

Florida Department of Health (FDOH)

Research Review and Advisory Committee (RRAC) Meeting Summary

Meeting on July 30, 2008, Orlando Airport Marriott, Orlando, FL

- **RRAC Members/Alternates Present:** Sam Averett, David Carter, Paul Davis, Anthony Gaudio, Marc Hawes, Bill Melton, Jim Peters, Eanix Poole, Jim Rashley, Patti Sanzone, John Schert, Clay Tappan, Pam Tucker, and Ellen Vause. Eight out of nine groups were present, representing a quorum.
- **Review of Previous Meeting Minutes:** The minutes were approved as submitted.
- **Onsite Sewage Nitrogen Reduction Strategies:** Specific Appropriation 1682 was signed by the governor. This project is to be controlled by the RRAC and the role of RRAC was discussed. RRAC voted, and had unanimous approval, that RRAC's role in the study is to: control the study, rank proposals for contracts, review draft deliverables and provide comments, RRAC will file a progress report, accept as completed the final report by contractors, and attach comments to the final report.

A discussion was had on each of the proposed tasks in this project:

- **Task A:** Preselection of technologies and prioritizing technology for testing
- **Task B:** Field testing of technologies at actual home sites and cost documentation
- **Task C:** Evaluation of nitrogen reduction provided by soils and the shallow groundwater below and down gradient of various systems
- **Task D:** Development of a simple model for predicting nitrogen fate and transport from onsite wastewater systems

The RRAC members voted to approve the Invitation to Negotiate (ITN) as it was discussed and amended during the meeting, including a preference for one provider to manage the entire project but also allowing the flexibility to evaluate individual tasks if there is a stand-out proposal. This passed unanimously.

- **Statewide Inventory of Onsite Sewage Systems:** The draft ITN was discussed for the inventory project, and after much discussion from the RRAC, the individual tasks were modified as follows:
 - **Task A:** Collect all available data on how many septic systems are in each county and where they are located
 - **Task B:** Develop a methodology for performing an inventory based on best management practices after researching processes developed by other counties that have done similar inventories
 - **Task C:** Develop a database compatible with the existing DOH Environmental Health Database and put the collected data into the database
 - **Task D:** Using the best available data, provide a revised estimate of the number of onsite sewage systems in the State of Florida

The RRAC member voted on a motion to direct DOH to do a study to accomplish the four objectives listed above. This passed unanimously.

- **Brief updates on other projects**

- Ongoing projects

- **Passive Nitrogen Removal Assessment** – The final project report has been submitted. This project is now complete.
 - **Optical Wastewater Tracers Study (old Remote Sensing of Optical Brighteners Study)** – QAPP is final approved. Mote Marine contract for specialized lab work is near execution. Sampling is currently being done.
 - **Manatee Springs, Performance of Onsite Systems Phase II Karst Study** – Currently working on the designs for the nutrient reducing systems. Also working on a new agreement with FSU to perform the sampling after the new systems are in operation.
 - **Taylor County Source Tracking Study** – Final project report for the grant was submitted to EPA on July 1st. A tri-fold brochure summarizing the results of this study has been completed and is ready for distribution.
 - **Monroe County Performance Based Treatment System Performance Assessment** – Currently developing criteria for the next phase of sampling. This includes expanding the diurnal variability assessment (looking at additional ATUs and PBTS for single family residences as well as PBTS serving multiple houses) and validating the field sampling protocol by sampling during routine inspections.

- Projects coming up

- **319 Project on Performance and Management of Advanced Onsite Systems** – DOH is waiting on the signed grant agreement from DEP. Once this has been received it will be executed and work can begin. One of the initial tasks is to select a vendor to create a database of all advanced systems. The draft task description is near completion and will be advertised soon after the signed agreement from DEP is received.
 - **Coastal Management Program Grant Funding Opportunity** – DOH is waiting on the signed grant agreement from DEP. Once this is received it will be executed and a provider selected through an ITN. The scope was presented at the last RRAC meeting, and the actual ITN document will begin routing in the near future.
 - **Restoration of the University of South Florida (USF) Lysimeter Station** – Memorandum of Agreement was sent to USF on June 17th and DOH is waiting for a response back.
 - **Phase II of the Florida Passive Nitrogen Removal Project** – Once scope of Nitrogen Removal project is finalized the determination on whether this task will be accomplished under Specific Appropriation 1682 will be made.
 - **Wekiva Onsite Sewage Treatment and Disposal System (OSTDS) Seasonal Variability Assessment** - Once scope of Nitrogen Removal project is finalized the determination on whether this task will be accomplished under Specific Appropriation 1682 will be made. One of the tasks in the Nitrogen Removal project is planned to address this research priority.
 - **Alternative Drainfield Product Assessment** – It was decided to postpone this research priority as staff will be busy with many other research projects at this point in time. This will be revisited prior to the next budget cycle determination.

- **Long-term deformation of tanks of different materials** – This project is currently in the scoping stages. Two stages are proposed: one focusing on a literature review on various tank materials, and another stage focusing on field sampling of various tanks based on the protocol developed during the first stage.
- **Other Business** – David Carter asked about the status of the appointments of the two new RRAC members and Elke Ursin stated that a letter was sent out regarding nominations to the Florida Association of Counties and the Florida League of Cities and that one of the two letters have been received. Once the second letter is in, a final decision will need to be made by the delegated authority.

Ellen Vause stated that this is her last meeting as a RRAC alternate. She has accepted two national board positions which will take up much of her time. She has been on the RRAC since the late 1980's. She said that she would attend as many future meetings as she can. The RRAC members and DOH expressed their appreciation for all her hard work.

David Carter also stated that the next meeting may be his last meeting on the RRAC, and that the RRAC needs to start thinking about who will be the next chairperson.

Clay Tappan brought up a topic for new business: to look at potential rule changes to allow the dual compartment toilet that Green's Environmental presented on earlier in the meeting. David Carter stated that this may also require a plumbing code rule change as well. Questions to ask are whether it is permitted under today's code and what would it take to change it.

- **Public Comment** – The public was allowed to comment throughout the meeting. Two public comment presentations were made during the meeting. One was made by Green's Environmental on the dual compartment toilet that separates urine from the waste stream to reduce nitrogen. The other was made by Lombardo Associates, Inc. about Nitrex, which is a type of technology that passively reduces nitrogen.
- **Next Meeting:** The next meeting is anticipated to be on October 9, 2008. The focus of the next meeting will be to review and rank oral presentations from respondents for the ITN's for the Nitrogen Reduction Study, the Town of Suwannee Study, and possibly the Inventory Study if this is done as an ITN.