

FINAL APPROVED MINUTES**Meeting #9 – Monday, February 23rd, 2009**

SunGro Centre
Beausejour, Manitoba
10:00 am - 4:00 pm

1. Call to Order

Meeting #9 of the Southeast Regional Groundwater Management Plan (SRGMP) Group was called to order at 10:11 am on Monday, February 23rd, 2009, at the SunGro Centre by Cornie Goertzen, Chair of the SRGMP.

Present:

Last Name	First Name	Agency
Anderson	Kristina	Manitoba Water Stewardship
Andrusiak	Julian	RM of Stuartburn (alternate)
Ball	Garth	Manitoba Conservation
Barker	Corinne	Manitoba Water Stewardship
Betcher	Bob	Manitoba Water Stewardship
Carriere	Les	Manitoba Métis Federation Inc.
Evans	Laurie	RM of Ste. Anne
Goertzen	Cornie	Seine Rat River Conservation District
Heppner	Neil	RM of Taché
Hinrichs	Albert	RM of Whitemouth
Kalyta	Phil	City of Steinbach
Kelln	Duane	Manitoba Water Stewardship
Kopelow	Sacha	Manitoba Eco-Network
Lucko	Ken	RM of Springfield
Martel	Gordon	Pembina Valley Water Cooperative
Maynard	Gerry	RM of De Salaberry
McDonald	William	RM of Victoria Beach
Mihaychuk	Ron	RM of Franklin
Moquin	Claude	RM of La Broquerie
Nachtigall	Scott	Manitoba Water Stewardship
Nedotiafko	Rob	Manitoba Water Stewardship
Oswald	Barry	Manitoba Water Stewardship
Peters	Sonny	RM of Hanover

Present (continued):

Last Name	First Name	Agency
Rackham	Jay	Manitoba Conservation
Ross	Marc	Cooks Creek Conservation District
Sawka	Earl	RM of Piney
Schaible	Frank	Holds industrial water bottling license
Schroeder	Cheryl	Dairy Farmers of Manitoba
Smith	Derek	Red River Basin Commission
Steinke	Glenn	Town of Beausejour
Stefaniuk	Bob	RM of Ritchot
Strang	Steve	RM of St. Clements
Summach	Dwayne	Manitoba Forage Council
Swidersky	Jim	RM of Stuartburn
Thibert	Lorraine	Manitoba Water Stewardship
Toop	David	Manitoba Water Stewardship
Wang	Jianrong	Manitoba Water Stewardship
Yosyk	Alvin	RM of Alexander
Young	Dave	RM of Reynolds

Regrets:

Last Name	First Name	Agency
Chapman	Paul	Town of Lac du Bonnet
Gibson	Janine	Pansy Groundwater Committee
Groumoutis	George	Sky Blue Water Inc.
Martens	Herm	RM of Morris
McCulloch	Gabriele	Canadian Gold Beverages
Morris	Lawrence	RM of East St. Paul
Riekman	Marla	MAFRI

2. Acceptance of Proposed Agenda

The proposed agenda was accepted.

Moved by Claude Moquin - RM of La Broquerie

Seconded by Albert Hinrichs – RM of Whitemouth

Carried.

3. Adoption of Minutes of Meeting #8

The preliminary minutes were accepted.

Moved by Alvin Yosyk – RM of Alexander

Seconded by Gerry Maynard – RM of De Salaberry

Kristina Anderson of Manitoba Water Stewardship provided the following changes to her comments on page 11 of the minutes from Meeting #8:

“In 2004, a policy was introduced where all proponents of groundwater applications need to hire hydrogeologists to prepare a technical report for all new projects. They look at area well logs, any previous research that has been done in the area, and make calculations based on an aquifer pumping test. This report is reviewed by the water use licensing staff. We always look at the applications that have gone before it, as they must have their rights protected. Sometimes we have very absolute numbers to work with, and sometimes these are very relative. If there are questions around the licence, we can issue shorter term licenses. We are currently considering minimum pumping rates for licenses, in order to assess the effects of pumping on some larger projects.”

Carried.

4. New Business

Barry Oswald stated that today’s meeting would be the last where the Group will have a full slate of presentations. The process will be shifting, over the next few meetings, to the identification of issues. Barry referenced and emphasized portions of the following two handouts previously circulated to the Group on January 21st, 2008:

1) “Outline of Proposed Planning Process For A Southeast Regional Groundwater Management Plan”:

This document was essentially the business plan for the Southeast Regional Groundwater Management Plan; it was prepared internally by the Department of Water Stewardship, presented at this process’s preliminary meetings in December 2007 and distributed at this group’s meeting #1 in January 2008.

