

# STATE COORDINATING COMMITTEE ON GROUND WATER

Ohio Environmental Protection Agency  
Lazarus Government Center  
Columbus, Ohio 43215-1049

Ohio Department of Natural Resources  
Fountain Square  
Columbus, Ohio 43224-1387

Ohio Department of Health  
246 North High Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43266-0588

Ohio Department of Commerce-SFM  
8895 East Main Street  
Reynoldsburg, Ohio 43068

Ohio Public Utilities Commission  
180 East Broad Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43266-0573

Ohio Department of Agriculture  
8995 East Main Street  
Reynoldsburg, Ohio 43068-3399

Ohio Department of Development  
77 South High Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43266-0413

Ohio Department of Transportation  
1980 West Broad Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

## TO PROMOTE AND GUIDE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A COORDINATED, COMPREHENSIVE AND EFFECTIVE GROUND WATER PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT PROGRAM FOR THE STATE OF OHIO

December 17, 2009  
Dutch Kitchen, Plain City

The December 2009 SCCGW meeting consisted of Agency announcements and a presentation on dye-trace studies conducted in Ohio karst terranes, by Heather Raymond (Ohio EPA).

### ATTENDANCE

Ohio EPA: Tom Allen, Michael Eggert, Brian Hall, Barb Lubberger, Heather Raymond  
ODNR: Mike Angle  
ODH: Rebecca Fugitt  
USGS: Ralph Haefner

with 250+ environmental messages broadcast since it was initiated (in March 2008). Please let Tom Allen know of any events or story lines in northwest or southwest Ohio.

### AGENCY UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### **SCCGW Chair:**

#### National Ground Water Monitoring Network.

Proposals for piloting this network were selected from the states of Texas, Montana, New Jersey, Indiana, Illinois and Minnesota. Ohio may join this network within a couple years.

2010 Midwest Ground Water Conference. The first planning meeting for this conference was convened on December 3<sup>rd</sup>; the next is scheduled for January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2010, 9:00 am, at ODNR. The planning committee welcomes additional members, so please contact Jim Raab if you are interested.

Storm Center. Entities in southwest Ohio have come up with funding to launch Storm Center in the Cincinnati area within the next 2-3 months. Meanwhile, WTOL (in Toledo) is still going strong,

#### **Ohio Department of Health:**

Sewage Rules. The Ohio legislature suspended for another six months the revised Sewage Rules, which were supposed to be reinstated in June 2009. Issues still being contested include:

- The definition of a "public health nuisance";
- Whether maintenance of septic systems should be required; and
- Whether local health districts should be permitted to independently decide what should be the required vertical separation distance.

ARRA Funds. In 2009 American Renewal and Recovery Act (ARRA) funds were made available for replacing or repairing failing home septic systems. About \$3.5 million of the \$5 million made available was spent within the provided time frame by 29 Ohio counties.

Private Water System Rules. ODH's rules for private water systems are currently being revised. Among the changes:

- Annual sampling will be required for bed-and-breakfasts and small hotels;
- Vulnerable ground water areas will be defined, and periodic sampling required within them;
- Water well contractors will be required to earn 5 continuing education units each year to remain certified;
- Installers will be required to carry liability insurance and take a test on the rules;
- The first 1-3 wells installed by a new installer will be inspected.

Comments are being accepted through January 15<sup>th</sup>. ODH hopes to take the rules to the Public Health Council in March. The earliest they could become effective is June 2010.

Geothermal Wells. The Ohio Water Well Association (OWWA) will meet on January 13<sup>th</sup> to discuss key criteria for rules regarding geothermal borehole installations. OWWA's main concerns are (1) requiring good locational information; and (2) ensuring that boreholes are properly grouted.

"Irrigation Wells". OWWA has also expressed concern about wells being drilled on private properties—often by individuals without drilling expertise—as contingency drinking water wells, but described as “irrigation” or “agricultural” wells. The state has no regulatory authority over such wells.

***United States Geological Survey:***

Great Lakes. USEPA provided \$475 million to the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), of which \$15 million is earmarked for the USGS, to be spent within the next 18 months. RFPs must address one of five specific categories: contaminated areas; invasive species; watersheds; near-shore areas; monitoring and education.

Secure Water Act. In March 2009 Congress passed the Secure Water Act, which requires the Secretary of the Interior to address national water resource challenges. USGS regional studies in significant aquifers will continue to build towards a national assessment of the nation's ground water availability. Contributing to the effort is the National Ground Water Monitoring Network being established through ACWI-SOGW, of which Tom Allen is a member representing ASDWA.

Marcellus Shale. USGS staff in the New York office are trying to get funding to conduct geochemical fingerprinting of Appalachian streams exhibiting very high levels of total dissolved solids. This data may support claims that disposal (legal and otherwise) of hydro-frac water from the Marcellus Shale is degrading waters of the state.

