

RESEARCH REVIEW AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE

ONSITE SEWAGE TREATMENT AND DISPOSAL SYSTEMS

ADVISORY TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

AUTHORITY: SECTION 381.0065(4)(o), FLORIDA STATUTES

Approved Minutes of the Meeting held at the Southwood Office Complex, 4042 Bald Cypress Way, Room 301, Tallahassee, Florida
October 21, 2016

In attendance:

Research Review and Advisory Committee (RRAC) Members and Alternates:

In person:

- Bill Melton (vice-chairman, member, Consumer)
- Eberhard Roeder (member, Department of Health)

Via teleconference:

- Thomas Baker (alternate, Real Estate Profession)
- Craig Diamond (member, Environmental Interest Group)
- Roxanne Groover (member, Septic Tank Industry)
- Bob Himschoot (alternate, Home Building Industry)
- Carl Ludecke (chairman, member, Home Building Industry)
- Daniel Meeroff (alternate, State University System)
- Christopher Pettit (member, Local Government)
- Mark Repasky (alternate, Restaurant Industry)
- Eric Rollings (member, Real Estate Profession)
- John Schert (member, State University System)
- Clay Tappan (alternate, Professional Engineer)
- Mark Tumeo (member, Professional Engineer)
- Robert Washam (alternate, Consumer)

Absent members and alternates:

- Geoff Luebkemann (member, Restaurant Industry)
- Matt Surrency (alternate, Local Government)

Department of Health (DOH), Onsite Sewage Program Section:

In person:

- Ed Barranco, Environmental Administrator, Onsite Sewage Programs
- Xueqing Gao, Environmental Consultant, Onsite Sewage Programs
- Levi Owens, Project Manager, Florida Water Management Inventory
- Elke Ursin, Environmental Manager, Onsite Sewage Programs

Other attendees:

Via teleconference:

- Damann Anderson (Hazen and Sawyer)
- Quentin Beitel
- Richard Hicks (DEP)
- Laura Kramer (DOH, Volusia)
- Judy Orcutt
- Andrea Samson (JMI Center for Property Rights)
- Gary Smith
- Pam Weeks (DOH, Walton)

1. **Introductions** – Ten out of ten groups were present, representing a quorum. Chairman Ludecke called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. The agenda was presented, introductions were made, and some housekeeping issues were discussed.

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2. **Review of previous meeting minutes** – The RRAC reviewed the minutes of the December 10, 2015 meeting.

Motion by Craig Diamond and seconded by Roxanne Groover for the RRAC to approve the minutes of the December 10, 2015 meeting with no changes. All were in favor, none opposed, and the motion passed unanimously.

3. **Old Business and Research Program News** – Elke Ursin went over the action items from the last meeting.

Elke Ursin provided an update on RRAC composition. The RRAC member and alternate positions up for renewal in January 2017 are Consumers, the State University System, and the Local Government. Alternate positions are needed to fill the Department of Health, Septic Tank Industry, and Environmental Interest Group vacant spots.

There has been some restructuring in the Onsite Sewage Program to create a new Research and Engineering section. The team includes Dr. Eberhard Roeder, the program engineer, specializing in engineering and is a technical expert. Dr. Xueqing Gao, the program consultant, coordinates outreach and provides technical assistance with research and engineering. Elke Ursin, the program manager, coordinates the program and manages research projects. Elke gave an introduction to Dr. Gao, who joined the program since the last time the RRAC met. He was previously the Total Maximum Daily Load coordinator at DEP, and comes to us with a wealth of knowledge that is very helpful to the onsite sewage industry.

Elke Ursin announced that Paul Booher passed away on August 12, 2016. He was the program engineer for many years, was heavily involved in the research the RRAC was involved with, and was a great teacher and mentor for the industry. He will be missed tremendously.

