



Jennifer Thacher, *Chair*
Steve Glass, *Vice-Chair*
Suzanne Busch
Matthew Earthman
Kerry J. Howe

Julia Maccini
Roland Penttila
Russell D. Pederson
Caroline Scruggs

Water Protection Advisory Board
c/o ABCWUA
P.O. Box 568
Albuquerque, NM 87103

Minutes: November 17, 2017
Location: Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of Commerce, 1309 4th St SW Albuquerque, NM 87102
Time: 8:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Board Members Present: Chair Jennifer Thacher, Vice Chair Steve Glass, Suzanne Busch, Matt Earthman, Kerry Howe, Julia Maccini, and Roland Penttila.

Board Members Absent (excused): Russell Pederson and Caroline Scruggs

PIC Members Present: Bart Faris, Liz Anderson, Dan McGregor, Rick Shean, Ken Ziegler, and Kate Mendoza

Guests: Justin Ball (NMED) and Elizabeth Reitzel (Congresswoman Lujan-Grisham)

I. Call to Order

Chair Dr. Jennifer Thacher called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m.

II. Approval of Agenda

Chair Thacher informed the board that the presentation by USGS was canceled and motioned to approve the remaining agenda. Vice Chair Mr. Steve Glass seconded the motion and the motion to approve the amended agenda carried unanimously.

III. Approval of Minutes

Chair Thacher requested a motion to approve the draft September 2017 meeting minutes. Board member Dr. Kerry Howe motioned to approve the draft September 2017 meeting minutes and Vice Chair Glass seconded the motion. Motion to approve the draft September 2017 meeting minutes carried unanimously.

Vice Chair Glass requested a minor addition to the draft October 2017 meeting minutes and Ms. Kate Mendoza volunteered to make the change. Vice Chair Glass motioned to approve the draft October 2017 meeting minutes with the change incorporated. Board member Mr. Roland Penttila seconded the motion. Motion to approve the draft October 2017 meeting minutes with the change incorporated carried unanimously.

IV. Presentation: An Update on Groundwater Contamination Sites in Albuquerque and Bernalillo County

Mr. Justin Ball, Team Leader in the State Cleanup Section of the Ground Water Quality Bureau of the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED), provided the board an update on three main categories of groundwater contamination sites in the Albuquerque area that included nitrate sites, chlorinated sites, and leaks from bulk fuels facilities.

Mr. Ball told the board about nitrate sites around Albuquerque that included the Kirtland Air Force Base nitrate plumes, the Western terrace site, Karler Packing Company, McCartharn Dairy, and the Mountain View nitrate plume. Mr. Ball informed the board that the Mountain View nitrate plume is actively being treated using soybean oil injections in “hot spots” of nitrate concentrations, which are flushed through the contaminated groundwater by a system of groundwater extraction wells. NMED, which is overseeing the cleanup of the site, anticipates that the enhanced natural attenuation approach will decrease nitrate concentrations to the drinking water standards in the future.

Mr. Ball also told the board about several sites around the Albuquerque area with groundwater contaminated by chlorinated solvents. Mr. Ball talked about the progress on the Rek Chem site, where there are low concentrations of tetrachloroethylene (PCE). Board Member Dr. Kerry Howe asked about the concentrations of daughter products from PCE and Mr. Ball replied that there have been no detections of PCE-related products at the site. Mr. Ball then told the board about the Sparton site, which has high concentrations of trichloroethylene (TCE) present. Board member Suzanne Busch said that she was aware that the treated water is discharged into infiltration galleries in the nearby Calabacillas Arroyo. Dr. Howe asked about the source of the contamination for the Sparton site and Mr. Bart Faris of the City of Albuquerque Environmental Health Department (City) explained that the site once housed a circuit-board manufacturer. Mr. Faris added that the Sparton site also has a smaller chromium plume in a shallower aquifer, which is being treated with ion exchange in addition to the pump-and-treat system cleaning up the larger TCE plume in the regional aquifer. Mr. Ball also told the board about the remediation at the Los Angeles Landfill, where there is only one well (maintained by the City) extracting groundwater contaminated by chlorinated solvents.

Mr. Ball told the board about Laun-Dry, an active business that sells dry cleaning supplies. While under previous management, the company had historical releases of chlorinated solvents over a period of many years, creating a large groundwater plume that includes PCE, TCE, and 1,2-Dichloroethene (DCE). Mr. Ball explained that there are plans to augment the interim remediation measures now in place with a system to change the water chemistry in the area by injecting a carbon source to adsorb contaminants to create a chemically-active barrier and encourage bio-remediation. Mr. Dan McGregor of the Bernalillo County Public Works Department asked about the existing soil vapor extraction (SVE) system and Mr. Ball responded that the SVE system has been expanded to include additional vapor intrusion wells because a nearby business, RAKS Building Supply, had vapor intrusion, which also prompted further investigations into the potential for residential vapor intrusion. Mr. Ball told the board that there is a possibility of an additional plume at the site with an unknown source and that Laun-Dry will be doing work to determine if this additional plume exists.

