

Groundwater Coordinating Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: July 25, 2019

Location: Annex, Montpelier

Attendees: Scott Stewart, Liz Royer, Diana Butler, Bryan Redmond, Patti Casey, Graham Bradley, Jon Kim, John Schmeltzer, Marjorie Gale, Michael B. Smith

Bryan Redmond:

Lead Testing in Schools

In 2017 a pilot project to test for lead was conducted in 16 schools beyond the testing required under the Water Supply Rule. Barre City took 250 samples and St. Albans School took 300 samples. Elevated levels (>15 ppb) were found at one or more taps in 5 schools. Each tap was immediately removed, and solutions found to reduce lead levels.

<https://www.healthvermont.gov/environment/school/lead-drinking-water-schools#pilot>

Building on the pilot project, Act 66, passed in 2019, requires all Vermont school districts, supervisory unions, independent schools and child care providers to test their drinking and cooking water for lead. If lead is found in an amount at or above the action level of 4 parts per billion (ppb), the school or child care provider must immediately take the fixture out of service and take corrective action to eliminate or reduce the amount of lead to below the action level. The Health Department has been charged with helping schools and child care providers with the testing process, providing water test materials, guidance and support. Initial testing must be completed by December 2020 and the Health Department must develop rules that will specify the frequency and scope of continued monitoring.

<https://www.healthvermont.gov/response/environmental/lead-testing-drinking-water-schools-and-child-care-facilities-2019-20>

<https://dec.vermont.gov/water/drinking-water/water-quality-monitoring/lead-copper-rule-resources>

The testing is modeled after EPA's 3Ts program and is a joint project with ANR, VDH and Department of Education with first draw sample followed by 30 second flush sampling (2 samples per tap). There are roughly 450 schools and 1000 child care facilities to be sampled. A 211 number has been set up.

PFAS Sampling in PCWS and NTNC systems

In May 2019, [Act 21](#) (S.49), an act relating to the regulation of polyfluoroalkyl substances in drinking and surface waters, was signed by Governor Scott. This new law provides a comprehensive framework to identify PFAS contamination and to issue new rules to govern acceptable levels in surface water and drinking water.

The Act requires the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) to adopt a maximum contaminant level (MCL) by Rule for per and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). The Department of Health's health advisory level of 20 ppt for the sum of five PFAS compounds including PFOA; PFOS; perfluorohexane sulfonic acid (PFHxS); perfluoroheptanoic acid (PFHpA); and perfluorononanoic acid (PFNA) will be used as the initial basis for the state MCL. Adjustments or variances from the advisory level may be proposed based on scientific evidence, industry standards, or public input. The proposed rule will be available for public comment later this fall. Hearings are proposed in November. The final proposed rule must be filed with the Secretary of State's office by February 1, 2020.

In addition, all public Community (CWS) and Non-Transient Non-Community (NTNC) Water Systems (about 650 total) must perform initial entry point sampling **before December 1, 2019** and report results to the Drinking Water and Groundwater Protection Division (Division) within 10 days of receiving the laboratory report. Future required monitoring frequencies will be determined based on the results. If results are detected and confirmed above 20 ppt, a Do Not Drink will be issued. A 211 number has been set up.

An RFP to hire a consultant to evaluate an Emergency Response Plan looking at all options for remediation to remove the Do Not Drink notice.

EPA sampling method 537.1 (for 18 chemicals) is required to be used. There are only about 8 labs currently in the US certified.

<https://dec.vermont.gov/water/drinking-water/water-quality-monitoring/pfas>

By 2024 ANR is required to adopt a PFAS standard for surface water.

John Schmeltzer - Reclassification

The reclassification of contaminated areas in Bennington are under way using the revised streamlined reclassification procedure developed last year. St. Gobain will be providing a draft map soon to the VTDEC showing proposed reclassification areas. It is anticipated that the map will divide the Class IV designation into two areas: one for areas served by municipal water, which will have a prohibition on drilling and the other for areas not served by municipal water, which will allow drilling, with conditions. These conditions will likely include include specific construction standards for wells/springs in reclassified (IV) areas. It is anticipated that a formal petition will be submitted sometime in the next several months.

John also provided a heads up that EPA and the state are in the process of preparing a petition for groundwater reclassification at the Elizabeth Mine Superfund Site in Strafford and Thetford, Vermont. It is expected that this petition will be submitted to the Secretary within the next 12 months. The purpose of the reclassification will be to advise well drillers, property owners, and regulators of the location of underground workings (tunnels and shafts) related to the mine, which will likely contain mine-related contamination if a well is drilled into the workings.

Patti Casey – Climate Change

Patti started a discussion about climate change and resiliency. Various existing groups were discussed with Peter Walke as the lead for the Agency. We should explore how climate change may impact disasters, drought, flood, temperature increase on various land uses, regulated and unregulated activities, groundwater and surface water.

Jon and Patti talked about “legacy” sites.

Not part of the meeting but sent in after was an article from Debra Perrone and Scott Jasechko “Deeper well drilling an unsustainable stopgap to groundwater depletion” 2019 using state well driller data from the US.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41893-019-0325-z>

Newsworthy

Graham Bradley has accepted Ken Yelsey’ position as hydrogeologist in the Water Resources Section and will start in September.

Next Meeting August 22, 2019 - 1 pm at the ANR Annex