

Wisconsin Groundwater Coordinating Council
Minutes from meeting held May 6th, 2011, 10:00 – 12:15
Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey
3817 Mineral Point Road, Madison.

Members Present: Ken Johnson (DNR); John Petty (DATCP); James Robertson (WGNHS); Dan Scudder (DOT); Chuck Warzecha for Henry Anderson (DHS); Eric Scott (Commerce); and Chris Babiarz for Anders Andren (UW-System).

Via telephone: George Kraft (Governor’s Representative)

Others Present: Ken Bradbury and Madeline Gotkowitz (WGNHS); Bob Pearson (DOT); Lori Bowman (DATCP); Jill Jonas, Mel Vollbrecht and Jeff Helmuth (DNR), Ed Morse (WRWA).

- 1) **Introductions and General Business** – New members John Petty and Ken Johnson were welcomed and introduced themselves. Petty had been in the Wisconsin Grain and Feed Trade Association for 13 years before joining DATCP as ARM Division Administrator position 2 months ago. Johnson has been at DNR for 32 years and in the Water Division Administrator position for less than a month. The February 11th, 2011 meeting minutes were approved.
- 2) **DNR Water Division Leadership Change** –Johnson noted that although most of his 32 years at DNR was focused on surface water issues, he started his career working on public and private drinking water systems. A civil and environmental engineer (B.S. UW –Mad), Johnson has reviewed bridge, dam and other water resources projects, served as Deputy Chief of the water regulation permit program, led the Lower Rock River Basin Team, and headed up the water program at DNR’s South Central Region. Johnson intends to focus on making water permitting more consistent across the state. Johnson noted that DNR’s role would be to advise the Legislature on policy impacts through bill and fiscal analysis, giving pros and cons without specifying policy positions. Petty added that likewise DATCP Secretary Brancel wants to enforce all statutes equally and leave policy to the Legislature.
- 3) **Joint Solicitation update** – Chris Babiarz distributed a list of the following joint solicitation projects to be funded in FY 12.

Title	PI	FY 12	FY 13	Funding
Silage Leachate: Waste Quality Assessment and Treatment	Larson/Panusk a UW-Madison	\$47,207	\$48,175,	UWS
Establishing Paleoclimate Records from Spring Tufa Deposits in the Driftless Area of Wisconsin	Muldoon UW-Oshkosh	\$26,606,		UWS
Preferential flow paths in heterogeneous glacially-deposited aquitards	Hart UW-Extension	\$37,991		UWS
The effects of particulate organic carbon quantity and quality on denitrification of groundwater nitrate	Stelzer UW-Oshkosh	\$21,683,	\$19,359,	UWS
Ecological Limits of Hydrologic Alteration in Wisconsin Stream	Diebel/Stewart DNR/USGS	\$41,048		DNR
Validation of a qPCR Assay for E. coli in Drinking and Recreational Waters	Long WSLH	\$64,668	\$69,127	DNR

An abstract of each project was included.

