

**Florida Department of Health Research Review and Advisory Committee
Division of Disease Control and Health Protection
Bureau of Environmental Health - Onsite Sewage Programs Section**

Approved Minutes of the Meeting held at the Southwood Office Complex, Tallahassee, FL
November 14, 2012

In attendance:

- **Committee Members and Alternates:**

- In person:**

- Carl Ludecke (vice-chairman, member, Home Building Industry)
 - Bill Melton (member, Consumer)

- Via teleconference:**

- Quentin (Bob) Beitel (alternate, Real Estate Profession)
 - Taylor Brown (alternate, Division of Environmental Health)
 - Tom Higginbotham (alternate, Division of Environmental Health)
 - Bob Himschoot (alternate, Septic Tank Industry)
 - Eanix Poole (alternate, Consumer)
 - David Richardson (alternate, Local Government)
 - John Schert (member, State University System)
 - Clay Tappan (chairman, member, Professional Engineer)

- Absent members and alternates:**

- Wayne Crotty (member, Septic Tank Industry)
 - Paul Davis (member, Division of Environmental Health)
 - Craig Diamond (member, Environmental Interest Group)
 - John Dryden (alternate, State University System)
 - Kriss Kaye (alternate, Home Building Industry)
 - Geoff Luebkekmann (member, Restaurant Industry)
 - Susan McKinley (alternate, Restaurant Industry)
 - Tom Miller (member, Local Government)
 - Jim Peters (alternate, Professional Engineer)

- **Visitors:**

- In person:**

- Anthony Gaudio (Sustainable Tallahassee)
 - Richard Hicks (DEP)
 - Keith Parmer (Wakulla Springs Alliance)
 - Dan Pennington (1000 Friends of Florida)
 - Jim Stephenson (Wakulla Springs Alliance)

- Via teleconference:**

- Damann Anderson (Hazen and Sawyer)
 - Josefin Hirst (Hazen and Sawyer)
 - Steve Meints
 - Don Orr
 - Andrea Samson
 - Sarah
 - Lee Smith
 - Shanin Speas-Frost
 - Pam Tucker

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

- In person:**

- Eberhard Roeder, Professional Engineer
 - Elke Ursin, Environmental Health Program Consultant

- Via teleconference:**

- None

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1. **Introductions** – Eight out of ten groups were present, representing a quorum. The groups that were not represented were the Environmental Interest Group and the Restaurant Industry. Chairman Tappan called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. The agenda was outlined, introductions were made, and some housekeeping issues were discussed. Since the last meeting Tom Miller, the Local Government member, resigned due to relocating out of state. Proposed replacements have been named and staff is working on gathering all information required to appoint these people. Groups on the RRAC that have terms expiring in January of 2013 are the Real Estate Professionals, the Professional Engineers, and the Home Building Industry. Letters will be sent to the appointing agencies requesting nominations. A brief overview was given of the DOH restructuring as it relates to the onsite sewage section. The old structure had a Division of Environmental Health and a Bureau of Onsite Sewage Programs. The new structure has a Division of Disease Control and Health Protection, a Bureau of Environmental Health, and a combined Water and Onsite Sewage Section.

2. **Review of previous meeting minutes** – The minutes of the June 21, 2012 meeting were reviewed.

Motion by Quentin Beitel, seconded by Bill Melton, to approve the minutes as presented. All were in favor and none opposed and the motion passed unanimously.

3. **Nitrogen Study Update** – Elke Ursin presented on the nitrogen reduction strategies study. On July 1, 2012 the project received \$1.5-million in budget and cash for continuation of the study. These funds must be expended this fiscal year or they go away. In the past the funds come from a DEP trust fund and were deposited into an account that carried over between fiscal years. Staff members are working closely with Damann Anderson and his group to find ways to ensure these funds will be spent. Staff, in coordination with the provider, authorized work to begin on additional tasks. The October 2012 Legislative Status Report was discussed. Bill Melton stated that the next report should re-emphasize maintenance component so that there is an understanding that maintenance is important for these systems and will occur. Bob Himschoot asked if the results of the monitoring will be included in the report and Elke Ursin, with confirmation from Damann Anderson, stated that the results are preliminary at this point and would better be discussed after the sampling has been completed so that there is continuity and context. The Task A final report on the test facility work is close to being complete and a summary of those results would be included in the legislative status report due after that deliverable is complete. There was a discussion regarding the funding for the project: what the total funding for the project is, what has been appropriated as cash, and what has been spent. Elke Ursin also stated that she believed that the annual Legislative Budget Request that is sent out from the department is in line with what is being asked for in the report. The next legislative status report is due in February 2013 and will include clarification regarding some of the questions brought up during the meeting. Elke Ursin stated that the contract is now available on the Florida Accountability Contract Tracking System (FACTS) which is online (<https://facts.fldfs.com/Search/ContractSearch.aspx>). This system allows for public transparency on state contracts. A contract monitoring event was conducted on 8/31/12 at the research facility. A request from Quentin Beitel at the last RRAC meeting to have all the deliverables for this project available for viewing on the webpage is ongoing. The interim raw data regarding the field work will not be included on this site until the final reports have been written, but the other reports can be placed here to make it easier to find information.

