

# 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

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Draft Minutes of the Meeting held at the UF-IFAS Extension Office, Orlando, Florida  
December 10, 2015

#### In attendance:

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

##### In person:

- Quentin (Bob) Beitel (member, Real Estate Profession)
- Roxanne Groover (member, Septic Tank Industry)
- Carl Ludecke (vice-chairman, member, Home Building Industry)
- Mark Repasky (alternate, Restaurant Industry)
- Eberhard Roeder (member, Department of Health)
- Matt Surrency (alternate, Local Government)

##### Via teleconference:

- Daniel Meeroff (alternate, State University System)
- Bill Melton (member, Consumer)
- Clay Tappan (chairman, member, Professional Engineer)
- Robert Washam (alternate, Consumer)

##### Absent members and alternates:

- Craig Diamond (member, Environmental Interest Group)
- Ed Dion (alternate, Home Building Industry)
- Geoff Luebke (member, Restaurant Industry)
- Tony Macaluso (alternate, Real Estate Profession)
- Christopher Pettit (member, Local Government)
- John Schert (member, State University System)

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

##### In person:

- Marcelo Blanco, Program Consultant, Onsite Sewage Programs
- Elke Ursin, Research Program Coordinator, Onsite Sewage Programs

##### Via teleconference:

- Ed Barranco, Environmental Administrator, Onsite Sewage Programs
- Kendra Goff, Chief, Bureau of Environmental Health
- Dale Holcomb, Environmental Administrator, Onsite Sewage Programs

#### Other attendees:

##### In person:

- Damann Anderson (Hazen and Sawyer)
- Doug Buck (Florida Home Builders Association)
- Nanci Cornwell (Senator Hays Office)
- Kim Duffek (DOH, Orange)
- Chris Ferraro (DEP Central District)
- Vic Godlewski (City of Orlando)
- Bart Harris (DOH, Orange)
- Richard Hicks (DEP)
- Laura Kramer (DOH, Volusia)
- Kari Lara-Murabito (DOH, Orange)
- Tony Matthews (Seminole County Government)
- Don Orr (Advanced Drainage Systems)
- Andrea Samson (JMI Center for Property Rights)
- Corazon Santiago (DOH, Orange)
- Scott Thomson (Plastic Tubing Industries)

##### Via teleconference:

- Maurice Barker (DEP)
- Will Bryant (DOH, Citrus)
- David Carter (Florida Home Builders Association)
- Josefin Hirst (Hazen and Sawyer)
- Tom Joos (DOH, Legislative Affairs)
- Kathryn Lowe (Colorado School of Mines)
- Eanix Poole (former RRAC)

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- Crystal Steele (DOH, Walton)
  - Charles Vogt (DOH, Indian River)
1. **Introductions** – Nine out of ten groups were present, representing a quorum. Vice-chairman Ludecke called the meeting to order at 10:12 a.m. The agenda was presented, introductions were made, and some housekeeping issues were discussed.
  2. **Election of RRAC Chair and Vice-Chair** – Elke Ursin said she has not received any nominations for the Chair position prior to the meeting. She asked for nominations. Quentin Beitel said that this was his last meeting. Bill Melton nominated Carl Ludecke for Chair. Quentin Beitel nominated Bill Melton for Vice Chair.

**Motion by Quentin Beitel and seconded by Eberhard Roeder for Carl Ludecke to be the Chair. Motion by Quentin Beitel and seconded by Mark Repasky for Bill Melton to be the Vice-Chair. All were in favor, none opposed, and the motion passed unanimously.**
  3. **Old Business** – Elke Ursin went over the action items from the last meeting.

Elke Ursin provided an update on RRAC composition. Both the Home Building Industry and Real Estate Profession have submitted nominations. Nominations have been requested to fill the Professional Engineers spot. Alternate positions are needed to fill the Department of Health, Septic Tank Industry, and Environmental Interest Group vacant spots.

