

The Network News

A Newsletter for Southeast MN Domestic Well Network Volunteers

SE MN Water Resources Board • Winona State University, Winona, MN 55987 • 507-457-5223
<http://www.semnwrw.winonastatenews.com>

Melding the Old with the New

Continuing the Original Network: The Volunteer Nitrate Monitoring Network will continue annual nitrate monitoring, thanks to a grant from the MN Department of Agriculture. The Southeast MN Water Resources Board will coordinate the annual monitoring with the help of county staff and the Olmsted Regional Lab. The lab will send out nitrate test kits to all volunteers in the network in August or September each year. *You can expect your kit in the mail in mid to late September this year.* Volunteers will collect their samples and return them to the lab in the postage-paid return packaging. The lab will send your results directly to you, and to the Water Resources Board for continuation of our long-term study.

Your County water planner will continue to be your point of contact if you have questions about how the program works or your results. One change you can expect is that you will no longer need to freeze your sample before mailing. Also, by using the lab for analysis we will be able to get anion results along with the nitrates at no additional cost.

Building on the Network with Targeted

Monitoring: In an effort to more fully utilize the potential of the network, the SE MN Counties are partnering with water quality

experts from state agencies (MN Pollution Control Agency, MN Departments of Health and Agriculture, and the US Geologic Survey) who are helping us plan and implement targeted monitoring of a subset of wells within the network.

It isn't cost-effective to test every well in the network for more expensive parameters, so a subset of wells was selected for this monitoring. The wells were selected based on their geology and well construction, with the aim of collecting results that will allow extrapolation to wells with similar criteria in the region. This targeted testing began in fall of 2013 and spring 2014 to help gain a better understanding of the wells within the targeted network before further monitoring that is planned for spring of 2015.

All of the monitoring we undertake with this network is done with the intention of better understanding the quality of the water in private drinking water wells in Southeast Minnesota, and to take a step forward in developing useful tools for protecting domestic and public drinking water supplies from human-caused and natural contaminants.

In the longer view, we hope the network can be sustained as valuable infrastructure that remains available for future drinking water protection studies that we cannot yet anticipate.