4. **Update on onsite wastewater nitrogen reduction activities since last meeting** – Elke Ursin presented a brief introduction to the Florida Onsite Sewage Nitrogen Reduction Strategies Study, which was submitted to the governor and legislature on December 31, 2015. Dr. Gao gave a presentation on what activities have occurred since submittal of the report and how the Department has been involved, heavily, with springs remediation efforts as they relate to onsite wastewater systems. Dr. Gao's presentation updated the committee on the basin management action plan (BMAP) development activities for Outstanding Florida Springs (OFSs) across the State since the last RRAC meeting in December of 2015. The presentation covered the following information:
- (1) Florida legislature designated 31 out of more than 1,000 springs across the state as OFSs.
 - (2) Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) verified, using the Impaired Water Rules (Florida Administrative Code, Chapter 62-303) process, that 21 OFSs are impaired for nutrients (i.e. nitrate concentration exceeding the 0.35 mg/L numeric nutrient criteria for springs). Nutrient conditions for seven more springs have not been determined pending more data collection.
 - (3) DEP is mandated by the Florida Watershed Restoration Act (Florida Statute, Section 403.067) to develop and adopt restoration targets (i.e. total maximum daily load-TMDL) as

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- rule and restoration plans (e.g. BMAP) as Secretarial Orders for each impaired water-parameter on the Verified Lists.
- (4) Because of large numbers of waterbodies that DEP needs to assess and develop TMDLs, and generate BMAPs, Florida legislature passed the Water Bill (Florida Law, Chapter 2016-001) and authorized the establishment and adoption of the Florida Spring and Aquifer Protection Act (Section 373.801-373.813) to make the assessment, establish restoration targets, and develop restoration plan for OFS as a high priority in the state.
 - (5) The new statute sections require DEP to work with the Department, water management district, and local stakeholders to develop onsite sewage treatment and disposal system (OSTDS) remediation plans for OFS basins where OSTDS nitrogen contributions exceed 20% of the nonpoint source nitrogen loads or DEP believes that an OSTDS remediation plan is needed. The plan needs to target achieving TMDLs within 20 years and each five-year within the 20-year period should have a milestone restoration goal. These statute sections also require DEP to delineation priority focus areas (PFAs) in basins of impaired OFSs.
 - (6) OSTDS nitrogen contributions in nine OFS BMAP basins (or in PFAs of these BMAP basins) exceeded 20% of the total nonpoint source nitrogen loads. These spring basins include: Wakulla Spring, Wekiwa and Rock Springs, Silver Springs, Rainbow Springs, Volusia Blue Springs, Kings Bay-Crystal River, Homosassa Spring, Chassahowitzka Spring, and Weeki Wachee Springs. A non-OFS spring, Aripeka Spring, is also included in these nine springs for OSTDS remediation plan development because of the hydraulic connection between Aripeka and Weeki Wachee Springs.
 - (7) Since the last RRAC meeting in December of 2015, until the day of this RRAC meeting (October 21, 2016), DEP held 26 public meetings for OSTDS remediation plan development for these spring basins. The OSTDS remediation plan development activities impact 16 Florida counties in which the Department regulates OSTDS.
 - (8) Topics covered at these meetings include:
 - a. Statutory requirement of OSTDS remediation plan (Section 373.807, F.S.)
 - b. Establish PFAs (Section 373.803, F.S.)
 - c. Three major components of the OSTDS remediation plan (science, projects, and education program)
 - d. Major nitrogen sources in each basin and load contribution (nitrogen source inventory loading tool – NSILT)
 - e. Percent reduction of nitrogen loads needed to achieve TMDL targets
 - f. 5-year, 10-year, and 15-year milestone load reduction goals
 - g. Compilation of sewage treatment projects
 - h. Education program: message, audience, and methods of communication
 - (9) The Department has been closely involved in the development of these OSTDS plans:
 - a. DOH County Health Departments - Advisory Committee members in Wakulla, Wekiva, and the combined Silver and Rainbow Springs
 - b. Central Office staff provide information on:
 - i. Passive nitrogen removal strategy study

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- ii. Available nitrogen removal OSTDS technologies
 - iii. Tools for evaluating OSTDS efficiency and life-cycle cost
 - iv. How passive systems will be permitted
 - v. Florida Water Management Inventory
- c. Central Office staff frequently met with DEP staff to:
- i. Discuss OSTDS related issues
 - ii. Review NSILT reports and provide feedback
 - iii. Perform quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC) on the OSTDS data used in DEP NSILT development
 - iv. Provide technical assistance to DEP's water quality model development
 - v. Provide data and analyses to help DEP identify locations for priority projects
- (10) The Department is also continuing the monitoring project on five full-scale passive nitrogen removal systems installed and tested by the Florida Onsite Nitrogen Removal Strategy (FONRS) Studies in order to establish the long-term performance of these passive nitrogen removal systems and provide guidance to future system refinement and implementation.
- (11) The Department is also revising Chapter 64E-6 to accommodate the needs of implementing the liner in-ground passive nitrogen removal system, and working on incorporating alternative designs of the liner system, new system monitoring plans, and other stakeholder's comments into the revised rule language.
- (12) The Department is also working very diligently to establish the performance specifications for in-tank nitrogen removal systems.

