

Wisconsin Groundwater Coordinating Council
Draft Minutes of Meeting held May 3, 2013, 10:00 – 12:00
Wisconsin Geologic and Natural History Survey, Madison, WI

Members Present: Ken Johnson (DNR); Jim Hurley (UWS), Henry Anderson (DHS); James Robertson (WGNHS); George Kraft (Gov. rep.), John Petty (DATCP).

Others Present: Bill Phelps (DNR); Joe Lourigan (DNR); Lori Bowman (DATCP); Chris Babiarz (UW-ASC); Jill Jonas (DNR); Mary Ellen Vollbrecht (DNR).

1) General Business –Petty moved to approve the minutes of from the February 15, 2013 meeting as written. The motion was seconded and carried.

2) Technical Presentations:

Molybdenum in Groundwater in Southeastern Wisconsin – Joe Lourigan (Hydrogeologist-Solid Waste Program) and Bill Phelps (Hydrogeologist-Drinking Water and Groundwater Program) described the discovery and investigation of elevated molybdenum levels in groundwater in an area generally along the Milwaukee-Racine County line extending east from Lake Michigan to the Muskego area and south into Racine County. Water supply well and monitoring well data, including analysis of several isotopes, was analyzed in an attempt to identify a source of the molybdenum. The hydrogeology of the area is complex and despite the significant effort, the data did not permit a conclusion about the source of the molybdenum. DNR has completed its active investigation. GCC member agencies and other scientists will be invited to a full presentation of the data to promote interest in further research.

The Geology of Frac Sand – James Robertson (WGNHS) characterized the sands suitable for use in fracking. In describing the geology of Wisconsin, Robertson explained why Wisconsin is the top source of frac sand – substantial formations of quartz-rich but loosely-cemented sandstone are found at or within 50 to 100 feet of the surface. Robertson listed the groundwater aspects of the industry, including the quantity of water used for washing and sorting the sand; discharge of flocculants used in treating process water; concentration of trace metals in settled solids; and future water quality and quantity impacts once flat, sandy sites are restored to agricultural use.

3) FY 14 Joint Solicitation – Chris Babiarz (UWS) distributed the final listing of projects approved for funding through the Joint Solicitation, noting that many good proposals were submitted and the resulting research should yield important information.

4) Recommendations for 2013 Report to the Legislature – Mary Ellen Vollbrecht (DNR) distributed the 2012 recommendations and requested comments by May 17. She reviewed the work done on the report in 2012 to consolidate recommendations and focus on the GCC’s strategic priorities; to produce a single-page reference handout; to use graphics, pictures and video to convey messages in the report. GCC members supported continuing these directions. Vollbrecht alerted the members that the target for circulating a first draft of the full report is the end of May; with the final report for member concurrence to be distributed at the end of July. Agency activity reports will be needed in May.

5) Agency Updates

WGNHS – Robertson reported on the community process for conducting the Chippewa County frac sand study. WGNHS has released a new fact sheet on groundwater disinfection in drinking water systems. Robertson alerted members that the groundwater viewer is nearing completion.

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DATCP – Petty reported that the public comment period closed for ATCP 50 (implementing state runoff rules) and is expected on the DATCP Board agenda in September. Bowman alerted the group that Bayer Crop Science is seeking registration in Wisconsin for formulations of isoxaflutole for weed control in corn and soybeans.

Kraft – Kraft reported based on Central Sands monitoring well data, the snow melt and recent rains are recharging the aquifer but not enough to make up for the long-term shortfall. His group is modeling build-out pumping scenarios as well as setting up volunteer monitors for stream base-flow.

UW System (UWS) – Hurley reported that the State Lab of Hygiene will soon have mass spectrometer capability for isotope work. Strategic planning is underway for the next phase of the Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts. The Water Resources Institute's social media work is helping get new research results into the hands of people who can put the information to practical use.

DNR – Johnson reported that DNR seeks partners for a comprehensive modeling effort on the Little Plover River under a proposal by WGNHS. Vollbrecht reported on the growing number (over 500) cases of hazardous vapor intrusion moving largely from former dry cleaning sites, rapidly and longer distances through groundwater. She also shared a fact sheet – and welcomed member feedback - on water quantity data and research over the past five years – and plans for the next five years.

6) Adjourn and Next Meeting - Kraft moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded and carried. The next meeting will be on August 2nd at DNR (101 South Webster Street, Madison, WI, Room G09).

Respectfully submitted by Mary Ellen Vollbrecht