

Wisconsin Groundwater Coordinating Council
Draft Minutes of meeting held February 15, 2013, 10:00 – 12:00
UW Aquatic Sciences Center, Goodnight Hall, Madison

Members Present: Ken Johnson (DNR); Jim Hurley (UWS), Henry Anderson (DHS); Ken Bradbury for James Robertson (WGNHS); Dan Scudder (DOT); George Kraft (Gov. rep.), Stan Senger for John Petty (DATCP).

Others Present: Tim Grundl (UWM); Kevin Masarik (UWSP), Andrew Aslesen (WRWA); Chris Babiarz (UW-ASC); Jeff Helmuth (DNR).

1) General Business –Hurley moved to approve the minutes of from the November 16, 2012 meeting as written. The motion was seconded and carried.

2) Technical Presentation –What happens to the underlying aquifer when you put 1000 meters of ice on top? (PowerPoint presentation at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Groundwater/GCC/minutes.html>) Professor Grundl’s research question originated with a query about cloudy water in a Kaukauna well and led to work synthesizing regional hydrogeology, glacial history, and isotope and noble gas tracers to show how air entrapment in the aquifer and in the glacier itself can be used to deduce glacial melting processes and climatic conditions when Wisconsin was covered in ice. This work applies to the entire eastern margin of Wisconsin from Green Bay to Milwaukee and shows that a distinct packet of glacially recharged water remains in the aquifer today and that some deep municipal wells pump groundwater that is nearly 30,000 years old.

3) FY 14 Joint Solicitation – Hurley noted that the Groundwater Research Advisory Council had met on February 7th and proposed their funding recommendations for the GCC’s consideration. Kraft moved to approve the UW Groundwater Research Plan as recommended by the GRAC. The motion was seconded and carried.

4) Well Data Workgroup status report and discussion on moving forward – Helmuth reported on activities of a workgroup composed of GCC Research & Monitoring Subcommittee members and other groundwater quality data stakeholders. The workgroup’s purpose is to develop a consistent process for interpreting and communicating private and/or public well data for use by legislators, agencies, and public. The following questions have been identified: 1) With current data, what do we know and what don’t we know? 2) Is well water quality better or worse? 3) If wells are being drilled deeper to avoid contamination what are the costs? and 4) Which aquifers are affected and tapped? For each question the workgroup has identified one or more options. Senger answered questions on past DATCP Statewide surveys. GCC members made suggestions and asked that the workgroup continue to address these questions and report on their progress. Masarik demonstrated use of the WI Well Water Quality Interactive Viewer (<http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/watershed/Pages/wellwaterviewer.aspx>), recently developed at UW-SP.

5) Adoption of GCC Priorities and Operations (P&O) Plan for the 2013-2015 Biennium – Johnson provided the GCC’s P&O Plan for 2013-15. The priorities for the plan were adopted at the November 16th GCC meeting. The only other changes from the previous plan are to biennium dates and updated Internet links. Anderson moved to adopt the plan as provided. The motion was seconded and carried.

6) Agency Updates

DATCP – Senger reported that the Environmental Quality Section had hired a Hydrogeologist, Kevin Olson, as Spills Coordinator and would hire another Hydrogeologist soon. An Environmental

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Enforcement Specialist, Mark McClusky had also been recently hired.

UWS – Hurley noted NOAA, USGS and other agencies were planning for the federal budget sequester. Among concerns are that USGS could eliminate the Water Resources Institutes funding. The GCC may be asked for data on funding cut impacts. Sea Grant may have a 3% cut to its base funding.

WGNHS – Bradbury reported that the Survey is hiring new Precambrian, Sedimentary, Pleistocene, and Subsurface Records Geologists. Great Lakes Compact and DNR Water Use funds are allowing progress on groundwater observation network enhancements and springs monitoring.

DHS – Anderson reported that the federal budget sequester might affect the Division of Public Health. DHS is involved in a review of new information about the effects of isoxaflutole, an active ingredient in corn herbicides, on water and other crops. The review will determine under what conditions future registration of isoxaflutole products in Wisconsin might be possible. [Despite recent misinformation that led agribusinesses and farmers to believe otherwise, isoxaflutole cannot be sold or used in Wisconsin.]

DNR – Johnson reported that the DNR is looking at the setback for manure spaying. While manure irrigation can help reduce groundwater contamination, one study showed airborne bacteria present 650 feet away from the spray nozzle on a windy day. DNR is now funding several studies to address the setback issue.

The Central Sands/Little Plover River groundwater quantity issue is yet to be resolved. Despite continued disagreement among stakeholders, DNR and UWEX are working to bring them together again. A new state-of-the-art groundwater flow model will build on past modeling to assess the current conditions and evaluate potential solutions. It is hoped the model will have wide support that will lead to voluntary actions as well as be applicable to other areas.

Molybdenum concentrations above the enforcement standard were found in monitoring wells and private water supply wells in the Caledonia-Oak Creek area in southeast Wisconsin. A two-year DNR study, <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Groundwater/molybdenum.html>, was unable to determine the origin of the elevated levels of molybdenum: Residents using private wells in the towns of Caledonia, Raymond, and Norway in Racine County, in Muskego in Waukesha County, and residents using private wells instead of municipal water in Franklin and Oak Creek in Milwaukee County are encouraged to test their well water for molybdenum.

5) Adjourn and Next Meeting - Hurley moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded and carried. The next meeting will be on May 3rd at WGNHS.

Respectfully submitted by Jeff Helmuth