

# Allegan County Water Study Workgroup

## Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, August 2, 2023 2:00 pm

| Member Name         | Group                  | Attendance | Notes                  |
|---------------------|------------------------|------------|------------------------|
| Dean Kapenga        | County Commission      | In Person  |                        |
| Chad Kraai          | Well Driller           | Absent     |                        |
| Brian Talsma        | Conservation District  | Zoom       |                        |
| Doug Sweeris        | Municipal Water Supply | In Person  |                        |
| Jaclyn Hulst        | Community              | Zoom       |                        |
| Ruth Kline          | MSU Extension          | Zoom       |                        |
| Brad Lubbers        | Agriculture            | In Person  | Arrived at 2:04 pm     |
| John "Ric" Curtis   | Community              | In Person  |                        |
| Liz Binoniemi-Smith | Tribal                 | Absent     |                        |
| Tom Kunetz          | Community              | In Person  |                        |
| Jaclyn Hulst        | Community              | Zoom       |                        |
| Zachary Curtis      | Consultant             | Zoom       | Joined zoom at 4:02 pm |

Guests and staff: In Person: Randy Rapp  
Zoom: Angelique Joynes, Scott Jones and Jill Dunham

Next meeting: Wednesday, August 16, 2023

### I. Approval of Agenda

- A. Agenda approved

### II. Action Items from previous meeting

- A. Jill will set up a pre-kickoff meeting with Tom, Ric, Valdis, Randy and Jill. Then Jill will schedule the project kick-off with Williams & Works. **DONE**
- B. Randy and Zach will meet to review the nitrates sites in Martin area. **DONE**
- C. Rob will follow up with Midwest Strategies about State resources. Midwest Strategies could come present to the GWS workgroup.
- D. Tom will work with Chad on questions for well driller survey. **DONE** Angelique can push out a survey using Qualtrics. **IN PROCESS**

### III. Discussion

- A. Groundwater Protection Strategy RFP Update (Rapp)
  - 1. Williams & Works kick-off meeting scheduled for 8/9. Introductory presentation from W&W at the GWS meeting on 8/16.
  
- B. Monitoring Wells and MI Geological Survey (MGS) (Rapp)
  - 1. Randy spoke with Valdis about the agreement. Very close to having the agreement completed for monitoring wells on County owned property.
  - 2. Lee Township has been contacted about placing a well at their site.
  - 3. Jaclyn saw that Bysterveld Park location had a monitoring well being drilled. Jaclyn also flags at Little John Lake Park site and Gun Lake. John Yellich said he is working on the Gun Plain Twp monitoring well, per Jaclyn Hulst.
  - 4. Rob stated that if a monitoring well is not accepted into the National Database, then it's up to the well owner to ensure access to the well. If there is an issue with the data transmission equipment, MGS will not pay for it to be fixed. As long as the connectivity is working, MGS would provide us access to the data whether the data is being sent to the National Database or not. This language change is with MGS legal currently.
  
- C. Meeting with EGLE and MDHHS Report (Kunetz)
  - 1. Tom provided the attached report on the meeting with EGLE and MDHHS.
  - 2. Brad – should we contact EPA, since EGLE doesn't have authority to hold polluters accountable for clean-up of contamination? Randy believes our EPA contact is located in Chicago and he will get the contact info to Tom. Referrals may need to come from EGLE.
  - 3. Rob mentioned that there will be Legislative breakfast in October. He can put a Ground Water Update on the agenda.
  - 4. Ruth has an EPA source water contact. She will reach out to him (listed in Action items.)
  
- D. Private Residential Wells Assistance Discussion (Kunetz)
  - 1. Tom reviewed the Residential Wells – Problems and Solutions list.
    - a) Randy reported that the well driller survey is almost ready to go. Target to send the survey on August 11<sup>th</sup> allowing 10 days to return it.
  - 2. Tom also shared the list of County partners that are already providing assistance to well owners.
    - a) Ruth talked to Nat'l GW Assoc – they may be offering grants in the future.
    - b) USGS – Zach will reach out to see if they have any additional info we could use.
  - 3. Tom shared a list of Problems and Solutions of well owners.
    - a) Tom suggested that it's time to begin working on the RFP for Community Education for well owners

- b) Dean suggested that the Commission on Aging has been doing outreach to residents. We could possibly learn from them and maybe there is an RFP that was used to select the vendor COA is using.

