

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

Draft Minutes of the Meeting held at the Southwood Office Complex, Tallahassee, FL
September 8, 2011

In attendance:

- **Committee Members and Alternates:**

- In person:**

- Mike McInarnay (alternate, Septic Tank Industry)
 - Bill Melton (member, Consumer)
 - 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)
 - Tom Higginbotham (alternate, Division of Environmental Health)
 - Bob Himschoot (member, Septic Tank Industry)
 - Kriss Kaye (alternate, Home Building Industry)
 - Tom Miller (member, Local Government)
 - Jim Peters (alternate, Professional Engineer)
 - Eanix Poole (alternate, Consumer)
 - David Richardson (alternate, Local Government)
 - John Schert (member, State University System)

- Absent members and alternates:**

- Sam Averett (alternate, Septic Tank Industry)
 - John Dryden (alternate, State University System)
 - Carl Ludecke (vice-chairman, member, Home Building Industry)
 - Restaurant Industry (no appointed member/alternate)

- **Visitors:**

- In person:**

- Damann Anderson (Hazen and Sawyer)
 - Wendy Hedrick (FOWA)
 - Keith Hetrick (FHBA)
 - Richard Hicks (DEP)
 - Maria Pecoraro (Rep. Nelson)
 - Paul Runk (Florida Senate)
 - Lee Smith (ECT)
 - Shanin Speas-Frost (DEP)

- Via teleconference:**

- Josefin Edeback (Hazen and Sawyer)
 - Sara Fowler
 - Gina
 - Kathryn Lowe (CSM)
 - Maria Pecoraro (Rep. Nelson)
 - Andrea Samson
 - Jim Spinnenweber
 - Pam Tucker

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

- In person:**

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

- Via teleconference:**

- Bart Harriss, Environmental Manager

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

1. **Introductions** – Nine out of ten groups were present, representing a quorum. The group that was not represented was the Restaurant Industry. Chairman Tappan called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. Introductions were made and some housekeeping issues were discussed.
2. **Review of previous meeting minutes** – The minutes of the September 8, 2011 meeting were reviewed.

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

3. **Nitrogen Study**

- a) **Review of progress to date** – Elke Ursin presented on the progress to date. The status report on the nitrogen study was sent to the Legislature and the Governor by May 16, 2011. Hazen and Sawyer and the Colorado School of Mines presented on this study at the annual meeting for the National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association (NOWRA), the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA), and the State Onsite Regulators Alliance (SORA) in Columbus, Ohio in June 2011. This was a great opportunity to get news of this project out to a mix of people who work in government, private industry, and academia.

Damann Anderson presented some preliminary results from the passive biofilters at the test center at the Gulf Coast Research and Education Center (GCREC) in Wimauma, Florida. The focus of the results presented was around the sulphur-based denitrification systems. Results from two-stage passive biofilter are encouraging after 12 months of testing, showing a total nitrogen reduction of over 95% (2.6 mg/L). There were some clarification questions from the RRAC that were discussed.

Damann Anderson went over the next steps for the project. The pilot scale work will be done by the end of the year. They are starting to install full-scale systems at actual home sites. They are also working on vertically stacked biofilters, which are designed similar to a drainfield. Plans are being designed currently to install some of these systems at the GCREC. They will need to be built large enough to last the lifetime of the system so that they do not need to be dug up to replenish the media.

