

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

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

Approved by RRAC November 5, 2010

In attendance:

- **Committee Membership and Alternates:**
 - **In person:** Quentin (Bob) Beitel (alternate, Real Estate Profession); David Carter (chairman, member, Home Building Industry); Kim Dove (member, Division of Environmental Health); Bob Himschoot (member, Septic Tank Industry); Kriss Kaye (alternate, Home Building Industry); Carl Ludecke (alternate, Home Building Industry); Jim Peters (alternate, Professional Engineer); Patti Sanzone (member, Environmental Interest Group); and Clay Tappan (member, Professional Engineer)
 - **Via teleconference:** Bill Melton (member, Consumer); and Pam Tucker (member, Real Estate Profession)
- **Not represented:** Restaurant Industry, State University System, and Local Government
- **Visitors:**
 - **In person:** Damann Anderson (Hazen and Sawyer); Blaine Carter (FHBA); Larry Danek (ECT); Josefin Edeback (Hazen and Sawyer); Brian King (York ISG); Don Orr (FOWA); Daniel Smith (AET); Nancy Smith (Orange County Health Department)
 - **Via teleconference:** David Winialski; Mary Howard; Sarah Fowler
- **Department of Health (DOH), Bureau of Onsite Sewage Programs:**
 - **In person:** Paul Booher; Eberhard Roeder; and Elke Ursin
 - **Via teleconference:** Debra Roberts

1. **Introductions** – Seven out of ten groups were present, representing a quorum. Chairman Carter called the meeting to order at 9:38 a.m. Introductions were made and some housekeeping issues were discussed.
2. **Review of Previous Meeting Minutes** – The minutes of March 23, 2010 were reviewed.

Motion by Bill Melton and seconded by Clay Tappan to approve the minutes as amended. All were in favor with none opposed and the motion passed unanimously.

Quentin Beitel brought up that alternates cannot vote when the member is present. His comment was noted. Only voting members are allowed to vote.

3. **Town of Suwannee Study** – Elke Ursin presented a brief overview of the status of this project. The final draft report has been submitted. Comments are to be emailed to Elke Ursin by end of June to finalize the report. Larry Danek with ECT presented. The goal of this project was to evaluate the impacts of closing 850 OSTDS in the Town of Suwannee. Baseline data was collected during a study in the winter of 1996. A copy of this presentation is available on the Department's website.

4. Nitrogen Study

Elke Ursin introduced the study and gave an overview outlining what has happened since the last meeting. Damann Anderson presented and the presentation is posted on the Department's website. A background of the study was given, Dr. Smith discussed the second stage of the passive nitrogen removal study, the proposed project scope for Phase I and II were discussed, and at the end of the meeting a tour of the test facility was given.

David Winialski suggested that one of these passive systems could have the maintenance and management done under the new Senate Bill 550 inspection program, so they would only be inspected once every five years. Eberhard Roeder responded by saying that this depends on how the system is classified. If it is classified as a conventional system, then that would be the case, but if it is classified as an advanced system then it would need to meet a more frequent inspection schedule. Damann Anderson said that part of the study will look at this and evaluate this.

David Winialski asked if these systems produce any by-products that would cause environmental problems. Dr. Smith stated that the systems will be designed to keep any discharges below the maximum contaminant level.

David Carter presented the budget proviso language that was approved to be in this year's budget. It gives \$2,000,000 to continue the study and requires an interim report on February 1, 2011 and a final report on May 16, 2011. The language also states that DEP is to have maximum technical input. David Carter has asked Elke Ursin to make sure that Jerry Brooks is notified of the RRAC meetings. The language also states that the main focus of the work this year is to focus on developing, testing, and recommending cost effective design criteria. This does not change the contract terms, but emphasizes focusing on passive technologies. Damann Anderson stated that this goes in line with the existing contract. Bob Himschoot asked whether any of the existing approved passive systems will be tested as part of this study, and Damann stated that some will, but not all of them. They will pick the systems that best meet the criteria established in an earlier task. Elke Ursin stated that the way the money was appropriated this year means that the \$2,000,000 is available July 1, 2010. Quentin Beitel stated that there was a lot of effort going into getting this money and he wanted to recognize the hard work that went into getting this funding.

Damann Anderson went into detail describing which tasks have been completed, which tasks are proposed for Phase II, and which will remain to be completed in Phase III. Phase I ended on June 30, 2010, Phase II is for this next round of funding, and Phase III is the final phase of funding. Phase II may or may not take 1-year. There was a discussion that tasks A.27 and A.28 (draft and final passive nitrogen reduction systems phase II reports) be moved to Phase II of the project. This will require moving something from Phase II to Phase III. The details will be worked out between Hazen and Sawyer and DOH. Eberhard Roeder asked that D.14 (complex soil model) be moved up to Phase II, and to move task D.10 (multi-source aquifer model) to Phase III. Damann said that he will get with the Colorado School of Mines regarding these changes.

