

Southwest Minnesota 25 by 25 Water Quality Town Hall: Table discussion input

Question 1: What goals could be established to improve water quality by 25 percent in Southwest Minnesota?

Starting local conversations about upcoming legislation before it comes up for a vote.
Towns establish water-friendly landscape guidelines.
Fund the water capital work of water providers.
Implement best nitrogen application processes.
knowledge transfer in ag community between generations
reduction in sediments and nitrogen in river and streams and ditches
Reduce tillage
Target major water degradation areas. Target the best methodology for clean up
investigate best practices in modern tillage practices
Balanced wholistic approach to the nutrient load to be cleaned up out of the water.
Reduce the green lakes.
Reduce turbidity in rivers and lakes.
Increase perennial land cover in target sensitive areas example dwsma
Living cover longer
Decrease peak flows
Create passion for people to take action voluntarily.
Increase number of cover crop acres planted
Reduce amount of phosphorus and nitrate levels. Consideration of buffers and where they work and where they don't seem to make sense. If we are going to improve water, blanket solution don't work.
Increase water storage
Do the simple cost effective solutions first.

Quit putting out disinformation in your literature at these meetings. For example your drain tile example. Tile restricts the volume of water entering our streams and also filters the nutrients.
Reduce number of open tile intakes
Reduce sediment erosion.
Increase soil organic content
Increase cover crops
Provide lots of educational opportunities
Take things on as a step by step, field by field approach.
Target urban runoff by increasing infrastructure investment
Reduction in depletion of aquifers
More money available for cover crops.
Educate the public about the quality of water in the aquifers and BMPs that can be used to protect them.
Educate the urban sector of the good that the Ag sector is doing. Educate farmers on other items that may be better practices.
Prevent public water suppliers from exceeding the nitrate standard
More funding available for Forever Green research.
25% increase of cover crops .
Address sewage issues from small towns in southwest Minnesota. Leaking ponds. Raw sewage from storm system overload.
Reduce water pollutants
Retrofitting existing current waste water infrastructure to save on cost instead of new buildings
Educate non-farmers that one size fits all approaches don't work for treating runoff from different soils types and land characteristics.
Apply Fertilizer in spring at 6-8 inch depth

1. Educate the community and use wellhead protection plans to protect wells. 2. Charge enough for water to fund future infrastructure and remediation. 3. Educate @ lawns, parks, parking lot runoff
Get data into the hands of people who are making farming and policy decisions.
Increase participation in discovery farms. Understand that what works on one farm may not work on other farms.
Increase number of Minnesota Ag Water Quality Assessments done per county.
Create more strict rules on city lawn applications as well as agricultural
More funding for education and outreach to farmers.
1. Education of key groups. 2. Improve soil health. 3. Water retention.
Utilize local soil and water districts to determine local goals and BMPs.
Increase perennial crops by 25%
Developing a way to hold water on the land where it falls, to reduce erosion and sedimentation.
Reduce phosphorus in the river
1) More cover crops 2) Stop fertilizing in the fall 3) need find a way to get buy in from farmers
Education for youth
1. get everyone involved to protect water, and regulatory rules apply to everyone. 2. improve water protection on agricultural lands 3. more technology for water protection.
Reduce sediment in flowing by 25%
Making municipal dollars go further
25% less run off
Education for all, informing of success and failure and letting people know what positive things that are already happening.
Promote education at local and youth level around water quality.
Promote development of methods of capture of nutrients from waters
Focus on reduction of pollutants

Water treatment education so treatment is effectively and efficiently.
Erosion control.
Monitor and protect well head protection areas from nitrates beyond municipal well head protection.
Slow water down no restore historic basins that did not have an outlet, everyone pay for it, work on fertilizer applications that work for you and farmers
Sealing abandoned wells.
No nitrogen in the fall, phosphorus reduction at point discharges to 0.2 miles per liter.
More cover crops, especially in the fall and for annual crops like corn and soybeans - public funding to figure out how to so farmers don't have to
Farm programs that encourage conservation and farmer's creativity to do conservation. now farm programs almost are a disinsentive to conversavation
Help farmers to apply their manures at the best time for the nutrient to be used by the plants.
More farmers on the land farming more diverse crops and coming from different communities, cultures and ethnicities. This will grow rural populations and local economies with diversified production
More locally specified funding distribution in a consistent manner
Increase hands on education to youths. As well as farmer-to-farmer education
Perhaps reduce total gallons of manure & suppliment with other types of N that can be applied at a more opportune time.
Incentives like tax breaks, not rules
Precision conservation
Hold water back and meter out/slow down onto the land (ie road retention, grade stabilization, control basins, dry dams)
Localize water improvement plans that are customized to the specific area.
Local input utilizing research and standard based information.

