

**Lincoln County Commissioners
Town Hall Meeting Minutes
March 3, 2017
Regarding Emergency Declaration and Well Water Contaminations**

Panel Present;

Lincoln County Commissioners; Cresley McConnell, Rebecca Wood, Roy Hubert.

Gooding County Commissioner; Helen Edwards

Gooding County Emergency Manager: Missy Shurtz

Lincoln County Emergency Manager: Payson Reese

Lincoln County Sheriff: Rene Rodriguez

SIRCOMM: John Moore (Public Information Officer)

South Central Public Health Department(SCPH): Jeff Pierson, Rene LaBlanc, Craig Paul

EPA: Cyndi Grafe, Jim Werntz

DEQ: Steve Lampert, Michael Brown, David Anderson

Idaho Department of Agriculture: Brian Oakley, Bill Barton

National Weather Service, NOAA- Vernon Preston

7:00pm Chairman McConnell called the meeting to order and led all in the Pledge of Allegiance. Introductions were made of those present on the panel.

Chairman McConnell reminded those present of the process that had taken place thus far; February 11th, the Lincoln County Commissioners held an Emergency Meeting to declare a Flood Disaster.

February 13th, The Lincoln County Commissioners ratified the declaration in the Regular Meeting and it was sent to the Governor.

February 24th, Lt. Governor Brad Little accepted the emergency declaration.

Chairman McConnell explained the Instant Incident Command Chart.

The County has opened shower facilities at the Community Center from 8am to 9pm for public use and made bottled water available for free.

Chairman McConnell opened the meeting to the floor for questions.

Issues from the floor;

Q - Accused a local dairy of deliberately allowing an over-flowing lagoon to run into the Millner Canal and what is being done.

Stockpiling of manure and the rules and regulations that apply and who is charged with monitoring and enforcing.

Cattle farmers having issues with bad water that is affecting cattle and new baby calves.

Having to haul large quantities of water to water stock.

Wells in affected area are filling with 'yuck', the dairies should be responsible. Need answers now.

A - Chairman McConnell -Looking into securing potable water in bulk, possibly a truck tanker soon as possible

SCPH – Have a request to Homeland Security to help provide resources.

EPA – Working on a national contingency plan.

DEQ – Look at possible milk tanker if available.

Commissioner Hubert – Check with Highway Districts or BLM for tankers, need something now.

Q - Would dairies found guilty of contamination lose their CAFO?

A - Chairman McConnell – the responsibility for any blame is not up to the County. That is in the hands of the Department of Ag. The County is here to help the patrons get through this disaster as best they can with resources available.

ID Dept of Ag – After a dairy has been given a permit, it is up to the County to monitor and enforce.

Q - Is there possibility of the aquifer being contaminated and flowing into the Snake River?

A - DEQ – With a high water table, if our bisal(?) is fractured it is subject to contamination. Fields with high water could cause a breach.

Q - What mediation exits?

A - DEQ website has information on “How to Clean a Well”

Chairman McConnell – requested that all patrons share their well test results with the County so we can track the area of impact.

Q - Has the source of contamination been stopped? Manure stopped?

A - ID Dept of AG – an investigation in on-going but it is a long process, we must ensure due process.

SCPH – We don't know all the sources. High water table could cause contamination from your own farm or ranch, from septic tanks or runoff from fields, even from a home septic system. Investigation in on-going.

Chairman McConnell – all lagoon breaches have been stopped. Coffor dams are up. We don't know how fast the underground water will clean.

EPA – Fast moving underground water, studying now shows 2 more weeks. Information on incidental recharge will continue.

Q - E-Coli present now for 3 weeks. Still stuff in the canals will contaminate again when we have another run-off.

A - EPA – Going to be flushing the canal soon.

Q - How often should well's be re-tested. Is there a map of affected wells? If it looks and smells clean do we re-sample.

A - EPA – Two actions are needed for contaminated wells, once the contamination stops, the water will dilute and the bacteria die in a couple of months. Some parasites can last up to 6 months. Using a reverse osmosis device will help. Be sure one test is clear to protect yourself.

