

Final Approved Minutes

Meeting #15 – February 22, 2010

Steinbach Cultural Arts Centre
Steinbach, Manitoba
10:00 am – 4:00 pm

1. Call to Order

Meeting #15 of the Southeast Regional Groundwater Management Plan (SRGMP) Planning Group was called to order at 10:15 am on Monday, February 22, 2010 at the Steinbach Cultural Arts Centre by Cornie Goertzen, Chair of the SRGMP.

Present:

Last Name	First Name	Agency
Anderson	Kristina	Manitoba Water Stewardship
Ball	Garth	Manitoba Conservation
Betcher	Bob	Manitoba Water Stewardship
Bodnaruk	Bob	RM of Springfield
Bezditny	Ernie	Pansy Groundwater Committee
De Yong	Pieter	Dairy Farmers of Manitoba
Evans	Laurie	RM of Ste. Anne
Gibson	Janine	Pansy Groundwater Committee
Goertzen	Cornie	Seine-Rat River Conservation District
Gunning	Ed	RM of St. Clements
Heppner	Neil	RM of Taché
Kalyta	Phil	City of Steinbach
Kopelow	Sacha	Manitoba Eco-Network
Lucko	Ken	RM of Springfield
Martel	Gordon	Pembina Valley Water Cooperative
Martens	Herm	RM of Morris
Matthews	Rob	Manitoba Water Stewardship
McRae	Curtis	Keystone Agricultural Producers
Michaels	Sean	RM of Brokenhead
Mihaychuk	Ron	RM of Franklin
Morris	Lawrence	RM of East St. Paul
Ross	Marc	Cooks Creek Conservation District
Stefaniuk	Bob	RM of Ritchot
Swidersky	Jim	RM of Stuartburn
Toop	David	Manitoba Water Stewardship
Wang	Jianrong	Manitoba Water Stewardship
Watson	Patrick	Manitoba Water Stewardship
Yosyk	Alvin	RM of Alexander
Young	Dave	RM of Reynolds

2. Acceptance of the Proposed Agenda

Moved by Janine Gibson, Pansy Groundwater Committee that the proposed agenda be accepted.

Seconded by Herm Martens, RM of Morris.

Patrick Watson, Manitoba Water Stewardship, suggested two items to the agenda:
Under New Business add:

- c. Review “What We Heard” document, and
- d. Round Table – Thoughts on Plan?

Motion to accept the agenda with the proposed additions was Carried.

3. Adoption of the minutes from Meeting #14

Moved by Sean Michaels, RM of Brokenhead that the minutes for Meeting #14 be adopted.

Seconded by Lawrence Morris, RM of East St. Paul.

Patrick Watson suggested two changes in the Meeting #14 minutes:
Under a) First-cut Draft SRGMP editing, Section 3.1 add a statement to the first paragraph re: the Federal Government as follows:

Water Rights licensing is done under the authority of the Manitoba *Water Rights Act* which came into force in 1930 when Manitoba took control of its natural resources which has previously been administered by the Federal government.

Secondly in the second paragraph of the same section, “water rights licences” is the correct term, not “water use licences”. Patrick will make edits as required.

Motion to adopt the minutes with the suggested changes was Carried.

4. New Business

a. Presentation by MWS – Groundwater Management Branch

Jianrong Wang of Manitoba Water Stewardship provided an update of the Southeast Groundwater Study being conducted. A handout of the PowerPoint presentation was provided to the participants. Main points included:

- Two new geologic cross-sections have been added – one through the central portion of the study area and another in the northern part of the study area. Also, more layers of have been added to all three cross-sections, primarily to reflect the different sand layers.
- Licensed groundwater usage data shows that water consumption is generally rising, and that amount of consumption is divided equally among municipal, industrial and agricultural uses.
- The vast majority of the groundwater is extracted from the Carbonate layer.
- Preliminary modeling results are very similar to observed results.

- The model cannot predict sudden changes in water levels because it works with yearly averages.
- The discharge to the Winnipeg Floodway is nearly the same as the total licensed usage in the Carbonate aquifer.
- The main recharge to the Carbonate aquifer is from the above overburden layer.
- The recharge from Sandilands to Carbonate aquifer is very small.
- More data is being collected in the Sandilands to allow the eventual calculation of the amount of water in the aquifer.
- A study on the interaction of surface water and groundwater has been initiated.

b. Review and discuss comments and suggestions on Draft Plan

Three written submissions with comments and suggestions on the Plan were sent via email. Printed copies were provided to the attendees. Discussion began with those submissions.

i. Doris Ames, Native Orchid Conservation, Inc

In general, the submission called for more attention to protecting wetlands which provide habitat for unique plants including rare species of wild orchids. It was also pointed out that wetlands play an important role in groundwater recharge. Reference was also made to the large volumes of water consumed in agricultural operations. Other points included considering the effect of climate change, no export of water until we know more about the resource and considering the needs of future generations.

The discussion focused on the need to educate the public on what is happening to the groundwater resource, including clearing up the mistaken impression that agriculture is the biggest use of water in the region.

ii. Gerald Maynard – RM of De Salaberry

The two main points made in this submission were that “*These operations (livestock) potentially use 10 times the amount of water that the people in the Southeast use*”, and there is a need for stricter monitoring of groundwater use and quality.

Discussion reiterated the need to clarify information on water use to inform the public that agriculture is not the largest user of water. It was generally agreed that more monitoring is required.

iii. Cheryl Kennedy Courcelles – Spirit of the Red River

This submission focused on land drainage as a threat to water quality, increasing flooding and the loss of wetlands. It also offered the suggestion that university programs should be linked to this plan.

