Missouri Department of Natural Resources

Water Quality Coordinating Committee
Water Protection Program

Minutes

May 20, 2008

Missouri
Department of
Natural Resources

WATER QUALITY COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Missouri Department of Conservation
Auditorium
2901 W. Truman Blvd.
Jefferson City, Missouri
May 20, 2008

10 a.m.

MEETING AGENDA

Abandoned Well Plugging Grants,
Steve Sturgess, Public Drinking Water Branch, Water Protection Program

Managing Wet Weather with Green Infrastructure Action Strategy 2008,
Mandy Whitsitt, EPA Region 7

Alternative Method for Ag NPS SALT Application Review,
Colleen Meredith, Soil & Water Conservation Program

Other

Agency Activities

Meetings & Conferences

MISSOURI WATER QUALITY COORDINATING COMMITTEE

May 20, 2008

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2901 W. Truman Blvd.
Jefferson City, Missouri

MINUTES

Attendees:

Sarah Fast	MoDNR, Water Protection Program	Bob Ball	USDA-NRCS
Darlene Schaben	MoDNR, Water Protection Program	Greg Anderson	MoDNR, Water Protection Program
Priscilla Stotts	MoDNR, Water Protection Program	Terri Brink	EPA, Region 7
Susan Higgins	MoDNR, Water Protection Program	Mandy Whitsitt	EPA, Region 7
Colleen Meredith	MoDNR, Soil and Water Conservation	Bob Broz	University of MO Extension
Stacia Bax	MoDNR, Water Protection Program	Paul Andre	MO Dept. of Agriculture
Georganne Bowman	MoDNR, Water Protection Program	Bryan Hopkins	MoDNR, Office of Director
Ken Tomlin	MoDNR, Water Protection Program	Cindy DiStefano	MO Department of Conservation
Angel Kruzen	Water Sentinel Program	Donna Menown	MoDNR, Water Protection Program
Tucker Fredrickson	MoDNR, Water Protection Program	Bill Whipps	MoDNR, Water Protection Program
Steve Sturgess	MoDNR, Water Protection Program	Chris Riggert	MO Department of Conservation
Linda McCarty	MoDNR, Water Protection Program	Verel Benson	Retired from UMC
Anne Peery	MoDNR, Water Protection Program		

Introductions were made.

Abandoned Well Plugging Grants, Steve Sturgess, Public Drinking Water Branch, Water Protection Program
PowerPoint Presentation

Steve is Chief of the Public Drinking Water Branch with Department of Natural Resources. Steve talked about a proposed concept that is developing within the Branch. This concept still needs department approval. This program would use public drinking water funds to plug abandoned wells. Steve previously worked in other department programs where he saw serious groundwater related problems. The state of Missouri currently doesn't have a program for plugging abandoned wells. There are an estimated 300,000 to 500,000 abandoned wells in the state. This number keeps increasing each time a new water district forms or expands. Abandoned wells can be a physical hazard. They can be a direct conduit for contaminants to get from the surface into an aquifer. Groundwater sources supply drinking water for about 92 percent of Missouri's 2,700 public water systems. Only eight percent use surface water. That eight percent supplies the majority of water for the state (KC, St. Joe, St. Louis, Springfield). About 87 percent of Missourians get their drinking water from community water systems. About 13 percent are supplied by private sources (domestic or multi-family well). Steve said it is far easier to plug abandoned wells than to clean up one that is contaminated.

The purpose of the Abandoned Well Plugging Grant is to locate and plug abandoned wells to prevent contamination of public drinking water aquifers. This will be the first time the "set asides" from the drinking water infrastructure funding will be used for plugging abandoned wells. The funding is from a multi-million dollar grant that the state receives from EPA to pay for drinking water infrastructure for communities. Loans are given to communities that need to upgrade their treatment plants or extend water lines. A certain percentage is allowed to be used for staffing, source water protection, and other activities. This proposed concept falls under source water protection. "Set-asides" provide funding for state public drinking water programs to provide technical and financial assistance to public water systems.