#### IV. New Action Items

- A. Randy will contact EPA and get a contact person for Tom.
- B. Tom will work with Randy to get the Phase 2 report posted to the AC water webpage, plus draft a letter to notify EGLE of the information we have collected.
- C. Ruth has an EPA source water contact. She will reach out to him.

Meeting adjourned 3:19 pm

**Take Aways from Call with EGLE and MDHHS**

**7-28-2023**

Attendees:

**EGLE**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Heather Bishop ( <a href="mailto:bishoph@michigan.gov">bishoph@michigan.gov</a> ):              | Type I Water Supplies   |
| Carolyn Hobbs-Kreiger( <a href="mailto:kreiger@michigan.gov">kreiger@michigan.gov</a> ):        | Type II Water Supplies  |
| Elizabeth Kalnins aka. Tweak( <a href="mailto:kalnins@michigan.gov">kalnins@michigan.gov</a> ): | Private and Type III Water Supplies                               |
| Ray Spaulding( <a href="mailto:spauldingr1@michigan.gov">spauldingr1@michigan.gov</a> ):        | Remediation and Redevelopment<br>Division                         |
| Montana Krukowski( <a href="mailto:krukowskim@michigan.gov">krukowskim@michigan.gov</a> ):      | Drinking Water and Environmental<br>Health (Long Term Monitoring) |
| David Harn  | Remediation and Redevelopment Division                            |
| Bree Bennett  |   |

**MDHHS**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Vern Johnson( <a href="mailto:johnsonv16@michigan.gov">johnsonv16@michigan.gov</a> ): | Public Health Consultant - Division of<br>Local Health Services |
|---|---|

**ACHD**

|   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| Randy Rapp:( <a href="mailto:rrapp@allegancounty.org">rrapp@allegancounty.org</a> ) | EH Services Manager |
|---|---------------------|

**Groundwater Study Work Group**

|   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| Tom Kunetz:( <a href="mailto:tomkunetz@gmail.com">tomkunetz@gmail.com</a> )     | Chair                    |
| Jaclyn Hulst:( <a href="mailto:geurinkj@hotmail.com">geurinkj@hotmail.com</a> ) | Community Representative |

Tom gave a presentation on:

1. Allegan County Groundwater Work Group
2. Screening Level Modeling and Risk Ranking of Sites of Environmental Concern
3. Allegan County Groundwater Protection Strategy
4. County-wide Groundwater Water Table Monitoring Wells
5. Private Residential Wells Assistance Program

### **TAKE AWAYS**

1. Overall, EGLE and MDHHS were interested in what we are doing, and supportive of our efforts.
2. Information on what contaminants are present at the 351 sites listed in the Phase 2 report may be available on the EGLE RIDE database:  
<https://www.michigan.gov/egle/maps-data/ride>  
Info is rather general and skimpy.
3. EGLE is not interested in receiving a copy of the Phase 2 Risk Ranking report. They do not intend to invest in groundwater clean up activities.
4. Michigan law does not require parties who contaminate groundwater to clean it up.
5. EGLE funds municipal water supplies to prepare a Source Water protection plan. But these funds cannot go to the County, as the funds come from federal gov't and are solely for municipal systems.
6. EGLE cannot offer any financial assistance or program for repairing/replacing private residential wells.
7. EGLE will be releasing program later this year to pay for testing of residential wells. Testing parameters are limited.
8. Recommends getting the local legislators from the Allegan County area educated and involved in what we are doing with the groundwater protection plan. Eventually, they may craft legislation to support private well owners.
9. Heather Bishop may join future work group meetings.
10. MDHHS attendee asked for a copy of the presentation, and the Phase 1 and Phase 2 reports to forward on to his supervisor.

