

Florida Department of Health
Research Review and Advisory Committee for the Bureau of Onsite Sewage Programs

Draft Minutes of the Meeting held at the Gulf Coast Research and Education Center, Wimauma, FL
December 10, 2010

In attendance:

- **Committee Members and Alternates:**

- In person:**

- Sam Averett (alternate, Septic Tank Industry)
 - Tom Higginbotham (alternate, Division of Environmental Health)
 - Bob Himschoot (member, Septic Tank Industry)
 - Kriss Kaye (alternate, Home Building Industry)
 - Patti Sanzone (member, Environmental Interest Group)
 - Clay Tappan (chairman, member, Professional Engineer)

- Via teleconference:**

- Quentin (Bob) Beitel (alternate, Real Estate Profession)
 - Kim Dove (member, Division of Environmental Health)
 - Carl Ludecke (vice-chairman, member, Home Building Industry)
 - Bill Melton (member, Consumer)
 - Pam Tucker (member, Real Estate Profession)
 - Vincent Seibold (alternate, Local Government)

- Absent members and alternates:**

- John Dryden (alternate, State University System)
 - Geoff Luebkekmann (member, Restaurant Industry)
 - Mike McInarnay (alternate, Septic Tank Industry)
 - Susan McKinley (alternate, Restaurant Industry)
 - Jim Oskowis (member, Local Government)
 - Jim Peters (alternate, Professional Engineer)
 - Eanix Poole (alternate, Consumer)
 - John Schert (member, State University System)

- **Visitors:**

- In person:**

- Damann Anderson (Hazen and Sawyer)
 - Josefin Hirst (Hazen and Sawyer)
 - Don Orr (ADS, FOWA)
 - Maria Pecoraro (Rep. Nelson)
 - Steven Rowe (Big River Ind.)
 - Daniel Smith (AET)

- Via teleconference:**

- Sarah Fowler
 - Mary Howard (Orange County Health Department)

- **Department of Health (DOH), Bureau of Onsite Sewage Programs:**

- In person:**

- Elke Ursin, Environmental Health Program Consultant
 - Paul Booher, Professional Engineer

- Via teleconference:**

- Kim Duffek, Environmental Health Program Consultant
 - Eberhard Roeder, Professional Engineer

1. **Introductions** – Eight out of ten groups were present, representing a quorum. Missing the State University System and the Restaurant Industry. Chairman Tappan called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. Introductions were made and some housekeeping issues were discussed.

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2. **Review of Previous Meeting Minutes** – The minutes of November 5, 2010 were reviewed with some modifications/corrections made.

Motion by Bob Himschoot and seconded by Patti Sanzone to approve the minutes as amended. All were in favor with none opposed and the motion passed unanimously.

3. **Nitrogen Study**

- a) **Unfinished business** – At the November 5, 2010 meeting, RRAC made a motion to send a memo to the Department's budget office regarding the budget numbers for the nitrogen study and to determine what was earmarked to be stricken from the budget. The intent was to clarify what DOH has requested for budget authority for this study. This was discussed internally and clarification was made that historically the mechanism for requesting budget authority for the nitrogen study is through the progress report that is sent to the Florida Legislature and Governor. After discussion with Gerald Briggs, he did not know of anything that would be earmarked as to be stricken in the DOH budget regarding this project. DOH did request budget authority for the remaining balance of the already appropriated funds. As far as is known, DEP submitted for \$1-million in their budget for this project. Bob Himschoot wanted to see a breakdown of how much has been budgeted, how much has been spent, and how much is remaining. Damann Anderson indicated that the contract, which is on the Department's website, shows the budget for the project with deliverables and costs. Elke Ursin indicated that along with all invoices that are routed for payment, there is a spreadsheet which shows this information. Clay Tappan indicated that there is a summary table in the draft legislative report showing which deliverables have been completed, which are currently planned, and which are dependent on future funding.
- b) **Discussion on draft legislative report** –The interim legislative report, as outlined in the legislative language in this year's budget, is due on February 1, 2011 and will need to be routed internally at least a month prior to be completed on time. The revised report, based on the last meeting, was discussed. More detail was requested on Table 1 to show the budgeted amount for each of the tasks, how much total budget is currently appropriated, and how much remaining budget is needed. Other topics were discussed regarding modifications suggested to be made to the draft legislative report.

