SRGMP | SOUTHEAST REGIONAL GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN

FINAL APPROVED MINUTES

Meeting #8 – Monday, January 26th, 2009

Oakbank United Church
Oakbank, Manitoba
10:00 am - 4:00 pm

1. Call to Order

Meeting #8 of the Southeast Regional Groundwater Management Plan (SRGMP) Group was called to order at 10:16 am on Monday, January 26th, 2009, at the Oakbank United Church by Cornie Goertzen, Chair of the SRGMP.

Present:

Last Name	First Name	Agency
Anderson	Kristina	Manitoba Water Stewardship
Andrusiak	Julian	RM of Stuartburn
Barker	Corinne	Manitoba Water Stewardship
Betcher	Bob	Manitoba Water Stewardship
Carriere	Les	Manitoba Métis Federation Inc.
Elliott	Jessica	Manitoba Conservation
Evans	Laurie	RM of Ste. Anne
Fontaine	Ron	Sagkeeng First Nation
Gilbertson	Mike	Manitoba Conservation
Goertzen	Cornie	Seine Rat River Conservation District
Gunning	Ed	RM of St. Clements
Heppner	Neil	RM of Taché
Hinrichs	Albert	RM of Whitemouth
Holtmann	Henry	Dairy Farmers of Manitoba
Kalyta	Phil	City of Steinbach
Keller	Greg	STEM
Kopelow	Sacha	Manitoba Eco-Network
Layton	Mike	Environmental Defence
Lucko	Ken	RM of Springfield
Martel	Gordon	Pembina Valley Water Cooperative
Martens	Herm	RM of Morris
Matile	Gaywood	STEM
Maynard	Gerry	RM of De Salaberry
McDonald	Bill	RM of Victoria Beach

Present (continued):

Last Name	First Name	Agency
McRae	Curtis	Keystone Agricultural Producers
Mihaychuk	Ron	RM of Franklin
Moquin	Claude	RM of La Broquerie
Morris	Lawrence	RM of East St. Paul
Nachtigall	Scott	Manitoba Water Stewardship
Nedotiafko	Rob	Manitoba Water Stewardship
Oswald	Barry	Manitoba Water Stewardship
Oertel	Diane	Manitoba Conservation
Prochera	Jennifer	Red River Basin Commission
Rackham	Jay	Manitoba Conservation
Ross	Marc	Cooks Creek Conservation District
Sadorski	Shane	Manitoba Cattle Producers Association
Sawka	Earl	RM of Piney
Shaykewich	Jen	Manitoba Conservation
Stefaniuk	Bob	RM of Ritchot
Steinke	Glenn	Town of Beausejour
Summach	Dwayne	Manitoba Forage Council
Thibert	Lorraine	Manitoba Water Stewardship
Toop	David	Manitoba Water Stewardship
Wang	Jianrong	Manitoba Water Stewardship
Yosyk	Alvin	RM of Alexander
Young	David	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.
McCulloch	Gabriele	Canadian Gold Beverages
Riekman	Marla	MAFRI
Schaible	Frank	Industrial water bottling licence holder

2. Acceptance of Proposed Agenda

The proposed agenda was accepted.
Moved by Herm Martens – RM of Morris
Seconded by Alvin Yosyk – RM of Alexander
Carried.

3. Adoption of Minutes of Meeting #6

The preliminary minutes were accepted.
Shane Sadorski – Manitoba Cattle Producers Association
Ken Lucko – RM of Springfield
Carried.

4. New Business

a) Planning Process: Updated Timeline & Presentations Summary

Rob Nedotiafko addressed the Group and identified the nine handouts available at the door, including:

1) Proposed meeting agenda
2) Preliminary minutes from the December 8th, 2008 meeting
3) Summary of presentations to date
4) Summary of group observations from Janine Gibson's December 8th presentation
5) Updated planning process timeline
6) Bob Betcher's December 8th presentation
7) Jen Shaykewich, Mike Gilbertson and Diane Oertel's presentation
8) Mike Layton's presentation
9) David Toop's presentation

Rob informed the Group that by the end of today's meeting, there will have been 19 presentations given to the Group. The Group has been asked over the past few meetings to identify information gaps or to indicate if they feel any presentation areas have been lacking. There is space for three to four presentations per meeting over the next three meetings, with one or two meetings reserved for issues identification. The goal is to have the first cut draft plan presented to the Group by this fall, with public open houses held in early 2010 and the finalization of the plan occurring in the spring of 2010.

