

Healthy Pine River

February 8, 2024

Call to Order: Gary Rayburn

Approval of Minutes: Dave/Brittany (corrected date January 11, 2024)

Financial Report: Opening balance \$20,256.52

Ending balance \$29,152.62

Brittany: 2024 membership drive in progress

EGLE watershed grant- submitted for review septic information

Pine River landowners advisory board met

Outreach – talks to begin with schools (education and information on Pine River)

Guest Speakers: Cheri Meyer and Barney Boyer

Cheri assisted in obtaining funding allowing the finish our Watershed Plan. This guides HPR's priorities and work towards a healthier river. Cheri's has a new position with EGLE. She is the manager of field operations for water quality. Today she'll present "Update on the State of Water in Michigan" with EGLE's working priorities. 2022 was the 50th anniversary of the Clean Water Act. While we have come a long way, work continues on improving our water quality.

-Part 31 rule authorizes what EGLE can do. In 2006 the governor took away EGLE's ability to promulgate new rules. Certain rules that EGLE currently has, cannot be changed or updated. Impairs ability to comply with EPA new guidelines/rules/requirements and affects water quality standards. ELE unable to update rules to include PFAS needing a secondary containment in case of spillage. Others rules needing change- bio solids and dated ground water regulations. This issue is in front of the legislature –to returning the ability to update regulations. The CAFO 2020 General Permit has been contested over this ability to update regulations. Most existing CAFO's are still operating under 2015 general permits. The claim is EGLE is promulgating a rule, which they cannot do. EGLE is contesting- that isn't what they are doing, they are updating permit. Issue is before the Michigan State Court of Appeals.

- New is mapping CAFO fields that receive land application – if there is a complaint now able to see if area is under permit and able to address.

- Anaerobic digesters: WRD (water resource Division) supports renewable energy sources digester can reduce pollution to surface and ground waters. EGLE wants to ensure facilities understand requirements.

Requirements haven't changed, people are just hearing more about those requirements. Example what is going into the digester and then being land applied is appropriate.

-Ground water program- expanding what is being discharged into ground water. Food processors initiative. If waste isn't being properly treated before land application it can contaminate ground water. Organic waste (from food plants- ex cider mills, slaughter houses) react with the metals naturally found in soil. The reaction unbinds metals and they are then released into ground water. This contaminates wells, making water unsafe to drink. EGLE staff is going out and working on sites to correct.

-Climate change: higher, flashier streams due to heavier precipitation in a shorter frame = flooding, damage to infrastructure, degraded water quality. Models show increased amounts of precipitation will continue. This causes infrastructure damage due to overloading of sewers and water treatment plants. Charts show increase in the frost free season, temperatures have increased average 2.3 degrees, total precipitation is up 14% and heavy precipitation 35%. EGLE's climate change plan has been developed to handle these changes. The plan is now out for public comment.

-Chlorides and sulfite levels are being studied to determined safe discharge numbers without negative impact on the environment, example aquatic life. Once in the environment it is hard to treat. Example of sources- salting of roads. Discussions with the transportation industry

-PFAS Michigan is the national leader with increased testing and requirements.

- New items EGLE will be looking at- micro plastics; collection stem regulations (sewers) are they are in good shape and appropriate capacity.
- Monitoring of water quality: chemistries, E.coli, biology of streams, visual observations of streams, fish contaminations. While the problem appears to be growing, in fact there is overall improvement. We just hear more and looking to identify problems earlier. Public can request monitoring – online form to fill out. EGLE meets Jan/Feb to review and decide which area to monitor. Trend sites – same area monitored year after year to capture trends.
- Work based on protecting surface water for designated use. People in Michigan have the right to have expectations for the water- drinking, eating fish, boating, aquatic life, water safe for agriculture and industrial use. Designated use are certain rights. EGLE works to protect water for designated use.
- Widespread water issues affecting Michigan- fish consumption due to bio accumulative chemicals (they stay in water- PCB's, mercury), E.coli impaired waters.
- Overall water improving. 1990-2014 see decrease of PCB levels in carp from the Great Lakes.
- Waters are still E.coli impacted
- Tools to address water quality: determine TMDL, studies, grants for best management practices, education in public schools, identification of impaired areas- then requiring the permitted entity to go above/do extra to correct problem. We have improved technologies (sampling, testing).
- To find out about any waterway go to EPA site and search: How's my waterway EGLE sends their information to EPA for inclusion.
- There is an Integrated report – statewide- on water quality that is sent to EPA every other year – on web site.

Discussion followed

HPR 2023 Annual Report at door

Meeting adjourned

Next Meeting
March 14, 2024
7:00 pm
Alma Public Library