

SMALL COMMUNITIES ENVIRONMENTAL INFRASTRUCTURE GROUP

December 7, 2009

MINUTES

Attendees: Steve Grossman, Ken Heigel and Gina Sopp, OWDA; Tony Logan and Dave Douglas, USDA/RD; Randy Hunt, RCAP; Nathan Johnson, ODH; Robert Hickey, USDOC/EDA; Jim Bonk, Dave Bornino and Brian Hall, Ohio EPA; Kaye Borchers, Choice One Engineering; Nick Gatz, Senator Voinovich's Office; Charmel Wesel, Buckeye Hills-HVRDD; Dave Frantz and Stephen Porter, US Army Corp of Engineers; Kurt Ericksen, TMACOG; and Mike Miller, OPWC.

Steve noted that Karen Mancl and Tim Leasure were unable to attend the meeting today; however, they have sent their comments for him to give on their behalf. Lori Libby was also not able to attend.

TRAINING COMMITTEE: Randy Hunt - RCAP Training and Steve Grossman for Karen Mancl and Lori Libby - Curriculum

RCAP Training

Randy reported that in 2009, RCAP was able to assist Ohio EPA's Drinking Water Division with a lot of their ARRA projects, including assisting with some additional environmental work.

Thanks to Mr. Bonk and his group, RCAP was able to pick up a contract with Ohio EPA's Department of Environmental Financial Assistance (DEFA) for wastewater ARRA projects.

Randy reported that Ohio is one of the top five states nationally in terms of getting ARRA funds spent. Lots to be proud of; this is a definite reflection on groups such as SCEIG. He has seen other states and he knows that in comparison, Ohio's agencies work well together in coordinating their efforts which resulted in this success.

Curriculum

Steve noted that he would report for Karen who is conducting a contractor's workshop today on "Mound Systems for Onsite Wastewater Treatment".

On behalf of Karen, Steve reported that the new Extension Bulletin entitled "Septic Tank - Soil Treatment Systems for Ohio Rural Homes" is now available for sale at OSU's local Extension offices for \$3.00 each. It is also available online at:
<http://ohioline.osu.edu/b939/b939.pdf>.

The following new publications will be available at <http://setll.osu.edu> and will be published in 2010:

Gaur, RS, L Cai, O. Tuovinen and K. Mancl. 2010. Pretreatment of turkey fat-containing wastewater in coarse sand and gravel/coarse sand bioreactors. *Bioresource Technology*. 101(3):1106-1110;

Tao, J. K. Mancl, and O. Tuovinen, In Press. Attenuation of pollutants in sanitary sewer overflow: comparative evaluation of treatment with fixed media bioreactors. *Bioresource Technology*.

Water and Wastewater:

Steve distributed a brochure for the “Mound Systems for Onsite Wastewater Treatment” workshop for contractors taking place today from 9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. at the Molly Caren Agriculture Center.

Upcoming Activities:

He also distributed a brochure for the upcoming annual Ohio Water Quality and Waste Management Conference to be held February 4 and 5, 2010 at the University Plaza Hotel just north of the OSU campus. The conference will be on “Waste to Energy for Rural Ohio” including looking at anaerobic digestion to produce bio gas, as well as microbial fuel cells to produce electricity. The brochure is posted on <http://setll.osu.edu>.

New Technology/Research:

“Using Fixed Media Bioreactors to Control the Environmental Impact of Sanitary Sewer Overflow” by Tao, J. K. Mancl, and O. Tuovinen was presented in October at the annual Water Environment Federation meeting in Orlando. This publication is available in the *Proceedings* of WEFTEC 2009 and is the result of the lab study that was completed at OSU.

OSU has also constructed a new wastewater treatment system at the Soil Environment Technology Learning Lab. They have installed a peat biofilter that discharges to an onsite spray irrigation system. This spray system is testing a number of strategies for sprinkler winterization. These strategies were first tested in the laboratory in a freezer before installation in the field.

FINANCE COMMITTEE: Jim Bonk

The next Finance Committee meeting is this Friday, December 11, 1 p.m. at OWDA. Currently, there is one project that will be presented primarily driven by Ohio Department of Economic Development in Warren County.

Jim reported that Warren County was approached by Hartz Mountain, a manufacturer of animal care products. Hartz Mountain wants to expand their current facility in Harlan Township to create approximately \$2 million in payroll. On the way to developing this project, it became apparent that the small Village of Pleasant Plain would be impacted. The County is working with the Village to see if there is any way to incorporate serving this residential unsewered area, as well as the industry with this project.

Jim noted that he cautioned them that a lot of the resources present on the Finance Committee are more geared toward residential development than the commercial facility. They are aware and very much want to attend, and are planning to bring someone from the Village to this meeting. Jim views this as a preliminary meeting just to let them know what may or may not be available for them.

