

## **MEMORANDUM**

To: Groundwater Advisory Council  
From: H. Bokuniewicz  
Re: Minutes of the meeting of 11 March 2013  
Date: March 13, 2013

### **PRESENT:**

R. Alvey  
H. Bokuniewicz  
S. Colabufo  
C. Gallagher  
E. Keenan  
J. LaPoma  
D. Paquette  
A. Rapiejko  
K. Roberts  
M. Scorca  
W. Spitz  
S. Terracciano

### **REGRETS:**

M. Alarcon  
N. Bartilucci  
L. Koppelman  
R. Liebe  
R. Mazza  
M. Nofi

1. The minutes of the last meeting (11 February) were distributed. There were no comments at this time.
2. Eileen Keenan joined us to talk about the joint Long Island Water Quality Coordinating Committee (LIWQCC) being initiated Nassau and Suffolk Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Eileen is with NY Sea Grant under contract to the DEC to assist LI municipalities with implementing the “MS4” stormwater regulations. Soil and Water Conservation Districts receive state funding. Soil and Water Conservation District WQCC’s had existed separately in each county throughout the state including, Nassau and Suffolk. In 2001, for example, the Nassau County District prepared a draft non-point source water quality strategy. The District managers for Nassau and Suffolk (Brian Zimmerman and Paul TeNyenhuis) intend to rejuvenate the LIWQCC as a joint advisory committee to municipalities and both counties. They will have links to the NYS Non-point Source Committee as well as a number of intermunicipality watershed-based water quality, like those in Hempstead, Northport, Oyster Bay-Cold Spring Harbor and the Peconics Watershed. They are also in contact with federally funded programs like the National Estuary Programs. The LIWQCC is not intended to be political or adversarial but to facilitate and expand ecosystem-based protection of water resources.

A Steering Committee will define the LIWQCC’s vision, methods and objectives. They intend to promote cost-effectiveness cooperation and coordination to reach regional goals. The Steering committee will meet on 3 April, 2013 to set priorities for the first year. They anticipate sponsoring forums, settling up web-sites and providing assistance with grant applications. It was suggested that the rejuvenated joint committee might undertake an inventory of relevant past, and active, initiatives and establish and information database.

3. The Saltwater-freshwater Symposium was discussed. Originally, I had intended to hold such a symposium this spring but date was moved back (next to fall, 2013). The issue was to include presentations on local conditions, Sandy impacts, forecasts in light of climate change and sea level rise. Faculty at SBU recommended a number of potential speakers from outside the region, but logistical costs would be fairly high (\$26,000). A request for University conference support brought the reminder that the existence of the Institute was still under review. I would still like to set up a symposium but I'm now shooting for spring 2014. There is a request for proposals under a SUNY program called "Conversations in the Disciplines" although capped at \$5000.

Locally, the USGS has been funded by the Nassau County Water Commissioners for basic monitoring including logging deep wells for salt-water intrusion. The GS also has some relevant cooperative work involving test borings and outpost wells with the Water Authority. In the spring 2014, the draft report on the USGS North Atlantic Regional Model should be available. John Masterson and Jack Monti are working on it. It will include the characteristics of the saltwater-freshwater interface. One of its results, for example, is that the Hudson Canyon does not bisect the NJ-LI system. These model results might be a keynote of a symposium.

4. The environmental community, spearheaded by the Nature Conservancy, the Citizens Campaign for the Environment, the Group for the South Fork and the LI Pine Barrens Society have funding (from the Roach Foundation, the LI Community Fund and others) to launch a major campaign concerned with water quality on Long Island. It may begin around 18 April, before Water Week. It seems that a ten-point agenda has been prepared including topics like a 2 ppm nitrate limit, establishing the DEC as a regional overseer on water quality issues, septic and sewer initiatives, and banning pesticides. All levels of government from villages to the state are expected to be called to action.
5. The Suffolk County Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan is expected to be released in March. Sy Robbins has been brought on to oversee the final revisions.
6. Some public supply wells in Nassau County had been contaminated with salt by Sandy. As discussed at the last meeting (February 11, 2013), these were pumped clean but it took a month or so. In Suffolk County, some (shallow) private wells that had been flooded by Sandy and contaminated with salt have not yet recovered. With pumping, salt content decreased but seems to have leveled off. It may be that area flooding left a residue of salt in the vadose zone that is flushed down to the capture zone with every rain. Induction logs run by the USGS may show this. We are not aware of studies that may quantify this process; there may be some in other areas that could be helpful. I'll try to check perhaps as a student project. Ty had a study on road salt a few years ago. Perhaps there is some relevant information in that report on the transport of salt from the land surface.

There were also some 800 reported oil spills after Sandy. Along the south shore there was No. 2 fuel oil due to flooding but inland to the north the spills were transformer oil due to wind damage. Shelter Island was fairly unscathed by Sandy. The EPA is currently assessing the vulnerability of superfund sites. There were not any serious problems at Superfund sites after Sandy. A disruption of power did interrupt remediation operations and could do so in future events, but the problem was not too serious. Surface flooding or breaching of containment dikes may be a more serious threat.

