

**Southeast Minnesota 25 by 25 Water Quality Town Hall:
Table discussion input**

Question 1: What goals would you like to see to improve water quality 25% in your region?

Provide economic incentives for farmers for land and water stewardship that exceed the incentives for production.
There needs to be regulations concerning fertilizer use in farms and on lawns
Stop nitrate contamination of Groundwater!
Zero nitrate use by farmers and lawns
Stricter regulations on fertilizers and runoff
More resources for city wastewater plants for compliance.
More state funding -- especially Clean Water Legacy funds -- for wastewater treatment upgrades.
Citizens need to be educated about water quality
Resources for cover crop demonstration projects
Animal unit caps on factory farms Winona had this
Better drug collection so antibiotics aren't flushed into water system
Agriculture needs to be regulated like all other industry and be held responsible for the pollution and water use.
Require that factory farming operations register and receive permits for water use and manure management so that their water use/ pollution is regulated and the companies are held accountable.
More education about water issues (knowledge and awareness)
Increase registration and regulation requirements for factory farms
Implement rural storm water fees and rebates
Consistent enforcement of buffer strips
Growth plan for water use
Require factory farms to register and report their antibiotic use, and limit it.
We need a measurable work plan to provides clarity of water quality baselines and goals

Shift ag subsidies from traditional techniques to more organic techniques.
A reduction of chemicals and contaminants in drinking water
Incentivize diverse crops and cover crops.
Ag working with extension u of m
Increased funding for local conservation districts for localized erosion issues on stream banks and waterways
Better enforcement of factory farms
Getting community engagement.
Reduction of number of impaired stream reaches.
Increase money for water quality and more specifically storm water
Have an open conversation with all stakeholders about our shared water issues.
We need continuous community centered action oriented dialog like what we are doing today, but consistently.
Manage and empower by Watershed, not by municipal or county boundaries. Fund watersheds through the State - since it is all "our" water.
State support of changes in sediment reduction BMPs like cover crops
25% less tile
Nitrates reduced in water.
Education, advertise success
Education
Reduction of phosphorus in water.
Reduce improper N use at location
Increase funding for waste water for SMALL communities.
Idea 1 - increase the # of private well owners who regularly test their well to improve safe drinking water awareness.
Improve infiltration
Reducing use of potable water for processes that do not require clean water. Increase incentives for farmers to use for cover crops and other conserving practices
Make water quality a political priority

There needs to be continuity in regulations for phosphates, nitrates, and chlorides going into our waterways to include farming, industry, and government.
Better enforcement
More ownership/accountability of all people about how they are impacting our water and how they can help.
Education of public and targeted populations on what the plan is and methods to reach goals
More cropland managed as no till.
Idea 1: More agriculture surveillance
A 25% reduction in stormwater runoff volume by increasing infiltration.
Increase soil health/best practices
Don't place blame, but find ways where individuals can contribute via programs like blue thumb
Upgrade urban water system: especially lead water pipe and stormwater retention
Measurable reduction in suspended sediment in lakes, rivers and streams.
Moratorium on factory farms
Permeable pavements for parking lots in cities.
Reduce pesticides/herbicides
Make aquifer use sustainable
No need to treat drinking water for nitrates.
Make sure agriculture is supported when there is the desire for action. Assume good intent with education before enforcement.
A focus on sediment for surface waters, and nitrogen for ground water.
Provide information to farmers about benefits of buffers and consequences of actions for broader public
Create incentives to develop markets for other crops.
Reduce all runoff in urban, suburban, and rural environments using both incentives and regulations
Improve widespread use of precision agriculture-- incentives for farmers
Reduce. Nutrient load

