



## WISCONSIN GROUNDWATER COORDINATING COUNCIL

### May 2024 Meeting Minutes Hybrid Meeting held at the USFS Forest Products Lab in Madison and via Zoom 10:00 am – 12:00 noon, May 10, 2024

**Members present:** Steve Elmore for Jim Zellmer (DNR), Brad Johnson (DSPS), Mark McColloch for Robby Personette (DATCP), Sue Swanson (WGNHS), Sarah Yang for Sheryl Bedno (DHS), Barry Paye (DOT), Christy Remucal (UWS)

**Agenda repair, Feb 2024 minutes:** Chair, Steve Elmore, called meeting to order; consideration of Feb 16, 2024 meeting minutes - motion to approve Mark M, second Brad J, approved by voice vote

**FY 2026 Joint Solicitation groundwater research priorities** – Jen Hauxwell (UWS) provided information on the FY 2026 GCC Joint Solicitation groundwater research request for proposal (RFP) updating; agency research priorities updates and estimate of money available to possibly fund FY 2026 proposals due May 31; webinar for interested Joint Solicitation FY 2026 researchers, to obtain information and ask questions, planned for Sept. 6 (12:00 – 1:00 pm)

**2024 Annual GCC Report to the legislature** – Bill Phelps (DNR) reminded GCC members about information on drafting of the 2024 GCC Report to the Legislature that was provided in an e-mail sent to them on May 7; e-mail contained link to SharePoint site to access draft report for document editing, and instructions for obtaining additional staff access to SharePoint site; plan is to try to have draft 2024 Report completed by June 21st

**DATCP 2023 Statewide Survey of Agrichemicals in Groundwater** – Carla Romano (DATCP) provided information on the 2023 DATCP *Agricultural Chemicals in Wisconsin Groundwater* survey; 380 homes with private drinking water wells were sampled between Mar and Aug of 2023 for the study; aim was to obtain updated assessment of pesticides and pesticide breakdown products in groundwater to compare to previous surveys; study locations were selected using a stratified random sampling procedure to represent WI groundwater accessible by private wells; samples were analyzed for 107 different compounds, including herbicides, herbicide metabolites, insecticides, fungicides, and nitrate; results indicated that an estimated 43% of wells in WI contained a pesticide or pesticide metabolite - an increase from 2007 (33.5%) and 2016 (42%) surveys; study showed that detections of pesticides and nitrate concentrations over 10 mg/L were more frequently found in areas with higher percentage of cultivated land; most frequently detected pesticide compound was metolachlor metabolite ESA - found in estimated 36% of 2023 samples; second most frequently detected compound wasalachlor ESA metabolite - found in estimated 20% of samples; estimated 20% of wells contained atrazine TCR (total chlorinated residue) - sum of atrazine and its metabolites; neonicotinoid insecticides clothianidin, imidacloprid and thiamethoxam found in estimated 5.3% of samples; imidacloprid above DHS drinking water health advisory level of 0.2 µg/L in 1 study sample; survey estimated that the statewide detection rate for nitrate between 2 mg/L and 10 mg/L about 32.7%; estimated detection rate of nitrate exceeding 10 mg/L was 7.3%; study results show no statistically significant changes observed in detections ofalachlor ESA, atrazine, and nitrate from previous studies; statewide estimated detection rates of metolachlor ESA and atrazine TCR consistent with 2016 study but increased compared to 2007 study results; neonicotinoid insecticide detection rates have increased since 2016 study

**Technical Presentation** - Kevin Masarik (UW-Stevens Point) provided a presentation on his *Investigating in-season cover crops for reducing nitrate loss to groundwater below potatoes* groundwater research project; objectives of study were to quantify potential water quality benefits of cover crops inter-seeded with potato crops during the growing season to reduce nitrate losses to

groundwater and to investigate positive and/or negative interactions of cover crops on potato yield, quality, and harvestability; potato and corn crops have been found to have high nitrogen losses to groundwater even when following recommended rates, and nitrate concentrations above 10 mg/L drinking water standard at potato and corn crop sites not unexpected.; study investigated ways to keep nitrogen in crop root zone (top 1 foot of soil); questions are how much improvement can be achieved and how can success be measured; potatoes cropped using hill – furrow method; study evaluated companion crops: barley, millet and oats interplanted in furrows between potato hills to evaluate potential to reduce nitrogen leaching; study used small plot (planted in “Latin square” configuration)/large plot design; did not appear to be a statistical difference in potato crop yield with interplanted companion crops; appeared that both potato vine and interplant crop were able to “hold” nitrogen; interplant crops estimated to “hold” approximately 31 lbs N, but up to 128 lbs N estimated leached to groundwater; barley appeared to be most effective intercrop with /up to 31 lbs/acre N uptake; study emphasized need to consider agronomic effect of companion crops on principle crop