He asked Dave Douglas if Jim Cogan or any of his programs would be of assistance to Hartz Mountain. Warren County has offered to take the wastewater from the area and treat it at one of their facilities; but he was not sure which one at this point.

Dave responded that he would check with Jim Cogan.

Jim apologized that there was not more information to report on this project; their profile sheet is very sparse but he is hoping to have a more complete profile prior to the meeting. He will e-mail Tim asking him to do a report for the Village of Pleasant Plain, requesting that he send the Committee his results prior to the meeting.

Jim mentioned to Brian that the Finance Committee has been contacted by Jefferson County over the long-standing pottery addition problem. It is his understanding that they were going to submit a profile sheet and attend the upcoming meeting on Friday. He has not heard from them in two months; however, he will attempt to contact them tomorrow to see if they will be added. This is one of the projects they have been extremely interested in and most of the funding agencies are aware of it. He will do everything he can to get them to attend on Friday.

Brian noted that the problem with this project is that the pottery company discharges directly into the Ohio River; he was not sure how much of an environmental problem this is other than some isolated health issues. Ohio EPA's district office has gone to Jefferson County, not necessarily for the pottery addition, but for a couple of other projects including New Amsterdam. They talked to the County about the unsewered conditions there, as well as some other small communities in the county.

David Frantz commented that Jefferson County has contacted the Army Corps and they have been in the process of completing paperwork for their 594 Program. Some of the County's people have been sending out questionnaires to their constituents talking about the 594 Program and authorization, but it has caused some confusion. The Corps has been working to clear up the confusion as they receive calls; explaining that they already have the 594 Program and need to contact their representatives to work on appropriations for the project, because the Corps already has the authorization in place. This has

prompted the Corps to have internal discussions. As a result, Lisa Morgan would like to put together a road show to take to some of the representative staffers to use this as an outreach opportunity for newer members and staff. Lisa is working on a list of people and they hope to put together this road show over the winter.

DECENTRALIZED WASTEWATER WORK GROUP: Dave Douglas

The community training session discussed back in March and June is now going to be discussed at a meeting tentatively scheduled for January 19, 2010. The new training date timeframe will also be discussed at this meeting with hopes of firming up a date in late spring or summer.

There may be a new decentralized project for Farmington starting to move forward in northeast Ohio, with apparent support from Ohio EPA's NE District Office.

Steve asked Dave if he has an update on Amesville which is the first decentralized project that has been operational for more than 1 year.

Dave responded that he believes it is going well and Jim concurred. Neither of them have heard about any problems.

Charmel noted that she has spoken with the Amesville's administrator. She said they have had no complaints.

APPALACHIAN ENVIRONMENTAL INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY WORKGROUP: Steve Grossman

The December meeting has been cancelled with the next meeting scheduled for March 2, 2010 in Logan. With all the ARRA activities, it was felt that this would help everyone given their current workload.

COORDINATING COMMITTEE: Ken Heigel

This committee has not met for a while; however, they will meet if there is an issue to be coordinated between agencies. He, Dave Douglas and Stacy Barna have sat on this committee in the past. He encouraged the group to send him any ideas or issues that need resolution.

SMALL COMMUNITY TRACKING SYSTEM: Ken Heigel

The database is working well and upgrades have not been made recently due to the ARRA workload. He has been entering all of the ARRA loans. OPWC has also entered updates and RCAP field agents utilize and update the database extensively. Keeping the database updated is very important because of the next item on the agenda for unsewered projects.

UNSEWERED AREAS - OWDA PLANNING LOANS: Ken Heigel

OWDA began this program in the first quarter of 2009 to give 0% interest rate planning loans to communities that are unsewered. The program was extended through the October OWDA Board meeting. He distributed a list of loans (attached) which total \$7 million noting that the program is not completely dead; however, OWDA is not currently taking applications in order to monitor the projects that have been approved in order to make sure they get to construction to repay the planning loans. This program can be utilized in the future if there is a community in need that qualifies.

Ken noted that all of these projects are listed on the database. RCAP field agents have contacted most of the communities; any that have not been contacted will be contacted shortly. He continues to work with the field agents to assist them with this process. Referring to the far right column on the list, thanks to Dave Douglas at Rural Development, his office is monitoring these projects including whether or not USDA RD is involved.

A few of these loans have already been paid off such as Coshocton County who has gone to construction using ARRA funds. Overall, OWDA is pleased with the progress of these loans.

Brian asked when it will be known if these projects have been successful in order to begin looking at the next potential group.

Ken responded that the plans are to review the status of this list next summer to see where the Authority is headed with the current communities.

Brian offered that Ohio EPA can provide another list of potential communities when the Authority is ready.

Ken asked Brian to continue updating their list and offered that the Authority could meet with them periodically (i.e. quarterly) to see if it makes sense to bring any of these projects to the Authority's Board for approval. If there is a hot area that needs immediate attention, do not hesitate to let him know.