Community education about the benefits (health, economic, environment) to buying organic to increase demand.
Reduce nitrates
Require sellers of pharmaceuticals to provide recycling on site.
Continuing Education required yearly for permits & licenses that involve or effect water use.
Tear down the silos that government units have and make them communicate about how they are meeting the goal of improving water quality.
Reduce runoff, lower peak flow, higher base flow.
Idea 2: Rewarding farmers for healthy farming practices.
Stop fighting and focus on addressing root causes of water quality issues.
Make the funding available for the adaptation so farmers know they have buy in.
Incentivize farmers to plant cover crops
Allow grey water recycling and require for new developments
Increase funds for small community water treatment and storm water needs
Restrict/regulate/provide incentives for reducing fertilizer
Increase cover crops. Explain connection between pollution and water quality. Flexibility in incentives. Increase water storage. Reduce rigidity for qualified funding for solution components.
Create an agricultural landscape with more CROP diversity
Reduce nitrate by cover crops, drainage control, and farm practices. Reduce road salt contamination.
Shared costs for water quality improvements.
Allow natural landscapes without a permit.

Reduce pollution by reducing CAFOs and increasing plant food farming with an aggressive public education program about the health harms to humans, wildlife, water, air from intensive animal ag.
Measure water quality more effectively and publish the information in a way that can be found.
Develop a mechanism to evaluation extranality costs of maintaining water quality to standards.
More conservation measures
More government intervention on current regulations
Clean up surface water by expanding use of buffers, reducing fertilizer & ecoli contamination.
Change the culture to recognize the right of clean water, clean lakes, protected environment. They have intrinsic value.
Establish consensus on fair and objective standards for contaminant levels.
Increase utilization of cover crops for improved water retention and increased infiltration
Provide free recycling of hazardous waste. that should be enough right
Be able to fix your own stream bank erosion (DNR will not allow you to fix it on your own land)
State and fed incentives to hold water on the land including sediment control structures, wetland restoration and other methods.
Support erosion prevention of Lake Pepin and sediment concerns.
Requirements on use of urban fertilizer & pesticide and Education. Targeting larger companies.
Improve resources and capacity to enforce existing regulations
1)Reduce suspended solids to rivers. 2)Reduce nitrates and phosphorous into the water. 3) better cooperation between government agencies.
Measurable reductions in groundwater nitrate.

Develop stewardship for N and water usage
Reduce contaminants from residential yards, medical, agriculture and sediment
Subsidize organic farms to reduce chemical pollution.
Idea 3: More regulations at the local government level for water quality.
Cooperation among government agencies and flexibility with in beaurcratic apparatus.
Monetary benefits for farmer Farmer support group Expanding monitoring
Address 1 billion trees at risk of ash borer disease.
Better reserarch
Work with existing organizations doing waterway protection on creeks, rivers, and watersheds
Update and Improve waste water and sewage treatment throughout the area
Figure out how to make conservation pay - how to get adoption of conservation practices that work for farmers and landowners.
Reduce sedimentation through expanded use of cover crops. Make cover crops more economical.
Policies to support connections to land & water
Store water instead of using drain tile.
Encourage water conversation practices in the home and corporations.
Reward systems that produce longterm ecological benefits. Fund Forever Green. Reward landowners that maintain and improve ecosystems that improve water quality.
Net nutruality in water and environment uses for all companies.
Use climate change as analogy. People understand (I think) long term effects and all need to do something. Little by little. Prioritize.
Increase water infiltration, permeable, keep water where it fell
Seek incentive programs that focus on protecting soil and water, much like ethonal subsidies

Regulatory enforcement.
See group of diversified water stakeholders to prioritize effort and monies
Have more forward thinking about what our water issues are. Not reactive.
Measurable improvement in flood mitigation, flood reduction, especially in light of increased frequency and intensity of heavy rain events.
Research and implementation of nitrate reduction methods like saturated buffers
Improve construction practices
Increase public awareness of contaminants
Generate top water quality problems list.
Preserve high quality water for hospital and healthcare purposes, but reduce any waste.
Reduce sediment with cover crop and rip rapping stream banks. Get landowners involved with discussion. Educate and incentivize landowners with state tax deductions. Reroute CREP Ethanol subsidies funds
need more consistent permitting between counties and state.
make urban farming easier.
Reduce runoff from ag land & construction sites
City rain gardens. Compost pickup collaboration of BSWR DNR and nonprofit watershed on creek and rivers. Zumbro Watershed Partnership and friends of Mississippi. Educate female landowners about BMP

