



Groundwater Plan Implementation Report 2022-2023 Annual Update

Introduction

The 2020-2030 Groundwater Plan (Plan) describes the strategic approach for new and ongoing programs for Dakota County residents, agricultural interests, businesses, industry, and government to protect and improve groundwater quality and quantity. The implementation framework identifies prioritized, targeted, and measurable activities necessary to achieve the Plan goals. As part of implementation, the intent is to provide an annual Groundwater Plan Implementation Report that will identify priorities for the given year, report on annual measures, and track changes of measures and outcomes over time.

In July of each year, Dakota County staff report annual measures for each goal, strategy, and tactic to the County Office of Performance Analysis as part of the Program and Service Inventory. For a complete list of 2022 Groundwater Plan annual measures please contact groundwater@co.dakota.mn.us.

The below tables provide a status update for all tactics that were ongoing from 2021 or were projected to start in 2022 timeframe (Table 1); and those tactics that are projected to start in 2023 timeframe (Table 2), per the Groundwater Plan Implementation Tables.

Table 1. Groundwater Plan tactics ongoing from 2021 or projected to start in 2022 timeframe

Tactic	Short Description	Status
1A3C	Facilitate installation of drinking water treatment systems for low-income households with a private well	Implemented pilot program in 2022 <i>(see 2022 Project Highlights below)</i>
1A3E, 1A3F, 1A3H	Provide private well owners with the opportunity to have their water tested at no cost to them; collect demographic data	Started implementation in 2020 and continued in 2022 <i>(see 2022 Project Highlights below)</i>
1B1B, 1B1C	Develop, adopt, and implement a Dakota County Agricultural Chemical Reduction Effort (ACRE); provide cost-share funding for ag. water quality practices	Started ACRE development in 2021, ACRE Plan was finalized and adopted by the County Board in 2022 <i>(see 2022 Project Highlights below)</i>
1B1D	Install monitoring wells to collect long-term water quality and water level data in high nitrate groundwater areas	Started implementation in 2021, well installation was completed in 2022 <i>(see 2022 Project Highlights below)</i>
1B1E	Partner with SWCD to facilitate, promote, and potentially provide cost-share funding for irrigation practices and technologies	Provided funding for Irrigation Management Tool in 2021; tool was rolled out in 2022.

Tactic	Short Description	Status
1B4A, 1B4B	Work with County Departments, and cities and townships to minimize salt use	Hosted a Smart Salting Workshop for Local Leaders; coordinated with the Library Department to educate residents on reducing salt use and offered smart salt cups at multiple library locations.
1C3E	Provide training for realtors regarding the property transfer requirements for wells and septic systems.	Delayed, projected to start in 2023
1C3F	Review and track proposed sites for land application of wastewater treatment plant biosolids	Process started in 2021; intern was hired to map sites for 2022 sampling (<i>see 2022 Project Highlights below</i>)
1C4B	Review the County's model Mining Ordinance, update as appropriate, and distribute to cities and townships.	Started implementation in 2022, coordinated with SWCD and hired consultant (<i>see 2023 Project Highlights below</i>)
2A2A	Develop and implement a County-wide water supply/conservation initiative	Topic included in the 2022 Collaborative agenda; discussions to be continued in 2023.
2A3B	Provide cost-share funding for water reuse projects.	Pending, TBD based on grant funding availability
2B2A	Encourage communities to complete or update wetland protection and management plans	Pending, TBD based on staff availability
2C1A	Encourage adoption and coordination of advanced technologies, such as "Smart Wellfield" technologies	Topic included in 2022 Collaborative agenda
3A1C	Host We Are Water MN exhibit (opportunity-base)	Implemented in 2022 in collaboration with Library Dep., Parks, VRWJPO, and SWCD (<i>see 2022 Project Highlights below</i>)
3A1D	Inform the public about groundwater levels by putting DNR observation well data on the County website.	Some information added to Dakota County Website: Water Watch
3A1A, 3A1B, 3A1F, 3A1G, 3A1H, 3B1C, 3B1H	<p>Expand groundwater conservation and pollution prevention education and outreach efforts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist annual Metro Area Children's Water Festival Leverage existing educational materials and programs Inform the public about DWSMAs Make non-private water quality data more readily available to homeowners and other stakeholders Develop and distribute educational information in multiple languages and accessible formats. 	Additional educational items were added to the Groundwater Website . The Find My DWSMA application was developed in 2022. Language needs for educational materials are still being assessed, but some translation was completed in 2022 (<i>see 2022 Project Highlights below</i>)
4A1B	Establish a County Groundwater/Source Water Collaborative	Started in 2021, Collaborative met three times in 2022 (<i>see 2022 Project Highlights below</i>)
4B1B	Review the County's Well Program Delegation Agreement with Minnesota Department of Health (MDH)	Meetings with MDH started in 2022 (<i>see 2023 Project Highlights below</i>)

