



**Environmental Management
Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, November 28, 2012, 5:30 p.m.
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Committee Members Present

Bob Hatcher, Chair
Dave Hemelright
Bruce Hicks
Charles Jensen
David Martin
Donald Mei
Norman Mulvenon
Bob Olson
Robert Stansfield

Others Present

Dave Adler, Department of Energy (DOE)
Spencer Gross, ORSSAB support staff
Holly Clancy, RSI

Absent

Jimmy Bell
John Coffman
Alfreda Cook, Vice-chair
Susan Gawarecki
Jennifer Kasten
Steve Kenworthy
Dick Ketelle
Gloria Mei
Lance Mezga
Tim Myrick
Kerry Trammell
Curt Walker
Kevin Westervelt

Briefing on Groundwater Strategy Development

Mr. Adler briefed the committee on plans to hold a series of workshops in 2013 to develop strategies for dealing with groundwater on the Oak Ridge Reservation (ORR). The workshops will include representatives of DOE, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC).

Work has begun on organizing the workshops. Four workshops will be scheduled in 2013 on January 29, February 26, April 2, and April 30.

A scope of work has been developed (Attachment 1). Each workshop will have a different topic:

1. Delineate and possibly enhance ORR boundary monitoring
2. Define groundwater flow basins and contaminant boundaries within each basin and any deep flow paths that might impact possible offsite migration
3. Establish additional groundwater use restrictions/policies and frame an alternative strategy if these restrictions/policies prove unavailable
4. Pursue selected groundwater remedial actions when practicable.

Regarding remediating groundwater, Mr. Adler said DOE generally takes the position that groundwater restoration is difficult and, unless there is an exposure threat, it should eliminate the

source of contamination, explore cost effective actions to take, and take a wait and see approach. He said EPA and TDEC take different stances. EPA believes DOE should try hard to restore contaminated groundwater. While it understands cost considerations, EPA believes DOE should be prepared to take engineered restoration actions. TDEC takes a more intermediate stance than EPA but believes DOE should spend some money to restore groundwater.

The workshops will not be open to the public, but DOE will engage Dan Goode of the U.S. Geological Survey to report to the committee. Mr. Adler said the number of participants is being kept small because of the complication of the discussions. At a minimum Mr. Goode would be expected to report to the board in July and again after the workshops are completed.

Mr. Adler said the committee and board will have an opportunity to comment on a final report scheduled for release in September 2013. The report is an enforceable milestone for DOE and will be a discussion of all the workshop proceedings and recommendations. The workshops will be one-day meetings and likely there will be two more workshops as follow on to issues or approaches identified in the workshops.

Mr. Hicks asked if the workshops will consider unexpected events that could affect groundwater. He said EPA policy is based on history. Mr. Adler said groundwater is a medium where unexpected things happen. Flow of groundwater in this area is difficult to understand because it is in an uncertain environment of fractured rock. He said the discussion of basins could include a discussion of unexpected events. He said an event like the recent large flood in Nashville could happen here and measures have been taken in anticipation of something like that, but other events like the building of a plant that draws on groundwater, a spill, or a new contamination source would have to be considered if and when it happened.

In budget planning, Mr. Adler said \$4.5 million will be budgeted for FY 2014-16 so if decisions are made that cost \$4.5 million or less money would be available.

Mr. Martin asked if minutes of the workshops will be available. Mr. Adler said minutes would be available.

Mr. Martin said he thought the workshops were the result of the inability to meet groundwater goals on the ORR. Mr. Adler said that is true to a degree, but also the conclusion that there needs to be a more systematic approach to groundwater. The three agencies have different perspectives on groundwater and none of them are considered in the big picture of cleanup of the ORR.

Mr. Martin wondered if money will be available to address groundwater problems. Mr. Adler said the fundamental question to answer is, are there things that are near-term goals. The hope is there are no immediate needs so money can be spent on more pressing problems. He said there is debate about that. Are there cost effective options of restoring groundwater? That has to be discussed.

Mr. Jensen asked about the nature of groundwater in this area. He said if 100,000 gallons is drawn out of a sand bed groundwater will move. Mr. Hatcher said that is more likely in coastal plains areas, but not so much here because of fracture density. Mr. Adler said there is evidence of how depleting a well changed groundwater flow in the area. That could cause unexpected, long-distance impacts. The concern is someone off the reservation could pump hard and pull contaminated groundwater off the reservation to that offsite well.

Mr. Stansfield asked if one person will be in charge of the groundwater program. Mr. Adler said there will always be people dealing with groundwater. These workshops will result in a unifying strategy for dealing with it. Currently groundwater resources are split by watersheds and sometimes divided under project management among the three main plants on the ORR. There is also the

Water Resources Restoration Program which is responsible for monitoring and tracking groundwater.

Mr. Stansfield asked if someone would be responsible for remediation. Mr. Adler said the decision to remediate would come from the DOE Oak Ridge Manager for Environmental Management Mark Whitney. If he does it would be given to one of the three project directors responsible for cleanup of one of the three main plants.

Discussion of possible comments or recommendation on groundwater workshops

The committee decided no recommendation or comments were needed at this time. Mr. Adler said the committee and full board would be encouraged to make a recommendation on the final report in 2013. The committee could also draft recommendations based on interim reports by Mr. Goode.

Input on January topic and selection of an issue manager – Hazardous and Radioactive Waste in Long-term Storage

The committee had no suggestions for the January topic. Mr. Adler said he or a representative of UCOR will talk in more detail about the presentation to the full board at the November 14 meeting.

Action Items

1. DOE will research the depth of fractures at the proposed Environmental Management Disposal Facility. Status, answer is being researched.

The meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Attachments (1) are available on request from the ORSSAB support office.

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