

North Central Regional WWOA Meeting

January 29, 2009

Marathon, WI

The winter meeting of the North Central Region of the WWOA was held on January 29, 2009. The meeting was hosted by the Village of Marathon and the Village of Edgar. The meeting was held at the Rib River Ballroom.

Ken Bloom opened the meeting at 8:30 am, introducing Dave Joswiak, Marathon Village Administrator. Mr. Joswiak welcomed those in attendance and complimented them on their dedication to protecting the environment.

The first speaker of the day was Paul Kent, Municipal Environmental Group. Mr. Kent explained that MEG was formed to give a lobbying voice to municipal wastewater entities when dealing with environmental and regulatory issues. He detailed some of their lobbying efforts. Their efforts included monitoring the effort to implement phosphorus water quality standards.

The EPA started the initiative in the early 1990's. The original intent of the initiative was to raise all the water bodies in designated water quality regions to the quality of the top 25% water bodies in the region. DNR used other factors in their effort to develop water quality standards for water bodies.

DNR's proposed phosphorus water quality standards vary by water body classification and resulted in the following criteria; large rivers – 0.1 mg/l; small rivers – 0.075 mg/l; large lakes – 0.04 mg/l; stratified lakes – 0.015 mg/l; great lakes waters 0.005 mg/l. These levels represent the target concentration for phosphorus in the water bodies. The proposal requires that any dischargers to water bodies with concentration exceeding its water quality criteria will have a discharge limit of 0.10 mg/l phosphorus. There are some additional discharge conditions that may in fact decrease the discharge limits from this level.

In response to the proposed water quality criteria rules, MEG surveyed its members and found the typical discharge level are currently in the range of .03 to 0.8 mg/l. Current technology is not able to obtain removal to a level of 0.1 mg/l. The only current widely used technology able to meet the 0.1 mg/l limit level is effluent filtration.

MEG initiated a study to estimate the capital cost to upgrade existing facilities with filtration technology necessary to meet the 0.1 mg/l discharge level. The estimated statewide capital cost to meet the proposed effluent limit is \$5 billion to \$10 billion.

MEG went on to assess the water quality improvement attributed to the \$5 billion to \$10 billion capital expenditure by point source dischargers. They found instances such as 50% of the phosphorus load in the Fox River is traced to phosphorus leaving Lake Winnebago, and only 20% of the phosphorus in the Rock River is from point sources. MEG concluded that the excessive capital expenditure potential required of point source dischargers would have minimal impact on water quality unless non-point sources were also controlled. DNR has no plans to address non-point sources beyond existing programs.

Mr. Kent briefly mentioned the status of several other regulatory initiatives currently underway. Total maximum daily load allocation is underway on the Fox River and Rock River. The legislature is considering a phosphate ban for lawn fertilizer. Thermal standards are moving ahead and now have drawn municipal dischargers into the rulemaking effort.

Allen Bergles, Morton Safety, followed with a presentation on safety issues. He discussed the impacts of injuries, cited several safety statistics and discussed reasons for a safety program. He explained how the State of Wisconsin regulates safety for municipal workers through COMM 32 and how the State adopts OSHA rules and enforces them.

He went on to explain specific requirements of adopted OSHA rules and the program requirements to meet safety rules.

After a short break he detailed the SPLAT Theory, which shows in graphic detail why even falls are so devastating. The theory clearly explains why an unrestrained fall of 10 ft or more is likely to cause death. He finished his

presentation with a lively question and answer period. Contestants were selected by audience member Darcy, who threw a dart at an attendance list attached to a dart board.

The next speaker was Randy Case, DNR. He explained the uses of mercury, the health issues and risks, and the environmental impacts of mercury pollution. The water quality standard for mercury is 1.3 nanograms/l (parts per trillion).

Wastewater treatment facilities are significant sources of mercury discharge to the environment. Over half the mercury in wastewater comes from waste dental amalgam that is released into sanitary sewer collection systems.

Mr. Case explained what the DNR Green Tier program was and the joint initiative between DNR and MEG to create a mercury green tier program to assist communities with developing and implementing voluntary mercury pollutant minimization programs.

Currently 15 municipalities are involved in the first Green Tier program. He explained the target sectors that were identified and the best management practices for each sector.