The Coordinators were asked how they planned on increasing attendance at the public consultations in the fall. The Coordinators responded that in

light of the attendance at the public workshops last spring, and in addition to the advertisements in local papers, an effort will be made to provide meeting notice posters to Group members, who would then be asked to post and distribute the posters in their areas.

The Coordinators were also asked how the draft plan can be written over the summer if there happens to be more local knowledge presentations than currently scheduled. A Group member also asked whether it was possible to hold an additional meeting before the end of the spring planning season. The Group discussed the possibility of holding meetings every 3 weeks, or perhaps holding two meetings in March or April, to avoid holding meetings later into May as the farming season begins. The possibility of having future meetings start at 9 am was also discussed.

The Group discussed methods by which members will be able to identify the issues they feel must be addressed in the writing of the plan. The Group agreed that there should be more than one mechanism for the members to submit feedback. The Coordinators reminded the Group that each agency has been asked to submit, in writing, on agency letterhead, the issues their agency feels the plan should address. These documents will be brought to the Group at the issues identification meeting, either in late April or early May. Those agencies that have already submitted their issues identification document are welcome to refine their submissions before the issues identification session.

The question of who will be writing the plan was raised. The Coordinators indicated that they will most likely draft the plan, but stressed that if the Group had other ideas regarding how the plan should be written, suggestions are welcome. It was stressed that this will be a first cut draft plan, which will be presented to the Group in the fall for their input. This is a group process, and the end product must be that this is the Group's plan.

Bob Betcher suggested that the Group consider bringing in representatives from the three existing aquifer management boards and implementation groups that exist elsewhere in the province (Oak Lake Aquifer, Assiniboine Delta Aquifer, and Winkler Aquifer). These representatives would be asked to inform the Group of the processes that have worked for their groups, those that have not worked, and those that they wish they had done. The Coordinators agreed to contact representatives for the three existing groups to ask if they would meet with the Group at one of the upcoming meetings.

A Group member proposed having an independent facilitator brought in to facilitate the issues identification session for the Group. This idea was

well received by the Group, and a show of hands indicated that the majority was in favour of considering hiring an independent facilitator.

The Group discussed whether one meeting for issues identification would be sufficient. The idea was presented that an additional meeting may be necessary and could be scheduled towards the end of the current planning session into April. The Coordinators highlighted the fact that we must first identify all of the issues, and then the Group must identify the subset of issues that this first management plan will address.

A Group member suggested that the information gathering stage of this process may take longer than previously thought, as we are still being presented information that is extremely important. The Coordinators stated that the Group must recognize that there will always be gaps in the knowledge. This plan is the first for this area, and we must put the plan together with the information that is available. If extremely pertinent information comes to light in the next 3, 5, or 10 years, this will shorten the life of the plan. We must be able to take the information that is currently available, and move forward.

b) Science Members Presentations

i. Mike Gilbertson, Manager of Environment Section, MB Conservation; Jen Shaykewich, Manager of Environmental Livestock Section, MB Conservation; Diane Oertel, Environment Officer, Eastern Region, MB Conservation made a PowerPoint presentation titled "*Regional Operations – Environment"*

Q: Why did you not work with Manitoba Pork Producers and Keystone Agricultural Producers?

A: (Diane) This list of departmental linkages is not all inclusive.

Q: For complaints received by your department regarding manure management, what is the split between those that are valid and those that are not?

A: (Jen) The types of questions that we tend to receive are usually "Does this person have a manure management Plan or not?" (Diane) I can't give an exact number today for this question, and will have to look into it. The majority of complaints are regarding the livestock program, but this does not necessarily mean that compliance is worse for this sector.

Q: Every time there are complaints against a farmer that turn out to be frivolous, this is not costless to a producer. How do you quantify the degree of compliance in an industry?

