

## SMALL COMMUNITIES ENVIRONMENTAL INFRASTRUCTURE GROUP

September 14, 2009

### MINUTES

**Attendees: Steve Grossman, Ken Heigel and Gina Sopp, OWDA; Kurt Ericksen, TMACOG; Karen Mancl, OSU; John Rauch, RCAP; Lori Libby, CPMRA – Miami University; Dave Douglas, USDA/RD; Amy Rauch, ORWA; Dave Bornino, Mike Baker and Brian Hall, Ohio EPA; Dave Frantz, US Army Corp of Engineers; and Peter Ross, Fifth Third Securities.**

Steve noted that he received a call from Jim Bonk just before the meeting. Jim will not be able to attend the meeting today.

Mike noted that Stacy Barna has accepted an opportunity to go to the Texas Water Development Board and is no longer with Ohio EPA. She is currently in the process of moving to Texas. He and his staff wish her well as this looked like a good professional opportunity for her. Ohio EPA is working to fill her position as soon as possible, which was posted today. In the meantime, between he, Dave Bornino and Kurt Leifheit they will be filling in to cover her position.

**TRAINING COMMITTEE:** Karen Mancl - Curriculum and John Rauch - RCAP Training

#### **Curriculum**

Karen noted that she returned from her sabbatical on July 1, 2009. She is working on her masters in East Asian studies and her thesis topic is “The Culture of Water Pollution Control in Rural China”. A Chinese scholar worked with her here in Ohio and she went to China to collect data and conduct presentations in rural China regarding wastewater treatment. Three demonstration projects are being worked on with Chinese engineers, including bringing Yangtze River water north to Northern China due to their water shortages. The projects also include working through all their difficulties with water quality, pollution and sewage in these areas, including a rural village, home and duck farm.

An educational outgrowth of her studies now includes people that are trying to go to China to work there who have never been there before. The Ohio Farm Bureau sent a small delegation to China for the first time and they asked her to do an orientation for them. She enjoyed this and the travelers appeared to be much more comfortable during their stay. As a result, she is offering orientations, especially for agriculture and environmental leaders that are preparing to go to China, with the goal of assisting them to do business there. The orientation can be customized to fit particular needs of the travelers. She handed out a brochure entitled, “Doing Business in China, an Orientation for Agricultural Leaders” and asked the group to have anyone interested to contact her.

### **Water and Wastewater:**

She is beginning to receive calls regarding small community infrastructure asking what OSU has to offer in terms of helping the planning of infrastructure. She has been sending out brochures for their water and wastewater courses. Nothing is scheduled yet; however, it is exciting to receive calls after a long period of no activity.

For the onsite wastewater portion of OSU's work, the struggle has been that Ohio has no rules. The rules that were adopted two years ago have been rescinded for two years which expired July 1, 2009 and is now extended another six months. In response to this, OSU was prepared because the rules that were rescinded required continuing education. In the past, they were so overwhelmed with continuing education demands from the regulating community that they went from one workshop a year to 12 workshops a year for contractors. They were maxing out the building capacity of the building in order to get everyone in; now they are back to one per year. She believes that the difference is due to the changes at the mandatory level.

In anticipation of having new rules, Karen noted that she has been writing a series of new design manuals. At the request of the Department of Health, she had not been working on them because of the rules being discussed by various committees and legislators. Since the rescission has been extended, she has decided to move on with the manuals and has sent them to be printed. The manuals include topics on septic tank soil absorption systems; sand bioreactors (which is up for review with Ohio EPA and Department of Health); and disinfection systems including the research with OWDA on chlorine dioxide (which will go out for review soon).

### **Upcoming Activities:**

Every year she hosts the Ohio Water Quality and Waste Management Conference, which will be held February 4 and 5, 2010 at the University Plaza just north of the OSU campus. The conference will be on "Waste Energy in Rural Ohio" including looking at anaerobic digestion to produce bio gas, as well as microbial fuel cells to produce electricity. Karen indicated that she would distribute brochures to the group at the December meeting and that the brochure would be posted to the website at <http://setll.osu.edu>. Her colleague from China, who is in charge of anaerobic digestive program for all of China, will be a speaker at this conference.

John mentioned that the Harrison County engineer wants to produce some bio fuel from wastewater treatment.

Karen mentioned that there a lot of projects in the Mid-West, particularly Iowa where they capture livestock waste. They run generators with the bio fuel; however, she is not aware of any projects in Ohio at this time.

### **New Technology/Research:**

Karen reported that OSU is currently working on five research projects that address concerns for small communities.