The discussion centered around the realization that although, in some cases, drainage works could impact groundwater, and was a big issue throughout the region, the Planning Group had previously identified priority issues and decided that it would not be feasible to address all issues in the study area (i.e. drainage issues), and would try and focus only on groundwater.

Patrick Watson will add the following points to the Plan:

- What organization(s) hold responsibility for maintenance of the land drainage networks?
- The drainage licensing process, including the role of Fisheries and Oceans Canada in that process.

Before the lunch break, Patrick Watson read a Steinbach On-Line.com news article from January 27, 2010, which referenced the Draft Plan and included general comments from the City of Steinbach representative. As well, a Beausejour Clipper newspaper article from February 8, 2010 was also mentioned and made available to the group.

LUNCH BREAK

c. Review “What We Heard” document

Following the lunch break, a review began of the “What We Heard” document – a summary of the questions, comments and suggestions from those who had attended the public open houses. The paper had been distributed to members of the Planning Group prior to the meeting, and additional copies were available at the meeting. The discussion focused on *conclusions* for each of the seven sections in the document.

Section 1) Purpose of the plan.

As a result of the review of the points presented and the discussion, Patrick Watson will add the following points to the Plan:

- A better description of why was the Plan was initiated with mention of the other three groundwater/aquifer management plans that have been completed for other areas of Manitoba will be added near the front of the document.
- A clearer description of roles and responsibilities (“pecking order”) – Section 3.1.
- Clarification of the need for integrating the groundwater plan with integrated watershed management plans and municipal development plans will be added in Section 3.
- Since the Cooks Creek and Seine-Rat River conservation districts approach water management differently, they will be discussed separately. – Section 3.1.

Section 2) The Groundwater Resource

Based on the discussion, the following actions will be taken.

- Add the following graphs from Jianrong’s Study Update PowerPoint presentation to the Plan: Licensed Groundwater Usage, Transient Calibration -1, and Modeling Results -1.
- A conversion of the amount of groundwater entering the Floodway from cubic decametres to a more recognizable form will be done.

Whether the groundwater model has been peer-reviewed was discussed. The model itself has not yet been peer-reviewed as it is probably too early to do that. However, the process/approach to developing the model has been reviewed by other experts in the field and the consensus was Manitoba Water Stewardship is on the right track.

Next, a discussion of whether the groundwater management plan itself was going to be peer-reviewed took place. The conclusion was that in the process of developing the plan

over 2 ½ years, it has been, in essence, peer-reviewed by the representatives of the groups and organizations on the Planning Group. In addition, the Minister will be forwarding the Plan on to the Manitoba Water Council which in effect, could be considered peer-review.

Patrick will add the following the Plan:

- Paragraph on what points are generally assessed through the water rights licensing application process in order to show that there is a formal management planning process in place.

The issue of groundwater vulnerability is already addressed in the Plan under section 3.2.3.

Section 3) Water Wells and the Fresh Water/Saline water Boundary

Bob Betcher will check to see if more information can be added to the Plan concerning the fresh water/saline water boundary.

Section 4) Water Export

In response to local concern over water exports the following will be added to the Plan:

- A discussion on the regulatory framework, including the need for an Environment Act license, and how that process would deal with issues such as water export.

Section 5) Ecosystem Concerns

As a result of the discussion surrounding ecosystem concerns, the following will be addressed in the Plan:

- A short discussion on climate change basically stating that there is a very short timeline of data that exists and that decisions are made with the best available information.
- A paragraph regarding municipal development plans and other planning tools that could help to protect wetlands and critical areas.
- Expand on the description of what occurs in Figure 5: Water Cycle.
- A statement about the importance of wetlands to groundwater recharge.
- Mention of the importance of the surface water/groundwater interaction.

Section 6) Stakeholder Participation

It was generally agreed that local stakeholders were well represented in the planning process.

Section 7) Other

The comments in Section 7 were duly noted.

d. Round Table – thoughts on Plan?

As a wind-up to the meeting, each attendee was given the opportunity to share their thoughts on the Plan.

The most common comments related to how the Plan will be used, and who will actually implement the plan. It was pointed out that the management responsibilities for the Plan are listed in Section 3.1 of the Plan, and Plan Implementation is outline in Section 4.0.

Several participants expressed concern that the Plan may start limiting what municipalities can do, primarily in terms of development, and will result in more regulations the municipalities will have to deal with.

A number of attendees commented that under the circumstances, the Plan is a good one, and if it doesn't get used, it would be a great loss. One suggestion was to put copies of the Plan in schools where the young people could learn about their groundwater resource so that down the road when it comes their turn to take over responsibility, they will be much better educated in the matter.

There was a suggestion that the Plan is not really a "plan", but simply a call for more research. It doesn't deal with many water management issues and falls well short on the ecological side.

Others suggested there should be more on groundwater contamination, discussion on evapotranspiration, the effect of land use on evapotranspiration and how evapotranspiration impacts groundwater supplies.

Many expressed their appreciation for being asked to part of the process, explaining it was a valuable learning experience.

5. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday March 8, 2010 from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm at the Sun Gro Centre, Beausejour.

6. Adjournment

Moved by Pieter De Yong, Dairy Farmers of Manitoba, that the meeting be adjourned.
Seconded by Sean Michaels, RM of Brokenhead.

Meeting adjourned at 2:35 pm.