

Nebraska Ground Water Monitoring Advisory Committee (NGWMAC)
Wednesday, May 13, 2009, 10:00 AM-12:00 Noon
NDEQ Van Dorn Street Facility
Lincoln, Nebraska

Meeting Notes

The meeting was called to order at approximately 10:05 AM.

1. Introductions

Present:

Pat O'Brien-NARD

Dave Miesbach-NDEQ

Dustin Wilcox-LBBNRD

Dan Inman-NDEQ

Colleen Steele-UNL

Craig Romary-NDA

Jason Vogel-USGS

Rich Kern-NDNR

Dick Ehrman-LPSNRD

Milt Moravek-CPNRD

Jeff Gottula-NDEQ

Ginny McGuire-USGS

Mary Spalding-UNL

Marty Link-NDEQ

Larry Angle-LPNNRD

Will Myers-NDEQ

John Chess-LLCHD

2. LPSNRD Petition for Committee Membership

Dick Ehrman reminded the Committee that as of February 2009, he no longer works for NARD but is now an employee of the Lower Platte South NRD. Since Ehrman no longer works for a Committee member agency, he submitted a verbal petition to allow LPSNRD to join the Committee. Vote was unanimous in favor. LPSNRD will be added to Committee membership.

3. Status of NGWMAC Chair

The current charter also states that the Chair will be elected from the membership, otherwise NARD or NDEQ will assume those duties. Ehrman asked if the membership felt the Chair should be changed in light of the aforementioned. Marty Link moved and Milt Moravek seconded that Ehrman should remain as chair. Vote was unanimous in favor.

4. NDEQ Annual Ground Water Monitoring Report to the Legislature—Dave Miesbach

Dave Miesbach provided an overview of the 2008 report. Of particular note was the effect of the addition of a large amount of data from Buffalo County (the MSEA site) from the late 1990s, and how that likely affected the overall averages and trends for nitrate. It was also pointed out that some of the statewide maps at the end of the report looked wrong; Miesbach noted these problems and will get back to the Committee. Rich Kern pointed out that the old link to NDNR's website which allows access to the Clearinghouse will soon be defunct with the general changes in the State of Nebraska's system and will provide the new link to the Committee. Steve Rathje at

NDNR is the contact for this matter. In light of such issues, the Committee discussed possible review of the annual report prior to NDEQ's issuance of the report each December 1 as required by statute. Since NDEQ is on a tight timeframe for this report, the Committee agreed that such review should not be particularly formal, but NDEQ agreed to try to let the membership provide informal review at some point before the December deadline in 2009.

- a. Statewide Ground Water Monitoring Network Update/Future—Dick Ehrman
Ehrman provided a brief summary of the 2008 results for the SGWMN. As in past years, for both the short- and long-term analyses, there are more increasing nitrates in network wells than there are decreases, but even more of the wells show no short- or long-term trend (that is, little/no change). Pat O'Brien will assume the annual SGWMN analysis as part of his new job duties starting with the 2009 report.
5. NDEQ Water Monitoring Strategy Update—Pat O'Brien/Marty Link
O'Brien provided a PowerPoint presentation discussing NDEQ's adopted strategy for both surface and ground water. Miesbach gave a summary of NDEQ's efforts at Fremont Lake 20 regarding the movement of algal toxins into the shallow ground water system; there is very little information on this in the literature. Upon completion of a pump test this summer, Miesbach hopes to publish information on this phenomenon.
6. Ag Chemical Clearinghouse Update—Mary Spalding/Colleen Steele
Mary Spalding provided an update on the Clearinghouse, noting that NDEQ and NDA have renewed the contract for supporting the effort. She also reminded the Committee that Dottie Harrell had resigned as the data manager for the Clearinghouse after several years of great work but has still provided assistance in the transition period. She also introduced Colleen Steele, who started as the data manager in April, coming to Lincoln after working for the North Platte NRD in Scottsbluff. Steele noted that she has received 2008 data from 12 NRDs to date, and will continue to work with the remaining NRDs to get their data. Craig Romary also noted that the NDA management has made some inquiries regarding that agency's funding of the Clearinghouse, and he is doing his best to answer their questions. He doesn't think this is necessarily a negative thing, but noted that he might ask the Committee to provide examples of how useful the Clearinghouse is so that he can continue to justify this expenditure.
7. Aquatic Pesticide Rule/Stay/Permit Update—Craig Romary/Marty Link
Link and Romary gave an update on recent issues with the application of aquatic pesticides. Due to court action, there was at least the possibility that any application of pesticides near a water body could be considered a pollutant discharge and thus a NPDES permit would be required for any such application. In response, NDEQ has revised their NPDES regulations (Title 119) to allow such application under its general permitting authority, so long as the application is according to the label. Currently, these regulation changes have been approved by the Environmental Quality Council and

are currently at the Attorney General's office. However, a court challenge has resulted in a stay of the possibility of an NPDES permit being required, so NDEQ is waiting to see what happens with this issue before officially adopting this change.

8. NSWMC Update—Jason Vogel

Jason Vogel provided an overview of the spring 2009 Nebraska Surface Water Monitoring Council meeting, which was held on May 8. Much of the discussion in that meeting centered around nutrient criteria for surface water.

9. Other items

John Chess noted that LLCHD has traditionally worked with UNL students majoring in water-related subjects, and that in 2009 Peggy Philson has completed a nitrate study of the MAR-MA-RA-LO subdivision near 84th and Pioneer in Lincoln. Philson, a student of Dan Snow's at the UNL Water Sciences Lab, utilized nitrogen and oxygen isotope analyses to determine that the source of the nitrate in question was likely from septic tank effluent. Chess handed out a limited number of copies of Philson's report.

Ginny McGuire handed out information from Bob Swanson regarding access to the beta map version of the National Water Information System (NWIS). She invited anyone with any comments on the beta to submit them to Swanson. She also noted that USGS is working on submitting its NAWQA Agricultural Chemical Transport (ACT) data to the Clearinghouse as well as data associated with the Heliborne Electromagnetic (HEM) surveys which are ongoing in the Panhandle and eastern Nebraska. She will also be working with Spalding and Steele to summarize the Papio-Missouri River NRD's nitrate data and get it into the Clearinghouse.

10. Next meeting—Wednesday, Oct. 14, 2009? Joint meeting w/ NSWMC?

Oct. 14 was not a good date for several members, so the fall meeting will be tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, Oct. 21 in Lincoln. The membership agreed that another joint meeting with NSWMC would be good. Storm water and the Fremont Lakes/toxic algae situation were suggested as possible topics. Vogel and Ehrman will be in touch with the membership of each group over the next few months to solidify the agenda.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:55 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Dick Ehrman