Bill Melton made a motion, seconded by Bob Himschoot, to follow the following protocol in getting the legislative report finalized:

- **Comments on the report are to be sent to Elke Ursin by close of business Monday December 13th.**
- **Comments will be compiled along with comments made at this meeting and sent to the RRAC on Tuesday December 14th as two pdf's (a final version and one with tracked changes).**
- **Votes will be emailed back to Elke Ursin by close of business on Thursday December 16th as either yes, no, or contingent. If a RRAC voting member does not respond this will be considered as a yes vote. Any contingent comments will be sent to RRAC. Once majority approval has been reached, the vote will be final.**

All were in favor, none opposed, and the motion passed.

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- c) **Comment on deliverables and next steps** – Elke Ursin gave an overview outlining what has happened since the last meeting. For Task A, a draft scope for proposed modifications for the Passive Nitrogen Removal Study Phase II (PNRS II) was submitted to staff, an authorization to proceed was given, and the modifications have been completed. Some additional small columns were constructed to provide information for the mini-mound component, and additional sampling will be associated with these columns. There will also likely be a process modeling component for PNRS II as well. Damann Anderson provided some information on how the PNRS II is set-up at the research facility and some of the overall project goals to address some questions from the RRAC. The Task B process forward meeting minutes and final QAPP was submitted to the Department. Home sites are currently being identified for Tasks B & C with plans to install one of the available passive technologies at a home site in Wakulla County. Instrumentation and monitoring of a Task C home site has begun in Wakulla County. The instrumentation and monitoring network for the GCREC mound was completed and monitoring/sampling has begun. The Task D scope and budget is being reworked to align with the QAPP. DOH staff gave the go-ahead to start the soil modeling work as per RRAC direction at a previous meeting.
4. **Research Priorities Workshop** – The basic process to get the ranking done as quickly and efficiently as possible was outlined. Everyone is to brainstorm up to 5 ideas for potential research projects. Then each person will recite his or her responses which will be written down by staff. Then a group discussion will occur to clarify and discuss the potential research projects. Then each person will select and rank the top 5 ideas. Finally, the rankings will be tallied and reported to show the final RRAC selection and ranking for research priorities. During the brainstorming process, RRAC shall consider studies that are related to human health, performance of onsite systems, and environmental impacts from onsite systems. After brainstorming, Elke Ursin asked each RRAC member to list their ideas. Several of the projects were explained in more detail. Eberhard Roeder provided an explanation of one of the projects that had to do with a study that Marion County did regarding the average age of failure for onsite systems based on several data sources and looking back at them now to see how many of these systems have failed. He also provided a more detailed explanation for the “designing for maintenance” project and how that project would be to discover ways that might make it easier to maintain systems that work. After some discussion it appeared as if this project might be more of a TRAP issue for known best management practices (i.e. designing a manhole to grade, putting observation ports in the drainfield). Grouping of some of the listed projects was done as well as listing some additional projects. Bob Himschoot suggested that the list should be narrowed down prior to doing the final ranking and prioritization. Patti Sanzone asked what the DOH timeline is for needing these projects ranked. Elke Ursin indicated that just after the June 10, 2010 meeting a budget was submitted requesting funding for several projects (alternative drainfield project, inventory, etc.) just in case they were voted as priorities, so that the budget would be available. This budget request is a placeholder for the funding, and does not require that any specific project be done. She will submit a budget in April/May for the 2011-2012 fiscal year. After further discussion RRAC directed Elke Ursin to email the revised priority list to the RRAC by Tuesday December 14th and RRAC is to send their top 10 projects back to Elke on Thursday December 16th. Once these projects have been screened, then a revised list will be sent to the RRAC prior to the next RRAC meeting.
5. **Other Business** – Bob Himschoot provided an update of SB 550 and how there are several bills being filed to repeal the bill. There is a coalition between home builders, realtors, Florida Chamber of Commerce, and associated industries (FOWA) proposing to keep the septic tank

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pumping and maintenance on a 5-year schedule and removing much of the rulemaking parts and simplifying the bill. Eberhard Roeder gave a quick update on the 319 project indicating that the testing of field procedures will be occurring in the near future. Elke Ursin requested that comments on the Town of Suwannee Journal Manuscript be sent to her as soon as possible. Elke also showed a graph depicting the number of new and repair septic installations on an annual basis. A significant drop in the number of permits has occurred over the past 5 years, as well as a crossing over in 2008 where the number of repairs first starts to outnumber the number of new systems.

6. **Public Comment** – The public were allowed to comment throughout the meeting. There was no additional public comment.
7. **Closing Comments, Next Meeting, and Adjournment** – Potential dates for the next RRAC meeting will be emailed to RRAC members and alternates to determine the next meeting date. It is anticipated that this meeting will occur sometime in March to coincide with the legislative session. The meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m. A tour of the nitrogen research test center at the Gulf Coast Research and Education Center (GCREC) was conducted after the meeting for all interested parties.

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