Page 2, paragraph 2 of this document lists “agree on regional sustainable yield/use estimates” as one of the items to be covered within the management plan. Barry noted that at this time, given

the information we have been presented by Bob Betcher, it does not look like we have enough information to do this.

Page 2, paragraph 3 states that this process was to be a “proposed two year planning process.” Barry noted that at this time it appears that this will be a three year process.

Barry also noted that according to the timeline on page 6 of the document, we are currently behind schedule. It is now thought that by February 2010 we shall have a finalized version of the plan.

2) Presentation to the Group by Barry Oswald on January 21st

Barry also briefly reviewed portions of the presentation he originally gave to the Group on January 21st, 2008 titled “*Proposed Planning Process Introduction to Groundwater Management Planning Group*”.

From slide 2 he reminded the Group that the task remains as stated here.

From slide 4 he reminded the Group that we are currently completing the first step in the planning process “Collect and study area’s groundwater information (science and local)”. We have had 8 meetings with around 20 presentations and question and answer periods. The vast majority of presentations to date have been done by science members. This time was spent to establish a basis of common knowledge from which to tackle the next steps. Now, the second step of the planning process is where the “rubber hits the road”. The second step, “Itemize and prioritize groundwater issues” will begin at the next meeting. SRGMP members must speak-up to identify the issues to be tackled in the management plan. Then in step 3 you members must make the plan yours. We will get a first-cut Draft plan (based on the issues you identify during step 2) to you by September of 2009 and during next winter’s planning season that first-cut Draft must be edited by this group into a Draft plan to take for public review, and then the public comments must be incorporated by this group into a Final plan.

From slide 5 he emphasized that unlike several previous management plans where volunteer advisory boards were established to implement the plans, in this case, the Groundwater Management Section of Manitoba Water Stewardship will implement the plan.

Q: Although we will be making recommendations for the Groundwater Management section to implement, does that mean that they will actually get implemented?

A: Yes. I feel that the recommendations from this plan will help guide the Groundwater Management section's actions (for Manitoba Water Stewardship) in the southeast area for the next 10 years.

From Slide 7 Barry noted that unanimous consensus speaks loudly, and for this to occur, it means that every agency must agree on the contents of the plan. For example, when the group comes to edit the first cut draft plan, if there are any points that an agency does not agree with, these points will not be included. If the Minister receives a plan that has been forwarded with unanimous support, this gives it a louder voice.

Q: Referring back to the "Outline of Proposed Process" document, on page 6, there is mention of "independent peer review". Is that still a part of the picture?

A: Yes, that is still there, but the timeframe has been altered. This refers to peer review of the hydrogeologic model of the study area flow regime which, as you know, is still in early developmental stages.

From Slide 14 he noted that although we had originally anticipated that 6 meetings would be necessary in order to "Collect and study area's groundwater information", we have had 8 meetings for this phase to date. Also, "Itemize and prioritize issues" will most likely consist of two meetings instead of one. Barry informed the Group that we will now require members to be vocal and work with their agencies in order to bring their issues to the table. We are still on the overall schedule mentioned here to complete in March 2010.

Q: Following the drafting of the plan, will the public meetings be held in different towns as for the previous public consultations?

A: Yes, that is a must. The last public consultations were held at four different locations: Steinbach, Beausejour, Oakbank and Ile des Chenes.

Q: I feel that we are missing information on conservation and education that we need in order to do this properly. Is it possible to have a presentation in the area of the reduction of demand? For example, the “soft paths” process that International Institute for Sustainable Development is working on?

A: Conservation and education certainly must be considered/referenced in the plan. The soft path approach could be looked at. It is up to the Group to decide if they feel they would like to have a presentation on.

Bob Betcher addressed the Group regarding the statement that the Groundwater Management section will be responsible for the implementation of the plan. Bob noted that there may be parts of the plan that lie outside the section’s mandate. For example, groundwater monitoring around contaminated sites is the responsibility of Manitoba Conservation. Also, some issues may be for Planning Districts or Conservation Districts to implement. Barry Oswald responded that if we do happen to seek a plan that outlines issues and responsibilities that fall under other agencies’ priority areas, that we should confirm this cooperation beforehand. Barry noted that those parts of the plan that fall under the Groundwater Management section’s mandate will be much more easily implemented compared to those for other departments, where some resistance may be encountered.