**Private Residential Wells Assistance Program  
Problems and Solutions**

Rev. July 19, 2023

Goal: To help private residential well owners who do not have access to safe, reliable drinking water and who are in need of financial assistance by creating a county-wide assistance program that leverages the County’s ARPA funds earmarked for water projects.

| <u>Problem</u>                 | <u>Solution</u>  | <u>Cost</u>  |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| Nitrate levels below 0.25 mg/l | Reverse osmosis system   | R/O system for whole house: \$6,000.<br>R/O system for single point of use: \$1,500<br>Nitrate removal softener: \$3,000 |
| Low production well            | Drill a new well deeper<br><br>You may not have to drill deeper. There are other reasons for low production.<br><br>(There may not be a deeper aquifer to drill to)  | \$9,000 for 90’ well   |
| Low production well            | Connect to municipal supply<br><br>(The property may be so far from municipal supply that connection is not feasible.)<br><br>Sometimes municipal water is available but the owner may not want to connect. This will probably cost thousands. | \$Hundreds of thousands  |
| VOCs                           | Air Scrubbers  |  |

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| Chromium                | Bottled Water  | Free from EGLE for drinking, but not for topical use.   |
| Metals                  | ?              |   |
| Properly Abandoned well | Cap the well   | \$400 (EGLE may have funds for this?)   |
| PFAS                    | Carbon Filters | Free, from Mich. EGLE<br><br>This is only possible if EGLE designates it as a contamination site. |

**Private Residential Wells Assistance Program**

**Activities List**

Rev. 7-20-2023

Goal: To help private residential well owners who do not have access to safe, reliable drinking water and who are in need of financial assistance by creating a county-wide assistance program that leverages the County’s ARPA funds earmarked for water projects.

| <u>Activity</u>   | <u>Goal</u>   | <u>Action By</u>  |
|---|---|---|
| Send survey to well drillers  | Learn what is the prevalence of various well needs  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tom to work with Chad to develop language.</li> <li>• Angelique to distribute to well drillers.</li> <li>• Communications to send out August 11. Response in 10 days.</li> </ul> |
| Compile a list of agencies that offer some kind of assistance program | Determine if there are already assistance programs out there that we can piggyback onto to make the ARPA funds go farther, and also avoid having to create our own program. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rob Sarro to collect list from County connections.</li> <li>• Jaclyn and Ruth also investigating.</li> </ul>   |
| Survey state and federal funding announcements.                       | Learn what other assistance programs are available.   | Midwest Strategies (County’s lobbyist.) We will need to tell  |



|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
|   |   | Rob Sarro if we what this to happen.  |
| Compile a list of solutions and estimated costs for solving various well problems | Use this tool along with looking at the prevalence of problems to help determine specifically what problems we could solve with the money we have               | Tom to send draft table to full work group for input. Will likely need outside assistance to be more complete.  |
| Meet with EGLE and MDHHS representatives.   | Learn what existing or future assistance programs the County can tap into. Learn how EGLE determines how they offer assistance to owners of contaminated wells. | Tom, Ric, Randy, and Angelique to meet with EGLE and MDHHS on July 28.  |
| Public survey of needs.   | To ascertain what is the prevalence of problems and how many well owners would take advantage of it.  | Work Group to discuss if this is needed   |
| Encourage well owners to sample their well water                                  | To learn the prevalence and type of contamination   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perhaps wait until EGLE offers their free testing program.</li> <li>• Question: if the County encourages testing, should it also have a robust “solutions plan” in place?</li> </ul> |

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| <p>Create a Well Assistance Program</p>                 | <p>To have the administrative mechanism in place to distribute funds and support to well owners.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work Group to develop criteria</li> <li>• Allegan County staff to develop and administer program</li> </ul> |
| <p>Develop a public education and outreach program.</p> | <p>To notify well owners of the assistance available.</p>  | <p>Cannot notify homeowners until there is a program in place to advertise about.</p>  |
|   |  |  |

