

GROUND WATER TASK FORCE CONFERENCE CALL NOTES

Thursday March 20, 2003

NEXT GROUND WATER TASK FORCE CONFERENCE CALL

The next Ground Water Task Force (GWTF) conference call will be Thursday, April 17, 2004.

INTRODUCTION

Notice: It is very important to note that this meeting summary has been prepared by EPA staff and/or contractor for informational purposes only. This paper may contain summaries and discussions of EPA's statutory authorities and regulations. This paper, itself, however, does not constitute an EPA statute or regulation and does not substitute for such authorities. In addition, the statements in this summary have not been reviewed or endorsed by Agency management, and thus do not constitute official statements of EPA's views and are not binding on EPA or any party.

Conference-call participants introduced themselves. The group consisted of representatives from EPA headquarters and regions, as well as the State of Georgia. The Georgia participant who was not formally representing the State or ASTSWMO joined the group to share his personal expertise in state programs.

BACKGROUND ON GWTF, SCC, OCP

Ken Lovelace (OERR) provided a summary of how the group evolved—the original Ground Water Task Force and its charge, and the group's adoption by the One Cleanup Program (OCP) as one of its initiatives. The GWTF mission under the OCP is to facilitate communication on ground-water issues across regulatory programs. The OCP has a Senior Cleanup Council (SCC), which is a designated group of OSWER office directors and senior representatives from the regions, states, and tribes that will provide their views on all OCP topics, including GWTF activities.

At its March 4 meeting, the SCC heard presentations of two GWTF issue papers. One issue paper was on the use of source water protection areas (SWPAs) to obtain regional, state, and tribal program manager consensus on cross-program cleanup issues. Some SCC members commented that this approach already is in place, and suggested that Headquarters oversee (rather than pilot) selected projects that employ the approach. The other issue paper was on cross-program remedies used at ground-water sites.

GWTF DISCUSSION

The GWTF decided to pursue the concept of using SWPAs as opportunities for cross-program coordination. This effort would involve ensuring that the approach is used, and identifying any issues that may need further guidance.

Representatives from the Office of Water presented the Source Water Assessment and Protection Program (SWAP) polygon database and summarized its statutory basis, the states' time line for conducting assessments, and the status of state reporting. The extent to which states have met SWAP polygon mapping requirements varies. The SWAP polygon Workgroup was established to support the Office of Water's goal of maintaining national SWAP polygon GIS coverage. The SWAP polygon database compiles information from other Agency sources such as RCRIS and CERCLIS to show the location of drinking water areas, the source and migration pattern of drinking water, and potential contamination sources.

Several limitations of the SWAP legislation were noted, including its posing a one-time requirement (and funding) for states. States are not required to monitor SWAP polygon areas, and can determine

different tiering criteria. Some states are interested in examining potential contamination sources. (These states consequently could serve as an appropriate pilot location.) Information on the SWAP program is available at www.epa.gov/safewater/protect.html and www.epa.gov/OGWDW/protect.html.

The group discussed what the GWTF might do within this project to facilitate coordinated clean-up decisions within SWAP polygon areas. In keeping with the OCP mission, the ultimate goal of such an initiative would be to develop consistency in approaches when more than one regulatory program is involved. Many issues were discussed, including funding (such as state travel costs), the hydrogeological impact of different climates in different regions within a single SWAP area, and lack of incentive.

The group discussed various options, such as: requiring each region to pilot a project (proactively join efforts under affected federal and state programs to determine the environmental strategy for a given SWAP); working with certain regions to conduct pilots; and requesting Headquarters to select a pilot. The group generally agreed to promote the process (through a means yet to be determined), evaluate the apparent issues and barriers, and decide what needs to be done to encourage the process on a broader scale.

ACTION ITEMS

A GWTF subgroup will evaluate the options for proceeding with a SWAP pilot, for presentation and further discussion at the next meeting.

The group agreed to hold conference calls on the third Thursday of each month, at 1:00-3:00 PM.

ATTENDEES

Headquarters:

Phyllis Anderson, OERR
Matt Charsky, OERR
Chuck Evans, OPPTS/OPP
JoAnn Griffith, OERR
Ken Lovelace, OERR
Bruce Means, OERR
Carl Reeverts, OGWDW
Rich Steimle, TIO
Hal White, OUST
Kathy Yager, TIO

Regions:

Harold Ball, Superfund Region 9
Arnold Bierschenk, RCRA Region 6
Kathy Davies, GWF Region 3
Ruth Izraeli, GWF Region 2
Dick Willey, GWF Region 1

States:

Robert Pierce, GA EPD