Q: Do our recommendations have an impact on development plans and zoning by-laws?

A: (Rob Nedotiafko) This goes back to Grant Melnychuk’s presentation at November’s meeting. This plan should be looked upon as a tool to draw from in the future drafting of development plans and zoning by-laws by planning districts.

A: (Barry Oswald) I have little doubt that this plan will be known of in the future, and may be considered. Currently the only plan that must be considered by a development plan is an Integrated Watershed Management Plan. Manitoba is a little ahead of other western provinces when it comes to this topic, due to the one line we now have in the Planning Act, which states that RMs /Planning Districts must, when formulating a Development Plan, consider an approved watershed management plan(s).

Comment by Steve Strang: “My concern is sitting at any table where big brother is saying “do as I say, not as I do” – there is enough water being wasted from the floodway that it could supply the entire city of Brandon. How can the province restrict our development because of conservation, when they are wasting water themselves?”

b) Planning Process & Timeline Considerations

Rob Nedotiafko asked the group to reference the updated planning process timeline that was handed out at the last meeting. To this point, the Coordinators have received little information from the group regarding the identification of additional necessary information. Rob stated that, at the last meeting, the Group indicated that they felt an independent facilitator would be necessary for the issue identification and prioritization stage of the planning process. The Group also suggested that one issues identification session was perhaps insufficient.

Rob referenced the handout circulated today, “SRGMP Group Meetings Schedule March/April 2009”, which was prepared in order to give increased detail regarding upcoming meetings in March and April of this year. The Coordinators suggest that the Group take the afternoon of March 9th's meeting to conduct a group session, providing each Agency representative opportunity to identify the issues their Agency feels the management plan should address. The Coordinator's also indicated that the independent facilitator would be present at this session. By experiencing the Group session, the facilitator will come to better understand the process as well as the issues identified by each agency prior to the March 23rd meeting. The Coordinators confirmed that the independent facilitator would facilitate the March 23rd issues identification and prioritization session.

Rob also informed the Group that the Coordinators have received only four “issues identification submissions” from Group members to date. Rob noted that as we are working towards the issues identification sessions, this would be a good date for Group members to submit their documents on agency letterhead. For those members that have submitted a document, Rob noted that these are not considered final and Group members may update them at any time.

c) Science Members Presentations

i) Bob Betcher, Manager of the Groundwater Management section, Manitoba Water Stewardship made a PowerPoint presentation titled "*Past and Current Studies + Groundwater Monitoring*"

Q: How far has the saline/freshwater boundary shifted?

A: I do not have the map with me that shows this, but we do have this information. All information to date indicates no significant shift in the position of the salt water/fresh water boundary.

Q: What gravel pits were looked at for the City of Winnipeg's supplementary supply?

A: They are located just north of the Moose Nose pits – they are shown on a map later in the presentation.

Q: How far does the influence of the Sandilands go east?

A: It extends down into the United States. Whitemouth Lake is a large groundwater discharge area. There are a lot of regional groundwater flow systems in addition to the overall picture shown here.

Q: What are the units on the map handout?

A: Metres above sea level (actual water level). You can think of it as the elevation of the water table. Groundwater flows from high elevation to low elevation.

Q: What do you know about the gypsum mine near Aubigny that was dug in the 1960s? It drained a lot of wells in the area and then when they refilled they were saline.

A: I am aware of this incident, but no reports were done on it. I will look up information on the incident and report back to the group, particularly in regards whether the water quality in local wells was affected

Q: Is it true that once the hydrogeologists determine contours as shown on the map handout, they can be used in a way like a topographic map?

A: Yes

Q: How important is a sustainable yield estimate for this process? How reliable would this be, and when do you feel we would have enough information to do so?

A: Sustainable yield calculations are incorporated into the calculations included in the 3D model. Once we have an area simulated, and we feel that it is being simulated correctly, we can add other developments to it in order to see what kind of impacts we will have. Sustainable yield is not necessarily a simple number that we will come up with, but a process.

Q: Are you able to input current use into the model?

A: Yes.

The Group discussed the idea of external peer review of the finished plan. There was some misunderstanding regarding peer review of the 3D model or of the final groundwater management plan. A Group member suggested that outside hydrogeologists be brought in to assess the plan and to give input, similar to the process used for the review of the floodway expansion plan. Barry Oswald distinguished between a project proposal (like the Floodway) and a management plan and he stated that he saw no need for outside peer review of the final management plan nor did he have any budget for such. He noted it is this Group who have review the information for this area and are best prepared to formulate a management plan for this area. He also noted that he has no concern about the science information brought to this table by the Manitoba science experts. He also noted in the planning processes used throughout Manitoba for both Development Plans and for Integrated Watershed Management Plans that there is no peer review sought by groups or individuals outside of Manitoba. Another Group member suggested that the peer review process would be beneficial to ensure that all potential issues have been incorporated into the plan and not necessarily to double-check the science that has been presented to the Group. The Group decided that this is an issue that should be discussed at the issues identification session in order to arrive at consensus.

