

Wisconsin Groundwater Coordinating Council
Minutes of meeting held May 2, 2014, 10:00 – 12:00
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Waukesha Room, 4802 Sheboygan Avenue, Madison.

Members Present: Dan Scudder (DOT); Ken Johnson (DNR); James Robertson (WGNHS); Henry Anderson (DHS); John Petty (DATCP); Jim Hurley (UW-System), George Kraft (Gov. Rep.).

Others Present: Ken Bradbury (WGNHS); Lori Bowman, (DATCP); Roy Irving (DHS); Mary Ellen Vollbrecht (DNR).

1) Approval of Minutes - The minutes from the February 28th, 2014 meeting were unanimously approved (motion by Anderson, 2nd by Kraft).

2) Technical Presentation – The Updated Dane County Regional Groundwater Flow Model and Associated Project by Ken Bradbury, WGNHS. The new model is an update of the 1994 model, incorporating better geological information and more detail enabled by greater computing power. GCC-supported research resulted in better methods for estimating recharge. The new model has already enabled identification of dozens of cross-connecting wells that not only have reduced pumping efficiency but also increase contamination risk. In addition, the model will support recent and ongoing GCC-funded research to answer management question including the assessment of streamflow reduction impacts, groundwater quality impacts of land use changes, and how viruses are drawn to drinking water supply wells. Workshops for potential model users will be held later this summer. Discussion ensued about priorities for development of similar models.

3) FY15 Joint Solicitation – Jim Hurley reported that 8 of 22 proposed projects have been funded, three by UW and five by DNR. He highlighted the lively Groundwater Research Advisory Committee (GRAC) discussion of a large proportion of projects as an indication of the quality of this year’s proposals. Based on projections for budget processes, Hurley anticipates next year will be good for applicants seeking UW System funding. From UW’s perspective, the Joint Solicitation process establishes Wisconsin as a national leader in groundwater research. (Note: Leadership in this area is especially appropriate as Wisconsin also leads the nation in number of public drinking water systems dependent on groundwater.)

4) Plans for the 2014 GCC Report to the Legislature including discussion of recommendations – Mary Ellen Vollbrecht reported that work continues on the dashboard approach to the groundwater condition report (presented in February) in response to member comments. Vollbrecht encouraged GCC members to begin looking at the Recommendations to identify any updates and highlighted three recommendations that DNR suggests for review. Ken Johnson discussed possible updates: that the nitrate recommendation could include less background and could focus on promoting community problem solving rather than promoting practices; that the recommendation for cataloging of information about groundwater resources could have an increased emphasis on data access; and that the dairy industry expansion recommendation could include an outreach component. Petty indicated that the dairy recommendation is more appropriately titled “livestock” and mentioned South Dakota’s approach as of potential interest to members. Robertson suggested that the Frac Sand Mining recommendation include development of groundwater-related questions for local consideration in decision-making about frac sand proposals. Members discussed that the recommendations were intended to support agency efforts, that GCC would receive reports of agency activity but not create its

February 28, 2014 GCC meeting minutes

own work groups. Vollbrecht indicated that proposed wording for the potential changes would be incorporated into a draft of the 2014 Recommendations for GCC review.

3) Agency Updates

DOT – Dan Scudder and Bob Pearson discussed recent examples of global factors with major effects on transportation demand and facility siting and associated potential groundwater impacts.

UWS - Jim Hurley updated information about funding for the Aquatic Sciences Center (ASC) and Sea Grant. He let members know that as part of restructuring within UW administration, a Vice Chancellor for Research will be created in 2015. Phil Moy will be taking a new position. ASC will announce recruitment for assistant director positions for research and outreach. With a new coordinator, WICCI activity will begin this month.

DATCP – John Petty noted that DATCP will be revising the Livestock Siting Facility Siting Rule (Ch. ATCP 51 Wis. Adm. Code). After the listening sessions for Agriculture, Environmental, and Government interests, a group will rewrite the code, hold public hearings, and respond to public comments. The listening sessions are anticipated to handle many concerns before the code is re-written. Lori Bowman reported that a draft proposal for the herbicide, isoxaflutole is under development.

DHS – Henry Anderson reported that DHS is proposing biomonitoring laboratory work to get early warning of occurrence and concentrations of groundwater contaminants in humans.

WGNHS – Jamie Robertson highlighted the newly-available Devil’s Lake phone app, Geohike. Elmo Rawling is the new glacial geologist. WGNHS will announce recruitment for a subsurface geologist.

DNR – Ken Johnson reported that in-lieu fees are now accepted for wetland mitigation. DNR will develop high capacity well review guidance, using its web-based system to seek public input. Johnson reported on DNR staffing changes, including Jeff Helmuth’s move to DNR’s Water Use Section, his own retirement and the appointment of Russ Rasmussen as Water Division Administrator.

6) Adjourn and Next Meeting - Robertson moved (Anderson 2nd) to adjourn. A revised meeting date will be sought for the August 22 meeting so that Russ Rasmussen can attend.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Ellen Vollbrecht