



## WISCONSIN GROUNDWATER COORDINATING COUNCIL

### August 2024 Meeting Minutes

Hybrid Meeting held at the

Farming for the Future Foundation - Food & Farm Exploration Center

and via Zoom

10:00 am – 12:00 noon, Aug 9, 2024

**Members present:** Brian Austin for Jim Zellmer (DNR), Brad Johnson (DSPA), Steve Diercks (Governor's Representative), Sue Swanson (WGNHS), Robby Personette (DATCP), Sheryl Bedno (DHS), Alyssa Barrette for Barry Paye (DOT), Christy Remucal (UWS)

**Agenda repair, May 2024 minutes:** Chair, Brian Austin, called meeting to order; consideration of May 16, 2024 meeting minutes - motion to approve Steve D, second Brad J, approved by voice vote

**FY 2026 Joint Solicitation RFP update** – Christy Remucal provided an update on the FY 2026 Joint Solicitation groundwater research RFP – RFP now available, deadline for submittal is Nov 1; Joint Solicitation webinar, for interested researchers to ask questions and gather info on GCC member funding requirements/priorities, planned for Sept 6

**FY24 GCC Report to the legislature update** – Brian Austin (DNR) provided an update on this year's GCC Report to the Legislature; GCC member review and approval requested by Fri, Aug 16; this year's report includes new, additional recommendations related to public health, pollutant source reduction and groundwater management

**Technical Presentation:** Jess Haucke (UWSP – Central Wisconsin Groundwater Center) provided a presentation on her monitoring and data collection work for the **Central Wisconsin Baseflow Monitoring Project**; started in 2011 monitoring 32 headwater streams in Central Sands; project monitors baseflow in streams, funding is through DNR; in 2013 added citizen volunteers and more monitoring sites for a total of 58 streams; this is the 13<sup>th</sup> year of project; enables synoptic surveys, to assess exchange conditions in streams; 7 sites now added in the Antigo area; results provided in quarterly reports and uploaded quarterly into DNR Surface Water Integrated Monitoring System (SWIMS) database; currently have 111 sites with coverage of all headwater streams in the Central Sands; results used for study of long term stream variability, for calibrating groundwater flow models, for research projects, such as the DNR Water Quantity Program Central Sands Lake Study, and to study Central Sands stream storage – discharge relationships; project baseflow measurements relied upon to determine significance of depletion potential from groundwater or nearby surface water withdrawals and associated potential for in-stream ecological impacts

### **Agency/Organization Updates**

**DSPA:** Brad J reported that the hydrograph method, used for siting POWTS system, was suspended as of April 1; agency working with WGNHS on "limiting factor" maps; POWTS pre-treatment devices being evaluated and adjustments to specifications being made; agency evaluating ruling in Minn Mennonite/Amish "gray water" religious freedom court case to see how it might effect WI; staff provided outreach and education at Chippewa Co Farm tech days – including constructed soil trench; two new plan reviewers added to staff

**WGNHS:** Sue S reported that staff working with DSPA on evaluation of where appropriate to use hydrograph method for POWTS siting; agency working on coastal management issues and extension of monitoring in eastern WI to evaluate NR 151 Silurian bedrock regulations; work on Kewaunee Co "screening" groundwater modelling project underway; working on obtaining USGS funding for fall Water Use Program aquifer properties database project; working on USGS funded state bedrock and

glacial mapping projects; using groundwater supplemental funding for drill cuttings analysis and drafting of geologic logs – staff evaluating use of pXRF equipment for cuttings analysis

**Governor’s Representative:** Steve D reported that as this has been an extremely wet year, growers have had to manage excess water on crop fields - has resulted in less irrigation, which is most effective way to apply ag chemicals, this year’s excessive rain has likely resulted in more nutrient and ag chemical leaching to groundwater

**DATCP:** Robby P reported that agency staff collecting private well samples in Dane, Dunn & Marathon counties this summer for Targeted Sampling program; Agrichemical Management (ACM) Program staff working on the 2023 Surface Water Report and summary report evaluating data collected over past 15 years; ACM staff participating in the WI Neonic Forum on Oct 30th at UW Institute for Discovery; UW Aquatic Sciences Center and agency began study to evaluate effectiveness of atrazine prohibition areas set up to protect WI groundwater - Sam Brockschmidt began Fellowship in June and is evaluating atrazine Prohibition Areas (PAs) and sampling private wells near Marinette and Brown Co PA’s this fall – will draft summary reports for each PA evaluated and present results (including at March 2025 National Monitoring Conference in Green Bay); ACM staff continue to work on outreach with registrants and commercial applicators on surface water set back label requirements for pesticide applications (in particular atrazine) in anticipation of more restrictive future EPA requirements

