

## Florida Department of Health (FDOH)

### Research Review and Advisory Committee (RRAC) Meeting Summary

Meeting on September 10, 2009

Betty Easley Conference Center, Tallahassee, FL

- **RRAC Members/Alternates Present:**
  - In person: Anthony Gaudio, Bill Melton, and Jim Oskowis
  - Via teleconference: David Carter, Kim Dove, Tom Higginbotham, Jim Peters, Vince Seibold, Patti Sanzone, John Schert, and Pam TuckerNine out of ten groups were present, representing a quorum
- **Review of Previous Meeting Minutes:** The minutes were approved as submitted.
- **Updates on projects:**
  - **Town of Suwannee Study:** The sampling has been completed, which included source tracking to detect human DNA component. The final draft report is in, and comments are due to Elke by noon on Tuesday September 15<sup>th</sup>. The RRAC voted at the July 1<sup>st</sup> meeting to renew the contract to conduct sampling again during December/January 2009 and the paperwork is now routing. Larry Danek with Environmental Consulting & Technology, Inc. (ECT) presented on the results of the study. Some of the conclusions were that Salmonella was found more often in the river than in the canals of the town. Nitrate + nitrite exhibited a strong correlation with river flow. There was consistently more nitrate + nitrite in the river samples than in the canals. The source tracking results indicated a human source was present approximately 42 percent of the time and approximately equally present in the canals and the river. The total and fecal coliforms were much higher in the canals than in the river. The fecal coliforms decreased from 1996 to 2009, whereas the total coliforms increased. Simple statistical comparisons of the 2009 results with the 1996 results were complicated by large changes in the river (control) stations. There was a significant reduction in fecal coliforms in the canals as compared to the river stations from 1996 to 2009. There was no large improvement in water quality in the canals between 1996 and 2009 that could be attributed to closing the OSTDS. A motion was passed to continue with the renewal process to replicate the sampling effort during November and December of 2009 and allow department staff to decide if the sampling will not commence based on factors such as river discharge levels (if greater than 10,000 cubic feet per second the sampling shall not take place), water temperature values, or impending significant weather events. In the case the department decides not to commence sampling the RRAC has the opportunity to reverse the decision and advise the department to move forward with sampling.
  - **Nitrogen Reduction Strategies Study:** An overview was given outlining what has happened since the last meeting. Numerous reports have been submitted and reviewed by RRAC and DOH:
    - Passive nitrogen removal study phase II quality assurance project plan
    - Literature review on onsite nitrogen reducing technologies
    - Classification, ranking, and prioritization of technologies
    - Prioritization of nitrogen reduction technologies

- Literature review of nitrogen reduction by soils and shallow groundwater
- Literature review on nitrogen fate and transport modeling
- Report on selection of existing data sets for model calibration

Dr. Smith and Josefin Edeback presented to the TRAP on the project. The contract amendment, as recommended at last meeting, is currently being discussed with provider. There was a discussion on the existing septic tank at the proposed test facility site and how the issue of groundwater infiltration into the tanks through the risers should be fixed. There was also a discussion on the Task C facility design having mound geometries that are different from the code. The first progress report on this project is due in February and the draft report will need to be submitted to the RRAC for review in December. A phone conference to discuss this report is planned for sometime early to mid December.

- **Manatee Springs, Performance of Onsite Systems Phase II Karst Study:** The original contracted sampling work has been completed. The draft report was submitted at the July 1<sup>st</sup> meeting and comments were sent back to the provider (FSU). The final report has been received and is being reviewed by staff to ensure comments addressed. The final report on entire project to be submitted to EPA and the RRAC by the end of September. An additional sampling event will be done during non-flood conditions, which occurred on September 10<sup>th</sup>. Once this sampling event has been completed, the final report that was sent to EPA will be amended with the new information and a draft of this report will be sent to the RRAC for review and comment.
- **Monroe County Performance Based Treatment System Performance Assessment:** Quality control of existing data is ongoing. All sampling has been completed. A report summarizing this project is being written.
- **319 Project on Performance and Management of Advanced Onsite Systems:** For the database task, data has been gathered from the state database, any county specific databases, and from Carmody. The data fields and database structure have been discussed and sketched. There was a discussion on the review of data from operating permits that has been gathered from the various sources and how there is limited overlap of the data. The Florida State University Survey Research Laboratory was selected to perform the user-group perceptions survey task, and they are currently in the process of developing the surveys with the homeowner and regulator surveys nearing completion. A draft of the Quality Assurance Project Plan has been submitted to the RRAC, and comments are due by September 22<sup>nd</sup>. Some of the next steps for this project are to finalize the Quality Assurance Project Plan for the sampling, and selection of home sites to sample. There was a discussion on what criteria should be used to select systems for sampling. Should there be a purely random sample taken or should the criteria be stratified? If it is stratified, what criteria should be used (i.e. age, commercial vs. residential, age of system, maintenance history, system manufacturer, ATU vs. PBTS)? The RRAC will provide thoughts on this to department staff.
- **Optical Wastewater Tracers Study:** The final report on this project is due at the end of October.
- **Upcoming projects:**
  - **Statewide Inventory of Onsite Sewage Treatment and Disposal Systems in Florida Study:** RRAC voted the continuation of this project as a priority at the May 27th meeting. Initial internal discussions have begun on how to proceed

with this. The RRAC is still on board with the department coming back with different proposals at a future meeting on how to move forward with this project. Several counties, people involved in the BMAP process, and DEP personnel have expressed interested in obtaining and utilizing the data and the process of sharing the data is being streamlined.

- **Columbia County Nitrogen Well Sampling Study:** The first step for this project is to obtain a purchase order with a lab that is able to do the sample analysis. The department has been inquiring with the DOH lab in Jacksonville to see if they would be able to do the analysis and it is looking increasingly as if this would not be possible. Private labs will be contacted to see if they might be able to do the analysis. The Columbia County Health Department staff is interested in collecting the samples.
- **Other Business:** Bill Melton brought up the Alternative Drainfield Product Study idea again, and there was a discussion on how to approach this as a future project. Anthony Gaudio mentioned that another possible future project would be looking at bacterial and viral contributions from OSTDS to ground waters and surface waters.
- **Public Comment:** The public were allowed to comment throughout the meeting. There was no public comment.
- **Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be scheduled for the beginning of December. The meeting location has not been determined, but the option of having a live meeting via teleconference and/or via a web conference was discussed and staff will research this further. The focus of the next meeting will be to discuss the progress report on the Nitrogen Reduction Strategies Study as well as discuss current and proposed research projects.