The funding will be provided to community water systems, not the landowners. There are approx. 1,200 community water systems that could apply for the money. Once the community received the grant, they would then work directly with landowners. If participating, landowners would be enrolled, plug the well, then be reimbursed up to $750 for the cost of plugging the well. Funding could also be used for public outreach, well finder's fees, water bill rebate, and costs of administering the program. This program will help the people who want to do the right thing and plug an abandoned well. All work is required to be performed by a well drilling or pump installation contractor who is permitted in the State of Missouri, which must be performed in accordance with the Missouri Well Construction Rules.

Community water systems can be reimbursed for public outreach to make landowners aware of the benefits of having their abandoned wells plugged.

Steve said the funds will be distributed through a solicitation process. A priority point system will be developed for the selection process. Extra points would be given to those water systems with a completed source water protection plan; if match would be provided; the number of wells; and for the proximity of the well to a public well (the closer to a public well, the more points that would be awarded). Water systems that have a Source Water Protection Plan would get higher priority. This will encourage public water systems to obtain department approval on their plan.

Steve anticipated this process to begin summer 2008. If it began in July, the application deadline would then be Sept. 30, 2008, with awards being made by Dec. 31, 2008. The projects would have two years to complete the work. According to Steve, approx. $500,000 is available. If this first round proves successful, they would continue the program as long as they had funds.

Any time a well is plugged; a registration form is filled out and entered into a database that can be used to develop a GIS data layer. All wells dug since 1987 are entered into a database at the Division of Geology and Land Survey in Rolla. They are working on developing a brochure on abandoned wells. Steve mentioned a CD that can be purchased from Division of Geology and Land Survey called Missouri Environmental Geology Atlas, or MEGA, that includes information on soils, geology, springs, data on abandoned wells, and drilled wells, losing streams, plus a lot more valuable information.

Sarah encouraged those working with watershed groups to share this information and to work with their community water systems. She felt this would be a good way to publicize this new program.

Managing Wet Weather with Green Infrastructure Action Strategy 2008, Mandy Whitsitt, EPA Region 7 PowerPoint Presentation

Mandy said many communities are looking for ways to protect their streams, rivers, and lakes from development. Green infrastructure fits into the sustainability. On natural ground cover, there is approx. 50 percent infiltration and 10 percent runoff. With 75 to 100 percent impervious surface, you get 15 percent infiltration and 50 percent runoff. The higher percentage of runoff is running into sewer systems and by-passing streams and lakes. This is upsetting the hydrological balance. She showed pictures of each and why they are going toward green infrastructure to get water back into the streams. Green infrastructure is the technologies and practices that use natural systems to mimic natural processes. It is really to infiltrate and reuse storm water. Green infrastructure is the where, low impact development is the how, and what of practices. There are multiple benefits of using green infrastructure – increased groundwater, recharge, improved air quality, reduces urban heat island impacts, etc. Mandy talked about different practices to use - parking lot island infiltration areas, open soils, rain gardens, green roofs, permeable and porous pavements, planters by sewer drains and buildings, rain harvesting. People are starting to use wooden barrels to capture rain. They can also be decorated to make them more attractive.

EPA and their partners developed a "Managing Wet Weather with Green Infrastructure Action Strategy" in February 2008. The intent is that it's not just EPA's ideas but other partners as well, including American Rivers, ASIWPCA, Low Impact Development Center, National Association of Clean Water Agencies, and Natural Resources Defense Council. These partners are working together to promote green infrastructure and encouraging cities to include it in their long-term control plans, ordinances, and codes.

Green infrastructure started in March 2007, when EPA Assistant Administrator, Ben Grumbles, sent a memo to all region administrators saying we needed to use green infrastructure to protect water quality in storm water, Combined Sewer Overflow, nonpoint source, and other water programs. On April 19, 2007, all partners signed a Green Infrastructure Statement of Intent. Elements of the strategy include research, outreach and communication, tools, clean water act regulatory support, economic viability and funding, demonstrations and recognition, and partnerships & promotion. Mandy talked about each element and said most are underway or will be starting next year. She said this is a living document. The strategy document can be found on the Web at: www.epa.gov/npdes/greeninfrastructure. She said an interesting topic of discussion is about whether a rain garden is a classified well.

The Natural Resource Defense Council developed a "Rooftop to Rivers" document that includes case studies. Large retailers like Home Depot, Target and Kohls, are starting to develop green infrastructure into their parking lots.

