



## Mill Creek Nutrient Reduction Project Stakeholder Committee Meeting Summary April 7, 2016

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The first Stakeholder Committee meeting for the Mill Creek Nutrient Reduction Project was held on Thursday, April 7<sup>th</sup> at the Rockville City Hall. Twenty-five members attended the meeting representing the following groups:

- City of Rockville-3
- Businesses-1
- Rural Landowners -5
- Producers -10
- Lake Association-1
- Soil and Water Conservation District -2
- Pollution Control Agency-1
- Sauk River Watershed District -1
- Local Reporter- 1

The meeting began with members introducing themselves and state what group they represent. This was followed by an introduction of the Mill Creek Nutrient Reduction Project and a map of the project areas.

The Sauk River Watershed District (SRWD) presented the water resources of concern, Mill Creek and Pearl Lake, and the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) reductions needed in order for these water resources to meet State water quality standards. This included a 59-93% reduction in E.Coli bacteria for Mill Creek and a 25% reduction in Phosphorus for Pearl Lake. Monitoring locations were identified by the SRWD, who will be conducting the lake and stream sampling to track changes in water quality.

Time was spent discussing the Goal of the Mill Creek Nutrient Reduction Project which is:

*“Reduce nutrient loading and E.coli impacts by addressing land use issues within the Mill Creek watershed through civic engagement and public outreach efforts, and implementing conservation BMPs”.*

The objectives to achieve this goal were also discussed by the SRWD. The four objectives are listed below.

**Objective 1:** Promote Community Awareness and Public Involvement

**Objective 2:** Establish Perennial Vegetated Buffers through the Hayed Buffer Program and other Conservation Programs

**Objective 3:** Install recommended Conservation BMPs and upgrade septic systems in the Mill Creek watershed

**Objective 4:** Monitor Mill Creek and Pearl Lake (2016 and 2018) to Determine Changes in Water Quality.

Nate Hylla, from the Stearns County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), went through a series of slides showing examples of water quality concerns found throughout Stearns County. In each slide, Nate described the situation and impacts to the water resources. This was followed up by the SWCD and SRWD staff discussing technical and financial assistance each entity can provide to landowners within the Mill Creek watershed. This would include engineering and inspections for conservation practices. The SRWD described the new Hayed Buffer Program to increase compliance to the State Shoreland Rule.

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Scott Lucas, discussed the mission of the Stakeholders Committee and the importance of working together as a team.

*The mission of the Mill Creek Watershed Restoration Stakeholders Committee is to promote better understanding of the project through a variety of public outreach and public relations efforts, to maintain project integrity and guide project to succeed.*

Scott also warned the group of the potential pitfalls that could derail a project, such as the Mill Creek project. He presented to the group the top five problems that occur which can create a dysfunctional group.

- Only a few participate in activities
- Lack of communication between group members
- Burnout of few active individuals
- Loss of funding or support
- Finger Pointing! – Polarizes the group

The remainder of the meeting was spent in open discussion. Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and begin developing an action item list with designated responsible parties. The following action items will be addressed and brought to the next Stakeholders Committee meeting.

- Get information to the Stakeholders on the subwatershed of the project and provide a larger map identifying these subwatershed. (SRWD)
- Find funding to monitor Goodners Lake (SRWD)
- Assess possible retention practices (SWCD)
- Information on the Hansen property (SWCD)
- Check into the “mill pond” restoration (SWCD)
- Public outreach – articles for the Rockville Newsletter, newspapers, Lake Association
- Send information to landowners with current BMPs (SWCD)

The next meeting is tentative scheduled for August. Please bring any ideas you may have for civic engagement and public outreach opportunities.