**Private Residential Well Assistance Program**

**Potential Supporting Partners**

**8/2/2023**

| <b>Organization</b>                      | <b>Contact</b>  | <b>Program/Funding/Support</b>  | <b>Follow-up</b> |
|--|---|---|------------------|
| Community Action Allegheny County CAAC   | Lisa Evans, Director<br><a href="https://communityactionallegheny.org/">https://communityactionallegheny.org/</a>   | Per Rob: She is definitely interested in assisting and referenced a potential loan program that can be leveraged.   | Promising        |
| Allegheny County Community Foundation    | <a href="https://alleghenyfoundation.org/">https://alleghenyfoundation.org/</a>   | They are partnering with the county right now on a few community health related items.  | Promising        |
| National Groundwater Association         | ngwa.org  | Provides resources on how to get funding to repair wells, but does not give grants.<br><br>Groundwater Foundation: are beginning stages of grant program. Not at point of discussing it.  |                  |
| Rural Community Assistance Partnership   | <a href="http://www.rcap.org">www.rcap.org</a>  | Michigan is covered by the Great Lakes Community Action Partnership   | See next         |
| Great Lakes Community Action Partnership | <a href="https://www.glcap.org/programs/home-repair-needs/private-well-assistance/">https://www.glcap.org/programs/home-repair-needs/private-well-assistance/</a> | GLCAP offers two primary services to assist rural well owners with their water wells.<br><b>Water Well Education Assessment</b> program provides no-cost water well assessments for rural well owners. <b>Household Water Well Assistance</b> program provides low-interest |                  |

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|  |   | financing for home owners for well repair or construction.   |   |
| Southwest Michigan Community Action Agency               | <a href="https://www.smcaa.com/">https://www.smcaa.com/</a>   | They have administered the county's CDBG grant relating to housing improvements  | Possible                                    |
| Michigan Rural Water Association                         | Kelly hon <a href="mailto:khon@mrwa.net">khon@mrwa.net</a><br>(517) 657-2601  | Utility-based support group  |   |
| U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development Program | <a href="#">Rural Decentralized Water Systems Grant Program   Rural Development (usda.gov)</a>  | USDA is making grants available through the <a href="#">Household Water Well System Grants</a> program. These grants help qualified intermediaries create revolving loan funds to construct, refurbish, or service household water well systems. <b>USDA does not provide funding directly to individuals</b> under this program. Terms for the loans include a one percent fixed interest rate, 20-year maximum term, and an \$11,000 maximum loan per household. Nonprofit organizations in rural areas of 50,000 or less are eligible to apply.<br><br>Maybe CAAC could be a good intermediary. | Application window closed for 2023          |
| Water Systems Council                                    | <a href="https://www.watersystemscouncil.org/about-wsc/">https://www.watersystemscouncil.org/about-wsc/</a><br>Margaret Martens, Executive Director<br><a href="mailto:mmartens@watersystemscouncil.org">mmartens@watersystemscouncil.org</a> | Serving as a key educational resource for private well owners on issues like water well maintenance, well water testing, well water treatment, and all aspects of water well ownership.  | Key program is Water Well Trust, see below. |

Allegheny County Ad Hoc Groundwater Workgroup

|                                   |  |   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|--|
|                                   |  | <p>Monitoring federal and state legislation, ordinances, and regulations that impact the well industry.</p> <p>Working with federal and state agencies at the policy level on issues relevant to well owners and the water well industry</p> <p>Spearheading Standards Development activities in order to establish performance standards for wells and well parts.</p> <p>Helping individuals and communities – especially small communities – determine the best ways to meet their needs for safe, affordable drinking water.</p>                    | <p>May be able to help with state policy advocacy.</p> |
| Water Well Trust                  | <a href="https://www.waterwelltrust.org/apply/">https://www.waterwelltrust.org/apply/</a>  | Will provide loans for low-income, rural, Low-no water supply and no city water.  |  |
| USGS Water Resources Mission Area | <p><a href="#">Understanding Water Availability   U.S. Geological Survey (usgs.gov)</a></p> <p>Lori Sprague<br/>           Email: <a href="mailto:lsprague@usgs.gov">lsprague@usgs.gov</a><br/>           Phone: <a href="tel:303-236-6921">303-236-6921</a></p> | <p>Mission:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how much water is available</li> <li>• whether that water is safe to use</li> <li>• human and ecosystem needs for water</li> <li>• how water availability has changed over the years</li> <li>• how we can expect water availability to change in the future</li> <li>• what causes these changes in water availability</li> </ul> <p>To answer these questions, the USGS Water Resources Mission Area will collect and share regularly updated data on water availability with the public</p> | <p>May be able to help with data</p>                   |
| Mich Geologic Survey              | John Yellich   |   |  |