Encourage more incentives in funding the next farm bill with more flexibility in programs like CSP.

Use of social media and public announcements to inform citizens about the issues and efforts they can take to improve those issues.

Encourage funding forever green education & research.

Question 2: What actions are needed to get to these goals for Southwest Minnesota?

Create action packets/talking points that people can share with organizations/churches/neighbors. Have them scheduled so we are all raising similar points at same time.
It is public good, public should pay
Inform and educate people in town as well that they need to do their part and what is already happening in country to control over use of fertilizer. Common sense!
Incentivize ag water quality certification through property tax reduction.
We all need to be responsible and take action
Create government controlled entity to do soil testing and provide information on best fertilizer application rather than trust independent companies
Do more localized research
If public wants a road, they buy the right of way. If utility wants an easement, they buy the easement. If Minnesota wants buffer strips, Minnesota should PAY for it
Are we making sure that the metro is doing there part and not putting all the responsibility on rural Minnesota?
Blanket policies don't work.we must recognize that the solutions are different depending on soils, landscape and practices
We must support local solutions and local opportunities to problem solve
Legislature more fully support the governor's plan to clean up water and sewer infrastructure through bonding. Focus on small town and rural MN.
Come up with an incentive to get people to try a cover crop.
Educational to young people
Educate the public on problems that will be big ticket expenses, make it a non political issue and explain how everyone can take actions to improve water quality and reduce long term financial costs.
Continuous improvement in things like CSP and other programs to create improvement.
Incetivize farmers that are already doing cover crop and other practices that have been improving water quality!

Funding for a good farm bill
Education! Farmers on cover crops, urban folks on lawn health, everyone on general soil health and water retention.
Build more retention pond and settling basins to slow the flow of water.
Need for changes in equipment (ex strip tilling)
We support all ideas under water protection in urban areas on agenda sheet.
Helping farmers build better soil and keep it in place.
Education farmers and consumers about what to do to protect ground water and surface water.
Difficult for coops to handle application in spring. Manure application in spring is difficult (concern about compaction).
Product labeling water quality certified farm products.
Education needed for those selling the product-product sales vs. clean water benefit.
Financed with statewide funding (sales or income tax). NOT property or local taxes.
Water conservation initiatives.
Show and tell stories are successful
Reimbursement to people taking the expenses upon themselves and help them educate and encourage other people to do the same.
Need willing landowners to try something different.
Need actions based on sound science.
Increase shoreland restoration
Create more water retention. Potentially look to locate on state-owned land.
Implementing data and technology to place BMPs where they are needed to start seeing measurable results.
More money for incentives
Need to put high priority on protecting public drinking water supplies from exceeding drinking water standard.
Educate golf courses and cities on fertilizer application
Promote and educate on soil health and provide local data to support

1. farm bill works for "green" 2. educate while regulate 3. select proper person to perform the education 4. tie human health and money spent with water quality
Create a water ethic charter for Minnesota
Financial incentives to help convince farmers to change farming practices.
Funding for infrastructure for small municipalities and for farmers to do treatment on their land.
Education
Organize ditch communities to meet the WQ standards through their own efforts, give them the ability to find their own solutions. Tap their ingenuity.
Don't do blanket regulations, not everything works for everyone. Consider regional regulations.
Call and promote the Minnesota Ag Water Quality Program to landowners who walk in the door or people who have preciously worked with conservation
Encourage more 3 crop rotations on farms to break the cycle of only two crops, this will help soil health and encourage ability to start trying cover crops.
Comprehensive water plan for the state and rule inforcement
Monitor
No Government programs that are implemented As if one size fits all
Make data more accessible and understandable
Incentivize reduced tillage more intensely
Education! Not just adults but youth as well by people "in the know" using real life examples.
Implement and fund plans (1w1p, Chippewa river)
Public school curriculum with scientific standards taught each year K-12.
Precision ag tech can help identify nonproductive acres to put into perennial
Keeping water on the land on a small scale.