Table 2. Groundwater Plan tactics projected to start in 2023 timeframe

Tactic	Short Description	Status
1A1A	Conduct Rural Water Feasibility Study (opportunity-based)	Received funding and hired consultant in 2022; implementation projected to start 2023 (<i>see 2023 highlights below</i>)
3B1F	Conduct stakeholder workshops for updated County Geologic Atlas, once updated	Pending, TBD based on completion of Geologic Atlas

2022 Project Highlights

Dakota County was successful in implementing many of the strategies and tactics identified within the Groundwater Plan in collaboration with state and local community partners, such as the Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and the Vermillion River Water Joint Powers Organization (VRWJPO). Staff continued to seek external funding and resources to assist with Plan implementation. In partnership with the SWCD, staff were successful in obtaining over \$550,000 in grant awards focused on groundwater protection activities, of which \$185,000 was directly awarded to Dakota County. Below is list of grants awarded in 2022 for Groundwater Plan implementation - many of these projects will be implemented in 2023-2025 timeframe.

Table 3. Grants Awarded in 2022

Grant	Short Description	Award Amount
Vermillion River Watershed – Watershed Based Implementation Funding (WBIF) Grant	Conduct targeted nitrate reduction practices (e.g., cover crops, harvestable crops), one-on-one outreach to landowners, and increase use of irrigation scheduling tools	\$85,000 (SWCD, 10% match provided by Dakota County)
Cannon River Watershed – WBIF Grant	Conduct targeted nitrate reduction practices (e.g., cover crops, harvestable crops), one-on-one outreach to landowners, and increase use of irrigation scheduling tools	\$85,000 (SWCD, 10% match provided by Dakota County)
Black Dog Watershed – WBIF Grant	Complete well inventory within watershed area and provide 50% cost-share for sealing of unused wells.	\$25,000 (Dakota County)
Groundwater Accelerated Implementation Grant, MN Dept. of Health	Update the County Model Mining Ordinance and conduct stakeholder outreach.	\$50,000 (SWCD, with project support from Dakota County)
Competitive Clean Water Fund Grant	Provide 50% cost-share for sealing of 80-100 unused wells throughout the County.	\$110,000 (Dakota County)
Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)	Complete Rural Water Feasibility Study	\$50,000 (Dakota County)
Competitive Clean Water Fund Grant – Drinking Water Protection	Provide incentive payments for nitrate reduction practices (eg. Cover crops, harvestable crops) in targeted areas.	\$150,000 (SWCD, 25% match provided by Dakota County)

Below are several highlights of projects implemented in 2022.

Strategy 1A3: Assisted Private Well Owners

Continued Community Focused Sampling (tactics 1A3E, 1A3F, 1A3H – 2020 Plan Start):

The Community Focused Sampling program started in 2020 (during development of the Groundwater Plan), with the objective to offer every private well owner in Dakota County the opportunity to have free drinking water testing at least once every five years. Free water testing provides multiple benefits – it removes barriers for well owners to help them understand health concerns related to their drinking water and improves the County’s understanding of community risks from groundwater contamination. The County provides each participant a copy of their individual results as well as a

customized packet with risk communication, contaminant factsheets, water treatment options (if applicable), and resources to help ensure residents have safe drinking water.

In 2022, water sample kits were sent to private well owners in four communities (Ravenna Twp, Castle Rock Twp, Sciota Twp, and Randolph Twp), from which 411 households participated. Cities and townships included in the sampling program to date are identified in the table below.

Table 4. 2019-2022 Community Focused Sampling Participation

Year	City/Township	No. of Private Wells	No. Samples Returned	Response Rate
2020	APPLE VALLEY	74	22	30%
2020	COATES	50	16	32%
2020	DOUGLAS TWP	250	82	33%
2020	EAGAN	295	58	20%
2020	HAMPTON (CITY)	11	4	36%
2020	HASTINGS	159	16	10%
2020	MARSHAN TWP	387	147	38%
2020	MIESVILLE	52	26	50%
2020	NEW TRIER	33	6	18%
2020	NORTHFIELD (within Dakota County)	14	3	21%
2020	RANDOLPH (CITY)	61	6	10%
2020	ROSEMOUNT	554	231	42%
2020	VERMILLION (CITY)	11	2	18%
2021	EMPIRE TWP	259	55	21%
2021	HAMPTON TWP	335	84	25%
2021	LILYDALE	5	0	0%
2021	MENDOTA	65	0	0%
2021	MENDOTA HEIGHTS	135	8	6%
2021	NININGER TWP	321	78	24%
2021	SOUTH ST PAUL	14	1	7%
2021	SUNFISH LAKE	196	44	22%
2021	VERMILLION TWP	453	91	20%
2021	WATERFORD TWP	235	39	17%
2021	WEST ST PAUL	84	3	4%
2022	RAVENNA TWP	835	219	26%
2022	CASTLE ROCK TWP	568	111	20%
2022	SCIOTA TWP	182	31	17%
2022	RANDOLPH TWP	317	50	16%
	TOTAL	5,955	1,433	24%

Community Focused Sampling results summarized by city and township can be found on the [Wells & Drinking Water Website](#). Private wells owners in the City of Inver Grove Heights and Eureka Township will be offered free drinking water testing opportunities in 2023.