Q: If we see this as a cash flow statement, how are we able to make recommendations if we don't have all the numbers?

A: That is reality. These numbers can be off in an order of magnitude. Often times we can predict what we think is going to happen, then measure what occurs, and then say “ok, this is actually what happened”. When you have a system with multiple aquifers, you are looking at all kinds of complications.

Q: So the bottom line is that this Plan will be a living document?

A: Yes, and the model as well. The monitoring is what helps you improve on the model. We will be adding to it continually, and the accuracy will improve over time.

Barry Oswald addressed the Group, and indicated that the reality of planning is that you will never have all of the information. The Group has been presented a certain amount of information and is required to make decisions based on that information. There will always be areas where you need more information, and that need is identified and incorporated into the plan.

Q: Can you say how accurate your model is?

A: It is thought to be 90 to 95% accurate, but this is at a regional level.

-----Break for Lunch-----

Q: What are plans for long-term evaluation of the plan? What elements are in place to consider this?

A: The Groundwater Management section has a drilling budget for the southeast region, which may be extended. There is currently no long-term committed funding to do continued work in the southeast region, although there is long-term funding for the province as a whole.

Q: It appears that there is a need for the acquisition of more data, for the accuracy and continued improvement of the model.

A: If there are any studies on the region that come in from consultants, this will be considered in the model. The province doesn't do everything ourselves. We expect to

have the funds to do studies in southern Manitoba, but how much of this goes into the southeast region is unclear.

ii) Duane Kelln, Hydrologic Engineer for the Surface Water section of Manitoba Water Stewardship made a PowerPoint presentation titled “*Surface Water in Southeast Manitoba*”

Q: Is the Whitemouth Lake a recharge or a discharge lake?

A: I am not completely sure.

Q: Where is the monitoring station on the Whitemouth River?

A: I can get back to you on that. I have never been there myself and I'm not sure of the exact location.

*****Update:** *Whitemouth station (WSC 05PH003) is located on PTH 44 just south of the town of Whitemouth. The legal description is SW 30-11-12E.*

Q: Why are you monitoring the Rat River at the source and not downstream?

A: We do have a monitoring station downstream. I happened to choose this station because I wanted to get as close to the groundwater component as possible, as then it is not masked by other effects as you get further downstream.

Q: Would the Surface Water section be able to label which parts of major waterways are discharge areas for groundwater? If you look at your data, can you determine which parts of individual streams have larger/smaller groundwater contributions?

A: The Surface Water and Groundwater sections would have to put their heads together on this one.

Jianrong Wang stated that if you have monitoring data during the wintertime that shows the river is flowing, that this would have to be groundwater contribution.

iii) Garth Ball, Wetlands Specialist for Manitoba Conservation made a PowerPoint presentation titled “*Wetlands of Southeast Manitoba*”

Q: Do you have an inventory of wetlands as they were in the 1970s compared to how they are today? How many have been drained and how many remain?

A: I am not aware that this type of inventory exists. This type of knowledge may become available eventually, but not a lot of research has gone into this to date. There are tremendous opportunities for research to be done in this area.

Q: As this Group is interested in the state of knowledge of recharge/discharge wetlands, is there any sort of inventory information that we could use to determine this for the southeast region?

A: This would be an interesting question to ask a forester, as they would have an inventory of photographic surveys that have been done, and they may have delineated different types of wetlands. There has been some work done for this using remote sensing data, but there is always a need to ground-truth this type of information.

Q: The map shown that demonstrates the number of wildlife sightings in the southeast area – are those species associated with any type of site-type ecology?

A: Yes, they are wetland species only.

5. Next Meeting

The next meeting has been scheduled for March 9th, 2009 at the Oakbank United Church in Oakbank.

The March 23rd meeting location has not yet been determined, but the Coordinators hope to schedule the meeting in Steinbach.

A tentative meeting date was set for April 20th, 2009, in the event that the Group feels an additional meeting is necessary.

6. Adjournment

The Chair thanked the Group for attending. The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 pm.

APPROVED