

Wisconsin Groundwater Coordinating Council
Meeting minutes, Friday, February 11, 2011, 10:00 AM - 12:15 PM
Aquatic Sciences Center Conference Room, Goodnight Hall, 1975 Willow Drive, Madison

Members Present: Bruce Baker (DNR); Henry Anderson (DHS); James Robertson (WGNHS); Lori Bowman (DATCP); George Kraft (Governor's Representative), Eric Scott (Commerce); Jim Hurley for Anders Andren (UWS); Bob Pearson for Dan Scudder (DOT).

Others Present: Kevin Masarik (Center for Watershed Science and Education); Jin Li (UW-Milwaukee, Department of Civil Engineering and Mechanics); Tim Weisbrod (NRCS); Ed Morse (WRWA); Jill Jonas, Mel Vollbrecht, and Jeff Helmuth (DNR).

1) Introductions and General Business – A motion by Anderson and seconded by Bowman to approve the November 7th, 2010 meeting minutes passed unanimously. The remaining 2011 meeting schedule was finalized: May 6th at WGNHS, August 19th at DNR, and November 4th at DATCP.

2) Technical Presentation: Transport and Survival of Pathogenic Bacteria Associated With Dairy Manure in Soil and Groundwater – Jin Li presented the findings of her recent project funded through the UW System (PowerPoint presentation available from jeffrey.helmuth@wisconsin.gov). In brief, E. coli transport through glass bead columns with various artificial biofilms was measured. Li examined how biofilm thickness affected introduced bacterial adhesion and compared the impact of biofilm composition on bacterial adhesion. After initial attachment, E. coli bacteria were able to survive and grow in the biofilm matrix with a relatively low nutrient supply. E. coli cells became an integral part of the biofilm and biofilm sloughing was the major mechanism that introduces the E. coli bacteria to the bulk fluid long after the contamination event.

3) FY 12 Joint Solicitation – Hurley reported that WRI completed the external review process and sent out materials for the GRAC meeting. The UWS has about \$120,000 for new projects in FY 2012. Randy Hunt has resigned as the GRAC chair and has been replaced by Dave Krabbenhoft (USGS). Helmuth reported that GCC and DNR review is nearly complete. DNR funding is uncertain in FY 2012 but the Department may be able to fund one or two projects.

4) GCC Strategic Plan – Jonas introduced the third draft with a brief overview. The purpose of the strategic plan is to help the GCC itself operate efficiently and enable agencies to identify and accomplish top priority joint work. One change since the second draft is that the strategic priorities will be updated biennially. Subcommittee tasks will be discrete and achievable in one-year time frame. The GCC will give specific assignments to the subcommittees based on the priority topics and Legislative Report recommendations. The intention is not for the subcommittees to do the work of the agencies but instead to identify common needs and ensure coordination of agency work. They will retain their inherent information-sharing function as well as working on specific assignments. The role of conference calls, Live Meetings, and electronic document sharing will increase. New member assignments will be based on the specific assignments to the subcommittees and will allow better agency workload management. Subcommittees will also keep in touch with former members and others beyond GCC membership using the GCC webpage and GovDelivery. Subcommittee members who currently review research proposals will be designated as a standing work group of the GCC.

Kraft handed out his comments on the draft including identifying the purpose of the plan, paring down the list of expectations from the subcommittees to a more manageable workload, and suggesting ad hoc working groups as an alternative to the standing subcommittees. Kraft also added specific tasks for these working groups on each priority. Discussion followed and key items will be captured in the next draft of the Strategic Plan.

Note: In response to a question, Baker clarified the context of the GCC's statutory "non-regulatory" charge. It is simply to maintain the GCC's role as separate and distinct from the groundwater standard setting process. Although it might be appropriate for the GCC to recommend that a standard be set for a particular substance, the GCC is not involved in the actual standard-setting process.

5) Agency Updates

Commerce

- Plans are for the Department of Commerce's Divisions of Safety and Buildings and Environmental and Regulatory Services (ERS) to be moved into the Department of Regulation and Licensing (DRL). Legislative action will be required to officially complete this move. In the interim, DRL and Commerce will work collaboratively on the management of these two divisions. At this time, it seems both divisions will physically remain in the current downtown location.

WGNHS

- Work continues on viruses in groundwater and flooding issues.
- A multi-year combined geologic and hydrogeologic project has begun in Columbia County
- The Dane County groundwater flow model is being upgraded.
- Several buried Precambrian-age granitic plutons in Central Wisconsin are being investigated to explore the potential for geothermal energy generation.

DATCP

- Elimination of the Working Lands Initiative's PACE and conversion fees programs is likely to be proposed.
- DATCP is providing comments to DNR's WPDES program on aquatic and aerial application of pesticides which will now require permits.
- A legislative hearing was held on the ATCP 30 (Atrazine) revision process.

DOT

- DOT is continuing to network with other agencies on hydrology, wetland, groundwater monitoring, and road salt issues.

Governor's Rep. – CWSE

- Kevin Masarik has been invited to the WWA board meeting for his perspective on well drilling issues. He will do a survey of the membership on property transfer well inspections.

DHS

- The CDC is interested in tracking water quality in private wells
- Lots of Chromium 6 questions are coming in.

UWS

- The University of Wisconsin Sea Grant College Program is currently reviewing pre-proposals and inviting full proposals for its next two-year grant period which begins February 1, 2012.
- WRI staff were involved in producing the just-released Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts (WICCI) publication "Wisconsin's Changing Climate: Impacts and Adaptation" (<http://www.wicci.wisc.edu/>)

DNR

- In 2011, EPA is expected to determine whether a Chromium 6 maximum contaminant level in drinking water should be set.
- Letters have been sent to owners of either high-capacity wells or who divert water from the Great Lakes Basin to request water use registration and reporting and remind owners of fee payments starting this year.
- A current legislative proposal removes disinfection requirements from community wells.
- The Drinking Water & Groundwater and Watershed Management Bureaus are working together to improve response procedures to drinking water contamination by livestock waste and review of high-capacity wells and other groundwater-related aspects of CAFO permitting.
- The Little Plover River is flowing below healthy levels but above recent years' flow. The Village of Plover has changed pumping and is planning an urban park along the stream corridor. Del Monte has also made operating changes to reduce water use and increase recharge.
- Wisconsin and the other EPA Region 5 States sent a joint letter to EPA on the proposed revised total coliform rule expressing concerns over various impacts to water systems and states.
- 2011 marks 10 years since DNR modified its well construction inspection process – with the goal of improving well construction for safe drinking water and groundwater protection. Significant violations have been found and 55 improperly constructed wells replaced. Other violations include short-casing wells, faking grouting, not collecting water samples, faking water samples, not notifying well owners of unsafe results, and working without a license. Inspecting wells during construction is now done at about 5% of all new wells. The goal is to inspect about 10% to 12% of new wells.

6) Adjourn and Next Meeting –. The meeting was adjourned at 1:25. The next meeting will be May 6th at the WGNHS in Madison.

Respectfully submitted by Jeff Helmuth