

Nebraska Ground Water Monitoring Advisory Committee (NGWMAC)
Wednesday, May 5, 2010, 10:00 AM-12:00 Noon
NDEQ Van Dorn Street Facility
Lincoln, Nebraska

MEETING NOTES

1. *Introductions*

The following individuals were present:

Dave Rus, USGS	Clancy Dempsey, LLCHD	John Chess, LLCHD
Marty Link, NDEQ	Steve Gaul, NDNR	Ralph Pulte, NHHS
Ryan Chapman, NDEQ	Howard Isaacs, NHHS	Nicolas Cantarero, LLCHD
Craig Romary, NDA	Dan Schulz, LPSNRD	Russell Callan, LLNRD
Dan Inman, NDEQ	Jeff Gottula, NDEQ	Will Meyers, NDEQ
Jenny Abrahamson, NDEQ	Pat O'Brien, NARD	Jim Newman, LLCHD
Rick Wilson, USGS	Milt Moravek, CPNRD	Dave Miesbach, NDEQ
Mary Spalding, UNL	Colleen Steele, UNL	Jesse Korus, UNL
Steve Herdzina, LPSNRD	Chris Witthuhn, LPSNRD	Dick Ehrman, LPSNRD

2. *NDEQ Annual Ground Water Monitoring Report to the Legislature—Dave Miesbach, NDEQ*

Miesbach gave an overview of NDEQ's annual report to the Legislature for 2009. Highlights of this year's report included the use of nitrate data from 1994 onward to begin establishing nitrate trends. 1994 was selected as this appeared to be one of the first years when more-or-less statewide coverage for nitrate was achieved. Also, Miesbach noted that NDEQ will be doing a GWMA study in Cuming County in the upcoming summer months.

- a. *Statewide Ground Water Monitoring Network Update—Pat O'Brien, NARD*
O'Brien summarized the SGWMN results from the annual report. As usual, some of the nitrate results were up, some were down. He and Marty Link also informed the group that NDEQ is revising its State Monitoring Strategy. As part of this effort, NDEQ will be eligible for up to about \$170,000 of USEPA supplemental funds, and wants to dedicate most of it toward ground water over the next two to three years. Possible areas where this money could be spent include expanding the SGWMN (possibly to include dedicated monitoring wells), or "snapshot" sampling of emerging contaminants like selenium or arsenic. O'Brien and Link asked the group to submit suggestions to them over the next few months (spring/summer 2010) if they have ideas for these funds. Milt Moravek expressed some concern about installing dedicated monitoring wells given the problems illustrated by the Grout Study; Miesbach responded that, as a result of the Study, grout recipes are getting better.

b. *Ag Chemical Clearinghouse Update—Mary Spalding/Colleen Steele, UNL*
Spalding briefed the group on current Clearinghouse activities. The 2009 data acquisition is going smoothly and she expects to be on track to have the data available by October 2010 as usual. She noted that the NRDs' 2009 data is nearly completely submitted, and noted Ginny McGuire and Jill Frankforter's efforts in submitting the USGS data for the last seven years, which really increases the completeness of the Clearinghouse data. Steele then summarized the current status of the Clearinghouse data: water sample data for 22,350 different wells; 87,241 nitrate data points; 308,223 pesticide data points representing 177 different pesticide compounds; the Clearinghouse is in the process of incorporating 39,498 nitrate and pesticide records received from the USGS into the database (37,177 of these are pesticides); and with the receipt of the USGS data, the database is up to date through 2008. Thanks and congratulations to all involved for making the Nebraska database one of the best anywhere!