Need consistent long term policies to support innovative soil conservation practices
Staff & money to do education, outreach, and when necessary, enforcement of existing water regulations
Get big producers involved in problem solving
Embed water quality into education at all levels - idea from 1 school - week focused on local water quality
Land stewardship project to educate and extend Cover crop solutions and incentives for change
Get these stats & stories into local media-didn't know that about SW MN
Join watershed and green committee in your city or local soil & conservation events/policy advisors
Educate consumers on salt, herbicide, pesticides etc. that can impact environment
Farmers need to hear it from farmers
Funding for incentives to develop & use road salt alternates
Continue community conversations via medical societies, vets, and nutritionists
Field days by farm retailers. Farmer to farmer coffee groups about soil bmp. Water conservation at rural wells.
Don't farm naked (i.e. Use cover crops)!
You should revise this question. It actually reads like you wanted to know how to reach goals. I think you wanted to know what the goals should be. Felt like we answered the same question for #1 & #2

Question 2: What actions are needed in your region to improve water quality?

Provide better State support for cities' MS4 work.
More water quality trading.
Better support for public education about water quality.
Require factory farms to publically register and receive permits for their water use and manure disposal.
Require registration and permits for factory farm water use and manure management, and increase oversight/ enforcement.
Incentivize people to reduce nitrates in frttilizers
State program to incentivize farmers to reduce nitrates
Organize farmers for water stewardship
Increased buffer areas between streams and fields.
clear rules that are plain to those that own the land.
Funding for city wastewater facilities
It's a public health issue. Support nitrogen fertilizer rule
Encourage testing of wells and sewer systems, but without repercussions and with financial assistance to fix
More statewide education and cooperation
Monitor agriculture runoff, with financial assistance and without repercussions
Develop ways to have safe conversations about water quality without having to point fingers or feel like the blame is being palced on a particular group of people.
How have other communities reduced nitrate use?
Have a responsible person in every county in MN to speak for water quality and organize
Increased individual responsibility and accountability
Figure out a way to bind Medicines (e.g. birth control pills or even antibiotics used in CAFOs) that get into our water supply. Perhaps Mayo can start on this.

Include children on water quality efforts (Eagle Scouts, etc.)
Monitor and regulate application of manure
Penalize offenders
You attract more bees with honey, provide rewards for conservation (like tax breaks).
Education in schools about water quality
Create more transparency about everyone's use and deficiency
Install practices to reduce peak runoff
Sponsor forums for best practices-- rural and urban and stakeholders
Use environmentally safe salt (or a substitute) for driveways, roads, and highways
Increased buffer zones
Incentives and enforcement
Incentivize cover crop BMPs and at the same time reduce disincentives for applying by streamlining process
Preserve/ improve conservation practices
Clear, published rules that landowners can follow
No flush labels for drugs and baby wipes
Enforce regulations on factory farms
Cover crops
Develop stewardship ethic for agriculture. Less industrial farming. Less lawn chemicals. Change aesthetic on shot mowed lawns to prairies.
Identify and recognize champions with industry-education, etc.
Build local incentives among local councils county boards and townships
Build consensus among all people, farms and urban, on priority problem.
Identify top five contributors to the issue and encourage/enforce change.
More statewide education and cooperation
Invest in infrastructure to recover nutrients