Mr. Ball told the board about the former Gulton Industries site, where the former circuit board manufacturer contaminated the groundwater with chlorinated solvents. Mr. Ball said that the solvent concentrations are decreasing, probably due to the active injection of hydrogen-releasing compounds that promote biodegradation of the remaining plume. Mr. Ball also told the board about the chlorinated solvent plume at the University of New Mexico, saying that a monitoring well at the main campus has detected chlorinated solvents with a maximum concentration of 10 µg/L at the site.

Mr. Ball told the board that, in his expert opinion, the most concerning groundwater contamination site in the Albuquerque area is the former Digital Equipment Corporation site, where a computer parts manufacturer contaminated groundwater with chlorinated solvents. Mr. Ball explained that the contaminants of concern, DCE and 1,4-Dioxane (a contaminant without numerical standards), have been detected at a nearby Water Authority supply well. Mr. Ball added that vapor intrusion has also become more of a concern than it was in the past and soil gas concentrations are above the standard, which has required the responsible party to implement vapor cleanup measures.

Mr. Ball concluded his presentation by informing the board about bulk fuels facility spills in Albuquerque including Phillips 66 Company and Chevron Environmental Management Company as well as a naphthalene plume at the BNSF Railroad Company. Mr. Ball informed the board that the well screens at the BNSF site have been submerged and there are plans to install additional wells for monitoring. Chair Thacher asked about the public notification process for changes in remediation efforts and Mr. Ball explained the outreach and notification processes in more detail.

V. Board Discussion on the Presentation

Board member Matthew Earthman asked about the EGIS mapper on the NMED website. Mr. Ball said that there are still a lot of contamination sites that need to be added to the map and there are plans to update the availability of information for contamination sites in the near future. Vice Chair Glass added that there are many leaky underground storage tanks (LUSTs) in the Albuquerque area that should also be mapped and addressed. Mr. Faris told the board about a map that Mr. Ken Ziegler of the City Environmental Health Department created that includes LUSTs, septic tanks, Superfund, RCRA, plume boundaries, landfills, and contamination sites. Vice Chair Glass recommended that the map stay updated with contamination sites in the area and Chair Thacher requested that the map and data should be available to everyone. Ms. Busch requested a short presentation in January to show the contamination map and discuss the sources of documentation for the contamination sites.

Vice Chair Glass asked about the density of the toxic chemical groundwater plumes compared with other municipalities. Mr. Ball said roughly half of the active groundwater contamination sites in the state of New Mexico are found in the Albuquerque area. However, Mr. Faris responded that there are many large cities around the nation with numerous industrial contamination sites that have resulted in unusable groundwater. Chair Thacher requested a presentation for a 2018 WPAB meeting to compare the Albuquerque groundwater contamination sites to relevant cities, such as Phoenix, to better understand how other municipalities deal with threats to their drinking water sources. In addition, Chair Thacher also requested a presentation on how water quality issues are addressed when planning developments in areas with groundwater contamination concerns.

VI. Board Business

Mr. Faris updated the board on the hearings for the WQCC regarding the proposed amendments to the groundwater and surface water protection regulations (20.6.2 NMAC). Mr. Faris told the board that there are four areas in the regulation where changes are proposed: 1) eliminate the five-year variance rule; 2) change groundwater quality standards for certain compounds to match drinking water quality standards; 3) changes in the process to amend discharge permits; and 4) discharge abatement plans. Chair Thacher requested an update on the WQCC findings at the next WPAB meeting in January.

Mr. McGregor informed the board about a recent mercury poisoning case in Bernalillo County. Mr. McGregor added that the person who ingested the mercury survived and the spilled mercury triggered a hazardous material cleanup in response to the incident.

Mr. Faris told the board that there was a public meeting to discuss the progress and technical details about the Kirtland AFB Bulk Fuels Facility spill on November 14. Mr. Rick Shean of the Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority (Water Authority) added that there was a presentation at the Water Authority board meeting on November 16th to review comments to the remedial facility investigation (RFI) document the Air Force submitted earlier this year.

Ms. Kate Mendoza of the Water Authority provided the board with the status of the Water Quality Protection Policy and Action Plan. Ms. Mendoza said that NMED and Daniel B. Stephens & Associates will be working on the surface water and groundwater assessments to inform the source water protection plan update. Mr. Shean added that the Water Authority board approved resolution R-17-21 to fund an inventory of potential sources of contamination in the Albuquerque area and complete a vulnerability assessment of those sources, both of which will be included in the source water protection plan. Ms. Mendoza added that the draft deadline has been pushed to spring of 2018 and requested to have the board review policies and policy measures in January. Ms. Mendoza told the board that the Water Authority is creating a video to educate the public about source water protection and that video will be available in January.

Board member Julia Maccini requested a ratification of the email vote that occurred between the October and November board meetings which approved a letter of recommended legislative priorities for the WPAB. Julia motioned to approve the letter written from the WPAB to the Water Authority board. Chair Thacher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. Adjourn

Chair Thacher requested a motion to adjourn. Vice Chair Glass motioned to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Penttila seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 10:21 a.m.