SCPH – It's suggested that all private wells should be tested annually.

Q -What about future dairy problems? Where do dairy trucks dump?

A – ID Dept of Ag – All dairies must adhere to their nutrient plan and land application.

Chairman McConnell – Most wells haven't been re-tested yet, still running colored water.

SCPH – Keep testing until results are negative, call the SCPH for a better test to check septic and ground water.

Q - There is a dairy dumping manure beside the fence and along the canal. Have let their water run for hours, still looks brown. Can't afford to fix the well, can't sell the property, just need help.

A - Chairman McConnell – The County is and will continue to do everything they legally can to help.

Dept of Ag – The Department of Ag has a land application practices complaint line

EPA – The aquifer flows NE to SW

Q – Maps don't match?

A -Chairman McConnell – The contamination zone seems to be from 320 N to 750 N west of Hwy 75 and from the Gooding County line to 2200E.

Q - Two wells across Hwy 75 are dirty.

A - Dept of Ag. – Dairy practices and local concerns or questions on cattle concentrations is a valid concern that it does cause problems. Jerome has dairies that have permanently contaminated wells.

Mary Davidson, P&Z – The County already has restricted CAFO's and is difficult for any current one to expand or for any new ones. A lot of new regulations were put in place in 2008 and we now have a buffer zone

A - SCPH – there is only one lab in the Magic Valley that can do the well tests. Will work on a transport plan that focuses on the advisory area and then expand out.

EPA – Strips tests for nitrates only give a ballpark. Must have further tests. We don't know about parasites. UV light will kill bacteria/viruses that go under the UV, but a lot to that option, you must know the contamination.

Suggest that there is a local place for pickup and send the tests to Public Health for testing. There are 44 tests that are needed for exact results. Or perhaps a mobile testing unit?

Karen Fields noted that on her ranch her well is contaminated every spring. She uses the UV process and then its better.

Q -Should you have someone pump your septic if you have a positive test?

A – SCPH, not until the water tables goes down, or you may cause more problems.

Q – Should clear water be tested?

A – SCPH – Clear water can be contaminated. Should be tested in a very wet winter which is the main cause.

Chairman McConnell – Coffe dam on inlet side has been placed.

EPA – How much risk do you want to take? Maybe test once a week.

Chairman McConnell – Bring receipts in and track mileage on testing.

Q – If I don't shock my well, will it clear up?

A – EPA – We don't know.

Kenetico representative stated that they have onsite analysis and well safe sanitation kits available. UV lights need maintenance. Should sanitize wells every year or even twice a year.

Q – Was canal company invited?

A – Commissioner Wood – Yes.

Q – What does E-coli do to you?

A – SCPH – E-coli is a normal flora, but an overdose causes abdominal cramps, diarrhea and sickness. Livestock are not as sensitive as humans, but if a high enough dose can effect them.

Q - Kids have been sick. When did the Dept of Ag know?

A – Dept of Ag. – Started sampling Tuesday last week.

Chairman McConnell – we knew on the 21st and sent out messages.

Q – How many colored wells are there?

A – Dept of Ag – sampled 16 wells and 8 dirty originally.

Q – What about costs for sampling outside the advisory zone?

A – Chairman McConnell – Keep receipts, we are checking out options.

Comments:

Our well was bad on the 14th, tested on the 17th. Have seen wet winters before, but never had green well. Looks like liquid manure. Is it coming out of the aquifer? The blasted 30 ft down. Ran their well 5 hours today and did no good. Canal is 1/3 full of brown water again, it will be dirty again. Has dynamiting the hydro plant caused this? They pumped quikset in, but it didn't work.

Suggestion, kidney infection is irritated by well and canal contamination. Liquid maure on fields sinks in and is pumped out.

Dirty well retested is bad again. Highway department also has a shower facility they will open for public use. They will haul water. Let's work as a community and solve the problems.

9:15pm Chairman McConnell adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully,
Commissioner Rebecca Wood

Cresley McConnell, Chairman

Attest:

Brenda Farnworth, Clerk