- b) **Discussion on budget and process forward** – The RRAC were sent an email with a proposed contract amendment and a summary of the changes. Damann Anderson presented on what contract changes are proposed with this amendment. He stated that now that the funding has been appropriated, the contract needs to be amended to reflect what is to be done during Phase 3 of the project. Bob Himschoot asked for a clarification that this is not showing an overall cost savings, and Damann Anderson stated that that was correct; this amendment is just shifting money around between tasks. Bob Himschoot stated that it would be prudent to show a cost savings where possible without losing the quality of work. Damann Anderson stated that the deliverables were originally split up prior to having done any design work, so this amendment aligns the costs. Task A is mostly complete, so there are not many changes. The major change is to reduce the number of innovative systems applications due to there likely being less proprietary technologies being tested. Task B changes include a reduction in the number of vendor agreements, reduction of the number of field tested systems by one and the corresponding number of sample events were also reduced, finally the deliverable costs for the final report was reduced. One Task C change was an increase in the cost for the monitoring of the soil and ground water test facility due to needing to use a drill rig for much of the work. There were also increases to the sampling and reporting due to the increased time and

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

equipment required to complete this task. The final changes were to reduce the number of sample event reports due to not being able to determine groundwater flow direction for one of the home sites because of the karst topography. Task D revised from 29 tasks to 18 tasks per previous discussions with the RRAC and the project team. Quentin Beitel asked what staff's opinion is on the consolidation of tasks and Eberhard Roeder stated that this way is organized better than is was before while still achieving the same end results. Task E changes include an increase in the number of RRAC or TRAP meeting presentations, and the number of meetings they will attend. Another Task E change included a reduction in the cost for the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting. The PAC is made up of key scientists in the wastewater community, and the intent was to include them for feedback and guidance. As the project went along, funding was sporadic, and the PAC was one of the subtasks that could be postponed until more funding was secured. Now, the project has moved along and the role of the PAC needs to be redefined as it will be difficult for them to provide guidance on where the project goes. It would be good for them to provide peer reviewed input at the end of the project. Paul Runk stated that the Legislature would appreciate having this project peer reviewed. After a discussion it was decided to leave that cost in, as outlined in the amendment, and the details on how that will be worked out will be decided at a later time.

Motion by Quentin Beitel, seconded by Bill Melton, to accept contract Amendment 3 as presented. All were in favor with none opposed and the motion passed unanimously.

Elke Ursin stated that the likely process forward is to do this amendment and then renew the contract for another three years as the contract expires in January. Elke Ursin stated that \$1.8 million has been encumbered for this fiscal year. Out of the original cash that was received, most of that amount is covered. \$350,000 is not covered under the current cash and the DOH budget office has the ability to cover that amount from the DOH Grants and Donations Trust Fund. In the past, cash was transferred from a DEP trust fund which was transferred over to DOH. This round of funding, although the authority to spend was made, there is not cash in the DOH Grants and Donations Trust Fund to cover the remaining cash needs.

Bob Himschoot stated that he would like to see this project come in under budget without damaging the quality of the final work product. He stated that he would like the minutes to reflect that this committee is conscious of the current state of the Florida economy and that they will do everything they can to promote due diligence and frugality.

Quentin Beitel stated that it is important for everyone to get with their respective organizations to make sure to find the money to fund the rest of the nitrogen study.

Elke Ursin stated that a legislative report on the completion of Phase II and progress on Phase III that is due in February 2012.

4. **Other Business** – Bob Himschoot asked for an update on the 319 project on the performance and management of advanced onsite systems in Florida. Elke Ursin stated that this project is not part of the agenda for this meeting, but that there has been quite a bit of work done on this project since the last meeting. She stated that the sampling will complete at the end of September when the grant is over and another RRAC meeting will be held in the future to discuss the results of that project.

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

Elke Ursin stated that the research priorities that were ranked at a previous RRAC meeting have not had much progress due to the 319 project taking up the majority of staff's time. There will be a TRAP meeting in October, and Elke Ursin will present the ranked priorities to them for approval per the statute requirements.

5. **Public Comment** – The public were allowed to comment throughout the meeting. There was no additional public comment.
6. **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. An upcoming meeting topic is a discussion on the 319 grant report on the performance of advanced OSTDS in Florida.

Bill Melton made a motion, seconded by Bob Himschoot, to adjourn at 3:55 p.m. All were in favor, none opposed, and the motion passed.

DRAFT