They just finished the lab phase of a wastewater treatment study on sanitary sewer overflows; representing low-strength wastewater that comes during very high flows but is intermittent, which makes it challenging to treat. They have successfully treated sanitary sewer overflows at a 25 year occurrence interval, including flow rates at all different types of reoccurrence intervals, which meet the anti-degradation rule effluent limits. Ammonia is a little tricky; however, they can meet the limits within the first 2 hours of an overflow. If the overflow extends beyond 2 hours, the ammonia starts to rise. They are working on design strategies to keep the ammonia removal high if an overflow lasts longer than 2 hours. This lab study is complete and they are presenting their findings at the October Water Environment Federation in Orlando.

OSU has proposed to build a pilot plant at Cincinnati, which has an overflow site where they do experimental work on treatment. OSU has applied to US EPA for funding, which might include ARRA funding that was set aside for wet weather flows.

OSU has an ongoing project in treating high-strength wastewaters at a turkey slaughter house. Lab research continues to be ongoing and there is an ongoing pilot plant at the slaughter house that meets all the affluent limits. Ammonia levels are mostly down to undetectable. They are in the design phase for a full scale treatment plant, which will be a sand bio-reactor treatment plant for a turkey slaughter house. This may be the first in the country.

As a result of this pilot treatment plant, what is done with the wastewater after it is treated is a concern. The newest treatment OSU is looking at is discharging the treated wastewater through irrigation, in lieu of discharging to a stream. They are addressing the concerns with discharging through irrigation through research including looking at drip irrigation. OSU has the only controlled study laboratory that is capable of looking at clogging through this type of irrigation system, using different types of wastewater. They are just finishing this study.

OSU is also doing a lab study on cold weather spray irrigation which involves putting sprinklers in the freezer and running the system at 20 degrees below zero. They have been able to use wastewater to irrigate at this temperature. The field site is installed and they are waiting for the weather to get cold so they can irrigate the field site this winter.

OSU is also continuing its ongoing research project regarding disinfection using chlorine dioxide.

## **RCAP Training**

John referred to the pamphlets that were mailed to the group for the RCAP course offerings which include Utility Management and Financial Management for Local Officials. Courses are scheduled from October through December 2009 and are detailed on RCAP's website at <http://www.glracap.org/ohio/>. They are hopeful that US EPA will be able to fix the CUPPS program so they can do the Applied Asset Management, Rate Setting and Budgeting, in order to offer these courses after the first of the year.

Regarding CUPPS, both Tom and Wayne are currently in Washington DC at a conference with US EPA and hopefully they will have some new information on how this piece of software can be fixed .

RCAP has been getting the Project Development short course information out as requested by several communities. They are working these courses in as they continue working on the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) projects.

Before Stacy Barna left, one of the things she asked RCAP to do was to put together a post-closing guide to meet the reporting requirements, as well as everything that a community would need after they close with ARRA funds. The guide only covers some of the recipients, not including direct funding ARRA recipients. Hopefully USDA/RD will be able to assist with these requirements. RCAP is working to get something put together to get into the hands of some of these ARRA recipients; then following up with phone conversations and some site visits. RCAP is stretched pretty thin, as is everyone, with the ARRA requirements and work.

Brian asked if any training sessions are being scheduled for the northwest?

John responded by giving Brian a schedule noting that they have a training scheduled for Upper Sandusky on December 15.

Brian noted that he had a conversation with Tom several months ago, that was very preliminary, regarding Ohio EPA's is interested in co-sponsoring and helping with publicity.

John responded that RCAP could still work with Ohio EPA on this. He asked Brian to continue speaking with Tom noting that they prefer to have approximately 15 participants in order to schedule and justify the time for their courses.

Brian commented that they have good connections with local officials and believe they can help to get the word out. This has been on hold on his end because he was not sure they would have funding, which they now have.

John responded that with this type of interest, they would be willing to schedule another date after February 2010.

**DECENTRALIZED WASTEWATER WORK GROUP:** Dave Douglas

The group has not had a meeting since the last quarterly meeting; therefore, he has nothing new to report.

They were planning to do a fall meeting; however, with ARRA funding and reporting, and the heavy workload this has created, they have not been able to do so.

Steve suggested that they plan to coordinate a meeting for sometime during the first half of 2010; everyone concurred.

**SMALL COMMUNITY TRACKING SYSTEM:** Ken Heigel

The database is being utilized regularly to track projects. He and the RCAP field agents are inputting information and he continues to receive weekly reports from Ohio EPA on the permitting, which is extremely helpful.

The project information is current. As the OWDA Board approves ARRA projects, he is inputting this information on a regular basis as well.

Reporting is the next phase they are working towards, which will include searching and customized reports. He will keep the group posted as this feature develops.

**COORDINATING COMMITTEE:** Ken Heigel

This committee has not met for some time. When they were meeting, they were discussing specific issues. If a meeting needs to be scheduled, they usually meet in an outside meeting (other than the regular SCEIG meeting), to accommodate additional discussion. If anyone has a specific issue that needs to be coordinated with several agencies, please contact him so that a meeting can be scheduled.