Respect ethanol subsidies
Education of water quality to general public and real scenarios that exist
Regional funding for cities to collaborate regional goals and projects
Be creative w/ revenue sources
Make heavy water users pay for water.
Address our changing weather events-- proactive planning for erosion, etc
Protected state funding for water conservation and clean up.
Factory farm regulation and enforcement policies need to be revisited. Many are not subject to environmental impact
Moratorium on large feedlots
Increased individual responsibility
Reduce peak flow via structures and cover crops
Policy based on science to identify problems and priorities
Funding 1 watershed 1 plan
Promote and incentivize no-till and cover crops practices.
Increase awareness of water quality at the point of use, quality check when home is sold
Urban areas - reduce lawn and golf course spray and fertilizer.
Invest in protecting and expanding our state and community forest resources
Taxation on the amount of nitrate pollution
Strategic program development and delivery, engage the target audience
Require factory farms to register and apply for permits for water use and pollution. Increase oversight/ accountability.
Regionalize expertise
Develop and Plan permeable urban surfaces.
Increased water quality measurements and published publicly
Protect Local Control.
We need the right regulations on the right things
Allow 1w1p to levy money to fund the plan

County level testing
Civic infrastructure at community level by valuing and voicing local experience, connecting communities, and making the issues personal!
Return it like you find it requirement under LAWS
Idea 1: Better coordination of state agencies to established regulations, monitor and enforce.
MPCA needs to enforce existencing rules on CAFOs.
Reduce or redirect , (not respect) ethanol subsidies
rural stormwater fees or rebates
Improve practices to decrease sediment
Locally-managed "green" revolving funds to reward landowners for good practices or where landowners have to pay fines for non-compliance.
Tax phosphates and nitrates. Use those funds to support municipal WWTP remediation efforts.
Educate about climate change, land use and water use.
One watershed/One plan across the state and manage water across political boundries
Structural practices for agricultural areas eg terracing, retention ponds, etc
Support and celebrate clean water practices by family farms
Encourage and reward better soil practices.
State Plan for education for ag community about benefits of no-till and cover crops practices.
Education and outreach.
Update upgrade manurestorage facilities to have nutrients available to the crop at the proper time
Incentives for best management practice to maintain farm business including nitrogen bmp's
Make new economic markets that support alternative crops, cover crops affordable, and align water quality stewardship

Idea 2: More strict regulations for what's applied on lawns.
Cover crops
Increase green cities participation and develop green county programs
Making water quality information readily available and easy to understand by the public. More convenient and affordable ways for people to know if their drinking water is safe.
Education about and use of gray water
Manage watersheds as a whole
More state funding for small community waste water treatment facilities.
Residential education through neighborhood associations
Conservation delivery for Ag Production. Improved connection between Ag retail planning for conservation benefits
Increased oversight by state agencies over agricultural chemical and fertilizer industries.
Support family farms, not polluting factory farms
Incentivize less and clean water use.
Improve aging existing green infrastructure (retention ponds).
Creative financing for owners of failing septic systems or larger failing infrastructure
Maintain support from the clean water legacy programs that we voted for to stay focused on the environment
Free and easy collect/drop off of RX and hazardous materials
Incentivize prairie and grazing land in line with conservation priorities.
Reduce tillage/increase soil health
Invest in climate-smart practices (on field and structural) that allow landowners and producers to adapt to changing precip events. e.g. cover crops or structural issues like manure storage year-round
Don't lose water stewards by scaring them off by the complicated beurocratic processes.
Soil health education

Increased government oversight of chemical and fertilizer industries.
On-farm planning for individual land conservation benefits. Then funding to assist with following through on conservation planning
Cropland managed as no till
Create incentives with the use of things like legacy funds, farm bill
Water use certification for consumer products and food, so consumers can use buying power to encourage stewardship.
Change the mindset - focus on profitability not yield
1) make biomass energy pay 2) control road salt education 3) water management structures
Focus on agricultural innovation for type and use of cover crops. Fund the u of m extension for this purpose.
Run water quality education campaigns aimed at all levels of stakeholders from owners to landscapers
Idea 3: More incentives for farmers and municipalities for better conservation protection.
Making conservation practices economically viable
Direct on-farm evaluation and outreach with landowners and producers in order to assist in choosing practices that are better for water quality and operations.
Don't increase allowed animal units per farm
Lobby for federal farm bill reform to include subsidies for diversified crops.
No mow lawns, landscaping with native vegetation
Developing conservation plans with individual farmers and help them meet their goals. Keeping them in compliance with Federal farm goals
Provide best practice options so the individual can pick what works best.
Idea 4: Allow for the use of gray water.