During the BMAP update presentation, several questions and comments were raised by RRAC members and the public:

Bob Himschoot: Bob questioned the accuracy of the loading contribution from OSTDS. He considered NSILT nitrogen loading calculations as the end of pipe loading calculation or based on literature values. Nitrogen fate and transport was not considered in the loading calculation. With the data and information collected from the FONRS studies by Hazen and Sawyer, do we have a chance to refine and update these calculations?

Department Moderator: NSILT loading results are not end-of-pipe loading results. DEP considered the vadose zone attenuation and impact from ground water recharge when estimated load contribution from different sources. In fact, DEP used a vadose zone attenuation factor of 60% to estimate the load contribution from OSTDS, which was considered too generous and was later on reduced to about 50%. DEP is also working with St. Johns River Water Management District to incorporate the lookup table results from the FONRS studies into their source analyses to refine the nitrogen loading calculations. In addition, it has been DEP's consistent stance that NSILT calculations can be refined as more and site specific information and data are collected. The general goal is that, at the end of each 5-year period, DEP will re-examine the previous loading calculation and refine the calculation with more recent and site specific information and data.

Quentin Beitel: What data are being used to determine "If OSTDSs contribute 20% or more of the nonpoint source nitrogen loads to groundwater"?

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Department Moderator: DEP used land use and population density to estimate the number of people per household, got the per capita nitrogen loading rate based on literature reviews, and used the Florida Water Management Inventory to establish the number of OSTDS in a given BMAP basins. These data were then used to calculate the OSTDS nitrogen loads entering the drainfield. The final OSTDS nitrogen loadings entering the groundwater were calculated by applying the vadose zone attenuation rate (about 50% to 60%) and groundwater recharge rate factor to the OSTDS loads entering the drainfield.

Quentin Beitel: What is the final date that this assessment will be done so that we know what we need to do with BMAP? Has the Wekiva NSILT be developed?

Department Moderator: Different BMAP basins have different dates. For Wekiva basin, the NSILT analyses will be drafted in May or June of 2017.

Quentin Beitel: What are the date and data used for the impaired 23 springs? It seems that the data are old and have they been updated? When was the last time you determined that a spring is impaired?

Department Moderator: The 21 springs verified for nutrient impairments belong to different basins. Different periods of records were used for verifying impaired waters in different basins. There are Verified Lists posted on DEP's website that specify the date of the impairment verification and the periods of records used to verify the impairment for any given verified waterbodies. The nutrient impairments of Wekiwa Springs should have been verified in 2005 to 2006 period (correction, the impairment was added onto the Verified List in 2007). TMDL for the spring was done in 2007 (correction, TMDL was adopted in 2008), and BMAP was adopted in 2015. After DEP develops and adopts a BMAP, they will constantly assess the existing concentrations of the nitrate in spring vents and spring runs and compare these existing concentrations to the TMDL target concentration to assess whether further reduction of nitrogen load is needed. DEP prepares an annual report after a BMAP is adopted to evaluate the improvement of the water quality condition in these spring basins. So the existing condition and the percent reduction are consistently updated.

Bill Melton: BMAPs did not take into consideration that there are 2 million households in Florida people who have valid septic tank permits? Is there a consideration who is going to pay the money for the spring restoration?

Department Moderator: There are \$50 million for spring protection and they are looking for projects. There are a lot of projects but most are about connecting the onsite systems to sewer. The Department is changing the dialogues to consider where things need to be done, how much it is going to cost, and what are alternatives out there. In addition, the \$50 million is managed through DEP, and water management districts will create projects by recruiting local sponsors from counties and municipalities. Counties and municipalities will provide their funds to match the \$50 million dollar funds.

Eric Rollings: How many dye tracer studies have been done across Florida to understand the nitrogen transport? For Wekiva River Basin, there were no dye tracer studies done. Nitrogen loading may not just come from one area. Multiple areas may contribute. It is important to know what are these sources.