### **Agency Updates**

**DSPS:** Brad J reported that the POWTS Technical Advisory Committee has recommended suspension of use of the hydrograph method as an alternate method to evaluate POWTS system limiting factors - as of April 1st, 2024 Hydrograph Procedure may no longer be used; agency staff continuing work on updating MOU with DNR on regulation for large scale wastewater septic systems

**DATCP:** Mark M reported that the agency participating in SWS DIP program this summer and planning to hire 7 summer interns; collaborating with UW Aquatic Sciences Center to fund Fellowship Fellow that will focus on atrazine in WI groundwater (expect Fellow to start on 6/3); \$1M has been allocated for Clean Sweep Program (budget was cut to \$750 K in 2009) - increase in number of satellite collections anticipated over coming years (in response to funding increase), 2025 application period currently open; agency staff working on 15 year surface water summary report and surface water and non-point groundwater sampling for 2024 underway (6 pesticides added to sampling list – list now increased from 106 to 112 pesticides); Agriculture Chemical Cleanup Program (ACCP) fund below \$1.5M threshold as of May 1 – “fee holiday” to end; 18 Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Program (NOPP) awards given to 28 ag producers (total \$1M) - website with info is <https://nop.wi.gov> ; agency is currently analyzing 2023 data from Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grant groups to estimate impacts of practices implemented through program; anticipated that ATCP 50 will be published in May - rule includes technical standards for meeting targeted Silurian bedrock performance standards

**UWS:** Christy R reported that FY 2025 GCC Joint Solicitation groundwater research projects now funded; now working on request for proposals (RFP) for FY 2026 projects; UW conducted *Water at UW Symposium* on May 6 that included talks on diverse and impactful water research and presentations of Flow Art & Science projects; Coon Creek watershed video completed - in Aug 2018 Coon Creek watershed suffered severe rainfall and breach of three dams, group of 6 UW-Madison Water Resources Management M.S. program students working with stakeholders in Vernon, Monroe, and La Crosse counties to research the watershed and develop goals to build resiliency against future flood events

**DHS:** Sarah Y reported that Hazard Assessment Section Chief, Roy Irving, has departed from the agency to pursue a career opportunity in New York State; agency staff currently updating MOU (and communications plan) for low income/ “new baby” well testing program; work continuing on CDC funded Environmental Health Capacity Project to improve the state’s ability to address environmental health hazards, including work to improve access to safe drinking water from small public water supply systems

**WGNHS:** Sue S reported that Anna Fehling hired as new agency hydrogeologist; agency working under a USGS grant on a number of geologic mapping projects around the state including bedrock mapping in Dunn, Jackson and Green counties, and subsurface and aquitard mapping in Grant Co.

and northeast WI; funding for Wisconsin Groundwater-Level Monitoring Network only at \$42K this year so no new network wells are proposed, but repairs to 7 existing wells planned

**DOT:** Barry P reported due to mild winter less road salt need this year – amended annual winter maintenance report expected out soon; agency working on salt storage shed cleanup sites and related TS4 storm water discharge issues; agency coordinating with DNR on wetland mitigation banking projects

**DNR:** Steve E reported that rulemaking on NR 812 (revisions to pump installation regulations) and NR 146 (driller licensing/continuing education requirements) continuing; agency requesting recommendations for 6 new PFAS groundwater standards from DHS (for PFAS compounds included in recently finalized US EPA PFAS MCL rule); federal ARPA well grant program wrapping up with folks on waiting list being contacted – will be spending all of the \$10M funds allocated for the program; will now be directing folks with contaminated wells to state well compensation grant program (state program has lower \$65K income threshold than \$100K federal ARPA program); biosolids containing PFAS now being managed under Water Quality Program “interim strategy” – allows biosolids with PFAS below certain thresholds to still be land applied; PFAS investigation in the Town of Stella sampling being extended out to 3 miles from Stella Town Hall, new replacement well construction into the granite bedrock underway – initially appears to be successful in reducing PFAS levels in home water supplies, although treatment still necessary in some cases; surface water monitoring for PFAS in area has shown significant PFAS surface water contamination; Public Water Supply system required sampling for PFAS now underway - shows about 90 systems have PFAS detections above new EPA PFAS MCLs – systems have up to 3 years to bring systems into compliance, expected that there will be funding available to assist systems with achieving compliance

**Meeting adjourned** – motion to adjourn Christy R, second Sue S, approved by voice vote

**August meeting** – Aug meeting planned to be held at the Farming for the Future Foundation - Food and Farm Exploration Center in Plover