Real-time monitoring and reporting of water quality in lakes, rivers, streams so residents have direct and visible awareness of water issues (e.g. stoplight red, yellow, green)
More funding for local projects that analyze things like the watershed
Increase awareness of public drinking water quality reports
Adequately fund "one watershed - one plan"
Monitor field edge by soil test to have a base line and that would be done on all property free
Metering water at a higher cost for irrigation if crops, lawns and golf courses
Secure funding to implement educational outreach
Educate the public on conservation and best farming practices.
Strong building codes for permeable pavements and storm water management

The state needs to classify the water that falls from the sky belongs to all, not the property owner, and needs to be treated as such by said property owner.
Stop frontier mentality. Work together. End partisanship.
Create a maximum crop cover percentage (like for developments) and chemicals per acre/year for farms.
Increase perennial vegetation.
Cover crops and prairie strips (Iowa research)
Market incentives to farmers for water quality
1) state wide education on water quality issues and mitigation 2) government to subsidize positive ag practices not negative. 3) council & respected champions for each of major problem areas
Reorganize state water management - a homeland water dept or water czar Health dept in charge of drinking water including groundwater protection
Regulate urban lawn water use and lawn chemical use.
Bring back a county actions

Question 3: What would it take to move the action forward?

I advocate strict mandates. We cannot keep putting this on future generations. We must act now to stop the water quality problems as well as increase water re-use.
Get rid of incentives that encourage pollution and overproduction and increase incentives for stewardship
Recognize what has been done
National law to protect water and air. Recognize global warming
money
Reward the best, motivate the rest
Communication and awareness about water quality. Education in the schools
They need to see the problem as personally identifiable.
Focus on projects that address long-term issues
Regulations on nitrates use
A fully coordinated effort between government entities that are responsible for water quality. Do the DNR, the MPCA, the BWSR and the EQB work together? Do they have common goals & strategic plans?
Best management practices in agriculture
Farmers can't just self report at big feed lots
Begin more education.
Invent precision conservation
Monetary incentives and fines where the majority needs to understand the benefits and economies of water improvement.
Even regulations/mandates i.e. chemical application to lawn or cropland
Laws need to be enforced about fertilizer use
Dedicated funding to protect existing community forest resources
Education, U of M funding, farmer peer to peer sharing. SWCD district capacity to facilitate this.

Build in the Precautionary Principle into all laws and economic decision. It is the moral thing to do.
Streamline and improve efficiencies of getting available programs out to agencies, Swcds and end users.
Funding that prioritizes water quality, particularly in agriculture.
Regulatory enforcement and monitoring
Local government and state agencies need to convey the same message
Require sealing of old Wells upon sale/transfer of property.
Consistency of message among government regulating agencies.
Fund education for farming best practices. Enhance u of m extension.
Long term thinking and funding
State agencies need to work with local groups to enforce water quality rules
Public Education
Identify the problem, provide education, marketing, and online presence
Citizens must become fully engaged at the local level. It's grassroots efforts that are going to bring about change at the community level and will eventually lead to change in legislation.
Funding
Motivation
Getting ALL in community to understand the impact of these issues on their personal lives SO THAT ALL find value in engaging in discussions leading to solutions
Change of culture - adoption of water ethics proactively rather than reactively
Field day events help farmers
Funding for swcd staff for outreach.
Use Legacy funds to promote interagency coordination for enforcement of wise water practices and regulations.
Planning and funding for municipality water supply and waste water upgrades.
Think beyond regional boundaries.