**DNR:** Brian A reported agency Source Water Protection workgroup has collaborated with NRCS and Co Conservation departments to nominate two NRCS National Water Quality Initiative–Source Water Protection projects for funding (in Manitowoc and St. Croix Counties) - are first NRCS watershed projects in WI to focus on protection of gw/public water supplies; staff drafting NR 146 & NR 812 rule revision language and working with external advisory committee on revisions - next step economic impact analysis (anticipate minimal economic impact); have requested DHS recommendations for new state groundwater quality standards for 6 PFAS compounds that EPA recently finalized public water system MCLs for; NR 809 scope statement (to promulgate new federal PFAS MCLs in WI) sent to Gov for approval; agency also drafting NR 809 rulemaking scope to make technical edits to rule; ARPA Well Grant program winding down - will fund as many applicants on waitlist as possible and continue to refer new applicants to statutory Well Compensation Program; municipal biosolids being managed under WQ Program’s *Interim Strategy for Land Application of Biosolids containing PFAS*

Town of Stella/Starks area PFAS sampling effort - expanded to 3 miles around Stella Town Hall (as of Aug 7, 2024, 57 private well sample results received from wells tested in the “2.5 to 3 mile zone”: 7 wells have tested above PFAS HALs and 11 wells have PFAS detections, but not above HALs, 39 wells had no PFAS detect), “safe” well construction techniques for granite replacement wells continues to be tested; surface water PFAS monitoring in area shows significant PFAS levels detected in lakes, rivers and streams

DG has sent letters/emails to public water systems which have had past PFAS detects above new EPA MCLs letting them know about the new federal PFAS MCLs and that WI has approximately 3 years to promulgate new standards (DNR offering potential funding opportunities for these systems); public water PFAS compliance sample results (as of Aug 6) from 1,864 active systems : about 31% (570 PWSs) have PFAS detect, about 2% (33 PWSs) exceeded DHS HI  $\geq 1$  (and public notice required), 3 systems exceeded current 70 ppt PFAS MCL, about 5% (91 PWSs) had detect at active entry point exceeding new EPA MCLs; next PFAS External Advisory Group meeting scheduled for Oct. 18

**UWS:** Christy R reported that FY 2026 GCC Joint Solicitation groundwater research RFP now on line and available to researchers; Institute federal funding has increased; new community engagement

position being staffed and internship program underway; Institute celebrating 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary - founded in 1964, Institute has funded more than 450 WI water resources projects

**DHS:** Sheryl B and Sarah Yang reported that agency starting work Sept 1 on CDC biomonitoring grant project evaluating link between rural communities and agricultural chemicals and “metals” (like lead) exposure; Curtis Hedman has left agency to accept position in Minn; now have Fellow working with DNR water supply program; finishing up CDC small public water supply system grant project paper; program to provide small public water supply systems with mini-grants underway; agency staff reviewing toxicologic information on six PFAS compounds that DNR has requested groundwater standard recommendations for

### **Formal GCC business meeting adjourned**

**Food & Farm Exploration Center tour** – Dick Pavelski, Founder/President of Farming for the Future Foundation, provided tour of the Food & Farm Exploration Center and educational exhibits; Center offers meeting and event rooms, Café, with food made from locally sourced ingredients, STEM agriculture production exhibition gallery, with exhibits exploring intersection of farming and food, children’s area with exhibits designed for kids to explore their imagination, senses and creativity, Kitchen Lab, with creative culinary arts courses, farm equipment tech area allowing “hands on” of latest innovative agricultural production equipment and technology, test plot Farm Demonstration Fields and the World’s Largest Potato Masher attraction

**Steve Diercks’ farm tour of Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Project (NOPP) study site** Steve D provided a tour of Coloma Farms NOPP study site and working potato/vegetable operation; NOPP project working with UW Water Quality Specialist Steven Hall on use of glycerol as a “liquid cover crop” to reduce nitrate leaching, study also testing use of cover crops inter-seeded with potatoes during growing season to reduce nitrogen losses and use of puck lysimeters to monitor N leaching