

Attachment: Draft ACRE Plan Summary of Changes

The 2020-2030 Dakota County Groundwater Plan identified agricultural chemicals, especially nitrate and crop herbicides, as a significant drinking water concern for much of rural Dakota County. Reduction of agricultural chemical contamination is a high-priority strategy in the Groundwater Plan (Strategy 1B1); specifically, tactic 1B1 states that the County will develop an ACRE Plan.

The purpose of ACRE is to reduce agricultural chemicals in groundwater to levels that no longer pose threats to human health and the environment. The ACRE Plan was developed through extensive research on current Minnesota programs and other state programs focused on improving water quality from agricultural operations, completion of a groundwater nitrate model, a robust stakeholder engagement process, and guidance provided by the County Board, County Planning Commission, and an Agricultural Advisory Group.

By Resolution No. 22-289 (July 19, 2022), the County Board authorized release of the draft ACRE Plan for a 45-day public review period from July 20 to September 3, 2022. County staff posted the draft ACRE Plan online during the review period and submitted it to the Metropolitan Council, the state review agencies, the Board of Water and Soil Resources, the Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District, cities, townships, and watershed organizations. Staff distributed the draft ACRE Plan through extensive electronic communications, including social media, news releases, and emails to partners; stakeholders; state; regional; and local agencies and officials; and others including agricultural and farm service agencies. Staff offered a Lunch and Learn opportunity for agricultural agencies (e.g., co-ops, agronomists) on July 26, 2022; conducted a Zoom Information Webinar for the general public on August 4, 2022; and provided information briefings at 13 township board meetings.

Comments were received from the county residents and the following organizations:

- Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR)
- Conservation Minnesota
- Metropolitan Council (Met Council)
- Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA)
- Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization (VRWJPO)

Changes to the ACRE Plan

Notable revisions to the draft ACRE Plan as a result of 45-day public review comments or County staff modifications/corrections are listed in the below table and highlighted yellow in the revised ACRE Plan posted to the [ACRE Website](#). No comments received resulted in substantial changes to the proposed goal, strategies, or tactics. Any changes not listed below, or highlighted in the revised ACRE Plan, were non-substantive grammatical or formatting changes in nature.

No.	Current Page No., Chapter & Section	Change to Plan (as a result of Public Review Comment or County Staff Modification)
1.	Page 1, Executive Summary, Plan Purpose	Clarified that primary focus of ACRE is nitrate reduction, but ACRE strategies/tactics will also reduce pesticides and chloride in groundwater.
2.	Page 2, Executive Summary, Agricultural Chemicals of Concerns	Clarified that sources of nitrate could be a result of septic systems or lawn fertilizer – these are addressed in other Dakota County Groundwater Plan strategies.
3.	Page 7, Chapter 1(B), Qualitative Measures	Clarified qualitative measure #5 – contributions of chloride to groundwater will be evaluated in comparison to baseline conditions described in Chapter 3.
4.	Page 8, Chapter 1(C)	Clarified primary focus of ACRE is nitrate, but ACRE strategies/tactics will also reduce pesticides and chloride in groundwater (see item #1 above).
5.	Page 10, Chapter 1(C), Strategy 1, Notable Components	Information regarding the Dakota County and MDA monitoring well network was updated as of August 2022.
6.	Page 11, Figure 4	Figure 4 replaced with well network information as of August 2022, and updated to be more visually accessible.
7.	Page 14, Chapter 1(C), Strategy 1, Tactic ACRE 1G	Edited tactic to identify that periodic pesticide sampling may occur for both private drinking water wells and the environmental well network – purpose is to evaluate risk to human health and presence in the environment.
8.	Page 21, Chapter 1(C), Strategy 4	Clarified that the County and SWCD will partner to promote <u>voluntary</u> measures since activities that are required under the Groundwater Protection Rule may be ineligible for grant funding.
9.	Page 22, Chapter 1(C), Strategy 4, Notable Components	Add clarifying descriptions of perennials and cover crops.
10.	Page 27, Chapter 1(C), Strategy 4	Clarified intent of optional tactics: ACRE 4F, ACRE 4G, and ACRE 4H.
11.	Page 29, Chapter 1(C), Strategy 4, tactic ACRE 4G	Edited tactic to identify that extending cost-share beyond 3-years is just an example of what the program may entail (see item #10 above).
12.	Page 30-31, Chapter 1(C), Potential Future Strategies	Clarified intent of potential future regulatory options, and when regulatory options may be recommended by staff.
13.	Page 33, Chapter 2(B), Planning Process	Updated Planning Process to include 45-day public review period process and outreach conducted.
14.	Page 34, Chapter 2(B), Table 9	Clarified that the Groundwater Protection Rule does have some elements of results-based measures to determine mitigation levels.