

MINUTES OF MEETING  
TECHNICAL REVIEW AND ADVISORY PANEL  
October 11, 2011

Members present were:

Scott Johnson, P. E., Florida Engineering Society  
Pamela Tucker, Real Estate Professional  
Derek Woodruff, Septic Tank Industry  
Greg Liskey, Septic Tank Manufacturer  
William Sirmans, County Health Department  
Roy Pence, Home Building Industry, Vice Chairman  
Ken Odom, Home Building Industry, Chairman  
Sonia Cruz, Florida Environmental Health Association  
Frank Dragoun, Consumer Representative

Alternate members present:

Glenn Bryant, County Health Department  
Mark Cotton, Home Building Industry  
Edward Cordova, Local Government

Department of Health staff present:

Gerald Briggs, Chief, Onsite Sewage Programs  
Dale Holcomb, Environmental Administrator  
Ed Williams, Environmental Health Program Consultant  
Eberhard Roeder, Professional Engineer  
Elke Ursin, Environmental Health Program Consultant  
Kara Loewe, Computer and Data Support

Absent members and alternates:

Clay Tappan, Florida Engineering Society  
Tony Macaluso, Real Estate Professional  
Martin Guffy, Septic Tank Industry  
Ellen Vause, Septic Tank Manufacturer  
Scott Franz, Soil Scientist  
Oren C. Reedy, Soil Scientist  
Paul Steinbrecher, Local Government

Speakers:

Elke Ursin, Environmental Health Program Consultant; Research and Review Advisory  
Committee Update

Others present:

Patti Sanzone, Florida Department of Environmental Protection  
Damann Anderson, Professional Engineer

Bart Harriss, Environmental Health Program Consultant  
Roxanne Groover, Florida Onsite Wastewater Association  
Mike Dryer, County Health Department  
Sam Averett, Septic Tank Industry

Chairman Odom welcomed the meeting attendees and called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM. Most members attended via telephone. Mr. Williams called roll for the panel members.

Nominations for Chair and Vice-Chair were requested. Ken Odom was re-elected for Chair and Roy Pence was re-elected for Vice-Chair.

A review of the December 2, 2010 meeting minutes followed. Mr. Liskey, seconded by Mr. Dragoun, motioned to approve the previous minutes with no changes. The minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

RRAC Update by Elke Ursin

Nitrogen Study Update Notes:

- Laws of Florida, 2008-152, directed FDOH to conduct a study to further develop more “passive” & cost-effective nitrogen reduction strategies for OSTDS
- Initiated the Florida Onsite Sewage Nitrogen Reduction Strategies (FOSNRS) Project in 2009
- Did lab scale study in 2008 on passive nitrogen removal with promising results
- Built on these results and installed pilot scale units with various media combinations at the Gulf Coast Education and Research Center (University of Florida IFAS)
- Results from two-stage passive biofilter are encouraging after 12 months of testing, showing a TN reduction of over 95% (2.6 mg/L). Strength of STE is about 61 mg/L of TN. Biofilter media is clinoptilolite and sulphur based. Other media we’re looking at: expanded clay, polystyrene, and lignocellulosic material.
- Not much difference between single pass and recirculation.
- Will take the more promising media combinations and install full-scale systems at actual homesites in the near future and sample those.
- Also testing reactive media in a more in-situ/in-ground system approach.

The TRAP discussed the amount of money spent on the nitrogen study and the amount needed to complete the study. A suggestion was made to write a letter to the legislature to request the funding needed to finish the project. Mr. Dragoun, seconded by Mr. Liskey, motioned to approve this request. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Research Priorities:

1. Continuation of Inventory of OSTDS in Florida
  - Update the current inventory from 2009 and develop a method to make this process easier for future efforts.
2. Effectiveness of Outlet Filters
  - Determine whether outlet filters are performing as expected/described and not causing unnecessary expense to the homeowner as in unnecessary cleanings and or pump outs.
  - Determine average maintenance frequency such as filter cleaning or pump outs.
  - Determine whether Department’s Approval Standards for Outlet Filters are adequate.

3. Life Expectancy of Onsite Systems
  - Determine the life expectancy of a septic tank and various kinds of drainfields.
4. Drip Disposal With Septic Tank Quality Effluent
  - Determine the effectiveness of permitting drip disposal using septic tank quality effluent.
  - Determine maintenance requirements and how these can be assured.
5. Correlations Between Water Quality, OSTDS, and Health Effects
  - Perform an analysis using a geographic information system (GIS) of any correlations between water quality in drinking water wells, OSTDS, and health effects.