Department Moderator: Dye study is important, however, there are other methods that can be used to estimate the contribution from sources influencing a springs. For example, the new statute

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requires DEP to delineate the priority focus area (PFA) for impaired Outstand Florida Springs. The PFA delineation takes into consideration the USGS potentiometric contour of a given basin and establishes the general contribution area. The PFA delineation also takes into consideration the local hydrogeology and pollutant contribution. All these analyses provide estimation on the general contributing areas for a given spring and the possible pollutant sources within the contribution areas. So, dye study results are not the only results that we can rely on to determine the source contributions.

Andrea Samson: Page 20 of the TMDL report suggests that, at the time when the Wekiva River TMDL was developed, no data specific to Wekiva and Rock Springs indicated toxic effects on the benthic macro-invertebrate communities. This is in conflict with the call that the Wekiva spring is impaired. She stated that we need to make sure that the impairment and the restoration plans are supported by sufficient scientific evidence. She stated that we need to better understand the fate and transport of the nitrogen in impaired spring basins.

Department Moderator: The mission of the Department in developing the OSTDS remediation plan is to address OSTDS. The TMDL part of the question should be directed to DEP. But we should also pay attention that the Florida nutrient criteria assessment includes both fauna and flora. While there were no direct evidence pointing to the toxic effect of the nutrient to the benthic invertebrate communities, there were many evidences included in the TMDL report that the aquatic flora communities were out of balance, ecological efficiency of the communities decreased, and there were experimental evidences to show that, when nitrate concentrations were elevated to more than 0.3 mg/L, some blue-green benthic algae would dramatically increase. These are all scientific evidence that the spring is impaired and the target for restoration is supported by these evidences. Of course, understanding the fate and transport of nitrate in the spring system is very important. We can consider using the nitrogen tools that we have to estimate the nitrogen loading in spring basins. Maybe using the fate and transport model developed through the Hazen and Sawyer's studies as a way to evaluate the impact of nitrogen from different sources. This may be considered as one of our possible projects for the future.

Bob Himschoot: What about the seasonal occupancy that some houses are only occupied part time. Was that considered in the NSILT calculation?

Department Moderator: DEP NSILTs took that into consideration.

Bob Himschoot: DEP groundwater data for Wekiva studies was collected in 2001-2009, draft NSILT report was done in 2012, and the final report was done in 2013. We see data going back to 2001, we are now in 2016, but TMDL is not changed.

Department Moderator: TMDL does not deal with source loading. It only considers the instream concentration. TMDLs are different from the NSILT loading calculation.

Bob Himschoot: What about other sources? There are other sources contributing nitrogen. There is probably too much emphasis being put on OSTDS.

Department Moderator: DEP also looks into many other sources, such as nitrogen loads from atmospheric deposition, urban turf grass fertilization, golf course fertilization, agriculture fertilization, livestock contribution, and wastewater treatment plants contribution. There are separate BMAP efforts addressing loading from these sources and the emphasis of the OSTDS remediation plan meetings is on OSTDS contribution.

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Craig Diamond: TMDL is not a concentration, but a quantity.

Mark Tumeo: TMDL is actually a mass flow rate - it is mass per unit time (daily)

Department Moderator: TMDL as a concept is indeed a load. However, most importantly, TMDLs represent restoration targets for impaired waters. Each individual TMDL can be expressed as concentrations, as loads, or as both. For many surface water nutrient and dissolved oxygen TMDLs, DEP used water quality models to simulate pollutant loads. Those TMDLs are mostly represented as loads. However, for fecal coliform TMDLs and spring TMDLs, the restoration targets are mostly expressed as concentrations. In order to implement these concentration targets, tools like NSILT was developed to evaluate the load contribution from different sources and set the loading bench mark from which load reduction can be achieved. DEP has never specified that a given TMDL has to be expressed as a load and this concept is accepted by the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

- 5. Florida Water Management Inventory** – Elke Ursin gave an update on the Florida Water Management Inventory. The project is to create a statewide map showing the drinking water source and wastewater treatment method for all built properties. She said that the team has expanded the project to cover both wastewater and drinking water, public and private, and created a result that is the first in the nation. The overall question is to find out where all the wastewater goes in Florida. There are about 1,800 domestic wastewater treatment plants in the State of Florida, with about 2/3 of the total population connected to this system. There are 2.7 million onsite wastewater systems in the state based on the census estimate. In sensitive environments, if remediation needs to happen there is a great need to know where these areas are located. The data set shows where all the onsite wastewater systems are.