Water Supply Testing Services (tactic 1A3A – ongoing):

In addition to providing free drinking water testing, the County also facilitated a fee-for-service Water Testing Service through a certified laboratory. In 2022, more than 105 residents participated in routine testing of arsenic, bacteria, fluoride, lead, manganese, and nitrate.

Develop Drinking Water Treatment System Grant Program (tactic 1A3C – 2021 Plan Start):

The Drinking Water Treatment System Grant Program was delayed from 2021 to 2022 due to available funding and prioritization of projects in accordance with the Groundwater Plan and annual workplans. Dakota County staff implemented the Pilot Grant program in 2022 – the program was approved for implementation by the County Board of Commissioners in April 2022, utilizing \$20,000 of the Environmental Resources Department budget.

The goal of the grant program is to ensure all private well owners in Dakota County have equal access to safe and healthy drinking water that meets MDH’s drinking water guidelines, and position Dakota County for future external funding opportunities. The Pilot Grant program provided 100% of cost, up to \$2,000, for the water treatment system equipment and installation for residents that met eligibility requirements. To qualify, the applicant had to (1) own the house or building where the private well was located; (2) meet “low-income” criteria as defined by the [USDA Rural Development](#) guidelines; and (3) have well water that exceeded a MDH drinking water guideline.

Through targeted outreach, Dakota County was able to award 12 water treatment system grants in 2022. Information on program success will be presented to MDH, and future program implementation will be dependent upon possible state grant opportunities starting in 2024.

Strategy 1B1: Reduce Agricultural Chemical Contamination

Complete Agricultural Chemical Reduction Effort (ACRE) Plan (tactic 1B1B– 2021 Plan Start):

The 2020-2030 Dakota County Groundwater Plan identified farm chemicals, especially nitrate, crop herbicides, and chloride as significant risks to drinking water in rural parts of the county. Dakota County staff, in collaboration with the SWCD, developed the ACRE Plan with input from an Agricultural Advisory Group and other state, regional, and local stakeholders. The ACRE Plan was finalized and adopted by the County Board of Commissioners in October 2022.

Outcome-based goals

The ACRE Plan focuses on using voluntary actions to achieve measurable progress within the next 10 years. Dakota County plans to work closely with the SWCD and partners to achieve the goals listed below; more intended outcomes are listed within the [ACRE Plan](#):

- Five percent or fewer of the households that use private drinking water wells exceed the drinking water guideline for nitrate-N.
- No public water supply well will exceed the nitrate drinking water guideline or be projected to exceed it in the next 10 years.
- Private well owners understand their well water quality and test their wells appropriately.
- Local farmers implement practices to reduce or eliminate agricultural chemicals reaching groundwater.
- Farmers who live or work in Dakota County have opportunities to thrive while protecting the environment for future generations.

Plan Strategies

The plan has four main strategies:

1. Information for Decision Making

- Provide private well sampling
- Sample monitoring well network
- Analyze ag. practice data
- Update groundwater models

2. Communicate & Educate

- Create Ag. Advisory Group
- Increase community communication
- Promote assistance programs
- Provide educational opportunities
- Advocate for improved internet access

3. Technical Assistance

- Partner on certification programs
- Increase assistance at farm level
- Work with landlords & renters
- Assist beginning/emerging farmers

4. Financial Incentives:

- Adopting new water quality practices
- Maintaining water quality practices
- MN Ag Water Quality Certification
- Funding sought from external sources

Adoption rate goals for conservation practices such as cover crops and harvestable perennial crops were identified utilizing a groundwater nitrate model developed in conjunction with the ACRE Plan. The groundwater nitrate model evaluated nitrate loss to shallow groundwater based on current groundwater concentrations, agricultural practices, and soil and land-use conditions. Interim adoption rate goals for each city and township are identified in Figure 2, these are based on initial model scenario results and other metrics in order to reduce nitrate in groundwater to below 10 mg/L.

