

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
on the use of
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SYSTEM
GROUNDWATER RESEARCH FUNDS

I. PURPOSE

This agreement establishes procedural guidelines for prioritization of groundwater research and selection of research proposals to be funded through the biennial \$600,000 appropriation to the University of Wisconsin System (UWS) for groundwater research; establishes the coordinative relationship between the University of Wisconsin Groundwater Research Advisory Council (GRAC) and the Groundwater Coordinating Council (GCC); and defines the procedure to be followed in seeking the approval of the use of this funding from the Secretary of the Department of Administration.

II. BACKGROUND

The University of Wisconsin System's budget includes a base biennial appropriation of \$600,000 to support groundwater research activities. It is the Governor's intent to support groundwater research to at least this level on a continuing basis and it is the UW System's intent to assure that these resources be used for high quality peer reviewed groundwater research consistent with statewide priorities.

Section 20.285(1)(a), Stats., directs that "The Board of Regents may not encumber amounts appropriated under this paragraph for groundwater research without the approval of the Secretary of Administration." Section 160.50(1m), Stats., directs that "The Groundwater Coordinating Council shall advise the Secretary of Administration on the allocation of funds appropriated

to the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin under s.20.285.(1)(a) for groundwater research.”

In 1984, the Legislature enacted Wisconsin Act 410 with the intention of improving the management of the state’s groundwater. The Groundwater Coordinating Council (GCC) is directed by s.160.50, Wis. Stats., to “serve as a means of increasing the efficiency and facilitating the effective functioning of state agencies in activities related to groundwater management. The Groundwater Coordinating Council shall advise and assist state agencies in the coordination of nonregulatory programs and the exchange of information related to groundwater, including, but not limited to, agency budgets for groundwater programs, groundwater monitoring, data management, public information and education, laboratory analysis and facilities, research activities and the appropriation and allocation of state funds for research.”

In October of 1986, the GCC unanimously endorsed a resolution which requested that “the University System establish a committee with broad representation from appropriate campuses and disciplines involved in groundwater protection.” This committee: a) reviewed the proposed groundwater research Decision Item Narrative (DIN); b) established priorities for research in collaboration with and for consideration by the Groundwater Coordinating Council, to include regulatory agencies; priorities as well as basic and applied research needs; c) established a proposed plan for undertaking research needs; d) developed a DIN for research; and, e) submitted it to the GCC for endorsement. At that time, the GCC noted that the University, as the major research arm of the state, is best qualified to present the GCC with its interpretation of research priorities on groundwater protection for review and discussion. The GCC also noted that a unified priority listing of research needs prepared by the highly qualified, diverse water specialists of the University System in conjunction with the identified priority needs of other state agencies would allow the GCC to establish a coordinated research agenda for the state.

In response to the resolution passed by the GCC in October 1986, the President of the University of Wisconsin System charged the UW-Madison Chancellor with the responsibility of establishing the UW System Groundwater Research Advisory Council (GRAC). Appointments to GRAC are suggested by the director of the University of Wisconsin Water Resources Institute (WRI). The council will have membership from UW institutions, state agencies, and private organizations. To enhance communication with the Groundwater Coordinating Council, four members of that body are appointed to GRAC as voting or ex-officio members.

Research needs and interests are to be identified by GRAC. The 1989-02 UWS groundwater research DIN was based on these research needs and was reviewed and endorsed by the GCC.

Further, it was the general consensus that the best interests of all parties, as well as the state, would be served if all project funding could be coordinated. This process would eliminate duplication, improve coordination, enhance complementarily, permit a more focused approach to critical issues, and provide better direction to potential proposal writers. It was also agreed that all aspects of research -from applied to basic- are needed to address existing groundwater problems, to minimize the impact of pollution, and to provide guidance on future use and management practices to reduce degradation of the state's water resource. An interagency joint solicitation of research proposals was first utilized to evaluate proposals in the first year of the 1991-93 biennium and will be used in the future.

III. PROCEDURAL AGREEMENT

The University of Wisconsin System, using the mechanism mentioned above, will allot \$600,000 per biennium for groundwater research. The UW-WRI, representing the UW System, will coordinate activities relating to proposal peer review, and project selection, management and reporting. The following procedural steps assure a coordinated, prioritized groundwater research thrust and meet the review and approval process specified in the statutes.

- A. A joint solicitation will be assembled and distributed to potential investigators in Wisconsin. The request for proposals will define the goals and priorities of each participating agency (including UWS priorities as identified by GRAC) and state a constant format for proposals.
- B. Two types of peer reviews will be conducted for all proposals. First, the UW-WRI will conduct an external peer review process. Reviews will be solicited from national and international experts in the field. Second, a research subcommittee of the GCC will assemble a panel of state experts to evaluate mission relevancy for a proposal submitted to a specific agency.
- C. Based on the results of the peer review process, WRI will rank proposals and forward the results to GRAC prior to the annual funding decision meeting.
- D. At the GRAC meeting, funding priorities are determined for new and continuing projects. Continuing projects are reviewed and assessed to ensure sufficient progress toward goals and objectives. New projects are selected on the basis of the peer review process and research priorities identified by GRAC.
- E. Assuming that no serious inter-agency problems exist, the set of projects proposed is consistent with priorities, and the total funding level is within the approved budget, the GCC and the UW System will jointly submit a request to the Secretary of DOA for approval to expend or encumber groundwater research funds pursuant to Section 20.285(1)(a).

F. An annual summary of WRI research progress will be conducted by WRI. Project completion reports and project summaries will be available through WRI's Water Resources Library and the WRI Web site at www.wri.wisc.edu. Reports will be written in a manner which helps a broad spectrum of the lay public to understand the issues, the relationship of the issues to the public good, and results and recommendations emanating from the research.

IV. EFFECTIVE DATE

The agreement is effective when signed by all authorized parties to this agreement.

V. AMENDING AND TERMINATING THE AGREEMENT

The GCC, the GRAC, or the UWS may propose an amendment to this agreement by notifying the other parties. Either the UWS or GCC may rescind the agreement upon 30 days written notice to the other party.

Susan L. Sylvester 11/21/02 Date
Susan L. Sylvester, Chair
State Groundwater Coordinating Council (GCC)

Charles G. Hill, Jr. 11/20/02 Date
Charles G. Hill, Jr., Chair
UWS Groundwater Research Advisory Council (GRAC)

Cora B. Marrett 11/21/02 Date
Cora B. Marrett, Academic Vice President
University of Wisconsin System (UWS)