The project began in 2008 by specific appropriations 1682, which required the Department to provide a statewide inventory of all OSTDS in Florida. This is the same appropriation that launched the nitrogen study. In that project, 80% of all the permitted wastewater in the state was collected from wastewater treatment plants. In April, 2014 CDC funded a portion of the project through disaster preparedness funds and kicked the project off.

Levi Owens, the project manager for the Florida Water Management Inventory Project, gave a presentation on the project, which is outlined below:

Levi Owens: Thank you to everyone to allow me to go over this project. We know all of you have been involved and supported this project from the beginning. We've just wrapped up the first cycle in September. The goal of the project is to map every built parcel in the state of Florida and recognize their water and wastewater treatment methods. From the beginning a collaborative effort is invaluable to maintain a positive relationship with stakeholders.

Working on a project like this is fun because this project is uncharted waters and you never know the challenges that will come into play. There is no centralized source for the data that we are gathering, assigning drinking and wastewater values to the state of Florida is important to response and environmental planning. We were able to provide GIS Coastal Maps during hurricane Matthew to show the different water and wastewater sources making it the first time this data has been put into action.

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Where did we get all of the data? Well, the data did not come from one source so we had to search the state for what we needed. Places like Property Appraisers and Department of Revenue provided the parcel data. From DEP we received locations of public water systems and wastewater treatment facilities through Geographic Information System point data. Point data from DEP establishes accurate data through exact latitude and longitude locations. From the Water Management Districts, we received private well data, and the Department provided septic data. But the bulk of the information came directly from utility providers.

The team consists of four members, Elke Ursin is the Project Owner, Liz Sabeff is the GIS Administrator, Alexandria Walter is the Data Processor, and Levi Owens is the Project Manager.

In May of 2014 we started gathering data after breaking the state up into four different phases of all 67 counties.

Elke Ursin: Let me expand on how the pilot systems were selected. In 2009, when we did our first inventory, the most complete inventory came from Alachua County, and Marion County had the most incomplete data. We had received a letter of support from Palm Beach County for the CDC funding, so they were included. We also selected several counties along the Indian River Lagoon to help provide data for that environmental need. Finally, we selected Charlotte and Lee counties because they have a relatively large number of onsite systems. Phase 2 counties were selected to wrap up the coverage of the northern east coast of Florida. Phase 3 counties were all those with springs with TMDL's. Phase 4 was everything else.

Levi Owens: Once we were on Phase 3 we encountered the largest number of counties. we wrapped things up in September with Phase 4 which was a really great mix of urban and rural counties.

We start with source data that needs to be scrubbed. DEP source data for the drinking water and wastewater facilities, which includes information on the facilities themselves as well as contact information, is the foundation that we built this project around.

We began each phase with a meeting with the county health departments (CHDs) to summarize what data might already be out there, whether the utility companies have GIS data, and to fill in the gaps for contact information.

Single parcel facilities are where a wastewater or drinking water system serves only one single parcel of land. Single parcel facilities are commonly mobile home parks, churches, schools. Point data is correlated with single parcel facilities from DEP we don't have to ask any other person for any data because we can fill in the blanks with these bits of information.

The most valuable piece of information we could have received from anyone is GIS data. It is so much more efficient and useful since the accuracy is greater. If no GIS data is given, we have to use tabular data.

Some areas provided a centralized data gathering model. It was done by Leon, Duval, and Indian River counties. One person in the county is to be the centralized data gatherer and

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sole transmitter of data so local area knowledge is utilized. Employing this method enabled these counties to have a highly accurate inventory.

After the pilot program everything else was solicited via email. A mass mailing was not effective, and electronic communication was the most successful. Nearly half of the data was manually researched by the four-person team itself.

We doubled the percentage of population served by using GIS. In Phase 3 we had less success as we were unable to get GIS data for some large utility providers. The overall data gathering results showed that we received 91% of the wastewater data in the state, and 81% of the drinking water data.

Elke Ursin: The 91% is based on the permitted capacity of the DEP Wastewater Treatment Plants. For drinking water, the 81% is based on the population served by the drinking water system. We used the known sewer values in the 2009 inventory if we did not hear from the facility during this data gathering effort. You can look at 91-81 and you see a 10% difference, that likely captures how much of the contribution came from the 2009 inventory.

