



WISCONSIN GROUNDWATER COORDINATING COUNCIL

November 2023 Meeting Minutes
Hybrid Meeting held at

The Wisconsin Geologic and Natural History Survey and via Zoom
10:00 am – 12:00 noon, Nov 10, 2023

Members present: Jim Zellmer (DNR), Brad Johnson (DSPS), Robby Personette (DATCP), Sue Swanson (WGNHS), Sheryl Bedno (DHS), Barry Paye (DOT), Steve Diercks (Governor's Rep), Moira Harrington (UWS)

Agenda repair, Aug 2023 minutes: Chair, Jim Zellmer, called meeting to order; consideration of Aug 11, 2023 meeting minutes - motion to approve Brad J, second Sue S, approved by voice vote

Update on FY 2025 Joint Solicitation proposal submittals: Moira Harrington (UWS) provided update on this year's groundwater research Joint Solicitation effort; 15 groundwater research proposals (from 9 organizations) submitted; approximately \$375K available this year to fund projects; researchers will be notified in March if their research is being funded

Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) Program Groundwater Update: Ian Anderson, DNR CAFO Program hydrogeologist, provided update on Program groundwater protection efforts; 335 permitted CAFOs; CAFO facilities operate under WPDES discharge permits and, when appropriate, CAFO production site groundwater monitoring is required; Kinnard Farms court case confirmed DNR authority to require CAFO site groundwater monitoring; Program holding workshops with industry to improve communication

Technical Presentation: James Price (School of Freshwater Sciences, UW-Milwaukee) presented his *Valuing groundwater quality: A cost function analysis of Wisconsin water utilities* research study results; study utilized data from the PSC reports; objective was to quantify how changes in source water quality (SWQ) affect treatment costs; study used regression modeling to relate treatment costs to determinants; study concluded that marginal increases in cropland near wellheads have statistically significant but modest effects on water treatments costs, and that adding an ion exchange treatment process to address nitrate contamination leads to notable increase in treatment costs (although estimates based on small number of systems)

Jim Hurley recognition: GCC members recognized and thanked Jim for his 11 years of dedicated service to the Council; Jim's contributions fostering the Council's groundwater research efforts, and his commitment to promoting interagency collaboration, were highlighted; the Council presented Jim with a Certificate of Appreciation and commemorative mug in recognition of his service

Agency Updates

WGNHS: Sue S reported that she has begun her tenure as the new Survey Director; agency anticipates posting new hydrogeologist position soon

DHS: Sheryl B and Sarah Yang reported that Sheryl has started her new position as Bureau of Environmental and Occupational Health Chief Medical Officer; agency updating their private well resources on the web with new fact sheets on contaminants and is working with Glen Schlueter at DSPS on updates to guidance on home water treatment devices; agency working on mini grants in Rock Co. and Eau Claire Counties to (GIS) map water quality issues

UWS: Moira H reported that FY 2025 Joint Solicitation underway; acting Water Resources Institute director is Christy Remucal; UW working on placing post grad fellows with state agencies

Governor's Rep: Steve D reported now working with GZA on research grant; nitrogen optimization projects underway; flex tower projects researching evapotranspiration also underway; testing of new crops that might use less nitrogen being done; researching use of crops planted between rows to capture excess nitrogen

DATCP: Robby P reported that the agency is recruiting for a policy analyst and new agricultural project manager; agency is working with NASS to complete statewide agriculturals in groundwater survey - 380 samples collected – report expected in early 2024; field edge and surface water sampling results sent to EPA; nitrogen optimization program continuing – about \$1M available for projects, 47 producer led requests; revisions to ATCP 50, related to Silurian Dolomite conservation practices, have been signed by the Governor and are now at the Legislature

DSPS: Brad J reported that the agency has filled 2 new private onsite wastewater treatment system (POWTS) plan review positions; WI Fund grant program to assist homeowners with replacement of failing septic systems has been funded with approximately \$1.7M available in early Jan 2024

DOT: Barry P reported that agency is filling Bob Pearson's hydrogeologist position with a wetland specialist; agency is continuing to work with counties on their winter highway maintenance programs to switch from using rock salt to using salt brine

DNR: Jim Z reported that the Governor's office is working on appointing a new agency Secretary; new NR 812 rule revisions related to use of Type II limestone cement for well construction now in effect; scopes for revisions to NR 812 and NR 146 have been approved and rulemaking will begin in early 2024; draft EIA for NR 140 PFAS rulemaking completed and final rule EIA being prepared; Waste Management Program continuing work on NR 500 rule updates; ARPA Well Grant Program continuing - 267 Well Compensation grants awarded (200 for nitrate contamination), total of \$4.67M in grants awarded so far; Water Quality Program updating *Interim Strategy for Land Application of Biosolids containing PFAS* guidance; new "safe" well construction techniques for "granite" replacement wells being tested in Town of Stella PFAS contamination area, current paper mill sludge from Rhinelander paper mill tested for PFAS: PFOA + PFOS levels at about 2 ppb; required public drinking water system sampling for PFAS underway - 1,545 PWSs sampled, with about 32% having a PFAS detect, 1 system had exceedance of 70 ppt (PFOA + PFOS) MCL

Dates for 2024 GCC Meetings: Feb 16, May 10, Aug 9 and Nov 8

Meeting adjourned