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Motion by Quentin Beitel, seconded by Bill Melton, to provide a consensus vote to concur with the work done on the report and that staff did a great job. All were in favor and none opposed and the motion passed unanimously.

Elke Ursin stated that Josefin Hirst presented a paper on the Task A PNRS II pilot study results at the annual Florida Environmental Health Association conference in September. This presentation will be emailed out to the email distribution list and posted on the website. A brief overview of the project was given to provide background information to people that are not familiar with the study. Elke Ursin presented an update on some of the tasks. Three additional sample events have been conducted at the first installed Task B home system. The second Task B home system design was completed, and the system was constructed. Start-up occurred in late September. Design has begun on three Task B home systems in Seminole County. Three additional sample events have been conducted at the Soil and Groundwater Test Facility (at GCREC). The fourth and final sample event was conducted at the second Task C home site. The third Task C groundwater monitoring home site was established in Polk County and instrumentation of the site for monitoring was completed. The first sample event was conducted at the third home site. The fourth Task C system, which is at the same location as the second Task B home system, had groundwater monitoring initiated. The site was partially instrumented and one sample event was conducted prior to installation of the second Task B system. This site will provide a before and after case study for improved treatment performance. Staff participated in a conference call with Hazen and Sawyer and the Colorado School of Mines on 7/18/2012 and 10/3/12. The approach was discussed for a simple soil tool that can be used to illustrate the subsurface behavior of wastewater. The scope and approach were refined and the deliverables were clearly specified and agreed to by all parties. There were discussions on the number of pumps required for the installed systems and the possibility of methyl mercury being created from the sulfur discharge.

- 4. Overview of Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Program and the TMDL Development Process and how it relates to Septic Tanks** – Rick Hicks with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) presented an overview of the TMDL program. The program assesses the water quality of various surface water bodies on a 5-year rotation cycle. The assessment identifies impaired waters and what pollutants are causing the impairment and then develops targets for these waters on a prioritized schedule. The sources of the pollutant are identified and a basin management action plan (BMAP) is developed. A BMAP is developed collaboratively with local stakeholders and includes projects, initiatives, and activities aimed at water quality restoration. A septic tank inspection program could be an example of a non-structural best management plan. Several example projects initiated by the stakeholders were given. Bob Himschoot discussed his disappointment in the Silver Springs and Rainbow Springs BMAPs. He did not see any support for a maintenance program for septic systems. The industry feels that this would extend the life of the septic system and identify failing systems. There has been a collaborative effort between the Florida Home Builders Association, the Florida Association of Realtors, and the Florida Onsite Wastewater Association to implement an inspection program. He said that he would like to see DEP and DOH come together and support a managed onsite sewage program that starts addressing these issues now before the systems installed from the 1980s to today start to go into failure in the future. He does not see funding going toward onsite sewage system management; instead it is all related to extending sewer lines.