The National Water Program Climate Change Strategy is available for public comment through June 10. This talks about how the water program will respond to climate change and the research they will do, which includes nonpoint source and water programs, drinking water, and wetlands. (www.epa.gov/water/climatechange) It is approx. 100 pages. A Web cast was held on May 8. Another document available on the EPA Web site is "Reducing Stormwater Cost through Low Impact Development Strategies and Practices." (www.epa.gov/water)

Alternative Method for Ag NPS SALT Application Review, Colleen Meredith, Soil and Water Conservation Program
PowerPoint Presentation

Sarah mentioned that this round was the official last SALT call for proposals. Colleen said they tried something new this time where some Soil and Water Conservation Program staff and a couple Water Protection Program staff traveled in a van to each of the project application locations. She thought this was helpful in that they could discuss the project with everyone together. Colleen talked about what they saw at each project site and their concerns. Applications they received and sites they visited included:

District	Amount Requested	Project Area
Bollinger County	$700,000	Hurricane Creek and Little Whitewater
Cape Girardeau County	$750,000	Byrd Creek
Cass County	$750,000	Upper Big Creek
Dunklin County	$750,000	Crowley's Ridge
Greene County	$520,049	Pearson Creek
Oregon County	$750,000	Warm Fork of Spring River
Pettis County	$750,000	Heaths Creek
Randolph County	$522,067	Elk Fork Salt River and Coon Creek
Ray County	$750,000	Crooked River
Scotland County	$750,000	South Wyaconda
Webster County	$750,000	Lower Headquarters in James River
Wright County	$650,000	Clark and Wolf Creek

Since funding was available, all of these projects were going to be recommended, for a total cost of $8,392,116. Colleen talked about the pros and cons of this method of application review. Even though it was time consuming and it made decisions harder, they could see the concerns and the statewide issues, meet the partners, and have valuable one-on-one discussions. Colleen felt it will be easier to manage the projects since they had visited the site.

Agency Activities

Priscilla Stotts went to Lancaster in Schuyler County to talk about the North Fork of the Fabius. There were over a dozen people that had attended the Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring training willing to do water quality monitoring on that project. A water festival will be held in Carthage on May 31 at Kellogg Lake.

Georganne Bowman mentioned that she and Colleen were trying to get a group together to look at vertical drains, mainly in Perry County. This is a drain that drains through a sinkhole. If you are interested in this topic, let Colleen know.

Angel Kruzen mentioned river cleanups will be held on June 7 for Jacks Fork and June 14 for Current River. She also mentioned an area of Sinking Creek in the Current River watershed where a 880-acre clear cut project is ongoing. This has brought out the wild hogs. MDC is hiring a hunter to hunt the area.

Anne Peery said more whole body contact recreation UAAs are available for public comment through July.

Greg Anderson said the FY08 319 RFP should be out in July. This will be a 75/25 percent split for targeted watersheds. There will be 15 targeted watersheds. Twenty-five percent will be available for other projects.

Bob Broz mentioned that Hinkson Creek is having a tour of their LID and rain garden activities tonight, May 20. Contact Scott Hamilton at 573-882-9909 if interested in attending. A seminar will be held on campus this Thursday to talk about green energy.

Paul Andre mentioned the May/June issue of the Journal of Environmental Quality features several articles about USGS investigations in five agricultural watersheds across the United States.

Paul also mentioned a CNN article regarding issues in Cameron regarding water quality. Bob said it reported 12 cases of brain tumors within the last six months. Steve Sturgess said the Department of Health would have to do a study.

Bryan Hopkins said he would be traveling with Mike Wells to sign the hypoxia action plan in New Orleans. An operating plan will also be approved in that process. There will be continued pressure that a state nutrient plan be developed. There is no new funding in the Farm Bill for this. One sensitivity about developing a nutrient plan for the state at this point is that it could easily confuse the issue on the nutrient criteria efforts.

Donna Menown mentioned something new on the department Web site is an online survey where people can report on how they use a stream.

Chris Riggert announced an Understanding Streams workshop in Sedalia, June 13-14.

Verel Benson brought some publications and an ag census atlas to share. Verel has retired from UMC FAPRI but plans to do consulting. His first project is with the University of Tennessee relating to energy crop production.

Sarah said the next meeting is scheduled for June 17 in Columbia. Bob Ball suggested an update on the Rapid Watershed Assessment.

Meeting adjourned.