A: (Diane) I can completely understand the frustration of a farmer when an Environment Officer turns up at their door. But the EO is not in a position to know whether a complaint is frivolous or not. Enforcement statistics go into the Department's annual report, which is available online.

Q: Has the province considered what Saskatchewan is considering, which is a refundable complaint fee? For example, $50.00 is charged for each complaint, but if it turns out to be valid, the money is returned (to the complainant).

A: (Jen) No, I am not aware if this is being considered. I do know that the Farm Practices Protection Board does charge a fee.

Q: What type of inspections do you do? How do you keep an eye on manure storage?

A: (Jen) I can provide the checklists which outline what we are looking for during inspections. Those facilities that were constructed under a permit are regularly inspected (1994 on for earthen manure storage, 1998 on for steel and concrete manure storage). The older facilities are now being considered. Over the long term, we hope to add these structures to the list of inspections. The requirement for registration for all manure storage structures just came into place in 2004.

Q: What percentage do you think are inspected?

A: (Jen) Our goal is to inspect annually.

Q: Since livestock operations over 300 animal units cannot spread manure in the winter, how is the City of Winnipeg able to spread their sewage sludge in the winter?

A: Unsure.

Q: When you use the phrase "review phosphorus thresholds", what does this mean?

A: (Jen) This is in reference to the regulatory phosphorus thresholds in our regulation. Depending on the phosphorus level in your soil, the application of manure may be restricted up to a point where it is prohibited.

Q: What type of effect do the chemicals and salts put on the roads in the winter have on water?

A: (Mike) The federal government declared road salts a hazardous substance. They require a management plan for their use, and the reduction of use.

Q: Do you have any comments to the Group regarding any groundwater quality or contamination information?

A: (Diane) We don't have a groundwater monitoring program, but may look closely at areas of concern such as areas with older wastewater storage facilities, or older infrastructure such as lagoons. One example is in the Garson area where they have a boil water advisory because of onsite wastewater management systems.

Q: Do you know of any incidences of groundwater contamination?

A: (Diane) There has been contamination with both petroleum hydrocarbons and bacteria that I am aware of.

Q: Why does your department not employ any hydrogeologists?

A: (Mike) Water Stewardship employs hydrogeologists.

Q: Why do you require annual sampling for livestock source water monitoring?

A: (Jen) We do not enforce based on these samples. The water could be from whatever the producer uses as a water source (groundwater, a dugout, etc..). If there are elevated nitrogen or phosphorus levels found, we will tell the producer to contact a Drinking Water Officer. We are now reminding producers that those who have a manure management plan must submit a source water sample.

Q: How is Conservation able to determine whether there is groundwater contamination from a septic field if they have no hydrogeologists to interpret this information?

A: (Diane) There are certain indicators that they look for (ex: Fecal coliforms) that would indicate that the contamination is from a wastewater system.

Q: We know that surface waters can contaminate wells. From the perspective of the formation of this plan, we need to have the quality of

information that can tell us for sure where the contaminants are coming from. Do we really know when the contaminants come from surface water or groundwater movement? And if you don't have a hydrogeologist, how do you know?

A: (Mike) Manitoba Conservation has a good working relationship with Manitoba Water Stewardship. When Manitoba Conservation does investigations on contaminated sites, they collect reports from consultants that are experts in the field, and also work with Manitoba Health, as well as Manitoba Water Stewardship. It is important to think of government as a whole.

Q: When you do become aware of a site where groundwater has been contaminated, what do you do? If there is an identified risk to groundwater? Do you have a map similar to that shown of manure storage areas for contaminated sites?

A: (Mike) We do not have the mapping capacity, but can provide this information to you. (Diane) The action would be based on the Canadian Council of Environmental Standards, which would help to assess risk. For example, with the removal of a petroleum tank, we require that soil samples must be submitted from the excavation. If there is identification of hydrocarbon contamination (info from consultants and contractors), they would require a study of the impacts. From there, if remediation is required, they would require the responsible party to submit a remediation plan.

Q: If you determine that remediation is necessary, are they then ordered to carry out that work? Do you follow that process to ensure that the plan has been implemented?

