



**GROUNDWATER NITRATE WORK GROUP
Wednesday January 5, 2022 @ 8:00 AM
Land Conservation Conference Room**

Minutes

1. **Call Meeting to Order.** Chair Sweeney called the meeting to order at 8:02 am.

Members present: Members present were; Pat Mullooly, Rich Bostwick, Dave Rebout, Lou Peer, and Al Sweeney.

Members Excused: Rick Richards, Wes Davis, and Rick Wietersen

Others present:, Scott Fleming, Jim Stute, Andrew Baker, and Chris Newberry
2. **Approval of Agenda.** Rich Bostwick moved the agenda, seconded by Dave Rebout. **Motion Carried.**
3. **Approval of Minutes**
 - A. **December 1, 2021 meeting,** Lou Peer moved the minutes for the December 1, 2021 meeting as presented, seconded by Pat Mullooly. **Motion Carried.**
4. **Communications, Announcements.** Newberry indicated he had just received an e-mail that morning from Eric Cooley the director of Discovery Farms. In the e-mail Eric outlined the costs of the purchase, installation and ongoing analysis of installed ETLs on a 40 acre field. The cost for the purchase of the equipment and installation is ~\$53,000. Cost of annual sample collection and analysis is ~\$21,000/year. And project management, analysis with report would be ~\$22,000/year. Discussion of proceeding with the project is indicated below in 5.
5. **Discussion regarding funding/cooperation for groundwater nitrate research at the County Farm and other privately owned lands.** The discussion of proceeding with lysimeter testing continued. Several members brought up the validity of the results given the units are placed in or near disturbed soil. Questions on cost effectiveness of the project and the availability of ARPA funds for the project come up. Much discussion was had with technical questions of ETL placement and research. Many questions were raised that could not be answered by Newberry or Baker. Chair Sweeney asked Newberry to contact Eric Cooley or Kevin Masarik to see if either or both could join in the groups next meeting.

Guest Jim Stute offered the group information regarding his past and ongoing research related to cover crop installation as it applies to nitrogen leaching reduction. Jim is having good results with winter rye after corn grain, regardless of how late it is planted in the fall. The growth in early spring before planting is the key tool. The group agree that in order to get operators to use cover crops they generally have to see an economic benefit on top of knowing they are being a good steward of the land. For example, if cover crops can save \$30-40 per acre in nitrogen costs by cost \$30-40 to implement, how do we convince an operator of the benefit?

Jim is also working with the SnapPlus developers to incorporate his research into the system. For example, drilling cover crop after Oct 1 is penalized because it is considered a tillage pass. That should be corrected along with the fact that the spring benefit of cover crops are not considered.

6. **Well Sampling-Update.** No new data on the monitoring wells around the county farm from the groups last meeting. Baker indicated that Newberry had compiled the land-use of the crop fields surrounding the monitoring wells over the last 5 years. Newberry gave the information to Wietersen for analysis.

Baker brought the forward the resolution he and staff wrote to establish a county program to subsidize groundwater nitrate testing and mitigation for residential wells. This resolution is the result of the discussion at the last meeting regarding the staff report looking at the feasibility of such a program and a proposed budget. The committee was pleased and indicated that the resolution should be brought to the Land Conservation and Public Health Committees before going to the full County Board.

7. **Status of 9KE and NWQI Plan Development.** Newberry noted the 9KE plan is on idle for a while so, he could continue to work on NWQI. Newberry pointed out he has been meeting with landowners to get them to sign up for the NWQI funding. He indicated that within the 3 weeks of finding out the county was receiving the NWQI funding and the batching deadline, he had lined up 4 projects. Newberry has since started surveying and designing the conservation practices for the NWQI and other programs.

8. **Producer Led Watershed Group Development - Update.** Newberry indicated FOTR have been awarded a DATCP matching grant of \$33,600. The grant is a 1:1 matching grant meaning to receive the full funding FOTR will have to come up with \$33,600 from sponsors or landowners. Compeer will be giving FOTR \$5,000 this Friday and Rural Mutual Insurance has promised \$5,000 once FOTR is a nonprofit. Newberry noted that he and the FOTR board have submitted paperwork to become a 501(c)3 nonprofit and should receive the status this January. The group has set up their own checking account to handle funding. Jim Stute talked about his research with winter rye as a cover crop. Stute thought that FOTR and he could work together to get more cover crops established in the county through the use of a potential demonstration project to show the efficacy of nitrogen in the system.

9. **Next Meeting Date, Time, and Location (Avoid Second and Fourth Tuesday Mornings).** Date and time was tentatively set for the week of February 7, 2022 at 8:00am in person at the LCD conference room dependent on the availability of Eric Cooley or Kevin Masarik to attend in person or on line.

13. **Adjourn.** Lou Peer moved to adjourn the January 5, 2022 meeting of the Groundwater Nitrate Workgroup at 9:17 am, seconded by Mullooly. **Motion Carried.**

Respectively Submitted,

Chris Newberry
Conservation Specialist IV

Minutes are not official until adopted by the Groundwater Nitrate Workgroup.