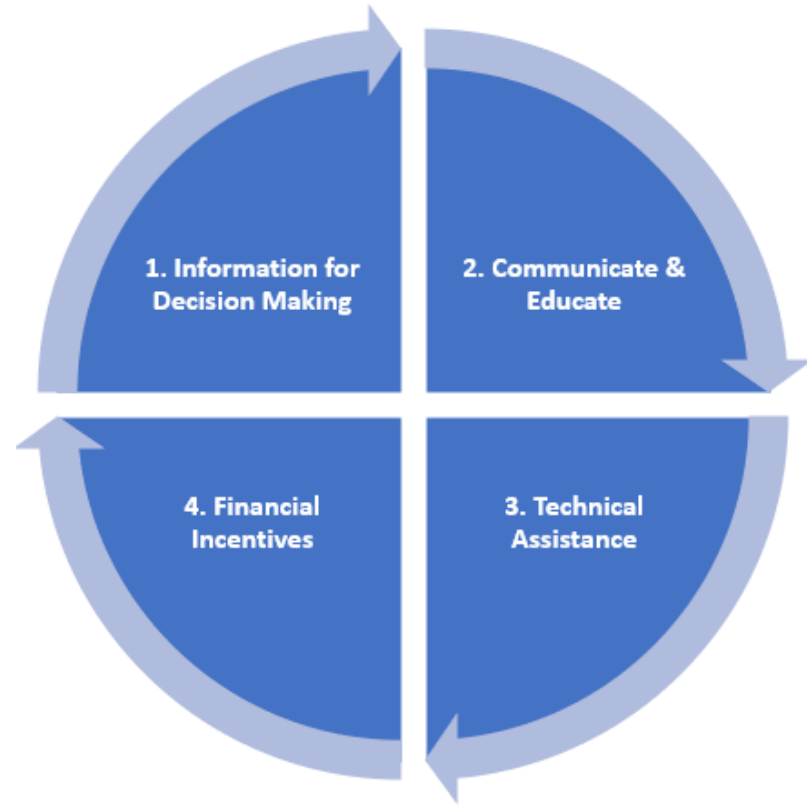


Figure 1. ACRE Plan Strategies

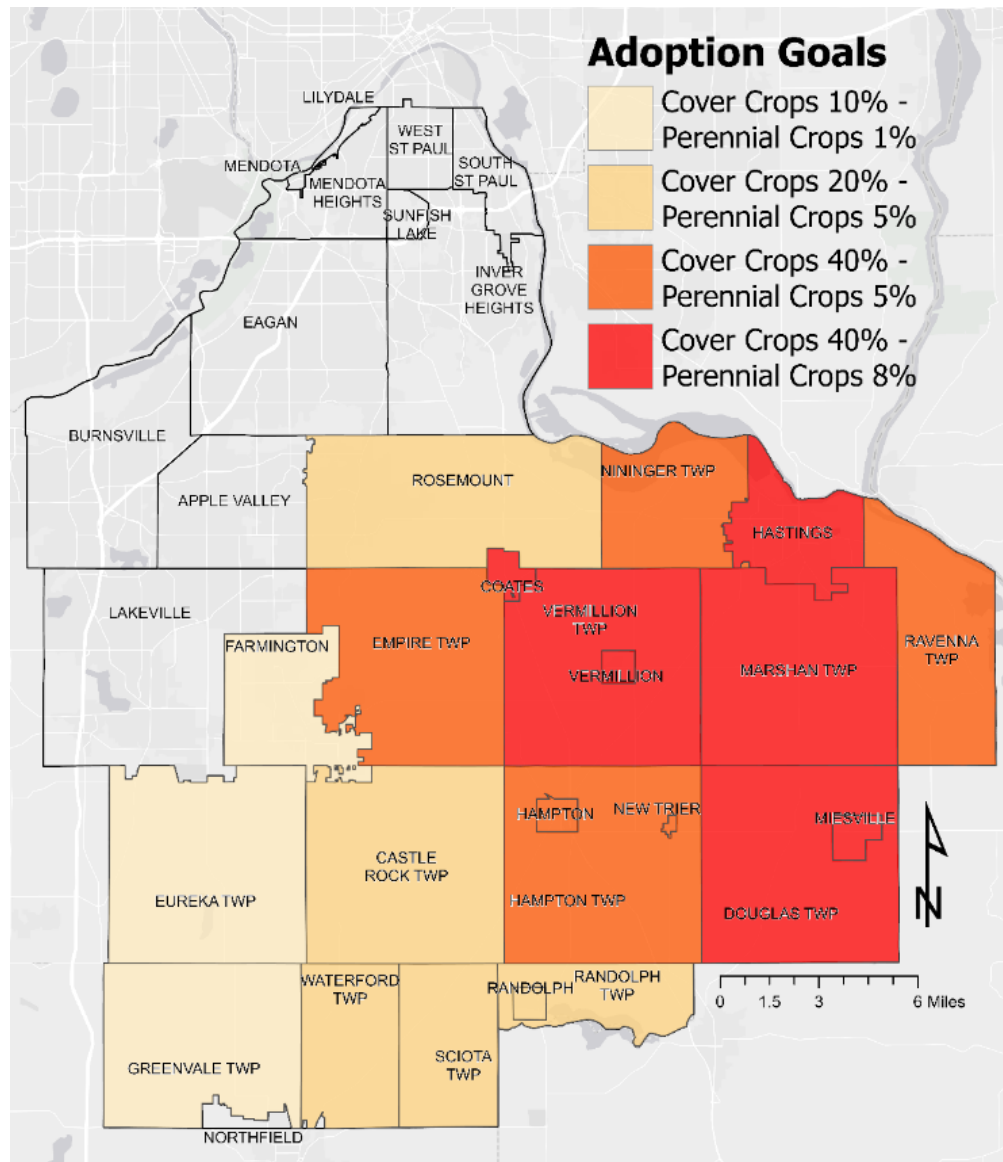


Figure 2. Interim Adoption Rate Goals

Complete Monitoring Well Network Installation (tactic 1B1D – 2021 Plan Start):

In conjunction with developing the ACRE Plan, staff partnered with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) to develop a long-term monitoring well network in high nitrate groundwater areas of the county. Dakota County installed 15 shallow groundwater monitoring wells in 2021-2022 (Figure 3). The county monitoring well network is meant to complement the monitoring network MDA is establishing within the Hastings’ drinking water supply management area (DWSMA).

Wells will be sampled three times a year (spring, summer, and fall) for water levels, nitrate, chloride, and other general chemistry parameters. This information will enable the county and MDA to establish baseline groundwater conditions and observe changes in shallow groundwater quality over time. Monitoring well results can be viewed on the [ACRE Well Results](#) dashboard.

