwater education; including, but not limited to, the use of 3D/visual tools and the integration of cultural and traditional knowledge.
- Continue coordination with the East Metro Water Resources Education Program on water education messaging for residents.