Levi Owens: If we do not get GIS data then the tabular data must be geocoded. Geocoding is taking a physical address and creating a point.

Elke Ursin: We used geocoding software that put points on actual parcels so it's a lot more accurate than other software which puts a point on a street segment.

Levi Owens: Data Processing is very important if we are unable to attain GIS data sets.

Levi Owens: The different assigned values represent the status of the water and wastewater methods. Known, Likely, Somewhat Likely, Unknown, Undetermined. As a product team reducing the unknowns on the maps is a priority.

Elke Ursin: Appendix E of the final draft report gets into the estimation and methodology of how we assigned these values.

Levi Owens: The foundation is the parcel data, just imagine the state broken up in different polygon shapes. We used the environmental health database (EHD) to run query records and give them to the data processor for geocoding to create GIS points to import into GIS for geoprocessing.

Elke Ursin: I want to expand on how we gathered data from EHD. The state captures permitting information for onsite systems and some of the data gathered is the drinking water source because we have to know that for permitting evaluations. We used that information to help populate the drinking water for a parcel. There are a lot of environmental health programs that the Department administer. One example is mobile home parks. Part of their inspection is to make sure that the drinking water and waste water systems operating efficiently. These data are captured in EHD, and were also mined and populated the inventory.

Levi Owens: What we end up with is the assignment of a drinking water and wastewater value for every built parcel in Florida. Quality Audits are performed on each geo-process.

Polk has the largest number of parcels with septic systems, and Glades has the highest proportion of built properties on septic systems.

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The most accurately mapped counties are Indian River, Nassau, and Marion counties, with the vast majority of counties have many more estimated septic systems than known systems. This demonstrates that additional work still needs to be done and it's going to take some time to get there. The project team outlined strategies for getting information to start to close the gaps.

There are about 9-million parcels in Florida, with 6.9-million having been built. The results of the Florida Water Management Inventory show that there are 2.1-million parcels with onsite wastewater systems. Based on the information that we gathered, there is a 23% reduction to the census-based estimation that there are 2.7-million OSTDS in Florida. Our goal is to continue to close the gap and reduce the number of unknowns. With the decisions that have to be made regarding the environment and growth, and considering the money that is being spent, we now have a tool that can be used that is based on solid data.

Elke Ursin: Thank you Levi. We began in 2014 with a focus on developing new business processes and standard operating procedures. In 2015 all the parcel data was compiled and processed for the pilot program, Phase 2, and Phase 3. GIS analysis and mapping was completed for the pilot program and Phase 2. In 2016, the rest of the project was completed. We are working on our final deliverable to give to DEP for early November 2016. What I would like from the RRAC and the public is to look at final draft report and please send me a direct email with your comments on October 28, 2016. I will then compile those comments and finalize the report for DEP and EPA.

Andrea Samson asked a question about how the data was used out in the field for hurricane Matthew response. Several septic systems may have washed away on the coast, so we created a map book using GIS of the coastline of St. Johns County and used the coastal construction line to visually see where construction would be restricted. The strike teams can make the assessment of where there are septic systems, and where sewer is available, in order to provide faster response. I'm not sure exactly how it was applied in the field.

Flooded areas were also mapped so that private drinking water wells in areas of known flooding could target sampling efforts for homeowners to make sure they're not drinking contaminated drinking water. It's a great use of this tool, drinking water toxics program is very interested in this data.

We have a very detailed project website and have several planned improvements in the works. The website itself hasn't been updated yet but it will be. There will be a standardized template for every county to provide summary data.

We have a web application you can go to <http://gis.flhealth.gov/flwmi>. You can type in your address and zoom to the property and access the information on that parcel. This is not done for all counties yet, but we will have all of the information hopefully online in the next couple of weeks. We plan on expanding this web application to make it more useful.

We have several planned improvements to increase online data accessibility, provide enhancements to EHD, update county data to fill in blanks and refine estimations, and ground-truth data.

We are still looking for additional funding that's not federal so I can supplement this DEP project and help with the matching funds requirement.

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That takes care of the inventory project any questions?

Question from Bob Himschoot: Levi have you considered having the property appraiser records identify the drinking water and wastewater data?

Levi Owens: Yes, we want to get there eventually.

Elke Ursin: Having this information available on the property appraiser's websites would be a definite improvement. It would be great to be able to incorporate that into their system. For this next cycle we will try to reach out to these appraisers to let them know about this data source.

