

Approved Minutes of the Technical Advisory Committee Meeting
February 8, 2005

Members present: Allison Lowry Roger Thompson
 Alan Huizenga Spencer Harris
 Rodney Pingree Barb Willis
 Gerry Kittle John Forcier
 Dave Cotton

Others present: Chris Thompson Frank O'Brien

Scheduled meetings:

March 8, 2005 1-4 PM Appalachian Gap Room

Review of agenda

The agenda was accepted as drafted.

Review of minutes

The draft minutes of the January 11, 2005 meeting were reviewed and accepted as drafted.

Letter from Arthur Krueger

Roger will write Mr. Krueger and let him know that TAC will take his comments related to replacing the percolation test method with a soil analysis method into account when TAC deals with the issue.

Dave suggested that as TAC decides which issues to work on for the next rule revision, and that the framework document, that was developed in the past, be reviewed and used as a starting point. He noted that there were "to do" items on the 2001 report from the previous sewage committee that still have not been done.

Legislative tour

There have not been any additional responses to Phil's request for information since the last meeting. While people agree this would be a good thing to do, the level of urgency is diminished since the end of 2004.

Budget and timeline for project to study existing systems on clay soils

Roger reviewed a conversation between Commissioner Wennberg and some legislators who proposed that an evaluation of systems on clay soils be done to determine if they are working. Commissioner Wennberg was supportive of this concept, with a budget of about \$50,000, and has asked that TAC consider what would be needed for a budget and work plan in order to get useful information.

The committee discussed various approaches and tentatively concluded that a study of 10 systems that were working would be a place to start in trying to determine the site conditions required for a working system. These would probably need to be evaluated for more than one year to get good information. As discussion evolved on how these systems would be selected, John noted that from experience it makes a great deal of difference in how you ask the questions. A question of does your system work usually gets a “yes” answer, while a question of whether your neighbor’s system works is more apt to get a “no” answer.

The committee discussed what an appropriate testing/monitoring program would include as the basis of writing a Request for Proposal (RFP). John suggested it would be better to create a budget and to define the question and then let the bidders propose how they would do the work.

Dave said that we should be trying to determine how many systems on Vergennes clay are working.

John and Dave noted that the budget would be pretty tight, with little money for monitoring of the systems. Dave suggested that an ideal approach would be to do actual loading tests with clean water for the site evaluation, and could envision testing systems with drip application and underdrains that would surface discharge.

Roger asked how, once working systems were identified, the sites could be evaluated so those sites that work can be separated from those that don’t.

Roger also said that Steve Revell had suggested that there should be an automatic credit of 6” when subsurface drainage is installed and that the topic has been added to the list for future review.

Gerry suggested that some experimental systems be tried, with the installations then monitored carefully to determine if they work. The issue of how to deal with sites that do not work remains an issue, unless a complying replacement site is available.

While the committee is supportive of doing a study, there is a feeling that with the limited budget such a study might not result in a clear path to rule revisions that would dramatically increase the number of sites that can be approved.

When is effluent no longer wastewater

Roger handed out copies of some pages from the current EPA Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems Manual. The manual suggests that there might be several classes of systems that provide different levels of treatment, that could be selected based on the risk to public health. The manual proposes systems ranging from those with only primary treatment to those that achieve near drinking water quality. Alan reviewed the e-mail he circulated to the committee which suggested using the spray disposal criteria already in the rules as the starting point. Dave noted that the treatment systems now commonly available can reach the near drinking water standard suggested in the EPA manual which is significantly better than what is required in the spray rules. Roger noted that the spray rules require that the wastewater be infiltrated into the naturally occurring ground and allow for storage of the wastewater during periods when the SHWT is less than 12" from the surface. The rules are also based on use of chlorine which might be an issue for subsurface discharge, and required fairly large separation distances from the area of application to houses, property lines, and areas accessible to the public. Some of the concepts have now been incorporated into the two year time of travel and into the store and dose concepts included in the January 1, 2005 rules.

Dave noted that there are already a lot of requirements in the rules, such as 50' to surface water, 25' to drainage ditches, 3 feet of soil to SHWT, etc and suggested that we assume it is no longer wastewater at that point.

Roger also noted that the Commissioner had discussed the need for a management entity, such as a town, or fire district. This would depend on what degree of operation and oversight is needed. A town could contract with a private company to perform the work.

The use of discharging systems by other states was discussed briefly. Chris asked about systems in Wisconsin and Dave said that he thought that for failed systems they allowed replacement mound systems that they expected to surface at least in the springtime.

Dave noted that the Monkton School had been approved many years ago with a system with a 50' sand wick.

Dave asked if the standard for determination of when effluent is no longer considered wastewater had to be numeric, or could it be time based, such as the two year time of travel, or could it be based on distance of travel through the soil.

Spencer suggested that legislators should be invited to the TAC meetings so they can understand the issues that TAC is trying to deal with.

Gerry suggested that some systems should be installed and tested on sites that do not comply, or maybe monitor some systems such as the Monkton School.

Innovative systems

Frank said he had issued draft permits for an advanced aerated constructed wetland project, and for the Singlair system. He had also responded to a proposal for a general use approval of the Elgin In-Drain system with an outline of the information required in order to grant a reduction in leachfield size.

Topics list

1. Drip disposal
2. Housekeeping changes
3. Inclusion of policies and procedures
4. Up or down location of holes in pressure distribution systems
5. Mound sand requirements
6. Encourage I/A
7. Changing the 20% slope restriction to 30%
8. Replacing perc test with soil identification approach
9. Defining when effluent is no longer wastewater
10. Disinfection
11. Colorado Rule – reduction in isolation distance to wells based on construction methods
12. Certification and audit approach to permitting
13. Lake water systems
14. Curtain drains
15. Terra-Lift System

Executive Committee

John Forcier, Steve Revell, Lance Phelps, Phil Dechert, and Roger Thompson
Alternates – Chris Thompson, Bernie Chenette, Spencer Harris, Jeff Williams

Subcommittees

Hydrogeology - Allison Lowry, Craig Heindel, Dave Cotton and Steve Revell.

Training subcommittee - John Forcier, Roger Thompson, Allison Lowry, Dave Cotton, and Barbara Willis.

Licensed designers - Spencer Harris, Alan Huizenga, and Gerry Kittle.

Well driller's knowledge checklist - Jeff Williams, Rodney Pingree, Roger Thompson, Bernie Chenette, Gail Center and Steve Revell.

Interested in the delegation rules - Spencer Harris, Gerry Kittle, Phil Dechert, and Alan Huizenga

Drip Disposal – Frank O'Brien, Roger Thompson, Dave Cotton, Steve Revell, Alan Huizenga

Legislative field trip – Phil Dechert, Gerry Kittle, Dave Cotton, Roger Thompson