



Groundwater Coordinating Committee

END OF YEAR REPORT FOR 2017

Scott Stewart and Kasey Kathan, Committee Chairs

Role of Groundwater Coordinating Committee

The Groundwater Coordinating Committee (GWCC) was established by the legislature (10 VSA Chapter 48) to serve as an advisory group to bring groundwater issues of concern to the attention of the Secretary. The committee also provides a forum for input by various stakeholders - EPA, state agencies (e.g. Health and Agriculture), consulting firms and advocacy groups, among others -- on rule, initiatives and programs related to groundwater use and management.

The majority of 2017 was taken up by continued drafting of the Groundwater Protection Rule and Strategy (GWPRS). The Department rule group has finalized a draft and will hold a “workshop” (Spring 2018) for various Agencies to discuss and comment on prior to starting the formal rule making process. Revising and adopting the GWPRS is a key component in the development of the Groundwater Management Plan and activities of the Groundwater Coordinating Committee.

In 2017 four meetings were held by the GWCC on January 26th, February 23rd, April 27th and June 1st. Meeting notifications, meeting minutes and other relevant correspondence is regularly distributed to approximately 50 members; however, 12 members attended the meetings on average.

2017 Themes

Technical Discussions

We continue to bring topics of current or past interest to our meetings by bringing in technical and scientific staff to present their studies or “take-aways” from classes, meetings or conferences throughout the year. Vermont Rural Water, EPA, USGS, VT Department of Health and Agency of Agriculture, Farms and Markets are regular contributors.

- Road Salt Conference at UVM – Surface Water studies, BMPs, removal of secondary standards from GWPRS
- Drone Surveys – mapping efforts by VT Geological Survey and others
- Geothermal Well Impacts
- Act 250 Blasting Practices, BMPs, Groundwater Monitoring Plans for Quarry projects
- Ongoing PFAS Investigations

Communication on Agency Activity

As several programs within the Department begin or complete the rule revision process, the GWCC is kept up-to-date and provides valuable scientific input. We also strive to bring issues of concern to the awareness of program directors, commissioners and the Secretary.

- Met with Commissioner Boedecker following her appointment to the Department. Generally discussed the need to promote public trust management of groundwater and support the technical work of the department.

- Waste Management and Protection Division’s Investigation and Remediation of Contaminated Property Rule (IRCPR) went through the rule making process and was adopted in 2017. The GWCC met prior to the public meeting to discuss this rule and correspondingly the updated levels for groundwater standards, particularly for benzo(a)pyrene.
- Agency of Agriculture, Farms and Markets also had the Required Agricultural Practices Rule finalized and adopted.
- We finalized the Vermont Groundwater Management Plan with input from DWGPD staff, USGS, and Vermont Geological Survey.
- Scott, as rule manager, and Kasey as member of rule workgroup continued efforts to complete a draft of the Groundwater Protection Rule and Strategy in conjunction with VDH, AAFM, DWPD and WMPD staff.
- Act 154 Toxic Chemical Working Group – Natural Resource Damage Assessment – rules were developed and then adopted November 2017.

Communication on Legislative Activity

There were several bills introduced in the 2017 session that were related to groundwater issues. These bills were discussed by the GWCC to ensure committee awareness of the issues, but no formal committee action was taken.

- H.268 – Bill included a provision initially for required testing of new potable supplies at single family homes.
- S.103 – Mandatory testing of groundwater supplies was added to this bill. Bill proposal was to place testing requirements in the potable water supply rules, but for results to be submitted to the Department of Health. The bill staled in the house and was deferred to 2018.
- S.10 – Bill generally addressed liability for the contamination of potable water supplies; however, as part of this bill a change was made to the statutory definition of Class IV groundwater which will impact potential future reclassifications. The Class IV definition now reads: not suitable as a source of potable water but suitable for some agricultural, industrial and commercial use, provided that the Secretary may authorize, subject to conditions, use as a source of potable water supply or other use under a reclassification order issued for the aquifer.

Discussion of Outreach and Education Opportunities

The GWCC is a forum for spreading the word “SCIENCE” and the opportunities available in-state along with providing links to new research.

- Promotion of two workshops titled ‘Future of Vermont’s Drinking Water: How today’s planning decisions can keep our water sources safe and clean’.

- Distribution of an excel compilation of municipalities and a review of town plans performed by VRWA.
- Vermont Environmental Consortium Spring Conference provided an opportunity for DEC staff – Patricia Coppolino, Michael Smith, Richard Spiese, Jon Kim, Kasey Kathan and Scott Stewart to present talks on DEC rule updates, PFAS, Groundwater Reclassification, Bennington/Pownal studies among other topics on “Evolving Regulations and Emerging Contaminants”

LOOKING FORWARD

For 2018, the formal rule making process for the Groundwater Protection Rule and Strategy will commence including opportunities for public comment and meetings. The GWCC membership anticipates being an active participant in this public process. The Vermont Groundwater Management Plan will be released in early 2018 and the GWCC will actively support work on implementing specific tasks outlined within the plan. This support will take the form of providing comment on proposed activities and providing a sounding board for new initiatives to be included in plan revisions in later project years. This committee will have a large role to play in steering the course as this plan moves ahead and as new issues arise. As always, the Groundwater Coordinating Committee will continue to address and discuss new topics as they arise and will provide advice to the Secretary as needed.

END NOTE

We would like to thank Jeff Comstock (AAFMM) for his years of service, knowledge and experience. For many of us, he was the one to call with questions regarding all things Agriculturally related!

To all those who attended, called in and particularly our presenters – We appreciate all of you taking the time (many of you unpaid!) to share your knowledge, perspective and technical abilities to make and keep this a vital and dynamic effort.