A: (Diane) Once the remediation is done, we receive a closure report. The action that is taken is based on risk. We look at who will be exposed and the pathways of exposure. I some cases, the answer could be the requirement of onsite groundwater monitoring. Authority comes from The Contaminated Sites Remediation Act, and also The Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Act. We have a variety of legislative tools. It is important to note, however, that approximately 95% of the work we do is done on a voluntary basis with folks who are experiencing the problem.

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

ii. Jianrong Wang, Aquifer Sustainability Hydrogeologist, Groundwater Management Section, Manitoba Water Stewardship made a PowerPoint presentation titled "*Follow-up Discussion on the December 8th Groundwater Resource Evaluation in Southeastern Manitoba (Preliminary)"*

Q: Is the term "domestic groundwater usage" in reference to unlicensed groundwater usage?

A: Yes, this is unlicensed users of less than 25,000 litres per day.

Q: Is the amount of "licensed" groundwater the actual amount that is used or the amount listed on their license?

A: All that we know is the licensed amount.

Q: In the areas around Steinbach, your map shows that water levels have gone down. Therefore, in that area does this mean that there should be no more wells drilled, because more water is being taken than is being recharged?

A: Theoretically, yes – but that is up to the licensing section to decide. Water levels are also able to recover with high precipitation.

Q: Have you done research further east towards the Ontario border?

A: (Bob Betcher) We did a regional study in the Kenora map sheet area. I can bring the flow maps next time.

Q: In the Steinbach area, because they are pumping all the time, over time are you able to pump more or less?

A: There are a certain number of fractures that a well will intersect with, and over a human's lifetime you would not see an expansion of fractures.

iii. Mike Layton, Program Manager, Environmental Defence, on behalf of Manitoba Eco-Network, made a PowerPoint presentation titled "*Environmental Considerations in Groundwater Management Planning"*

Q: Where is the discussion of loss of wetlands and perennial cover for the preservation of groundwater recharge areas?

A: This would fall into areas of preservation. No distinction has been made about the type of cover. If it is an important aquifer recharge area, then it should be protected.

Q: What is being considered in Ontario in terms of wellhead protection, and times of travel?

A: Timing is still being considered. A circle is drawn around it (for example, 100 m), and they score it based on the level of threat. If it is a high threat, they would have mandatory measures that need to be undertaken. One example is if it was with an individual landowner, they would negotiate with them regarding the application of pesticides, etc.

Q: Will there be consideration taken regarding the location of certain threats within these protected areas? For example, gas stations?

A: Yes. The majority of these issues are old problems, and we can't change where they are located.

Q: What about those communities on private wells?

A: A community with a group of wells could get that aquifer designated for source water protection. The problem lies with the fact that if they are on the list, they are also on the hook for the money needed to implement any management strategies.

iv. David Toop, Hydrogeologist, Groundwater Management Section, Manitoba Water Stewardship, made a PowerPoint presentation titled "*Groundwater & Surface Water Interaction*".

Q: How adequate is our knowledge of surface water / groundwater interaction? How well can we make predictions such as how the withdrawal of water from one area will affect stream flow in another place? How good is our information base, and how close are we to having a prediction base?

A: You need to assess what you know about the area, for example how many wells are present, what aquifers do you have, etc. Many of these predictions are based on modeling. IT is hard to be definitive – it depends on how well you know the area.

You can get an idea of the processes that are present in an area when you look at the vegetation, landscapes, etc… You can make

predictions, but how well-tuned your answer is will depend on the amount of information that you have about your area.

Q: How much background information does a proponent need to have in place before applying for a groundwater license?

A: (Kristina Anderson) 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 rights 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 license, we can issue shorter term licenses. We are currently considering minimum pumping rates for licenses, in order to assess the effects of pumping for some larger projects.

Q: Does a proponent have to cover the costs associated with getting a license?

A: (Kristina Anderson) Yes, it is the proponent's responsibility. We can write almost anything into a permit – it is very flexible, and each one looks a little different.

5. Next Meeting

The Group decided to schedule two meetings in March, the 9th and 23rd.

6. Adjournment

The Chair thanked the Group for attending and the meeting was adjourned at 4:09 pm.