The project website has been updated with links to all nitrogen study deliverables. Comments and responses on Task B report have been posted on the website. The final report outline was also posted on the website.
  4. **Review of previous meeting minutes** – The RRAC reviewed the minutes of the October 6, 2015 meeting.

**Motion by Eberhard Roeder and seconded by Quentin Beitel for the RRAC to approve the minutes of the October 6, 2015 meeting with no changes. All were in favor, none opposed, and the motion passed unanimously.**
  5. **Nitrogen Study Update** – Elke Ursin presented an update on the Florida Onsite Sewage Nitrogen Reduction Strategies Study. Elke Ursin said that the bulk of time for this meeting is to go over the draft nitrogen study Legislative report. She requested formatting and grammar comments be sent directly to her rather than discussing in the meeting, and that this meeting was to go over the report content. By December 31, 2015, the Department shall submit a final report to the Legislature containing:
    - a) Analysis of field monitoring of performance and cost of technologies at various sites
    - b) Analysis of soil and groundwater sampling at various sites to determine how nitrogen moves
    - c) Analysis of various models to show how nitrogen is affected by treatment in Florida-specific soils

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- d) Final reporting on all tasks with recommendations for science-based nitrogen reduction options for OSTDS

Elke posted the link to the final report into the chat window. The December 1, 2015 version of the report is the topic of today's discussion. Concurrently to RRAC's review, there is a review going on within the Department. The December 8, 2015 version, which is the latest version routing within the Department, moved some technical information into appendices. Quentin Beitel expressed his concern that RRAC is not reviewing the final document. Elke Ursin will be compiling comments from RRAC, the public, and the Department. Roxanne Groover inquired when RRAC could see the final report, and Elke Ursin was not sure due to the tight timeframe.

Elke Ursin pulled up the December 8, 2015 version with tracked changes so she could outline the changes made to the December 1, 2015 document. She outlined which sections of the December 8, 2015 report were moved into appendices.

There was a lengthy discussion as the committee and the public went over the report section by section, which was recorded and available via this weblink:  
<http://connectpro22543231.adobeconnect.com/p7j87h7qjok/>

Some of the discussion points were:

- Clarifying and simplifying some of the field sampling details such as how the home sites were selected
- Describing how the field systems were permitted
- Making it clear that the results of these studied systems are not going to impact all systems throughout the state
- Using the term onsite wastewater treatment system and soil treatment unit instead of septic system and drainfield
- Clarifying what work was done by the contractor and what work was done by the Department
- Outlining the steps necessary to make these systems available to install
- Describing the reasoning behind renumbering the home sites to allow for grouping of the technologies into in-tank and in-ground, rather than the original numbering which was based on installation date
- Clarifying the media longevity estimates are based on stoichiometry not field measurements
- Making sure that the report makes clear actual costs versus standardized costs
- Discussing how RRAC's comments and recommendations will make it into the report and whether there will be any consensus that could be made within the available timeframe
- Making sure there is some mention in the report of Florida's karst environment and how that could impact some of the model results

Quentin Beitel requested that tracked changes version of December 8, 2015 version be sent out to the committee.

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Andrea Samson said that the discussion has evolved from the 2008 legislation. She said that back then it was about mandating performance-based treatment systems, and now it is about a water policy bill and allocating resources. She said there are two main considerations: (1) How big a factor is onsite wastewater compared to other factors; and (2) How much will it cost per pound of nitrogen removed.

Roxanne Groover suggested that RRAC could provide recommendations to TRAP regarding the rule language because TRAP has tabled that language. Damann Anderson suggested that more details are needed before TRAP can move forward, and a decision made on whether to use a prescriptive code or a performance code. Damann Anderson said that design criteria were going to be included in this final report if the time and funding had been available.

Elke Ursin summarized that the report is under DOH-review and that the report will be completed by December 31, 2015. Comments from RRAC and the public will be reviewed and incorporated into the version of the report that is routing internally. The deadline for comments to be submitted to Elke is by close of business on December 16, 2015.