- 4) **Consideration of 2011 GCC Strategic Plan** – Jonas outlined the development of the plan, first suggested by Andren at the August 2010 GCC meeting. Bowman, Jonas and Warzecha had put together a first draft and GCC members commented on 3 subsequent versions. Discussion centered on concerns over limitations on subcommittee activities, lack of mention of manure problems, and articulating the priority need to use available data to characterize groundwater problems. Agreement was reached on two major points: 1) the plan will be an informal, internal document that provides direction and justification for devoting agency staff time for subcommittee activities; and 2) the plan will not limit information exchange activities in the subcommittees. GCC unanimously passed Warzecha motion to adopt the priorities and operations following Robertson comments on the draft to reflect the conversation.
- 5) **Subcommittee member appointments and assignments based on GCC Priorities** – Vollbrecht handed out a draft subcommittee assignment paper. In essence the Research and Monitoring & Data Management Subcommittee would be combined into a new Research & Monitoring Subcommittee, and the Education and Local Government Subcommittees would be combined into a new Outreach & Partnership Subcommittee. Within the Research and Monitoring Subcommittee a subgroup would review and score joint solicitation proposals. Ken Bradbury and Jeff Helmuth would chair the Research & Monitoring Subcommittee. Kevin Masarik and Mel Vollbrecht would chair the Outreach & Partnership Subcommittee. Subcommittee appointments should be made by June 3rd.
- 6) **Plans for 2011 GCC Report to the Legislature** - Helmuth reported that the report preparation process, timeline, report format and content will be similar to the 2010 report (<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/water/dwg/gcc/rtl/GCCReport2010.htm>). The report is due in August each year and will be submitted for the GCC's approval before the August 19th meeting. Preparation begins in May. There will be less redundancy and more use of links. Each section will be made to stand alone. More pictures, videos and other items of visual interest are sought to enliven the report.
- 7) **Technical presentation: Climate variability and groundwater recharge in southwest Wisconsin** – Madeline Gotkowitz summarized work done by herself, Bradbury, Doug Joachim, Steve Vavrus, and Steve Loheide in a 2-year UWS-funded project motivated by elevated water tables and resultant long-lasting flooding in 2008. Three-dimensional, transient groundwater flow in the Spring Green Area was modeled using MODFLOW. Topography of the lower Wisconsin River floodplain includes a wide upper and lower sand and gravel terrace bordered by sandstone-siltstone/dolomite uplands all underlain by a sandstone aquifer. Precipitation and temperature estimates were provided from 8 global circulation models. Runoff and infiltration estimates were provided from a soil water balance model. Predictions of recharge and water table levels were made for the 1981-2000 (base case), 2046-2065 and 2081-2100 time periods. Based on her modeling, Gotkowitz concluded that: 1) the average recharge will decrease by about 10%, due to increases in temperature and ET; 2) the variability in recharge will be high, and high groundwater conditions occur infrequently; and 3) current flood mitigation efforts may prove useful to preserve existing land use. Gotkowitz added that private wells may have more bacterial contamination due to increased rainfall.
- 8) **Agency Updates**
DATCP – Bowman reported:
 - New atrazine prohibition areas will be published by May 15th. Based on the recent hearings, DATCP expects legislative interest in each update of these areas.
 - Private well water contamination related to manure-spreading has occurred again this year. Eastern counties were hit hardest.

- Structural deficits in funds remain a budget problem.

Commerce – Scott reported:

- An acting Division Administrator is in place.
- Changes within the agency are not being implemented quickly.
- PECFA awards will be cut in half. IOUs will need to be issued during the second half of the biennium.

DNR – Jonas reported:

- DNR is starting to work on a pilot project to assess practices to reduce nitrate in source water protection areas.
- Water Use Permitting Rule (NR860) was adopted by the NRB in April to define the process and criteria for water use permitting in the Great Lakes Basin. In December general or individual permitting will be required for persons withdrawing 100,000 gal/day in a 30-day period.
- The City of Waukesha submitted over 1000 pages of additional application materials for their requested diversion of water from Lake Michigan (<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/water/dwg/WaukeshaDiversionApp.htm>).
- Coal ash landfill issues have been reported nationally. DNR, DHS, WGNHS, and EPA are looking at a few sites in Wisconsin and weighing whether to begin requiring molybdenum (Mo) testing. Mo has been detected in areas near the closed, unlined We Energies ash landfill in the Town of Waukesha as well as the ash landfill at the Oak Creek Power Plant. DNR appreciates cooperation of WGNHS, UW and EPA in working to identify all potential sources of the Mo in these areas and to understand background levels.
- A bill is moving through the Legislature that would prohibit DNR from requiring disinfection by municipal water systems unless required by federal law. This bill affects 66 of the 612 municipal water systems in Wisconsin. [Note: The bill was signed into law on May 24th.]

DHS – Chuck Warzecha reported:

- Manure and flooding impacts on private wells have been fewer this spring than in the last few years.
- A new Division Administrator has not yet been appointed. Henry Anderson continues to fill that role in addition to his own.

DOT – Dan Scudder reported:

- DOT is looking at flooding vulnerability of highways in the Portage area and the Milwaukee-Madison corridor, both which were impacted last year.
- Pearson is working with DNR on Lower Wisconsin River Valley water table levels at multiple sites where there has been excess groundwater. Highway stability requires that the subgrade is dry.

WGNHS – Jamie Robertson reported:

- Bradbury, Gotkowitz and others continue to work on virus transport studies:
- DOE funds have been obtained for explorative geothermal drilling in Marathon County.
- Sand from the Jordan, Wonewoc and St. Peter formations are being heavily used to extract gas and oil from rock in the hydraulic fracturing process (“fracking”). The processing of the sand requires large quantities of water.
- The proposed Gogebic taconite mine is still in the early phases – the notice of intent is unsigned.

9) Next Meeting: August 19th at DNR.

Respectfully submitted by Jeff Helmuth