

The Network News

A Newsletter for SE MN Domestic Well Network Volunteers

SE MN Water Resources Board • <http://www.semnwrb.winonastatenews.com>

Network News

Have you gotten another test kit in the mail?

You may have received two kits in the mail. In addition to the testing you have been participating in through our volunteer network, MN Department of Agriculture (MDA) is conducting a study on wells identified as at-risk for nitrates. MDA testing is wrapping up in Winona and Dodge counties right now, and is planned for Goodhue, Wabasha, Rice and Fillmore Counties in 2017. The MDA testing is a one-time nitrate test, and any well with nitrate detected will be offered a free pesticide test. Here is a description from MDA on their project:

“The MDA project is designed to look at private well nitrate concentrations in your township. The more wells MDA tests, the better information MDA will have on nitrate levels. Private well testing is part of the Minnesota Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan, a statewide strategy to address high levels of nitrate in groundwater. The MDA will focus future work in townships where results show that a significant number of wells contain nitrate above or near the drinking water standard of 10 mg/L (or ppm).”

Please continue to provide samples for the SE MN Well Network. Ours is a separate study from the MDA project and you may participate in both studies. The Volunteer Nitrate Monitoring Network provides added value in maintaining long-term test results, helping to track trends in water quality that can change over time, as indicated in the examples on page 2.

Your Volunteer Nitrate Monitoring Network sampling kit will be sent out in October 2016

If you have questions please contact your County Water Planner:

Dodge County 507-635-6273

Fillmore 507-765-3878

Goodhue 651-923-5286

Houston 507-724-5261

Mower 507-434-2603

Olmsted 507-328-6723

Rice 507-333-3871

Wabasha 651-565-4673

Winona 507-457-6522

or Linda Dahl, SE MN Water Resources Board Director, at 507-301-3404.

Volunteer Open Houses

To thank you for your participation in the Volunteer Nitrate Monitoring Network you will be invited to the annual volunteer open house. This year's event will be held in Mower County. An invitation will arrive in the mail.

Stop by to meet other volunteers, enjoy a snack, and learn how our testing results are being used.

Trends in Two Area Wells

And the importance of long-term monitoring

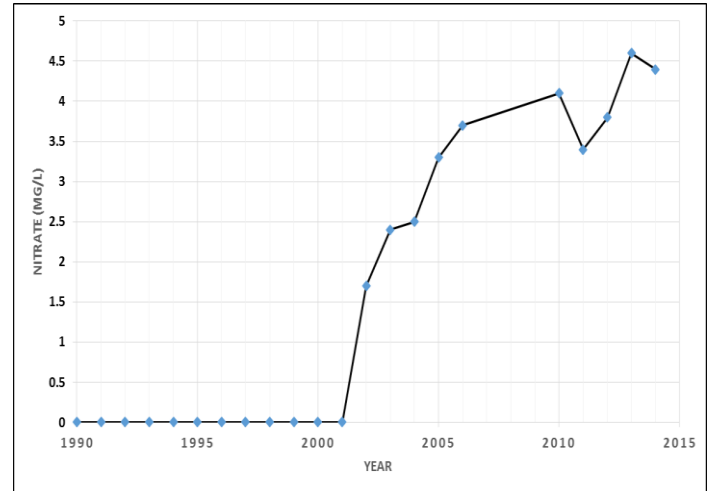
Many of our volunteers are surprised to know that even seeing no change in contaminant levels is important information for researchers to know.

Recent trends in two different wells help illustrate the importance of sustained monitoring over time.

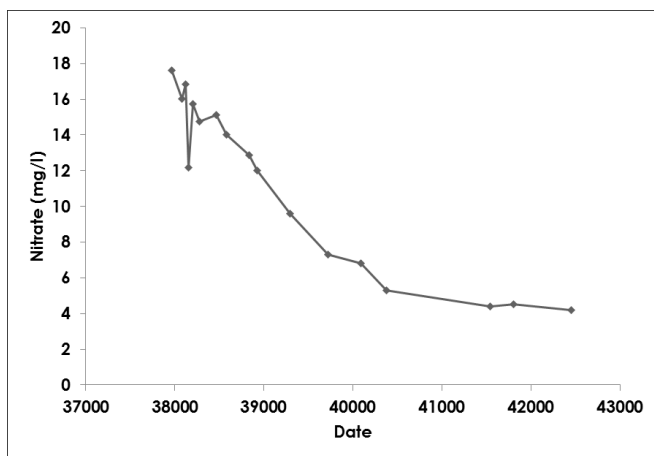
In one Olmsted County well, after many years of no detection of nitrates in the well water, nitrates have begun to show up in recent samples. In another well, within the Galena aquifer, nitrates have been improving in recent years.

The take away here is that whether you have poor or good nitrate results, there is value in continued monitoring over time.

There can be a lag time between when activities happen at the land surface and when you start to see corresponding changes in ground water. If and when changes start to appear can tell a lot about aquifers, movement of contaminants and water age. Even if we see no change for many years, that is also important information to know.



Results from a deep well in Douglas, MN showing a spike in nitrate levels after many years of no detection.



Results from a shallow well constructed into the Galena aquifer. The declining Nitrate trend seems to be related to local changes in land use.