

Talking Points – Draft Ramsey County Groundwater Protection Plan, 2009



1. The original Ramsey County Groundwater Protection Plan was written by the Ramsey Conservation District and adopted by Ramsey County in 1996.
2. A Technical Advisory Committee of representatives from Ramsey County, city engineering departments, water jurisdictions (watershed districts and WMOs), state and regional agencies, and a well driller provided expert opinions during the planning process.
3. Most of the northern half of Ramsey County (20% of the total population) is completely dependent on groundwater.
4. Groundwater is inextricably linked to surface water. What affects one, affects the other.
5. Ramsey County is the only county in Minnesota where “net water use” is more than 100% of the renewable resource (groundwater recharge). This is an unsustainable level of use.
6. The Metropolitan Council projects drawdowns and localized groundwater supply shortages by 2030.
7. Groundwater contamination has already affected city wells in New Brighton and St. Anthony.
8. Countywide groundwater protection is the most practical approach because aquifers transcend political and surface water boundaries.
9. Groundwater protection has not yet been addressed at the local level but this is the most effective stage at which to target programs.
10. The draft Ramsey County Groundwater Protection Plan lists programs and initiatives that address issues of sustainability, groundwater quality, public outreach, mapping of contaminant plumes, and stormwater infiltration.
11. The Plan proposes the formation of county groundwater partnership based on a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that would institutionalize groundwater protection in Ramsey County.
12. What would happen if no Plan was implemented?
 - a. Increased city well interference due to more intensive use of groundwater by growing population.
 - b. Lack of planning could lead to future limitations on cities’ groundwater appropriations by the Department of Natural Resources.
 - c. Unsustainable use of the resource could lead to lowering of water levels on lakes, streams, and wetlands.
 - d. Unsealed wells offer conduits for easy movement of groundwater contaminants. Fewer wells mean lower risk.
 - e. Implementation of the Plan’s programs would either not occur or would be left to individual cities and water jurisdictions, on a piecemeal basis.
 - f. Grant funding opportunities (i.e., LCCMR, EPA Section 319, and Clean Water Fund) would not be solicited.
13. For more information, call Geoff Nash, Ramsey Conservation District, (651) 266-7273 or go to (<http://www.co.ramsey.mn.us/cd/docs/Ramsey%20County%20Groundwater%20Protection%20Plan.pdf>).