

GWCC Meeting: May 3, 2018

In Attendance: Scott Stewart, Zeno Levy, Jon Kim, Patti Casey, Liz Royer, Robert Pelosi, Colin Dowe, Rodney Pingree, Michele Eisenstein

Welcome -

Michele Eisenstein, EDM Consulting Services – microbiologist. Michele is expanding her horizons to the broader issues of groundwater and brings her particular perspective on groundwater, surface water, water chemistry and biology to us from years of work running one of the few labs in the state and country that runs Microparticulate Analyses, among other projects.

Scott discussed the EPA request for comment on the Clean Water Act language for NPDES (National Pollution Discharge Elimination) permits. This was called “Conduit Theory” and looks at the connection and pathway for discharges to the groundwater that makes it way to impact surface water. Groundwater and surface water are connected; however, the current language is vague – conduit could be tunnel, pipe or pore space in soils; direct connection is unclear without reference to travel time, etc. Scott and Mary Clark and others are providing comment to Watershed Management Division (who received the request).

Comment Period on pollutant discharges from point sources that reach surface waters via groundwater – see Clean Water Act Coverage of “Discharges of Pollutants” via Direct Hydrologic Connection to Surface Water https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-02/documents/direct_hydrologic_connection_frn_signed_20180212.pdf

Scott provided an update on the slow progression of the Groundwater Protection Rule and Strategy. We are working with Ag (AAFM) and the Health Department (VDH) to finalize the enforcement standards in Appendix One, specifically dealing with pesticides. We are also finalizing the associated Class IV reclassification procedure (a separate document to provide guidance on how to reclassify an area). When these are sorted, a draft will be finalized and sent around for comment internally (DEC, VDH, AAFM and hopefully GWCC) along with scheduling the internal workshop with Agencies.

Around the Room

Zeno, Liz and Sille continued outreach to towns and held a two-part conference with the UVM extension service. This was a preview of the VLCT (Vermont League of Cities and Towns) forum to be held in the Fall. They provided an overview of private well info, source protection areas, underground injection control, pesticides and public protection.

Geology had a piece on VPR regarding the recent farm study looking at 17 years of pesticide use, major and minor trace element geochemistry, nitrates, and herbicides. They are also working with 2 students on Bennington PFOA/S – age dating, stable isotopes and other parameters. Patti and Liz are investigating a town well in Sutton for nitrates. Colin has completed 2 of 4 counties on water well location improvement project (as part of USGS grant). He’s working on Orange County now. Colin is also working on gathering and consolidating the “large” Groundwater Withdrawal reporting data and working with Patti to get the agricultural withdrawals submitted and accounted for. Jon is working on surficial mapping in Jeffersonville with Steven Wright and have better locations for 300 wells. The goal is to find new locations for a public community water supply.

VT Environmental Consortium (VEC) – will be holding their annual conference at VTC on June 6th. *The State of Vermont’s Water*. Several staff from DEC, AAFM, and consulting firms will be presenting. See list of topics: <http://www.vectogether.org/vec-events/spring-conference/>

Patti – presenting at VEC on Hardwick Farm study of ambient surface water sampling from tributaries, rivers and tiles. Sampling twice a month. The lab is updating their methods. Field sampling is under way on various projects. Patti is taking over the Vector Management program for mosquitoes and ticks. Finally, there is a new database under construction and in the beta testing mode.

Robert – Facility Engineering Division. The Intended Use Plan (IUP) is out with 70 applicants – more interest than expected and there may be a funding cap all the projects go through. H.77 – sponsorship for green infrastructure extends to privately owned land. The bill made cross-over in the legislature.

Michele – Groundwater Resource Initiative – a New England states meeting and forum for discussion of state's groundwater related issues. Rodney and Scott and others have attended sporadically over the years. Great meeting but out of state travel can be problematic at times. The group meets in Spring and Fall. If you have ideas for topics let Michele, Scott, Rodney know. In previous meetings we covered topics such as Geothermal wells, inter-basin transfers, new state regulations, contaminants of concern, etc.

Upcoming Topics?

Phytoremediation Tree Wells – Michael B. Smith

Next Meeting: June 14, 2018

Montpelier Room at National Life (Basement of Davis)