5. **Discussion on DEP's Wekiva Fertilizer Report** – Elke Ursin presented a brief background on DEP's Wekiva Fertilizer Study. They have completed their study, which focused on residential fertilizer use. The inputs were modified for wastewater treatment facilities and atmospheric deposition per comments from DOH and Damann Anderson. Fertilizer inputs were adjusted

based on the findings of the study. They also used Ellis & Associates field data for the OSTDS inputs and loadings which increased the estimate by 45% and 16% respectively. The pie charts showing the nitrate loadings for both the Wekiva Basin and the Wekiva Study Area were discussed. In 2007 the RRAC decided to postpone making a decision on whether the OSTDS contribution of nitrogen to the Wekiva Study Area was significant until the DEP study was done. Now that the study is done it is being brought back to the committee for review and consideration. Damann Anderson said that he is surprised to see the nitrogen contribution from OSTDS so high. He knows of no other study that has demonstrated this. David Carter said that the committee has gone beyond the initial question and that the nitrogen study is looking at this. The committee has decided that septic systems need to do better with nitrogen and that is what the nitrogen study is looking at. He does not think that we need to be doing anything more than what is being done right now. This appeared to be the consensus of the RRAC. No motion was made.

- 6. Discussion on Continuation of Inventory of OSTDS and Relationship to Maintenance and Management Program (SB 550)** – Elke Ursin presented a brief overview of SB 550, which requires a 5-year inspection to be done on all systems in Florida. This program has a tie-in with the inventory of all systems in Florida that was completed last year. This inventory presented a snap-shot in time that could be built upon and updated. A website showing the results of this inventory has been developed and should be posted in the near future for the public to access. The RRAC had decided in a previous meeting to start working on a method to continue the inventory and to present this at a future meeting. Elke Ursin presented some proposed next steps, which included updating the Environmental Health Database, updating the data with the latest Department of Revenue information and figuring out a method of automating this task, updating the database with the latest DEP data on permitted wastewater treatment plants (WWTP), resending out letters to the WWTP requesting customer information to update the database, and using county health departments to resolve some of the unknowns. After discussion, it was decided to hold off doing anything until direction is given from Gerald on what would be most beneficial. Scott Carmody gave a brief overview of his database system and mentioned that his program is currently under contract with DEP.
- 7. Update on Study of Performance of Advanced Systems in Florida** – Elke Ursin gave an update on the status of this study. The draft summary report for the Monroe County portion of this project is being written. The database is mostly complete and identifies 16,802 advanced systems in the state. Summary statistics are being developed. A description of technologies that the current advanced systems use has been added to the database to make sure different technologies are sampled. Surveys were sent to various interest groups. Approximately 1,000 of the 3,800 surveys were returned as undeliverable due to various reasons such as the house being vacant, or there not being a mail receptacle. DOH staff found these owners' addresses on the property appraisers' websites and resent the letters to these new addresses. The QAPP for the sampling portion of this project is being finalized. The contract with the lab to evaluate the samples has been executed. Permit file reviews on the selected systems is ongoing. An evaluation tool to look at management practices is being developed as this project continues.
- 8. Alternative Drainfield Products Discussion** – Availability of data on the longevity and effectiveness of alternative drainfield projects is limited. At the last RRAC meeting staff were directed to come back with a proposed scope of work and budget. Elke Ursin presented a scope of work and wanted to hold off developing a detailed budget until RRAC directs staff on what they would like to see be done. Three different phases were proposed. Phase I would be performing an evaluation of existing data and the cost of this phase would be staff time. Phase II would be

creating an advisory group with product manufacturers, contractors, and CHD's to get an idea of how to gather the information gaps found after Phase I. Phase III would be to go out and gather the data to fill in the data gaps. The RRAC directed staff to wait and see what is going to happen with the SB 550 inspection program.

- 9. Discussion on Research Budget** – Fiscal year 2009-2010 budget numbers were presented. There is a significant reduction in the total revenue coming in from the \$5 surcharge on new septic permits. In years past this number was around \$200,000 and now is around \$67,000. The 2010-2011 research budget request was presented. It was decided to keep the alternative drainfield product assessment and inventory phase II studies in the budget.

Bill Melton made a motion to accept the budget, seconded by Patti Sanzone, and the motion passed.

- 10. Election of Chair and Vice Chair** – David Carter is retiring as chair of the RRAC, Carl Ludecke is taking over his spot as the Home Building Industry primary member on the RRAC, and a new chair and vice chair are to be nominated and elected. Pam Tucker nominated Clay Tappan as the chair and Carl Ludecke as the vice chair. Nominations were closed. All were in favor with none opposed. Bill Melton thanked David Carter for all of his years of service stating that he has been remarkably even keeled and easy to deal with. There was a round of applause from those present at the meeting.
- 11. Other Business** – Elke Ursin brought up that the pollution prevention grant proposal was submitted on April 5, 2010 and that EPA should make a decision in July. There was a discussion about how to get the Hotel and Restaurant RRAC representatives to attend the meetings.
- 12. Public Comment** – The public were allowed to comment throughout the meeting. There was no additional public comment.
- 13. Closing Comments, Next Meeting, and Adjournment** – Clay Tappan thanked David Carter for his dedication to the committee for over a decade. David Carter said that he has enjoyed his time on the committee. The next meeting will be scheduled for sometime in the future, with the date, time, and location being determined via email. The focus of the next meeting will be to discuss the RRAC priorities, the inventory study phase II, and the alternative drainfield products study. Damann Anderson provided some information on the tour of the research facility that occurred after the meeting.

Carl Ludecke made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Patti Sanzone, and the meeting adjourned.