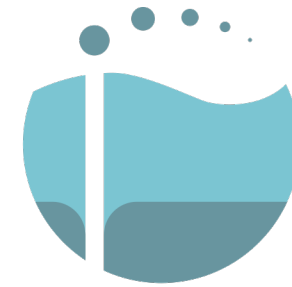


Private Water Well Testing Update

July 21, 2022

for the Minnesota Legislative Subcommittee on Water



mnwoo

educate • advocate • preserve

Where we are? Where we need to go?

Protecting water at the kitchen sink for all Private Well Owners (PWOS)

Jeff Broberg, LPG

Director of the Minnesota Well Owners Organization (MNWOO)

Partnerships build a foundation of support for Private Well Owners (PWOS).

Water Clinics:

- Since fall of 2020 MNWOO and partners have held 10 water clinics.
- Over 800 Private Well Owners have brought water samples
- Over fifty partners have helped arrange and conduct the water clinics:
 - Over 20 Local Government Units
 - 16 Non-Government Units
 - 6 state entities
 - 6 University Departments
 - 3 businesses

Partners Planning, Assessment and Recommendations.

- Minnesota Groundwater Association – Education Committee
 - Make over 60 recommendations for action. Some are easy, others will take a decade
- University of Minnesota Rural Development Partnership (RSPD)
 - MNWOO received grants in 2021 and 2022 and currently is working on PWO communication with a Humphry Fellow and a 3rd Year Medical Student)
- UofM Institute on Environment
 - Survey of 800 PWOS

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- **Team 1: Recruiting volunteers, and retiree volunteers**
 - **Team 2: Resources for well clinic hosts and volunteers**
 - **Team 3: Resources for well owners**
 - **Team 4: Methodology for selecting analytes**
 - **Team 5: BMP's for water testing clinics**
 - **Team 6: Data available for SE MN karst and Central Sands**
 - **Team 7: Evaluation and Effectiveness**

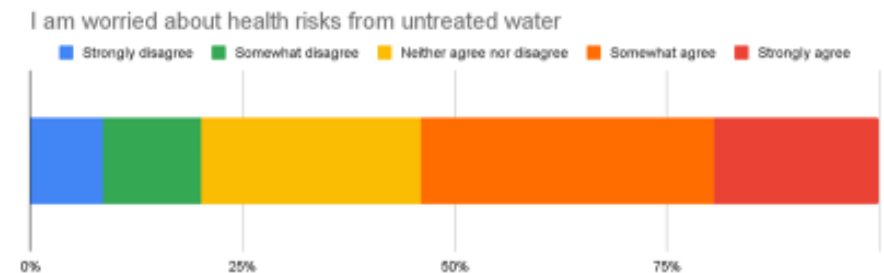
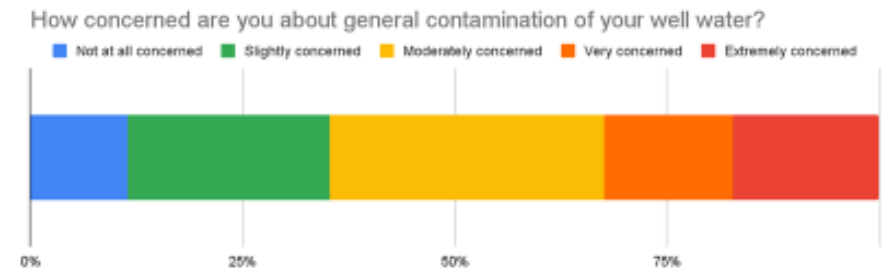


NEW FINDINGS: What We Have Learned: Theoretical and practical implications

- Residents look to agencies for information
- Norms influence action via risk perception
- We must better understand the gap between public and scientific narratives about water resources
 - How do we align perceptions of environmental risk
- Need plans, resources and partners to motivate water action

2/3 are moderately, very or extremely concerned about contamination of their wells

Risk perception



N ≥ 144

80% are moderately, very, or extremely concerned about health risks from untreated water.

Despite the Needs Funding is Elusive.

- HF 3006 State Funding for Dept of Health, UofM Water Resource Center, and NGO Partners did not make the cut in the Health Omnibus.
 - Numerous Legislators advised seeking funding sources outside of General Fund
 - LCCMR
 - Legacy Funding through the Clean Water Council
 - Agency Budget Requests
- Project Planning and Strategic focus has shown the scope of the challenge:
 - Rural residents are underserved
 - Fiscal Notes for HF3006 and HF1806 (Water treatment and well replacement) have begun to clarify the need and scope necessary to effectively serve PWOS)

Clean Water Council 2022-23 Budget. July 18, 2022

- **Expand water testing statewide.**



Photo from MNWOO: pre-covid water testing clinic in Preston, MN testing nitrates from private wells

- A 10-year private well testing effort to offer every private well owner (PWO) in Minnesota the opportunity to test their water for five major contaminants for free, and to counsel PWOS how to mitigate any issues.
 - \$3 M for FY22-23, the first two years of effort

Mn Dept of Health Clean Water Council 2022-23 Private Well Initiative, July 18, 2022

What do well owners need?

Reduce the barriers to testing.

Education and resources for private well stewardship including:

- Risk Assessment**
- Effective Water treatment**
- Source water protection**

- **The Biggest Challenges:**
 - Lack of information and resources
 - Complacency
 - Every well and water system is unique
 - Old wells and non-code wells
 - Widespread contamination

How can the State of Minnesota help?

Take a non-regulatory public health approach

- Communication and training on drinking water risk is a key.
 - Especially for Arsenic, Bacteria and Nitrates
- Meet people where they are: At the kitchen sink.

Establish appropriate standards

- Promote the benefit of the Well Code and code-complaint wells
- Communicate health risk standards

The Issue



1 of 9

About 1 in 9 Americans get their drinking water from a private well.



Germs, chemicals, or radionuclides can impact wells and other private drinking water sources.



1 of 5

About 1 in 5 sampled private wells had contaminants at levels that could affect health.

Provide programs and incentives.

- Develop the use of multiple incentives for well testing: education, convenience, cost, social opportunities all generate incentives.
- Develop Water Safety Plans for PWOS
 - Define water risk managers
- Require drinking water to be addressed in County Community Health Assessments
- Statewide screening and testing
- Source water protection
- Access to effective, affordable water treatment



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