

Wisconsin Groundwater Coordinating Council
Minutes of meeting held August 10, 2012, 10:00 – 12:00
At Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Members Present: Henry Anderson (DHS); Ken Johnson (DNR); James Robertson (WGNHS); Dan Scudder (DOT); John Petty (DATCP); Eric Scott (DSPS);

Others Present: Ken Bradbury (WGNHS); Pete Novak, Jeff Wyman, Angela Bauer-Dantoin, Michael Zorn, Chris Babiarz (UW System); Lori Bowman Stan Senger (DATCP); Jill Jonas, Mary Ellen Vollbrecht, Larry Lynch, Bill Phelps, Dave Johnson, Lisa Gaumnitz, Brian Austin, Jeff Helmuth (DNR)

1) General Business – The May 2012 meeting minutes were unanimously approved as written.

2) Technical Presentations –

Wisconsin Institute for Sustainable Agriculture Central Sands Initiative UW Professors Nowak (Extension) and Wyman (Entomology), briefed the GCC members on the purpose and progress of the Wisconsin Institute for Sustainable Agriculture’s Central Sands Initiative. The initiative was created to address the role of agriculture in dropping groundwater levels in the Central Sands, causing trout streams and recreational lakes to go dry in summer. The Initiative was designed to fill information gaps, promote communication between partners, and foster iterative collaboration. Next steps will include continued work on addressing the three goals above and seeking funding.

Assessing levels of potential health effects of endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs) in groundwater associated with Karst areas in Northeast Wisconsin Professor Bauer-Dantoin, UW - Green Bay presented results of her UWS-funded project designed to determine whether the presence of EDCs correlates with nitrate and/or E. coli and to determine whether the presence of contaminants in well water correlates with season / recharge events. Work was carried out in Brown, Calumet, Fond du Lac, & Kewaunee Counties in areas with carbonate bedrock, shallow soil depths, heavy agriculture, and a history of many wells with past contamination by bacteria and nitrate. Results indicate that groundwater contamination with EDCs was prevalent in these areas but greater during the months of August and November. Bacterial contamination was greatest during the months of February and March. No correlation was found between the water quality parameters.

3) 2012 Report to the Legislature - Helmuth updated the members on the updates and edits made to the annual report to the legislature and requested the agencies’ final input and direction. The members’ consensus was to make the list of recommendations more concise, focusing on the previously identified GCC strategic priorities. Helmuth said he would produce a new list with the help of others and post the revised list with the report for the GCC’s consideration. Approval will be by email or meeting if necessary [The revised report was made available on August 24th, approved by the GCC on August 29th and released on August 31st.]

4) Agency Updates

DATCP

Petty reported that spray irrigation of manure is a growing issue. Senger reported that changes to ATCP 30 include updates to prohibition area maps and should be promulgated by September 1. The Department is seeking funding and input for their next groundwater survey.

DNR –Johnson reported that the DNR was working to implement the Lake Beulah decision, addressing the impacts of high capacity wells on surface and groundwater quantity. Statewide, nitrate remains the

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biggest groundwater quality problem. Jonas invited all GCC members to join the stakeholder meeting for input to Wisconsin's Nutrient Reduction Strategy. USEPA has asked each state to develop a strategy because despite efforts and investments over several decades nitrogen and phosphorus contamination continue to increase in our surface and groundwater. Jonas reported that in response to drought conditions, DNR had approved 33 emergency high capacity wells in 24 counties for irrigation or livestock water supply as of July 24. The gas pipeline rupture in the Town of Jackson presented drinking water contamination challenges. A contract has been finalized for Groundwater Level Monitoring Network enhancements.

DHS – Anderson reported that senior toxicologist Lynda Knobeloch has retired. Knobeloch had been active on the GCC Education Subcommittee for many years. DHS has been heavily involved in the aftermath of the Town of Jackson gas line spill. Anderson noted that interagency cooperation had been good. Blue-green alga is a growing issue this year.

UWS – Babiarz noted that the WRI was requesting comments as part of its five-year-planning cycle and that climate change research would again be part of the joint solicitation this fall. Agencies should have their priorities revised by October.

DSPS – Scott reported that funding for the Petroleum Clean-Up Fund Program was still uncertain and that management changes were still frequent.

WGNHS – Bradbury reported that the following groundwater-related activities were occurring: 1) Education on the impacts of frac sand mining in Chippewa County; 2) Progress on the Hydrogeological Data Viewer; 3) Groundwater Level Monitoring Network enhancements; 4) Virus transport research; 5) DOE-funded geothermal gradient research in deep wells; 6) Research on geothermal plumes at Epic site and other large systems; and 7) calibration of the Dane County regional groundwater flow model.

5) Adjourn and Next Meeting - Robertson moved (Anderson 2nd) to adjourn. The next meeting will be on November 16th at DATCP.

Respectfully submitted by Helmuth