Mr. Liskey, seconded by Ms. Cruz, motioned to approve the research priorities as presented by Ms. Ursin. The research priorities were approved by unanimous vote.

Issue 07-21 – Excavation Inspections  
Rule Section: 64E.6.003

Some soil replacements are too deep to be checked during final inspections. The proposed changes provide uniform criteria for when to require excavation inspections. The proposal requires an excavation inspection when the bottom of the excavation is more than six feet below the bottom of the drainfield. The issue was initially brought up by the TRAP because excavation inspections vary from one county health department to another as well as required fees. Discussion regarding walkout requirements (OSHA/FL Trench Safety Act), safety issues, difficulty of taking excavation material off-site or spread on-site, situations where water has filled in the excavation hole, how many systems require these deep inspections state-wide, costs, and fees. Mr. Pence, seconded by Mr. Dragoun, motioned to table the issue to allow input from septic contractors and county health departments. A unanimous vote by the panel to table followed.

Issue 08-15 – Bedroom Definition  
Rule Sections: 64E-6.002

The proposal develops a bedroom definition that is more consistent with the Building Commission Bedroom Definition Workgroup's preferred option. Comments and concerns were discussed. Comments and discussion included the Building Commission's proposal and concern over having to define numerous rooms, allowing the legislature to act on this issue, home sale issues, sizing based on number of persons per bedroom, and others. Mr. Johnson, seconded by Ms. Cruz, motioned to approve the issue as written. A vote was taken with seven members voting yes to approve the issue and three voting no. The motion carried. The three dissenting votes were from Pam Tucker, Roy Pence, and Ken Odom.

Issue 10-04 – Sand Lined Trenches  
Rule Sections: 64E-6.008

Mr. Mike Sundin with Apalachee Backhoe originated this issue. The proposed changes would allow the installation of a sand liner beneath the drainfield trench in non-karst settings to allow effluent to percolate rapidly from the trench into the sand liner down to the seasonal high water table. Mr. Sundin explained some of the problems encountered in clay type soils and that providing the sand liner prevents ponding in the drainfield. This practice is currently being utilized by many contractors across the state. Gerald explained that this technique was not currently approved because it does not meet the excavation requirements. It was suggested to include language that would require the drainfield to be sized on the most restrictive soil

texture/loading rate. Mr. Liskey, seconded by Mr. Johnson, motioned to approve with the proposed changes. The motion carried with unanimous vote by the panel.

Issue 10-05 – Part II (Florida Keys) SB550, Update Standards  
Rule Sections: 64E-6.017, 018, 0181, 0182

The proposed changes incorporate repair standards for systems in areas where sewer will be available by the end of 2015 and clarify options for onsite systems in the Florida Keys. Mr. Holcomb explained the changes proposed in this section that answered the panels concerns from previous meetings. These issues included mean high water elevations/wet season water tables, the 0.9 loading rate for sand-lined drainfield utilizing a septic tank, clarifying soil depths regarding sand liners and nutrient reducing material, and depth of sand filters. Mr. Johnson, seconded by Ms. Cruz, motioned to approve. The motion carried with unanimous vote by the panel.

Issue 10-09 – LTAR and Alternative Drainfield Geometry for PBTS  
Rule Sections: 64E-6.028

Mr. Holcomb said this issue deletes a part of the rule that has never been used. The issue was passed by the TRAP and was taken to the Variance Review and Advisory Committee for comment. Variance Committee comments regarding the issue were made available for discussion. There was no further discussion and Mr. Liskey, seconded by Mr. Woodruff, motioned to approve. The motion carried with unanimous vote by the panel.

Issue 10-11 – PBTS Design Standards  
Rule Sections: 64E-6.0295  
Issue 08-09 – Innovative Systems – Test Data Required  
Rule Sections: 64E-6.004, 64E-6.026, 64E-6.027, 64E-6.0295, 64E-6.030

These two issues were combined.

The proposed changes consolidate innovative requirements to a single rule section and allows more sources of data and allows one development system as a step to allowing twelve demonstration systems. Intent of the language is to utilize the technology from the research program. Under current standards it would be difficult to bring these technologies into Florida. A conference call with industry has been scheduled for October 17, 2011. Comments and concerns were discussed. Mr. Liskey, seconded by Mr. Woodruff, motioned to table the issue to give department staff time to discuss specifics of the issue with industry representatives. A vote was taken with seven members voting yes to table the issue and three voting no. The motion carried. The three dissenting votes were from Scott Johnson, Sonia Cruz, and Frank Dragoun.