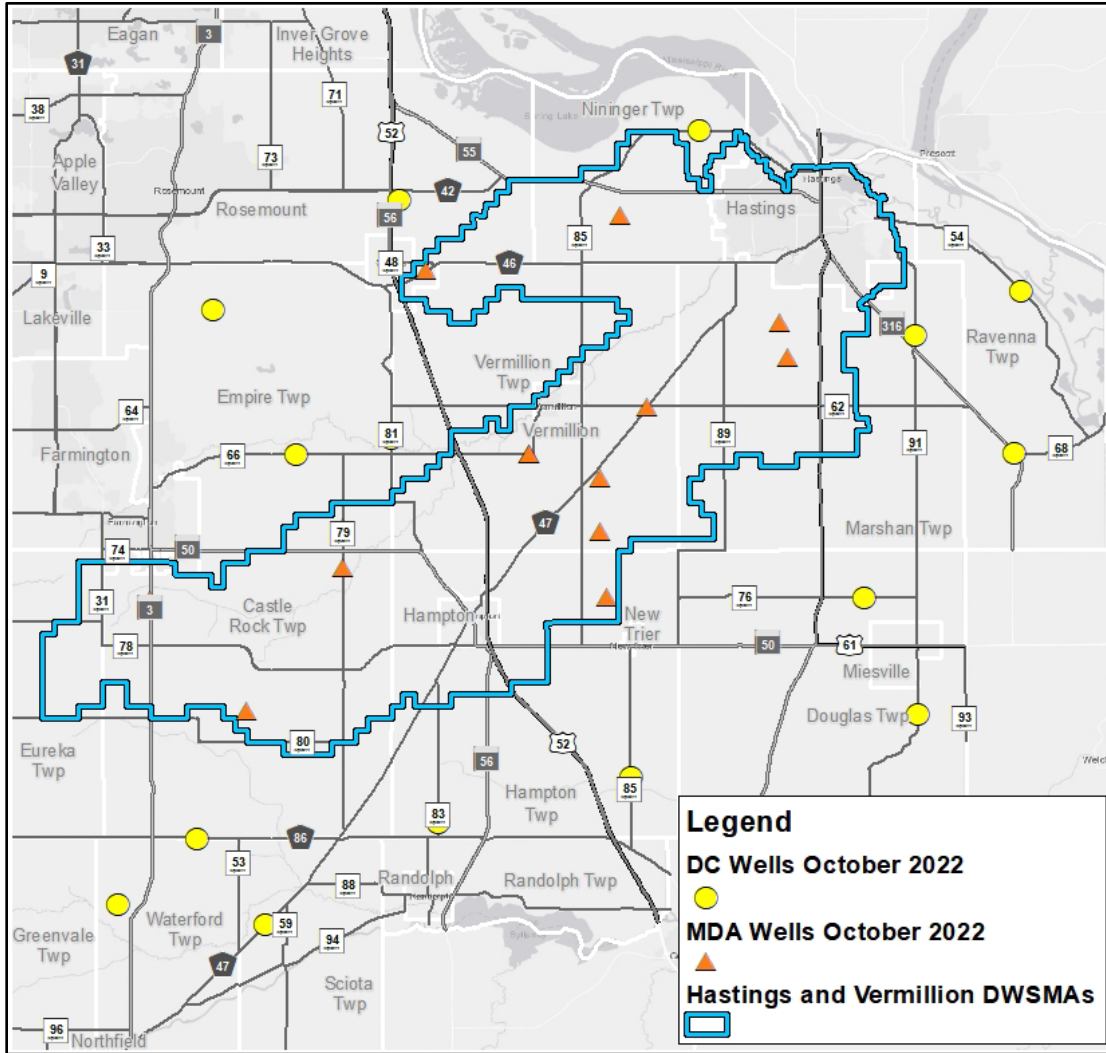


Figure 3. Groundwater Monitoring Network

Support Implementation of Water Quality Best Management Practices (tactics 1B1C – ongoing; 1B1E – 2022 Plan Start):

Dakota County also provided \$250,000 in cost-share funding to the SWCD to support technical assistance and installation of water quality best management practices. Cost-share grants supported 3,191 acres of cover crops on 43 fields, and 12.5 acres of native prairie restoration, resulting in 13,930 pounds of nitrate reduction per year.

In addition, Dakota County provided cost-share funding to SWCD in 2021 for development of an Irrigation Management Assistant (IMA) tool that was made available for public use in 2022. A total of 11 registered users utilized the tool in 2022 to support irrigation management of 1,510 acres of corn, 221 acres of peas, 9 acres of potatoes, and 107 acres of soybeans. Next steps will include increased promotion and assistance to farmers. The IMA tool has gained state support for use and is transitioning to the University of Minnesota for future funding

and maintenance. However, the tool will continue to be available to all Dakota County producers for free – it can be accessed at [Dakota Irrigation Management Assistant \(respec.com\)](https://respec.com).

Strategy 1A2 & 1C2: Protected Groundwater by Regulating Well Construction and Sealing, & Seal Unused Wells

Administered Delegated Well Program (tactic 1A2A - Ongoing):

Dakota County continued to administer the Delegated Well Program and enforce County Ordinance 114, Well and Water Supply Management, to ensure that new wells are constructed, and unused wells are sealed to meet health standards and protect Dakota County aquifers. In 2022, staff completed 78 well construction permits and 128 well seal permits.

Targeted Well Seal Grants (tactics 1C2A, 1C2B - Ongoing):