Rich Boden, Plover, and Ron Dickrell, Marshfield, briefly discussed their involvement in the Green Tier initiative and recommended the program to anyone that is interested. Jim Krueger, Antigo, related that Antigo was forced to implement a mercury pollutant minimization program due to a permit limit and expressed his belief that the voluntary program was a better way to go.

Eric Donaldson, Wausau DNR, reminded that the DNR is moving towards mandatory electronic DMR reporting, and is available to help with the transition. He discussed the DNR rulemaking process in general and the phosphorus and thermal standards rulemaking status. He closed with an explanation of the current area engineer stating situation with Joe Behlen taking a different post in DNR.

Lyle Lutz called the business meeting to order.

1. He thanked everyone for attending today's meeting and thanked the speakers for sharing their presentations with us. He thanked Edgar and Marathon for providing this morning's refreshments, and gave a special thank you to Dan Dvorak and Ken Bloom for hosting today's meeting and welcoming us to their facilities for tours later.
2. Lutz called for any questions/comments/ or changes to meeting minutes from our last regional meeting in Crandon on October 14th, 2008 as posted on the WWOA website. Hearing none, the minutes were accepted as printed.
3. Treasurer's report. As of 1/28/09 our escrow balance account is \$794 and the checking account balance is \$3407.
4. Lutz reviewed the November 11, 2008 Steering Committee Meeting. He welcomed Terry Vanden Heuvel to the steering committee.
5. 2009 officer assignments:
 - Lyle Lutz- Chairman
 - Matt Saloun- Vice Chairman
 - Ken Bloom- Treasurer
 - Rich Boden- Secretary
6. Lutz thanked Chris Helgestad for his service on the Steering Committee and his work on behalf of the Region over many years.
7. He recognized the North Central Operator of the year, Gus Strehlo.
8. WWOA annual conference will be October 6th – 9th at the KI Conference Center Green Bay. Registration is available online at the WWOA website.
9. Anyone interested in the Operator Competition Team should contact a Steering Committee member for details.

10. Upcoming meetings and events were listed
11. Directory Update - a directory is available for changes/additions at the registration table. Please check and make any necessary corrections or contact a steering committee member for more info.
12. Plant update survey- these were mailed out in the fall and all are encouraged to complete and mail in if they have not yet done so. If you feel you have lost or not received the form contact a steering committee member or Richard Mckee on the State Board.
13. Membership for all non-members is encouraged. Benefits include discounted rates to annual convention and training opportunities, student scholarships, tuition aides, the Clarifier Magazine, the Membership Directory, and eligibility for WWOA awards.
14. Scholarships- two of \$1000 each available for either 2 or 4 year program students. Candidate must be a child or grandchild of a member and in an eligible program this academic year. More information available on the WWOA website.
15. Nomination forms for the Regional operator of the year awards are available on the WWOA website. Scholarship applications can also be obtained from the website.
16. Tuition reimbursements- Six for \$150 each academic year, credit courses or advanced non-credit seminars. Contact Wade Peterson for more information.
17. Anyone interested in having your community host a future meeting should contact a steering committee member for details. The Steering Committee members are available to provide you with as little or as much help, as you need. It is a great way to showcase your community and your facilities.
18. There was no new business. The meeting was adjourned at 11:53. Lunch was served.

The afternoon session started out with a drawing for door prizes.

Camille Johnson, DNR, discussed common deficiencies in laboratory audits under the revised NR 149 that became effective in September 2008. She discussed the role of the laboratory quality manual, and the component sections that are now required.

She discussed the need to document corrective actions when problems occur with testing. She gave several tips on things to look for and the importance of documenting whether the corrective action was effective. She briefly review the new quality control requirements for the four major testing categories, suspended solids, BOD, phosphorus, and ammonia.

She informed the group that Orion redesigned its ammonia ion probe. The new probe has different handling and storage requirements that analyst need to be aware of. Ms. Johnson finished with several suggestions to make the procedures and QA go smoother and took several questions at the end of her presentation.

The last speaker of the day was Fran Bender, Account Executive for the Wisconsin Deferred Compensation Program. She explained what the WDC program was and how it worked. She compared and contrasted with several other available programs. That led to a spirited discussion of the various plans that were offered by municipalities. Ms. Bender was invited to visit several communities to explain the benefits of the WDC program to administrators during the course of the discussion.

The meeting concluded with tours of either the Marathon or the Edgar treatment facilities.

Submitted by Rich Boden, Secretary, North Central Region