Issue 10-13 – Portable Restroom and Holding Tank Permitting  
Rule Sections: 64E-6.0101, 030

Eric Anderson with the Portable Restroom Industry originated this issue. The proposed language deals with the permitting fees for permanently placing portable restrooms and holding tanks. The proposed changes require a permit fee only (\$35) for permanent placement of a portable restroom. The proposal also provides that one permit can cover all permanent portable restrooms or all stationary holding tanks at a single site. Mr. Holcomb did not have the information requested regarding the number of these applications and Eric Anderson was not

present to speak on the issue. Mr. Liskey, seconded by Mr. Dragoun, motioned to table the issue to allow Mr. Holcomb to get the requested information and to allow Mr. Anderson to speak on the issue. A unanimous vote by the panel to table followed.

Issue 10-14 – Setback from DEP Water Main  
Rule Sections: 64E-6.005

The proposal requires OSTDS to be 10 feet from public water mains that are 3” diameter or larger. This coincides with DEP rules which require a 10-foot setback between onsite systems and water mains. The issue was taken to the Variance Review and Advisory Committee. Variance Committee comments regarding the issue were made available for discussion. There was no further discussion and Mr. Liskey, seconded by Mr. Johnson, motioned to approve. The motion carried with unanimous vote by the panel.

Issue 10-18 – Repair Permit Fees  
Rule Sections: 64E-6.003

Mr. Holcomb explained the premise of the issue that proposes to eliminate the repair permit fee exemption for systems that fail within one year of initial installation. The issue went to the Variance Review and Advisory Committee for comment. Variance Committee comments regarding the issue were made available for discussion. Mr. Woodruff, seconded by Ms. Cruz, motioned to approve the issue. The motion carried with unanimous vote by the panel.

Issue 10-21 – DEP/DOH Interagency Agreement  
Rule Sections: 64E.6.001

The existing DEP/DOH Interagency Agreement deals with coordination between DEP and DOH about jurisdictional issues. The Interagency Agreement has never been incorporated into rule. The issue was taken to the Variance Review and Advisory Committee. Variance Committee comments regarding the issue were made available for discussion. Mr. Johnson, seconded by Ms. Cruz, motioned to approve incorporation of the Interagency Agreement into the rule. The panel concurred and the motion carried.

Issue 11-01 – Drainlines the same length  
Rule Sections: 64E.6.014

The proposed changes clarify that drainline lengths shall be within 10 feet of one another for lift-dosed and gravity-fed systems. This clarifies DOH interpretation “as near as practical” which has been in effect for several years. The ten foot allowance was based on alternative product units which usually come in ten foot lengths or less. The DOH attorneys were concerned with the arbitrary statement of “as near as possible”. Comments and concerns were discussed. Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Dragoun, motioned to approve the issue. A vote was taken with five members voting yes to approve the issue, four voting no, and one abstained. The motion carried. The dissenting votes were from Derek Woodruff, Greg Liskey, Mark Cotton, and Ken Odom. Pam Tucker abstained.

Issue 11-02 – Expiration of permits between Construction Approval and Final Approval  
Rule Sections: 64E.6.003

The proposed changes provide an avenue by which permit holders of expired permits can complete the project at a minimal expense under original permit conditions provided the

system was installed meeting the tank requirements of 2002. Mr. Briggs explained that this is currently a problem statewide due to the construction market being so slow. The research surcharge would be part of the fee. Mr. Liskey, seconded by Ms. Cruz, motioned to approve. The motion carried with unanimous vote by the panel.

Issue 11-03 – Land Application on Phosphorous-limited areas  
Rule Sections: 64E.6.010

The proposal prohibits land application of septage in phosphorous-limited areas. These areas include the Lake Okeechobee Basin, the Caloosahatchee River Basin, and the St. Lucie River Basin. Currently, no land applications sites remain in the affected areas. It would be very difficult and cost prohibited for an applicant to attempt to land apply in these areas. Ms. Cruz, seconded by Mr. Cordova, motioned to approve the issue. The motion carried with unanimous vote by the panel.

There was discussion regarding travel to future meetings and the capability to allow the TRAP to meet. Mr. Briggs indicated that travel could not be reimbursed at this time.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:00 PM.