The County provided up to 50 percent cost-share grants through the County's existing Well Seal Grant Program to permanently seal unused/abandoned drinking water wells utilizing three different funding sources: (1) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) dollars, (2) 2021 Metro Mississippi East Watershed – WBIF dollars, and (3) County Environmental Legacy Funds (ELF).

In 2021, the Environmental Resources Intern identified potentially 1,500 unsealed, unused wells within the Mississippi East Watershed Area - this included the cities of Mendota, Mendota Heights, West St. Paul, South St. Paul, Inver Grove Heights, Sunfish Lake, and Lilydale. Letters were sent to landowners in 2021-2022 with potentially unsealed wells, with priority on properties located within city DWSMAs. A total of 26 wells were sealed in 2021-2022 within the Mississippi East watershed Area.

In addition to focusing on well seal grants within the Mississippi East Watershed, funds were utilized to seal an additional 32 wells throughout the county. In total, \$107,000 of cost-share grants were awarded, and 50 unused wells were sealed in 2022.

Strategy 1D: Monitor Groundwater Quality

Research Groundwater Conditions (tactic 1D1A – ongoing)

Biosolids Sites Private Well Sampling Project:

To evaluate the impact of biosolids land-spreading on the county's groundwater, staff collected samples from 25 private drinking water wells in 2020 and 10 additional wells in 2022. Weck Laboratory analyzed the samples for PFAS and Minnesota Valley Testing Laboratory analyzed the samples for nitrate, chloride, sulfate, manganese, and heavy metals. The 2020-2022 project was a follow-up to PFAS samples collected from 62 other private wells as part of the 1999-2019 Dakota County Ambient Groundwater Quality Study. In the 97 private wells County staff have sampled for PFAS, it was determined that there is a correlation between the distance to a known biosolid application site and the concentrations of PFBA, PFPeA, PFHxS and nitrate.

The full [PFAS in Drinking Water Wells](#) report can be found on the [Drinking Water Studies](#) website.

