



## WISCONSIN GROUNDWATER COORDINATING COUNCIL

**February 2021 Meeting Minutes**  
**10:00 am – 12:00 noon, Friday, Feb 12, 2021**  
**Virtual Meeting held via Skype**

**Members present** Jim Zellmer (DNR), Brad Johnson (DSPS), Sara Walling (DATCP), Ken Bradbury (WGNHS), Bob Pearson (DOT), Jim Hurley (UWS), Sarah Yang for Jon Meiman (DHS), Steve Diercks (Governor's Representative)

**Agenda repair, Nov 2020 meeting minutes** Chair, Jim Zellmer, called meeting to order; approval of Nov 13, 2020 meeting minutes: Ken B. motion, Sara W. second – approved by voice vote

**Review of FY 2022 JS groundwater research proposals** – Bill Phelps (DNR), Jen Hauxwell (UWS) reported that the GCC Research and Monitoring Subcommittee and UW recruited national Peer Reviewers had completed review and scoring of the 16 FY 2022 Joint Solicitation groundwater research proposals; there is estimated \$400K available this year for project funding; anticipated that investigators will be notified in March about project funding

**Presentation on WisPAC statewide PFAS Action Plan** Mimi Johnson (DNR) reported that Wisconsin PFAS Action Council (WisPAC) has completed its PFAS Action Plan and it is publicly available; plan contains Council guiding principles/themes and recommendations, including establishing PFAS environmental standards, sampling all municipal wells for PFAS and PFAS risk communication and stewardship/education efforts; plan includes collaboration with partners such as the firefighting community, airports, military facilities and the business sector to minimize PFAS discharge and reduce PFAS in the environment

**Technical Presentation Bedrock controls over arsenic in SE Wisconsin** - Eric Stewart (WGNHS) presented his work evaluating use of geologic mapping to assess arsenic risk in water supply wells in eastern WI; study evaluated arsenic in groundwater in Dodge and Fond Du Lac counties; arsenic source sulfide minerals associated with bedrock folds/fractures; study used high conductivity zones as indicators of bedrock fracture zones and used logistic regression to evaluate different factors that might be associated with elevated groundwater arsenic levels - found correlation in western part of study area between elevated arsenic and both distance to bedrock structures and well construction; modelled probability of elevated arsenic and got good fit between model predictions and arsenic sampling results; bedrock structure mapping and risk modelling found to be effective tools to map areas of increased risk of arsenic in groundwater

### **Agency Updates**

**Governor's Representative:** Steve D. reported potato and vegetable growers working with DNR to provide input on NR 151 nitrate targeted performance standard rule revisions; concern is how rule revisions might effect growers and how proposed nitrogen leaching limit of 2.2 pounds of nitrate per acre per inch of groundwater recharge will be measured; growers might have to modify crop rotations to meet limit, possibly with potato/alfalfa crop rotation; growers interested in participating in research on use of different crop varieties, varying nitrogen application timing and use of different types of fertilizers; growers have participated in rule economic focus group; want to help get good data and willing to collaborate/provide input on planned research

**DATCP:** Sara W. reported that agency staff involved with work on northeast WI aerial electromagnetic flyover survey evaluating areas with <5' to bedrock - flyovers completed and web page will have survey information and results; staff participating in two wetland hydrologic restoration symposiums; three bills related to agency grant funding work now going through Legislature - bills are related to producer led grant program, water stewardship and conservation grant program; agency working with National Agricultural Statistic Survey (NASS) on planning 2022 agricultural chemical well/groundwater statewide survey; DATCP groundwater related web

pages now being updated; agency extending Bayer Crop Science isoxaflutole herbicide study; agency assisting DNR with current NR 140 rulemaking efforts

**DHS:** Sarah Y. reported that agency sent NR 140 Cycle 11 groundwater standard recommendations to DNR in Nov; agency working on CDC grant Environmental Health Hazards efforts - funding "healthy homes" initiatives, assisting small community water systems and mini grants for communities; agency expects to finalize hiring of toxicologist for site evaluation program in March; staff continue assisting with work on PFAS contamination site health related issues

**DOT:** Bob P. reported that agency formed flood risk resiliency team in fall 2020 - team to address increased flood risk in areas where groundwater levels are increasing; focus on determining areas most at risk

**DSPS:** Brad J. reported agency still evaluating high groundwater conditions; evaluating hydrographic procedure and have determined that regional wells are not good high groundwater indicators; hydrographic procedure not working in parts of the state like Central Sands; agency evaluating current rules that allow use of exemption; evaluating rules revisions and hope to make decision this year; tracking Senate Bill 84, related to POWTS system replacement and rehabilitation grant program, and septage characterization study; bill requires DSPS to fund septage characteristics study to be conducted by UW-Stevens Point, if funded, results to DNR and POWTS technical Advisory Committee; bill also adds 2 project plan review positions

**UWS:** Jim H. reported UW Groundwater Research Advisory Council (GRAC) to meet on FY 2022 JS groundwater research project funding; UW planning Feb 22 convocation to recognize Sea Grant Fellowship recipients; anticipated that FY 2021 federal funding for both Water Resources Institute and Sea Grant will increase; planned use of \$1 million for PFAS research efforts; Sea Grant providing \$1 Million for emerging contaminants and green infrastructure

**WGNHS:** Ken B. reported Survey now has updated publication catalog on web site; staff working on northeast WI aerial geophysical flights - flights now completed, data being used for determining depth to bedrock; new report on Door Co. wetland water quality; working on high groundwater area at Pigeon Lake near Drummond in Bayfield Co.; SWIGG study work continuing along with related Rountree formation study; new quaternary mapping ongoing; bedrock mapping in Grant Co.; working on USGS funded study of rare earth minerals at old mine sites in Lafayette and Grant Counties; staff involved with neonicotinoid pesticide study in Central Sands, includes sampling drainage ditches; Survey assisting with Driftless Karst Trails project in WI, IA and MN, includes caves public can visit

**DNR:** Jim Z. reported Secretary's Clean Water For All efforts underway - lead, PFAS, nitrate groups formed and drafting 2 year action plans; NR 140 Cycle 10 EIA being drafted; NR 809 PFAS MCLs - EIA drafting underway; surface water PFAS standards rulemaking continuing; NR 140 Cycle 11 Statement of Scope completed and being reviewed; Scope for possible additional NR 809 PFAS MCLs being prepared; possible rule revisions to NR 812 to address use of PVC water supply well casing; NR 151 rulemaking underway - EIA prepared; revisions completed for NR 113 and NR 114 septage rule - addressing storage and winter spreading issues; PFAS sampling planned for wastewater treatment facilities and some public water supply systems; WisPAC PFAS Action Plan completed and posted; PFAS technical advisory group efforts continuing; Water Use court case coming up with briefs submitted to Supreme Court - issue is DNR consideration of cumulative impacts; DNR web site has posted information and answers to questions about high water concerns

**Meeting adjourned**