So again, please send comments to me by October 28, 2016.

- 6. New Business** – Elke Ursin said that there is a need to update our list of research priorities. They have not been updated since 2011. Program staff have been busy with the nitrogen study and the inventory project over the past several years. There is a need to move forward with this. Our funding comes from a \$5 surcharge on septic systems. The funding covers Elke Ursin's salary, the traveling for the resampling of the research systems, and is funding a match for the inventory project. Elke is always on the lookout for federal or state funding, and has been very developing projects for potential funding.

There is a list of past project considerations. We have gone back and forth on how to do the prioritization and one way would be to take a two-step approach: make a quick list and then determine details such as the overall goals and basic tasks. Elke will gather past project ideas and send that to RRAC. She is hoping a quick list would suffice, and entire project descriptions can come later. The direction from the last meeting is to start fresh with a fresh list. Bill Melton has one project on alternative drainfield systems that's been around for a really long time.

Bob Himschoot said that in the past two years he has approached the EPA and has put together a lobbying group and task force with the National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association (NOWRA) Board of Governors. One of the purposes for that group has been to approach the EPA and look for funding on the onsite disposal systems in a fair and equitable manner. There are all sorts of funds for centralized wastewater infrastructure, but funding for onsite sewage systems is underfunded. The states are not asking for the funding to go to decentralized systems. He suggests to educate the congressional bodies about the inconsistent funding for wastewater infrastructure, and is exploring an opportunity to ask the state for specific funds to be dedicated to onsite sewage. Elke Ursin said that she will be going to the NOWRA conference next week. She reminded the RRAC member to remember the sunshine laws and make sure there are no sidebar conversations between members.

Bob Himschoot said they have the right to petition to the EPA. He said that they will be discussing the mission statement with the NOWRA caucus, as well as the goals and objectives with the NOWRA lobbyists. He said that this is going to be a long term scenario, but if we want to get the onsite program dedicated to funding and is willing to ask the state for money. Ed Barranco said that the federal rules need to be looked at regarding how the money is divided. The program has asked for clean water act dollars be used for onsite sewage systems and the request was revoked. There

RESEARCH REVIEW AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE

ONSITE SEWAGE TREATMENT AND DISPOSAL SYSTEMS

ADVISORY TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

AUTHORITY: SECTION 381.0065(4)(a), FLORIDA STATUTES

may be an existing statutory structure that exists that limits what can be done, and that should be studied. Bob Himschoot said that if the needs are not being met supporting the maintenance and management of onsite systems EPA should be aware and provide the funding. Most states do not really parse funds for the onsite industry, so the industry has taken it upon itself. State onsite sewage programs should take a percentage of those federal funds to improve the onsite sewage infrastructure.

Motion by Roxanne Groover and seconded by Eberhard Roeder, for a member of the RRAC to attend the NOWRA Board of Governors meeting to gather information and bring it back to the RRAC. Once that is done, RRAC and Department staff can discuss what the next steps are. All were in favor, none opposed, and the motion passed unanimously.

Elke Ursin will start to gather the rules and regulations related to the Clean Water Act State Revolving Funds and will find contacts at DEP. Elke Ursin let the group know that the Department cannot do any lobbying, and to be very cognizant of that.

7. **Public Comment** – The public commented throughout the meeting.
8. **Closing Comments, Next Meeting, and Adjournment** – The next meeting will be scheduled in early December as needed with a focus to set future research priorities and continue the discussion on funding for onsite sewage activities.

Motion by Bill Melton and seconded by Eric Rollings, for the RRAC to adjourn at 12:20 p.m. All were in favor, none opposed, and the motion passed unanimously.

Summary of action items from meeting:

- Comments due to Elke Ursin on the draft final report for the Florida Water Management Inventory by October 28, 2016
- RRAC member to attend NOWRA Board of Governors meeting at the conference at the end of October in Reno, Nevada and report back to the RRAC
- Elke Ursin will start to gather the rules and regulations related to the Clean Water Act State Revolving Funds and will find contacts at DEP
- Elke will gather past research project ideas and send them to RRAC

Past action items not completed:

- Elke Ursin needs to finish review of a report looking at correlations between water quality, OSTDS, and health effects and will get that out to the committee
- Elke Ursin will provide cash and budget information for the OSTDS Research Program at the meeting held to discuss research priorities