

FLATHEAD REGIONAL WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT GROUP
MINUTES OF AUGUST 10, 2010
11:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM A & B
EARL BENNETT BUILDING
KALISPELL, MONTANA

<u>Members Present</u>	<u>Members Absent</u>	<u>Others</u>
Turner Askew	Joe Brenneman	Judel Buls
Dan Bangeman		Thomas Cox
Kate Cassidy		Lisa Dennison
Ned Cooney		Peter Pesarik
Mike Durglo		
Laurie Ellenwood		
Joni Emrick		
Jim Foster		
Pam Holmquist		
Curtis Konecky		
Marc Liechti		
Joe Russell		
Mike Shepard		
Jim Simpson		
Julie Spencer		
Chruck Stearns		

Call to Order

Ned Cooney, Flathead Regional Wastewater Management Group (FRWMG) Facilitator, called the meeting to order at 11:02 A.M.

Self-Introductions

Each individual introduced themselves and stated which department or agency they represented.

Public Comments

Thomas Cox-

Thomas Cox said that he is with the Flathead Lakers. He stated that the Flathead Lakers are trying to create a map of where all the pumping stations are on Flathead Lake. They are trying to encourage the formation of pumping stations for large boats since several of the current pumping stations are inaccessible to them.

Judel Buls-

Judel Buls said that she e-mailed a document to the group. She wanted to inform the group that the State has released the draft nutrient trading language. The nutrient workgroup will further discuss the nutrient trading language. She suggested that the FRWMG also place the discussion on their agenda in the near future. She felt that how to handle nutrient standards could be an issue in Flathead County. Cooney asked for a timeline for the policy. Buls said that the language was presented in draft form and the nutrient workgroup will be making the recommendations to it next spring. She mentioned that the workgroup's next meeting will be in September and she plans to attend. Buls encouraged representatives from the FRWMG to attend the nutrient workgroup meetings.

Septage Overview – Presentation from Dick Montgomery

Dick Montgomery, Environmental Engineer, contactor for the Flathead City-County Health Department, said that one of the largest problems that has developed in his tenure with the Department is the treatment and disposal of septage. His presentation included information on Flathead County septage production

and disposal, sources of septage, alternatives methods, etc. He distributed his presentation outline to the group for future use and review.

Turner Askew, Whitefish City Council, asked if land disposal can be used on forest land in addition to crop land. Montgomery said that it is possible to put it on forest land, but it is not practical. He distributed an illustration of land use comparison from 1990 to 2004. The illustration demonstrated the significant increase in septic systems. Jim Foster, Glacier National Park Facility Manager, asked if the local septic pumpers are disking the 250 acres that are actively being used as disposal sites. Montgomery said that for the most part, the pumpers do not provide any type of treatment separation. The pumpers must comply with the federal regulations that require them to be disked and lined. Montgomery commented that there has been some reluctance on the part of the municipal systems to accept septage for a number of different reasons. One reason is that the treatment plants have a limitation on what they can discharge. If they begin to accept another two or three million gallons of septage, it can have a significant effect on the quality of discharge. Joe Russell said that the biggest key with septage is that it must be dewatered. Montgomery suggested that the group evaluate possible alternatives and then select which alternatives they would like to pursue further. Jim Simpson inquired about the 250 acres for septage disposal. Russell said that a portion of that acreage is not being utilized either because it is being fallowed or it is unusable. Simpson wondered if water monitoring was being conducted in the septage disposal area. Russell stated that water monitoring is not being conducted. Thus, we do not know the impact of that septage on the water quality. It was asked why pumping more frequently causes a lot more septage than liquids. Montgomery stated that a higher volume is created because it is a lower strength. Also, you don't run the possibility of solutes coming out of the tank and into the drainfield. He said that the primary responsibilities of the entities who are responsible for the septage district are to ensure that 1) the systems working correctly and 2) that they do not dump nutrients into the ground water system. There is very little that can be done to take the nutrients out of the septage after it gets more than one foot down.

Peter Pesarik, a member of the public said that he is a vibration analyst for Plum Creek. He presented alternative options for treatment. Montgomery stated that if something can be done by the private sector, then the government should not be involved. He is not in favor of the County or State being responsible for an activity that can be handled by the profit making/private entity.

Break for Lunch

Laurie Ellenwood, Environmental Technician with the Lake County Health Department, distributed and reviewed a licensed pumpers report. She reported that her department tries to be proactive by doing replacements and inspecting existing tanks. Cooney asked for the total number of permits in Lake County. Ellenwood said that there are approximately 10,000. The population of Lake County is about 24,000.

Mike Durglo stated that the tribe does not permit. Currently, there is a list of requirements that the pumpers are to follow. He announced that he finished his requirements to be an NPDS federal inspector. He added that the tribe is planning to eventually issue permits for individual wastewater septic tanks. They are also working to create a permit to issue.

Montgomery reviewed his list of potential alternatives for septage disposal that was distributed to the group. He added that septage disposal is an issue that will continue to be a problem but it is a problem that should be dealt with technologically before it becomes a crisis.

Mike Shepard said that there are groups who are trying to introduce legislation to eliminate traditional toilets and move to incinerating toilets.

Buls wondered if there are areas of the Flathead Valley that are being targeted for collection systems. Montgomery said that there are always plans for expansion. There was further general discussion regarding town expansion, collection systems, and treatment systems. Ellenwood said that it is her understand that a small percentage of the lake's pollution is actually attributed to waste systems. It would be beneficial to regulate activities such as fertilizing lawns of lake front property, open burning, and disturbances of soils and nutrient loading from lakeshore construction. Russell said that it would be beneficial for Lake County to ban open burning around the lake.

Shepard inquired about the amount of permits issued per year. Russell said that on average, about 650 are issued per year. Shepard asked if there have been any further advances in technology to aid in distribution. Montgomery mentioned that although pressure distribution has been one of the main current advances, there those who will continue to research different options. Technology will continue to improve.

Durglo inquired about the FRWMG website. Cassidy said that the website was launched in June. The website contains meeting agendas, minutes from previous meetings, updates, and other information.

Buls asked if there is a push for the city leaders and planners to take a new direction or review different planning opportunities to prevent mass development which may further expand the sewer problem. Russell commented that the cost of land will drive development. Also, now that there are sewer lines out to some of the major areas, it will be economically feasible for those areas to connect to sewer instead of septic. He added that there are some logical areas for Kalispell to grow, although, there are some constraints on the sewage getting back to the plant.

Confirm Next Meeting

Cooney mentioned that at the next meeting, the group should discuss the initial issues and determine what information they still need to obtain and review. Also, they need to establish what direction the group would like to take in the near future. He reminded the group to establish a strategic plan that includes suggestions, policies, and practices which, in turn, will be presented to the various jurisdictions.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 14th from 11:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. in conference room A and B.

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 P.M.

Lisa Dennison, Secretary