1. Increase Discovery Farms. 2. Increase funding for local Soil & Water Conservation Districts. 3. Find ways to treat stormwater more effectively. 4. Work more effectively with higher education.
1. Education 2. Continued funding for programs and incentives. 3. Continued monitoring local groundwater and surface. 4. Share between agencies.
Entire Population has to help property tax can't handle it. Sales taxes gets diluted
Recognize the programs that are working (e.g. CRP, CREP, RIM) and invest to expand them.
Increase regulations for waste water treatment plants.
Research perennials and markets to provide tools to farmers to move away from monoculture of corn/soybeans towards perennials
Change the tone of the conversation so farmers have input into the variety of BMPs that can be utilized to encourage water quality results.
Increase funding for local soil and water districts.
More grazing helping beginning farmers to get started with grass fed businesses
Promote diversification and risk management, address crop insurance promotion of farming risky acres
Forever Green research tools to help farmers diversify their crops
Work on Farm Bill to expand insurance to cover more than corn, beans and wheat so farmers can plant alt crops
Help farmers calibrate their nitrogen applicators
The ability to partner state and local funds for more cost effective programming.
Education! Education! Education at all levels and ages.
Encourage farmers to use perennial cover crops and make them economical.

Question 3: What specific next steps are needed to move the actions forward now?

Need cooperation and leadership at the legislature.
Educating farmers about strip tilling, cover crops and integrating livestock
More appropriate use of the Lessard Sams fund to address water quality problems.
More \$ for research on using cover crops with corn and soybean
Recognition that one size DOESN'T fit all. Water quality potential varies across the State.
Promote a diversity of crops
Resources for farmers and swcdds to implement practices without too much red tape or oversight.
Increase in targeted implementation dollars
Incentives
Build awareness of our actions in cities, as home owners soil health can benefit urban lawns
Properly align the Farm Bill to incentivize the conservation practices with insurance payments.
Education
Change our language. Find ways to educate the public without talking over them.
Educate crop consultants to spread the message
Provide individualized step by step program for farmers who want to work towards improved soil health
Fund forever green at million each year to develop more options for cover crop.
More flexibility in the funding for conservation easements.
Target Legacy money toward important projects rather than let it be foolishly spent.
Establish a citizen based vs stakeholder based statewide comprehensive water management plan. Including: farming practices, storm water management, etc

Productive conservation, for example let us cut or graze our prairie strips.
Need State leadership in committing to doing real cost/benefit analyses and concentrating on the most cost-effective solutions first.
Support transfer of small scale lessons learned to mainstream implementation: upscale discovery farms.
Property tax incentives for water quality certification.
Fully fund the Governors bonding bill as introduced in 2016.
Increase funding for soil and water districts
Use proper engineering techniques to put the right practices onto the right places not a one size fits all
More stringent discharge standards fortreatment plants.
Cities increasing storm water retention capacity.
Incentivise. 2)targeted incentives instead of broad regulation 3) follow the current plans(nitrogen study)
Diverse crops to allow for more windows for manure application
Increase funding to educate the public on watery quality issues.
Start the conversation about general public funding for projects that benefit everyone and not the landowner directly so it's not on the backs of landowners
We need more professional educators with research based data to educate producer on striptill or other nitrogen management program, covercrops and other programs that work and increase yields.
Change the way agriculture is taught at all post secondary institutions.
Broken down talking points on a go to website (example talking points for city dwellers, ag professionals). 2.allocate funding to outstate.

Education in SW MN for farmers and communities on new or effective ways to improve water. More municipal zero-scape. U of MN Forever Green info and its positive outcomes.

Have younger generation of farmers work with their parents and grandparents on implementing conservation practices.

Promote local community led solutions, let people feel like they are truly part of the solution.

Invest in infrastructure so that beginning farmers have processing options in southwest MN to diversify their farms like small scale pastured poultry, hogs and sheep

Many state federal and local governments need to work better. For instance all may have fingers in a particular issue on a drainage system and often work poorly together.

Need professional educators to explain if field drain tile is helpful or harmful to water quality and why.