Strategy 3A & 3B: Expand Water Education

Host “We Are Water MN” (tactic 3A1C – *Opportunity-based*):

Through an application process, Dakota County was selected to host the We Are Water MN exhibit. Staff from multiple departments and organizations worked together to bring We Are Water MN to Dakota County, which comprised both an indoor exhibit at the Pleasant Hill Library and an outdoor exhibit at Lebanon Hills Visitor Center from October 13 to December 5, 2022. Dakota County created opportunities through the program to deepen connections between humanities and water through a network of partnerships, the exhibit, and related events.

Partners included the Dakota County Library, Environmental Resources and Dakota County Parks; as well as external partners including the VRWJPO and the SWCD. Goals of the We Are Water project (as determined by partners) were to:

1. Build and strengthen lasting relationships
2. Increase awareness of relationships between our water, our communities, and ourselves
3. Reduce barriers that will help residents take individual and collective actions to protect water
4. Reach diverse audiences using inclusive and effective communication methods
5. Seek and include diverse voices, partners, and communities
6. Facilitate communication and education around connection between land use and water

The exhibit and associated events examined water issues statewide and in Dakota County through personal stories, histories, and scientific information. This resulted in strengthened relationships with water, new perspectives regarding water quality, water quantity and individual responsibilities, and increased participation in water stewardship activities. Over 13,000 people were educated on local water concerns at the exhibit and associated events. Staff and partners planned and executed 15 different events and activities throughout 2022 focused on reaching a variety of residents and stakeholders. Events included Drinking Water Treatment Plant Tours, Smart Salting Workshops, a Story Trail: We Are Water Protectors, a Nitrate Clinic, a Water-themed Opt Outside Day, Protecting the Waters Panel Discussion and other educational lessons, activities, and workshops.



Figure 4. We Are Water MN Exhibit

Hosted Smart Salt Classes (3B1D - Ongoing):

Figure 5. Smart Cup Instructions

In 2021, Dakota County received \$3,000 from the Clean Water Land and Legacy Amendment, distributed by the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) to support annual Smart Salt Training Classes. The Mississippi East WBIF Grant supported a *Smart Salting for Roads (level 1 certification)* workshop in September 2022, conducted in collaboration with Washington County. In addition, the County hosted a *Smart Salting for Parking Lots/Roads (level 1 certification)* workshop in October 2022. A total of 81 people were certified between the two classes.

Dakota County also hosted a *Smart Salting for Local Leaders* workshop as a component of We Are Water MN, and coordinated with the Dakota County Library Department to offer Smart Salt Cups at multiple library locations instructing residents on how to reduce chloride in the environment.

Ensured information is available in multiple languages (tactic 3B1H – 2021 Plan Start):

Dakota County staff worked with the SWCD and the ACRE consultant (Environmental Initiative) to identify educational material translation needs. SWCD program factsheets on Cover Crop Incentives, Harvestable Cover Incentives, and Native Prairie Restoration Cost-Share programs were translated into both Spanish and Hmong to support ACRE education and outreach efforts.



Figure 6. SWCD Translated Materials in Spanish and Hmong

Strategy 4A: Collaborate with other Levels of Government

Host the County Groundwater - Source Water Protection Collaborative (4A1B – 2021 Plan Start):

The Dakota County Groundwater – Source Water Protection Collaborative (Collaborative) was formed in 2021 to provide a forum to facilitate benchmarking, data-sharing, idea-sharing, and collaboration between the County and drinking water stakeholders. The goal is to increase protection of the County’s groundwater and ensure sufficient and healthy drinking water for all residents.

In 2022, Dakota County hosted three Collaborative meetings. On average 20-30 representatives from cities, townships, watersheds, SWCD, state and regional organizations attended. The 2022 topics focused on Water Conservation/Reuse, Wellhead Protection Partnerships, and Education and Outreach – presentations were given by VRWJPO, MDH, Met Council, Washington County, and city staff; and private business organizations. The Collaborative is planning to meet twice in 2023 to discuss topics such as water conservation messaging and chloride reduction efforts.

2023 Upcoming Highlights

Dakota County has a number of projects planned for 2022. This includes several Department priority projects that were started in 2022, such as the Rural Water Feasibility Study and the Model Mining Ordinance Project. A highlight of 2023 priority projects are discussed below.

Complete Rural Water Feasibility Study (tactic 1A1B – Opportunity-based):

Staff were successful in receiving a \$50,000 Community Development Block Grant to support completion of a rural water feasibility study. The intent of the study is to evaluate the establishment of a rural water supply, or extension of existing public water connections, to residents who currently rely on private wells. The County contracted with Bolton & Menk to complete the study – tasks in 2023 will include (1) confirming the study area with priority based on areas with the highest contaminant concentrations in private well; (2) conducting community outreach in target areas to determine community preferences and capacity of existing systems; and (3) completing the feasibility study report for the study area. The report will identify feasibility, cost and recommendations for connecting private wells to municipal or rural water services. The Final Feasibility Study Report is projected to be completed and made available to stakeholder by the end of 2023.

