

Drainfield to Surface Water Setback Distance Subcommittee

Teleconference Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, 01/25/11, 10:00 am

Teleconference
Date: 2011-01-25
Start: 10:00 a.m.

ATTENDEES:

Athol: George Miles, PE
Boise: AJ Maupin, PE; Joe Canning, PE; Michael Cook, DEQ Soil Scientist.
Coeur d'Alene: Allen Worst
Hayden: Dick Martindale, REHS
Rapid City, SD: Bill Holder, PE
Kimberley: Dr. Jim Ippolito, Ph.D. USDA

Absent:

Idaho Falls: Nathan Taylor, REHS
Idaho Falls: Brett Skidmore (Building Contractors Association Representative)
Coeur d'Alene: John Corcoran (Realtor Association Representative)

Support Staff: Lindsey Stanton, DEQ clerical

Meeting called to order: 10:05 a.m.

Past Meeting minutes:

The subcommittee reviewed the January 11th minutes. A motion was made to approve the minutes as presented, the motion was seconded and the minutes passed unanimously.

1985 Rule Hearing Officer Findings

The subcommittee reviewed the summary finding from the 1985 rule hearing regarding a change in setback criteria. The change in setback criteria was contested and requested to further reduce all setbacks to 100 feet. The hearing officer found that specifying a separation distance decrease from 300 feet incrementally to 100 feet based on soil texture should remain as stated in the 1985 *Rules and Regulations for Individual and Subsurface Sewage Disposal Systems*. The 1985 Rule superseded the 1978 Rule which had specified a flat 300 foot separation distance to surface water. The 1978 Rule did allow applicants to seek reductions through a variance request. The variance could be granted as long as it did not violate the intent of the Rules and degrade the environment.

It was noted that at this time most drainfields were dosed by gravity and were in a saturated flow state.

Permitting Flow Chart

The subcommittee reviewed the modified flow chart which has been incorporated into the progress report as Appendix E. Modifications were made to streamline the permitting process outlined in the flow chart.

Questions arose regarding the accuracy of the Effective Soil Volume formula. Jim suggested modifying the formula by subtracting the phosphorus concentration from the aluminum and iron.

Another question that arose was how the calculated drainfield life relates to establishing an actual distance between a drainfield and the adjacent surface water. There are currently no clear answers to this question.

Progress Report

The group reviewed a rough draft of the progress report which will be the subcommittee's final product for submission to the Technical Guidance Committee and the DEQ director.

The central question of how to correlate the lifetime of a drainfield to the setback distance remains a conundrum. Mike suggested it might be helpful to start by identifying the resource to be protected, using numerical criteria to set a limit and establish where the limit is to be applied.

Saturated Flow Model: AJ requested help from Bill Holder on completing a draft of the Saturated Flow Modeling section.

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Pressurized Drainfields: Everyone was in agreement that pressurized drainfields are a requirement for any drainfield setback reduction.

Permitting: The current state of regulatory permitting needs to be defined. AJ asked the subcommittee to think about and provide input on the following questions: Should operating permits be used if these types of systems are permitted? What would be the constraints and provisions? What repercussions would be acceptable to the regulated community? How do we protect our resources?

Action Items: Subcommittee members will review and comment on the draft progress report and provide input regarding possible permitting schemes.

Sampling Protocols

Sampling protocols relate back to the permitting issue. Who would conduct the monitoring component? Would operation and maintenance or performance be monitored? What happens if a system is operating properly but fails environmental performance tests? How would the impact on ground and/or surface water be determined?

Mike commented that it is much easier to regulate compliance of operation and maintenance than to determine results based on environmental data.

Operating Permits in Other States

AJ shared findings on how Tennessee handles operating permits. They use the U.S. EPA's five tiered Voluntary National Guidelines for Management of Onsite and Clustered (Decentralized) Wastewater Treatment Systems. Idaho's operation and maintenance structure does not clearly fit into the EPA's structure.

Action Item: AJ will send subcommittee members a copy of EPA's guidelines for review.

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING:

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, 8 February 2010, from 10:00 am MDT (9:00 am PDT) to 12:00 pm MDT (11:00 am PDT).

ADJOURN: Meeting Adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Next Meeting Topics:

Progress Report