Fact Sheet on GW Flow Modeling. In November the Survey published a fact sheet on ground water flow modeling titled “U.S. Geological Survey Ground Water Modeling Software: Making Sense of a Complex Natural Resource”. This fact sheet is available from the USGS Web site at <http://pubs.er.usgs.gov/usgspubs/fs/fs20093105>.

***Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Geologic Survey:***

Subsidence Mapping. The Ohio Survey is working towards receiving half a million dollars this year and for several years to follow, to map underground mines and investigate claims of subsidence. This effort is underwritten by the Abandoned Underground Mine Subsidence Insurance Authority

Arsenic in Soils. The Ohio Survey recently completed a paper on the levels of arsenic in Ohio soils.

Coastal Erosion Maps. Coastal erosion maps along Lake Erie will be released on January 4, 2010.

Geothermal Energy. The Ohio Survey also is looking at a grant, funded by the Department of Energy, for measuring deep borehole temperatures. These data will support future exploitation of deep geothermal energy.

***Ohio EPA, Division of Surface Water:***

Recreational Use Standards. New water quality standards were adopted on December 15<sup>th</sup>, and the anticipated effective date for these rules is March 15, 2010. These rules require changes to be made in bacteria monitoring and limits in new and renewed NPDES permits.

Rule Changes. Three of four revised rule packages—covering water quality standards, anti-degradation and 401 rules-- have been public noticed as of last September. However, some

reviewers have declined to comment until the 4<sup>th</sup> package—concerning stream mitigation—is released for interested party comment.

GLRI. RFPs for Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) funds are due January 29, 2010.

Surface Water Improvement Fund (SWIF). One-time grants are currently available from a \$1.25 million “surface water improvement fund” acquired from environmental fines. No matching funds are required, and storm water projects and septic system improvements are eligible. RFPs are due to Division of Surface Water by February 15<sup>th</sup>.

Integrated Water Quality Report. The Integrated Water Quality Report, which is issued every two years, is currently in internal review. The goal for 2010 was for 80% of Ohio’s large rivers to meet their water quality attainment goals. The report indicates that 92-93% of Ohio’s large rivers have attained their goals.

TMDL Reports. Reports on the Total Maximum Daily Limits for three watersheds are currently out for public comment. These include: Walnut Creek, White Oak, and Mad River.

Clyde Sampling. The division is finishing up a report on surface water sampling conducted in the vicinity of the Village of Clyde, related to the childhood cancer cluster recently identified there.

Grand Lake St. Marys Public Meeting. The directors of Ohio EPA, ODNR and ODA recently met with the public at Grand Lake St. Marys. They introduced a plan to deal with the lake’s blue-green algae infestation that forced the agencies to issue public warnings about recreational contact during the 2009 Labor Day weekend. The meeting was well attended but rather hostile, with some attendees complaining the plan lacked detail and expressing frustration with the length of time required for water quality improvements.

New Ballast Rules. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recently published new rules requiring ballast waters from *all* types of lake vessels—not just seagoing vessels--to be treated before discharge. A number of owners/ operators of small

lake-only vessels are claiming this requirement will drive them out of business.

### ***Ohio EPA, Division of Drinking and Ground Waters***

Integrated Water Quality Report. The division added a ground water chapter to the Integrated Report for the first time, discussing “impairments” to ground water (based on drinking water MCLs) in the major aquifers of the state.

Chardon Complaint. DDAGW staff investigated a complaint of high chlorides in ground water that appears to be related to a township salt pile. Sampling of a private well indicated elevated chloride (>2,000 mg/l) and sodium. A meeting will be held with the township officials early next year following complete data analysis.

Michindoh Aquifer. The public comment period has been extended concerning the proposed federal designation of a sole-source aquifer in northwest Ohio (as well as portions of Michigan and Indiana). A public meeting will be held on January 13<sup>th</sup> in Bryan, Ohio.

Muskingum Watershed Nitrates. The division may investigate the high levels of nitrates in large water systems drawing from the Muskingum River valley aquifer in Washington County. Nitrate levels in finished water currently are ranging from 5-13 mg/l, and averaging 8 mg/l. (The MCL for nitrate is 10 mg/l.)

### **PRESENTATION**

Heather Raymond (OEPA) gave a presentation on dye-trace studies conducted in Ohio’s karst regions over the past year.

### **NEXT SCCGW MEETING**

... will be held February 18<sup>th</sup> at the Horace R. Collins Classroom, ODNR facility at Alum Creek, Delaware, Ohio.

**REMINDER:** Meeting agendas and final meeting summaries are posted on the SCCGW Web site: <http://wwwapp.epa.ohio.gov/ddagw/SCCGW/>.