Roxanne Groover requested that RRAC be copied via email with all versions of the report that are going through review. Elke Ursin said that she would have to check on how that process could work as the review time remaining is short and things are moving rapidly back and forth. Roxanne said that she only requests this if it does not complicate things or impact the deadline.

Doug Buck asked if this type of report is sent annually for this project, and Elke Ursin said that it has been variable, with some years requiring two progress/status reports, others one, and others none. Doug asked whether the reports arrived on time, and Elke said that generally they have been submitted early. Doug was under the impression that final report is not going to be on time, and that it may be more important to get it right than be on time. Elke said that staff have been keeping executive leadership informed on a regular basis on this project.

Elke Ursin congratulated Hazen and Sawyer for winning the 2016 Engineering Excellence Grand Award from the Florida Institute of Consulting Engineers for the project, and now qualify for the national award.

Elke Ursin said that one of the appendices lists all the public outreach that has been done as part of this project. There have been 33 RRAC meetings for this project, and 11 Legislative reports. She said that the entire project team has been heavily involved with getting the word out about this important project.

Elke Ursin will send an email to the RRAC email distribution list for interested parties within the next several days summarizing the meeting and informing them of the comment deadline of close of business on December 16, 2015.

- 6. Updates on Other Projects** – 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
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wastewater treatment method for all built properties. She said that she is actively working with DEP to secure EPA nonpoint source pollution grant funding. The focus for mapping at this point is counties that are impacted by springs Basin Management Action Plans. The funding has been inconsistent, and has caused delays in the project.

7. **New Business** – Elke Ursin said that there is a need to update our list of research priorities. They have not been updated since 2011. The research program staff and resources have been heavily focused on the nitrogen study as well as the Florida Water Management Inventory. A Masters in Public Health intern provided some work on one of the 2011 projects looking at correlations between water quality, OSTDS, and health effects. Elke Ursin needs to finish review of that report and will get that out to the committee. Kari Lara-Murabito mentioned that she is developing a project that would help with this priority as she investigates sanitary nuisances in Orange County and water quality. The project looking at the effectiveness of outlet filters was put on hold because other outside research was going on looking at this. Roxanne Groover provided an update that the NSF protocol is stalled because there was no agreement on what artificial sewage waste would look like. Eberhard Roeder said that he thought there was also a field performance verification being developed but that an outlet filter company is needed to test the protocol.

Elke Ursin asked whether RRAC would prefer to focus on completing the 2011 priorities and then coming back to the RRAC to rank new projects, or whether RRAC would prefer moving ahead now with ranking new projects. Carl Ludecke said it would be good to set new priorities now. Some of the unanswered questions from the nitrogen study may be ideas for future projects. Elke Ursin said that knowing how much money is available is important and she will provide cash and budget numbers.

8. **Public Comment** – The public commented throughout the meeting.
9. **Closing Comments, Next Meeting, and Adjournment** – Elke Ursin thanked Clay Tappan for all of the hard work he has done for the committee serving as committee chair. There was a round of applause. David Carter, the previous RRAC chair, was also on the call earlier. Elke Ursin said that he knows well how much work goes into being the chair. Clay thanked staff for doing a wonderful job and appreciated having the opportunity to provide input. Elke Ursin thanked the RRAC for all of their time and commitment to the project.

The next meeting will be scheduled as needed with a focus to provide an update on the nitrogen study report and to set future research priorities.

**Motion by Eberhard Roeder and seconded by Roxanne Groover, for the RRAC to adjourn at 2:15 p.m. All were in favor, none opposed, and the motion passed unanimously.**

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#### Summary of action items from meeting:

- Elke Ursin will send the December 8, 2015 version of the report with tracked changes to the RRAC
- Elke Ursin will send an email to the RRAC email distribution list for interested parties within the next several days summarizing the meeting and informing them of the comment deadline of close of business on December 16, 2015
- 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