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- 5. Discussion on Draft Report on EPA Non-Point Source Pollution Grant on the Performance and Management of Advanced OSTDS** – Elke Ursin gave an overview of the EPA 319 project on the performance and management of advanced onsite systems. This project is to assess water quality protection by advanced (ATU, PBTS, etc.) systems throughout Florida and has been ongoing for approximately five years. The draft report, which is to tie all of the project components together, was submitted for review by the committee. The submitted report has some sections incomplete, which will be written over the following few weeks. Elke Ursin stated that the data entry and quality control were completed on 10/30/2012 and the report was sent to the committee on 11/8/2012. Elke Ursin went through each section of the report providing an overview and some of the results. Eberhard Roeder went over the sample data analysis and quality control information. She made a request for the committee and the public to send here any comments or ideas for things to analyze. Several discussions occurred during the presentation. Elke Ursin and Eberhard Roeder mentored two Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University Masters in Public Health students during the summer. These students worked on comparing various survey results with sample results and field operational assessments. After the presentation and discussion, Elke Ursin asked the RRAC what their preference would be regarding the final report: whether they would like to meet again to discuss the final report prior to submitting or whether staff could submit the final report without another RRAC meeting. The due date of the report is November 30, 2012. RRAC would like to review the executive summary and conclusions of the report and have another meeting on November 28, 2012 in the morning. Any questions can be directed to staff. Bill Melton commended Elke Ursin and Eberhard Roeder on this tremendous project and how they have overcome setbacks.
- 6. Updates on Other Projects –**
- a) Inventory of OSTDS in Florida** – Elke Ursin presented the progress on this project since the last meeting. Elke Ursin collaborated internally to begin developing both public and DOH interfaces to will allow for accessing and editing data. A process flow chart was shown showing the steps for the public view website. A demonstration of the draft website was given, which allows the user to find a parcel of interest, see what the wastewater method is, and provide an option for someone to update the information by sending DOH an email. The DOH view will come next after resolving and updating some ArcGIS software. The process on how to proceed is still being developed.
- b) Relationship between Wastewater Disposal and the Incidence of Salmonella and Campylobacter in the State of Florida** – Elke Ursin presented the progress on this prioritized project. She has been mentoring Nicole Pritchard, a volunteer intern working on her MPH at Nova Southeastern University, since August 2012. The project started with collaboration between OSTDS staff and DOH epidemiology staff to determine what disease data was available. The goal was to discover the risks associated with living in an area with sewer versus living in an area with septic systems and becoming ill with Salmonella or Campylobacter. GIS was used to geocode disease data and overlay with the OSTDS inventory data. Two by two tables and risk ratios were then calculated. The methods used were discussed, as well as the data limitations. Despite limitations in the methodology and data, the results suggested that there was an increased risk in specific counties for cases of Salmonella and Campylobacter in individuals served by a septic system. The combined risk ratios were calculated for all eleven counties that had the best inventory data; indicating that the greatest risk is associated with acquiring Salmonella while strictly being served on a

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known septic system. Today Nicole Pritchard will present a poster with the data results for the 2012 Seven Hills Regional User Group (SHRUG). A project report will be drafted in the near future. There was a discussion of whether any statewide drinking water data exists, with Shanin Speas-Frost indicating that there is a project working on this and that contact information would be forwarded to Elke Ursin for follow-up.

- c) Other Research Program Activities** – Presentations on the research program were given at the FOWA 2012 Convention and Trade Show Educational Program, the Gulf Coast District of the Florida Environmental Health Association at their annual OSTDS continuing education course, and an online training for certified environmental health professionals. Staff have been working on an update for the research program public website and this update is nearing completion. This update will provide a much easier to navigate user interface. Staff also participated in a conference call with a Water Environment Research Foundation (WERF) project team for a project titled "Applicability Analysis of Existing Models for Site-Specific Water Quality Criteria to Protect Designated Uses from Nutrient Impacts". The discussion focused on the development of a nutrient impact modeling toolbox that could be used by regulatory agencies to assist with setting site-specific nutrient goals. Staff have also reviewed and provided comments for several DEP reports.

- 7. Other Business** – There was no discussion on other business.
- 8. Public Comment** – The public were allowed to comment throughout the meeting. Pam Tucker said that she was thankful that the public can comment throughout the meeting. She also said that the work that has been done is fantastic and she was impressed to see the results of work that started many years ago. There was no additional public comment.
- 9. Closing Comments, Next Meeting, and Adjournment** – The next RRAC meeting will be on November 28, 2012 to discuss the advanced systems project executive summary and conclusions section. The next meeting after this will need to be in mid-December to discuss the draft legislative status report for the nitrogen study. The meeting adjourned at 2:08 p.m.

Motion to adjourn by Bill Melton, seconded by Carl Ludecke. All were in favor and none opposed and the motion passed unanimously.