

Title & Abstract:

“PFAS in Minnesota, US – 18 Years of Investigating the Forever Chemicals and What’s Next”

Since 2002, the state of Minnesota has been investigating several PFAS legacy disposal sites related to a major chemical manufacturing facility. PFAS from those sites have contaminated over 150 square miles of groundwater and the drinking water supply of over 140,000 people. Investigations have revealed a complex, interconnected surface water-groundwater transport system that created discrete PFAS groundwater plumes miles from their original sources. As with PFAS investigations elsewhere, Minnesota then turned to other PFAS sources, identifying significant releases at several fire-fighting training sites and plating facilities. As the global understanding of the scope of PFAS contamination continues to expand, so too do the state’s efforts to assess PFAS in the environment, identify and prioritize the investigation of potential release sites, and adopt policy approaches to limit future releases. This talk will provide a retrospective of the work already done in Minnesota and a look toward future efforts to create a more wholistic approach to these forever chemicals, within the context of other state and federal PFAS efforts in the US.

Bio Data

Biosketch:

Ginny Yingling is a senior hydrogeologist in the Environmental Health Division of the Minnesota Department of Health. She works with a team of Health Risk Assessors to evaluate human exposures to harmful chemicals in drinking water related to man-made contaminated sites. Since 2003, she has been the agency’s lead investigator of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (or PFAS).

Ginny holds a B.S. from Penn State, and a M.S. from the University of Wyoming, both in geology. She has over 25 years of experience working on contaminated sites - first as an environmental consultant, then at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and since 2000, at the Department of Health.

From 2017-2020, she co-chaired the Interstate Technology and Regulatory Council’s PFAS Team that developed an in-depth report on the current state of PFAS science and related factsheets, online training modules, workshops, and a risk communication toolkit.