Implement ACRE Plan (tactic 1B1B – 2023 Implementation Start):

ACRE Plan implementation will focus on the following components in 2023:

- 1) Continue to collect information for decision making purposes, especially in the early years of ACRE implementation to verify baseline conditions.
 - Determine a method to verify farming practices being implemented and maintained on existing acreage throughout the County (ACRE tactic 1A).
 - Conduct annual sampling of the long-term monitoring network (ACRE tactic 1B).
- 2) Increase communication and outreach efforts to the farming and rural communities.
 - Create and distribute an annual ACRE update (ACRE tactic 2A).
 - Coordinate with SWCD to distribute information, training, and program incentive opportunities utilizing a variety of platforms (ACRE tactic 2C).
 - Create an Agricultural Advisory Group to provide guidance to Dakota County and SWCD staff during ACRE Plan implementation (ACRE tactic 2E).
 - Provide in-person updates to cities and townships on ACRE progress (ACRE tactic 2F).
 - Work with service providers such as agronomist, co-ops, retailers, etc. to advocate for water quality practices (ACRE tactic 2G).
- 3) Collaborate with the SWCD on ways to expand the availability and awareness of one-on-one technical assistance to farmers for water quality improvement practices (ACRE tactic 3B).
- 4) Work with the County Board and/or the SWCD to expand incentive programs as necessary to achieve ACRE Plan adoption rate goals (ACRE tactics 4A-J).

Update Model Mining Ordinance (tactic 1C4B – 2022-2023 Plan Timeframe):

SWCD was successful in receiving a \$50,000 MDH, Groundwater Accelerated Implementation Grant to support completion of an updated Model Mining Ordinance – with support from Dakota County staff. The purpose of the ordinance is to provide guidance and recommendations for optional use by cities and townships in Dakota County to help ensure protection of surface water and groundwater resources. WSB was hired in 2022 to support project implementation – tasks in 2023 will include (1) a technical review of current city and township planning and zoning requirements (started in 2022); (2) development of the updated Model Mining/ Zoning Ordinance; and (3) outreach to communities regarding the updated model ordinance with recommendations based on the technical review, as needed. The Final Model Ordinance and stakeholder engagement is projected to be completed by June 2023.

Review Delegation Well Program Agreement (tactic 4B1B – 2020-2025 Plan Timeframe):

Dakota County is one of ten local boards of health that administers a Delegated Well Program under the direction of the MDH. There has been a Delegation Agreement between Dakota County and MDH since 1989; the most recent agreement has been in effect since July 1, 2020. As part of the agreement, the County is responsible for regulating the construction, repair, and sealing of water supply wells used for private water supply; non-community public water systems; irrigation; agricultural, commercial, or industrial purposes; heating or cooling; environmental monitoring; and dewatering.

The Groundwater Plan proposes to review the current Delegation Agreement and expand the County’s well construction delegation authority based on what is allowed within Minnesota Statute § 103I. Delegated Well Agreement discussions started in early 2020, but were halted shortly thereafter due to COVID and MDH staff reassignments to address the pandemic. Delegation Agreement discussions were restarted in 2022, led by MDH staff. An updated Delegation Agreement is projected to be completed by the end of 2023 - staff will work with MDH to seek additional delegated authority where possible, such as for elevator borings or geothermal wells.

Seek Resources to Implement the Groundwater Plan and ACRE Plan:

In accordance with Groundwater Plan principles, the County plans to “use financial and human resources prudently; leverage non-County funding to the extent possible.” Dakota County staff, in collaboration with partners, are in the process of seeking additional resources and funding to implement the strategies and tactics in the Groundwater Plan. Staff are actively seeking resources to complete the following:

- **Support ACRE Implementation Efforts (tactic 1B1B):** Staff are planning to submit a grant application for the 2023 MDH, Accelerated Implementation Grant – Groundwater Protection Initiative. The purpose of the application will be to build groundwater protection staff capacity to support ACRE Plan implementation.
- **Continue Well Seal Grant Program (tactic 1C2A/1C2B):** Staff will apply for additional CDBG funding to support well seal grant cost-share programs, the purpose is to augment Clean Water Fund Grant dollars for well sealing activities.

Thank you to Dakota County partners for your assistance in implementing the Groundwater Plan.

For questions on the Groundwater Plan or annual report please contact groundwater@co.dakota.mn.us, or 952-891-7000.

Funding for the ACRE Plan is provided through the Clean Water and Legacy Amendment, distributed by MDH to Dakota County.

Funding for the Mississippi East Watershed Well Seal Grant and Smart Salt Training is provided through the Clean Water Land and Legacy Amendment, distributed by BWSR.

