

Minutes of WCMUC meeting

November 17, 2011 at ALS Environmental, 9936-67 ave., Edmonton

The meeting was attended by 7 delegates representing four laboratories and Osprey Scientific, plus Cary Morris of SDIX on speakerphone. Ansar Qureshi had advised of his late arrival; Anthony Neumann and Irene Gaudet sent regrets.

The meeting was called to order at 10:10 a.m. by John Ashworth, and delegates introduced themselves. The meeting Agenda was approved.

The minutes of the previous meeting (Nov. 18, 2010) were approved.

Matters arising.

John and Cary outlined presentations made by them and Anthony Bulich at the Microtox Training Workshop held in Canmore, AB in May 2011. There has since been positive feedback from workshop delegates, as well as requests about holding another.

John asked whether any attendees had tried the “new recon.” – in which all newly-reconstituted Reagent is diluted 1:10 and kept near 15 °C, rather than diluted one vial at a time from a concentrated *Vibrio* suspension kept in the Reagent well at 5.5 °C. Aaron MacDonald of Osprey Scientific said he’d had comments that it had led to a small improvement in effective reagent life; no-one at the meeting or at SDIX had yet tried it.

Round Robin data.

Ansar took over the chair during discussion of RR reports 44 and 45. He pointed to some copy/paste typographical errors in the RR 45 report (by Epcor) but said that lines connecting data points in its graphs were helpful.

In both reports, a few labs reported Abs values for red-brown samples that were quite different from the median value. However, there seem to be fewer outliers since labs first started reporting Abs, about 3 years ago.

WCMUC need to state in future that the as-is, raw Abs is to be reported, even though colour correction involves the Abs of diluted samples.

In general, the std. dev. on EC50 values in both RRs was only slightly > 10 % of the mean, indicating good agreement. Labs not using the ISA drilling waste 82 % protocol got results in line with those that did.

Ansar noted that EC50 values for the majority of labs fell below the mean. This may be due to high values from a few labs being given equal weight in calculating the mean. Outlier labs are urged to re-examine their data and to identify any avoidable discrepancy.

The next set of samples will tentatively be K dichromate, a pulp mill effluent and a drilling waste, to be shipped the week of April 9, 2012 – data to be reported early in May.

Treasurer’s Report

Anthony Neumann had provided a current financial statement and comments which Ansar presented. There were various challenges:

- Anthony will resign at the end of Dec. 2011
- Some labs had not paid for 2010-2011
- Labs need a current invoice in order to pay

- Payments to Vitrak Consulting (Irene) and Epcor are overdue
- WCMUC may be being overcharged for RR shipping and data analysis; Epcor only shipped RR 44 samples.
- There is a cash flow squeeze, but if dues are received there will be enough to pay outstanding bills, leaving an estimated \$2,709 in the bank.

Attendees moved, seconded and unanimously approved that JA and AQ should meet with AM to expedite membership fee collection and bill payment. They likewise accepted Anthony's resignation with regret and expressed thanks for his past efforts.

Future of WCMUC.

The need for new executive members, especially a treasurer, was discussed. AQ and JA are willing to continue a little longer, but are near to retirement. Robert Vivian will ask for leeway from Maxxam to spend the 2-3 days required per year as treasurer. He and other attendees acknowledged the value of WCMUC and its RRs. There is a recognized need for PT studies. CALA provide accreditation but give no experience of real-world samples, and no feedback or support like WCMUC. Epcor, however, are looking hard at the value of WCMUC to them. Ansar will call them to follow up.

Sale of Microtox

Michael Jones of SDIX came on the speakerphone to describe the recent acquisition of Microtox by Modern Water (UK). MW have desalinization plants world-wide, and an in-line water quality system based on *Vibrio*. The same former SDIX staff (Michael, Cary and Tracy Weidman) will be available to address concerns. *Vibrio* prep. and lyophilization etc. will stay in the same experienced hands.

Michael also outlined how any User Group can use the Linked-In website for networking and to exchange information, which for Microtox users would complement WCMUC. He will send an invitation from Linked-In to WCMUC. He mentioned SDIX/MW plans to hold Microtox training workshops in Latin America and the eastern U.S. in 2012.

WCMUC Website

The meeting unanimously recognized the value of the website to WCMUC and agreed that Vitrak Consulting be paid outstanding fees to keep the website operating. Aaron MacDonald suggested we send Irene additional technical items to display on the site, with a view to attracting new members.

Other business

Aaron reminded the meeting about Osprey Scientific's Model 500 Loaner program. This option is available when a user-owned Model 500 is in for repair; documented proof of shipment for repair is required.

The meeting adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

The next meeting will be at Agat Labs, 6310 Roper Rd., Edmonton AB on Thursday May 24, 2012.

JA is willing to describe using the Microtox test as a rapid bioassay for oil-contaminated soil, a recent ALS development.