Steve noted that the timeframe for this program was approximately 6 months, including an extension that was approved by the Board. During that time, quite a few communities qualified for loans. He mentioned to the group that there is some risk involved for the Authority on these loans.

Dave Douglas stated that he and Ken suggest that some coordination with OWDA and the funding agencies that may end up being the permanent financiers might be good before the planning loans are made.

ECONOMIC STIMULUS COORDINATION: Everyone

Steve noted that Drinking Water is done as far as obligating ARRA funds; getting the money out the door is the next challenge. DEFA is in the midst of finishing up the wastewater projects for ARRA obligations.

Jim reported that they have 50+ loans scheduled for approval with OWDA this week. They are on track to finish within the allotted time.

Steve stated that the Authority will be holding a special Board meeting in January as well as their regular meeting two weeks later. Hopefully this will be all that is required to finish up the ARRA loan approvals.

Dave Douglas commented that USDA RD had a good year in 2009. They have ARRA money for more than just water and sewer including community facilities, guaranteed housing, as well as business and industry programs. The ARRA money for housing has been used up; however, there is still money available through the end of September 2010 for business and industry, and water and sewer loans/grants; as long as the money holds out.

The money is not allocated to Ohio like it normally is for their program. For ARRA funds, it is held in a pool in USDA RD's national office and it is distributed on a first-come, first-served basis. States that are able to use it will be able to and when the money is gone, there is no more.

USDA RD did receive an allocation of regular funding for 2010 which is currently available to them. This allocation is a little higher than they have typically seen in the last few years. There is also still a lot of money left over from the 2009 ARRA; how much they are not sure of because it is not allocated to Ohio.

Steve inquired if USDA RD has done any 2009 ARRA awards in the last several months.

Dave Douglas responded that they have not had any awards for a couple of months; however, they do expect to have one sometime in January for a \$30 million sewer system for Scioto County. This large dollar amount seems to be the trend for these ARRA funds as he monitors Ohio and other states. The more typical dollar amount projects are being funded with regular allocation funds.

Steve asked if all the non-ARRA loans/grants for 2009 have been taken care of.

Dave Douglas responded that they had been. Their regular allocation for 2009 ceases at the end of their fiscal year. ARRA funds were set up initially when the Bill was signed as two year funds, which is why they carry over from 2009 to 2010.

Stephen Porter noted that the Army Corps has a project partnership agreement with Scioto County for the design cost on a portion of this project through their 594 Program.

Dave Douglas stated that there is talk of trying to somehow work in the Eaton Township portion of that project; however, they have not worked the details out completely yet. This project has been around for 3 years and has not gotten off dead center. He believes they think there will be capacity with the new treatment plant to be able to fold everything into one project.

Bob Hickey reported that EDA had \$150 million in ARRA funds which were to be obligated by the end of September. In Ohio, there was only 1 ARRA project for Fremont at \$2.9 million. They had hoped to have 2 projects; however, EDA and EPA were not able to work out the details in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Hopefully an MOU will be done by legal counsel soon should there be another round of stimulus funds or a significant increase in EDA funds for 2010; then they will not have this problem.

This was also the problem they had with the Hillsboro project. EDA had intentions of putting \$2.5 million towards that project; however, when Hillsboro originally came to EDA there was no mention of EPA funds. Eventually Hillsboro received \$4 million of ARRA funds as well as \$4 million from EPA and \$2.5 from EDA.

Steve noted that the Hillsboro loan is on OWDA's agenda for approval this Thursday. Hillsboro came before the SCEIG group a year ago in Athens.

Jim stated that Hillsboro has a healthy funding package that includes funds from OPWC, CBDG Block Grant, Ohio EPA, Army Corps and OWDA. The Army Corps design portion really helped make this funding possible.

Bob commented that EDA is still confused as to whether or not there will be potential for more ARRA funds in fiscal year 2010. Six months ago, they believed they might be rewarded with additional funds since they would be one of the few agencies expending or obligating 100% of their money by the end of September.

Kurt reported that as he has spoken with local wastewater officials, one thing he hears from some of them is that they are dead-set convinced that ARRA did not accomplish anything; that no one received the money. He asked if it would be possible to get a clear and concise list of information as to what the final word is for the ARRA grants. TMACOG is very interested in helping to get this word out.

Steve commented that OWDA is tracking this for Ohio EPA's ARRA funds and suggested to Jim that a press release from Ohio EPA would be helpful.

The group concurred that the Recovery.gov website has been difficult to separate out reporting documentation and to navigate.

Kurt noted that if he can communicate what has been obligated to the local officials of northwest Ohio, it will not help him to have the entire list of all projects with all the different categories. If it is possible to pare the list down to water and sewer projects in a