Change building code to require graywater system.
Money
Policy decisions should be done on the watershed level.
Funding for training staff for swcd.
Water coordination by watersheds.
Education
Provide help, \$s and education, to make the best practices more available.
Actionable guidance for citizens
Dedicated funding to local conservation organizations that address known water quality issues
Demonstrations of success
Watershed specific policies and BMP.
Public education
Investing in early and continued education in water issues and water awareness.
Idea 1: Money for inventive programs, monitoring, and follow through.
Regulations
Legislation and money. Raise public awareness. Enlist business.
Best management practices incorporated into policy at a watershed level
Money!
Follow examples and successes from other states (Iowa is example for "butterfly highway" for incentivizing certain BMPs)
More meetings like this for public engagement
Change culture so we pay for what we want - put our \$ where our mouth is
Inverse local/state subsidy for nitrogen use (more money for less nitrogen).
A public awareness system that works like the fire risk system--get people asking the right questions.
Move faster than 25 by 25. Be real about the sense of urgency
Measure water quality and publish the results where the public can find them.
Money for education, innovation, research and infrastructure.

Develop and implement creative project competitions, like the X Prize, but for clean water. Or the Oscars of clean water. Best Farm, Best watershed, etc
Local county responsibility for pollution (if country does not meet certain pollutant standard--fee assessed by state).
Educating outreaching public on water quality concerns in urban and agricultural settings
Redirect funds from water damaging policies to water quality incentives
Leadership to bring people together for solutions and lead implementation.
Monetary incentives for farmers to adopt best management practices
Have the political courage to take on well-entrenched interests (like factory farms)
More money dedicated to SWCDs
Make guilt work. Shorten feedback loop for actions that impair water.
Local farmer round tables with local decision making collaboration. Bring in farmers who are having success with similar issues to share. Less competitive grants.
Improve education and awareness with demonstration projects to illustrate impacts and benefits.
Idea 2: Co-operation and communication between state agencies.
Create more watershed districts (to empower the areas that exist already)
Reorganize watershed management from counties to whole watershed level
More coordination between government agencies.
Develop curriculum and resources for teachers to educate students.
Acknowledge the problem
Provide more market incentives for clean water, include grey water in urban areas.
Create a credit trading platform for incentivising farmers through best management practices to reduce nutrient runoff.

Fostering trust and cooperation between communities (small towns, cities, metro). How to elevate small projects in rural towns that have value.
change the farm programs to incentivize improved soil organic matter.
Publicize local crises to help prioritize the issues, and also publicize successes to provide examples of what can be done
Need farming practices adopted and organized at the watershed level
Don't politicize the problems
Incentivize farmers to do the right thing
Get political active. Let elected people know water quality is important.
Too much competition for clean water funds. Streamline and stabilize funding for SWCDs
Promote narrative of "Farmer as the Hero" and solution rather to improve incentives. Labels as water-friendly beef, pork, etc
More money to fund research for cover crop at the regional level
Think and act long term - not short term
Educate people on the quality of their local water
Focus on common issues that affect people's lives and health, especially drinking water
Pressure corporations to change policies and practices that impact our water resources
Idea 3: compelling to people's emotions

Incentivize cover crops and encourage farmers to air seed to get it done first year
Fund cover crop research.
Create Animal unit cap per acre for all corporate farms and require them to be bonded to recover cost of damages
Ballot measures
Grassroots engagement
Bonding funds for Oronoco's Wastewater collection & treatment facility. 75% of downtown Oronoco's individual septic systems are non-compliant per MPCA standards & are next to Zumbro Middle fork river.
Incentives landowners to maintain high quality landscapes like forests to protect and maintain water quality
Education of farmers, homeowners, country clubs, etc. About the necessity of keeping farm and lawn chemicals and soil runoff out of our waterways.
Serve as a good example to others
Fully fund Forever Green at U of M
Education and awareness
Encourage native ecosystems - prairie, forest to replace mowed lawns.
Charge heavy water users for water
Level the playing field
Test the water
Fund BMPs identified in local watershed plans.
Encourage a water ethic
Instill an ethic of care, compassion and community