3. *Pesticides/Water Quality Update—Craig Romary, NDA*

Romary reviewed several pesticide issues, including some more aimed at surface water. He noted that budget problems mean that NDA will not be funding the NRD pesticide ELISA analysis this year; Romary is in the process of compiling the results for past years. O'Brien later stated that NDEQ will be using 319 funds to pick up at least some of this monitoring. So far, seven NRDs (Little Blue, Lower Big Blue, Lower Loup, Upper Niobrara White, Twin Platte, Tri-Basin, and Middle Niobrara) have agreed to participate. This effort will involve sampling for atrazine and metolachlor. Romary updated the group on the legal action involving the requirement of NPDES permits for application of aquatic pesticides. NDEQ is in the process of developing a general permit as currently required. John Chess asked whether this would mean that mosquito control efforts this year would require any permits. Link responded that this wouldn't be required yet as the permit process is still in development. Romary also noted that atrazine monitoring as part of the re-registration process has increased; Nebraska currently has several 303(d) listed watersheds for atrazine impairments. Syngenta is monitoring some of these watersheds which are exceeding levels of concern; most of these are in the lower Big Blue Basin. Also, he noted that recent legal action has seen communities filing suit against Syngenta due to atrazine in drinking water. Will Myers informed the group that NDEQ will be doing atrazine monitoring in the Big Blue watershed from Crete to St. Mary's and will be doing runoff studies. Dave Rus noted that USGS has nationwide data indicating that atrazine concentrations in surface water is not related to conservation practices, but to use amounts. Dick Ehrman and Russ Callan reminded the group that work done in the Recharge Lake watershed in UBBNRD had shown that a very small percentage of the field applied atrazine actually left the field, and one of the primary controls on this was the occurrence of significant rainfall shortly after application. Romary also reminded the group that buffer strip funds (from pesticide registration fees) are still available, and briefed the group on NDA's new pesticide-sensitive crop locator feature on its website. Dick Ehrman asked the group if anyone had any information regarding glyphosate (Roundup) resistant weeds as his management had

inquired about this issue. Nobody had any specific examples, but Romary said that there are a variety of Extension publications available.

4. *NSWMC Update—Will Myers, NDEQ*

Myers informed the group that the Nebraska Surface Water Monitoring Council met on April 21. The meeting included updates from participating agencies like NDEQ, US Army Corps of Engineers, USGS, and others. Chris Pracheil from NDEQ gave a presentation on NDEQ's 2010 integrated report, and there was a great deal of productive discussion on surface water issues.

5. *Radium in Drinking Water at Village of Denton—John Chess, Jim Newman, & Clancy Dempsey LLCHD/Howard Isaacs, NDHHS*

Chess began the presentation by providing the group with a brief history of the Denton issue. Isaacs then briefed the group on the history of radium and uranium regulation. Newman then discussed background information on water wells in the Denton area, and Dempsey finished up with an overview on risk evaluation. Overall, a very informative presentation, and with possible future action, a potential topic for future meetings!

6. *Other items/roundtable discussion*

Jeff Gottula brought up the issue of discharge of water into Lincoln's Wellhead Protection Area along the Platte River near Ashland, and its relation to the WHPA modeling that has been done for that area. Jesse Korus gave an update on UNL's statewide water level monitoring program, and the updated website for the program. He noted that Mark Burbach has completed the real-time monitoring network, which is mostly utilizing wells in relatively undeveloped areas to reflect climatic influences rather than water use. UNL is also working on the concept of a ground water level monitoring "Clearinghouse" similar to that for water quality. A prototype data portal is in the works, and Korus will be soliciting comments on it soon. Callan expressed some concerns about how such water level data might be used, as wells located near each other can have considerably different water levels depending on what formation(s) they are screened in. O'Brien informed the group that UNL, NDEQ, and NARD are cooperating to offer some training events for ground water data collection, QA, and safety. These events are pre-approved for three hours of CEUs for all categories of NHHS water well licenses. The events will be held June 3 at one of the ENWRA sites near Firth, June 9 in Scottsbluff, and June 16 in Grand Island; further information is available on NARD's website. Rus noted that USGS will be briefing Congress on May 21 regarding domestic water supply issues, and that inquiries might come up as a result. Korus brought up an item primarily for the geologists in the crowd, noting that UNL-CSD is doing work on the Elk Creek carbonatite in Johnson County. Romary also noted that Bayer (the manufacturer of Balance (isoxaflutole)) has requested any available monitoring information regarding isoxaflutole. Re-registration is coming up and they are looking for data; he reminded the group that Nebraska had participated in some of

the registration monitoring for isoxaflutole several years ago.

7. *Election of Chair*

Ehrman reminded the group that the NGWMAC Charter requires the election of a chair every two years, and it has historically been done during the spring meeting of every even-numbered year. He opened the floor for nominations. Some smart aleck who I can't even remember nominated Ehrman and moved that nominations cease. There was no opposition, and so unfortunately you're stuck with me for another two years.

8. *Next meeting*

The Fall 2009 meeting was a joint meeting with NSWMC, and the group generally agreed that such a joint meeting would be appropriate for Fall 2010. A tentative date of Wednesday, Oct. 13, 2010 was suggested; given the rather large turnout for the 2009 meeting we may need to find a larger space. Dempsey will check on the availability of LLCHD's conference room. Please forward any suggestions for meeting topics and/or presenters to Dick Ehrman or Will Myers!