John mentioned that there was an issue last fall regarding villages that do not have a water system where someone else is providing the water services. The villages were putting in a sewer system and they wanted to know how to collect for the services. He mentioned an agreement which has not been challenged. Considering the activity of legal aid in that area, RCAP has farmed this question out to some other communities, as well as to their solicitor. He and Dave Douglas thought that this might be a topic for the Coordinating Committee to discuss to assist with some options.

Ken asked John to keep him posted on their progress so that he can make arrangements for the committee, if needed. John affirmed this.

Karen mentioned that in Northern Minnesota, people are on wells with sewage service that is collected through their electric bill. This has been going on since the late 1990's.

John asked Karen to get him copies of these agreements. Karen affirmed this and asked John to e-mail her if he did not hear from her.

**OUTREACH EFFORTS:** Steve Grossman

The last outreach/finance committee meeting was held in July in Athens. At the last SCEIG meeting in June, it was discovered that Representative Space was holding a series of sessions the second, third and fourth Friday in June. As a result, the finance committee canceled their meeting in June and some of the group attended one or more of the three sessions that took place. Representative Space's sessions were well attended. Approximately half of the people who attended the sessions had water and wastewater needs; and the other half who attended had interests in economic development and social concerns.

The July outreach/finance committee meeting in Athens was not heavily attended by people interested in learning about information for their water and wastewater needs; however, five communities did attend for the finance meeting which made the effort worthwhile.

Steve reported that the goal for this year was to do two sessions, which has been accomplished. At the December meeting, he asked the group to be prepared to discuss schedules for next year, including options in the northeast and southwest. With Kurt here today and due to previous conversations, he believes a meeting will need to be included for the northwest, with Kurt's assistance in getting communities to attend.

John asked if there would be any interest in going to St. Clairsville next year if they could find a location.

Steve responded that this would be the group's decision and could be discussed in December.

These events have clearly been successful in getting communities in to present. Looking back to 2007 and previous years; the committee had more communities present in 2008 than in the previous 5 years. For 2009, there were 3 communities in Findlay and 5 in Athens; therefore, it is worth going out.

Steve noted that the other goal for this committee was to go back to the legislators, which was last accomplished in 2007. Those sessions directly resulted in the outreach sessions to communities in 2008 and 2009. The thinking was to have the next session all in one day instead of two, with two back-to-back sessions. After speaking with Tracy Freedman at Ohio EPA per Stacy's suggestion, the only possible week for this year would be the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of November. He is not sure how good that would be and if it would be doable.

He reminded the group that the previous session in 2007 was done by the entire SCEIG group; however, the most recent delivery has been to have Lori or RCAP do the entire presentation. This could be done for the legislators so that everyone would not need to be

present. Is the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of November good; or should we look at mid-January or February. He asked the group to consider this.

The group responded that mid-January or February would be better.

Steve noted that he will contact Tracy to let her know that the November date is not workable; that the projected timeframe would be mid-January or February 2010.

Regarding the 2007 session, Federal legislators attended; however, the State legislators did not respond well. Our recent success came as a result of Senator Voinovich's office attending, including one of his new staff people who offered that they could sponsor something around the state. After two sessions with Senator Voinovich's sponsorship, Senator Brown's office requested to join in and the two Senator's co-sponsored sessions. This increased attendance overall.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:** Steve Grossman for Jim Bonk

At the meeting in Athens, the following communities presented:

Cadiz has a project in need of approximately \$3 million of additional funds. The community's wastewater project has been approved to receive \$2.9 in principal forgiveness from the WPCLF.

Racine presented and brought the committee samples of their bottled water. Their project was approximately \$1 - \$1.5 million and the committee felt this was achievable. The community knew who to contact because they have worked with the committee on previous projects.

New Boston also presented and Steve asked if they have been in touch with RCAP.

John responded that Nathan has been visiting New Boston. The first thing they wanted to look at is what kind of arrangement New Boston has with Portsmouth. They need to come up with a plan due to Findings and Orders from EPA. The problem is with a trunk line that goes through New Boston that they installed and Portsmouth uses. However, Portsmouth does not pay New Boston for the usage. New Boston has no enterprise accounts where they are collecting any funding for sewer.

RCAP has talked to them about surcharges and transportation fees. RCAP needs to revisit the agreement with Portsmouth, including addressing a couple of other items. This will be a long term project. John believes Nathan is setting up a meeting with New Boston, Portsmouth and a person from US EPA that they are dealing with.

Steve noted that this is a multi-million dollar project for New Boston. The agreement with Portsmouth is very old and has a long term, which was negotiated by previous administrators. Now there is a relatively new Village Administrator who is requesting