7. Jennifer LaPoma was introduced. She is the EPA project manager for the New Castle-Hicksville groundwater contamination site. Eleven public supply wells have been impacted south of Old Country Road. In 2003, the DEC issued a ROD calling for in-well vapor stripping which may be implemented.
8. FEMA has a temporary (perhaps 6 months) office in Forest Hills to coordinate federal assets for the Sandy Disaster Recovery Framework. They have six themes including one on the natural systems. The USGS Coastal Office (St. Petersburg, FL), for example, intends to use LIDAR to estimate sand losses due to Sandy and the current vulnerability of the LI coast. The LI USGS Office hopes to improve their program to deploy temporary, storm-surge monitors quickly before extreme events as well as to collect real-time water level data at more locations. The Fish and Wildlife Service hopes to restore wildlife refuges (\$13 million?). There are apparently many (18 or so) other similar proposals being considered.
9. The DEC's Long Island Pesticide Pollution Prevention Strategy was presented to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) recently. Long Island is the highest user group in the state. Originally, the Peconic Estuary Program had suggested that a Pesticide Management Plan be formulated. Vinny Palmer of the DEC became the project manager and funds were provided to Suffolk County to sample public and private wells, targeting "high-risk" sites. The draft "plan" raised issues concerning whether or not a SEQR process would need to be used and the practicality (or legality) of withdrawing any existing pesticide registrations. Vinny has since retired and the DEC Pesticide Management Unit in Albany has now made final revisions. The document was redrafted as a "strategy" that does not require a SEQR process.

The strategy focuses on pollution prevention and "best management practices". The TAC has been replaced by a Technical Review and Advisory Committee (TRAC) to provide continuing advice. The TRAC is expected to focus initially on the most frequently detected pesticides. These are Atrazine, Metatalaxl and Imidacloprid. It may be that issues of remediation and the need to revisit all active ingredients in pesticide products may also be considered.

Stakeholder's meetings are scheduled and Assemblyman Sweeney is holding a legislative hearing on 2 April. Environmental groups and others have already expressed dissatisfaction with the strategy. Revisions can still be made based on comments received. In the broader sense there may be other beneficial actions that could be considered. In Canada, for example, fertilizers are sold without inmixtures of pesticides and herbicides that are only necessary in special cases. Separating pesticides and herbicides from standard fertilizers sold on Long Island would reduce the applied loads. Better control on the timing of applications would also help. What has been the response of other states to these issues?

10. Back to Sandy. The "Sandy bill" allows 100% Federal support for COE coastal-flood-protection projects (like dune construction) that have already been authorized. New projects will probably need local matching commitments.
11. Hofstra hosted a conference on sustainability called "From the outside in: Sustainable Futures for Global Cities and Suburbs" on March 7-9, 2013. Among many other topics, they discussed LED certifications, wetlands, the suburban environmental movement etc. For example, one concept was that the greenest building was one that was already built because it consumed no additional construction energy or materials. More information can be found at <[http://www.hofstra.edu/community/culctr/culctr\\_events\\_sustainability.html](http://www.hofstra.edu/community/culctr/culctr_events_sustainability.html)>.

12. Assemblyman Sweeney (with Assemblymen Weisenberg and Thiele) pass a bill last week, Bill A.1047, <<http://open.nysenate.gov/legislation/api/1.0/lrs-print/bill/A1047-2013>> for modifying plans in order to achieve a groundwater standard of 2mg/L nitrates in special groundwater, and surface water, protection area. Steve Liss probably drafted this legislation. It has been delivered now to the State Senate. It may act as a placeholder for broader legislation to come. The issue of a 2 mg/L standard had been raised at Senator LaValle's Environmental Roundtable.
  13. There was a brief discussion of earlier groundwater planning for Long Island including the LI (Substate) Strategy (see the minutes of the meeting of 17 September 2012) and the Long Island Groundwater Management Program that was implemented out of the 208 Study.
  14. The DEC will be releasing (next week?) the report on compost leaching at "Long Island Compost: Vigliotti's Great Gardens". Elevated levels of manganese and radium were a concern as well as detections of PPCP's that may indicate a septic source. (See also minutes of 6 June 2011 and 21 November, 2011 <<http://www.somas.stonybrook.edu/institutes/ligri.html>>.
- SPDES permits are not required for composting facilities but, as solid waste facilities, they cannot contaminate groundwater. It is generally accepted that composting is needed on Long Island. In-vessel composting has been considered earlier but the conventional wisdom was that, because the cost would be so high that compostable waste would just be sent off-island for disposal instead (See also meeting of 28 September 2011).
15. The SCWA working with NYS Department of Health's Waste and Wastewater Committee (Teresa Boepple) will be issuing a brochure on "The Value of Water" for Water Week.
  16. The next meeting will be on April 8, 2013, 9:30 AM at Dvirka and Bartilucci in Woodbury.

HB/ed  
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