

From: SETAC Whole Effluent Toxicity Steering Committee (SETAC WET SC)

To: SETAC Board of Directors

Subject: 1998 Report to the SETAC Board of Directors

The SETAC WET SC was formed as a result of recommendations to USEPA from the 1996 WET Pellston Workshop. The USEPA granted \$300,000 to the SETAC "Foundation" in 1996 and increased the grant to \$550,000 to "provide technical expert support on scientific guidance involving testing, characterization and identifying sources of toxicity in complex effluents". The charter of the WET SC is to: 1) provide expert advice related to the technical aspects of WET testing and develop training courses; 2) provide balance by academia/government/private sectors; 3) Select and solicit key technical issues; 4) form and charge expert panels; 5) handle no issues in litigation or policy.

The *WET SC* membership is: Larry Ausley (North Carolina Division of Water Quality); Dennis Burton (University of Maryland); Debra Denton (US EPA, Region 9); Philip Dorn (Chair) (Shell Chemical Company); William Goodfellow (EA Engineering, Science, & Technology); Joseph Gully (LA County Sanitation District); Teresa Norberg-King (Chair) (US EPA/ORD); John Rodgers (Clemson University); William Waller (University of North Texas).

The two panels presently empowered by the WET SC are: 1) *WET Training Panel* comprised of the following individuals: Raymon Arnold (Exxon Biomedical Sciences, Inc.); Allen Burton (Wright State University); Debra L. Denton (Co-Chair) (US EPA, Region 9); Richard Diehl (Burlington Research Inc.); Steven Klaine (Clemson University); Matt Matthews (North Carolina Division of Water Quality); Bill Peltier (Chair) (Private Consultant); Jim Pletl (Hampton Roads Sanitation District) and 2) *WET Expert Advisory Panel on Performance Evaluation & Interpretation of WET Data* which is made up of the following individuals: John Cooney (New England Bioassay); Patrick Downey (FTN and Associates); Daniel Fisher (University of Maryland); Kari Fleming (Wisconsin Dept. Of Natural Resources); Florence Fulk (Chair) (US EPA); Joseph Gully (Co-Chair) (LA County Sanitation District); James Heltshe (University of Rhode Island); Jim Pletl (Hampton Roads Sanitation District); Carrie Rowland (Wright State University); Victor de Vlaming (California State Water Resources Control Board).

The main thrusts for the year have been in education/training and development and discussion of technical issues. The products have been in the form of short courses, white papers, Q&A formulated as Frequently Asked Questions, SETAC News articles, letters.

Training for the year consisted of a 2-day SETAC short course developed for WET that was hosted by Regional Chapters, SETAC Annual Meeting and the Water Environment Federation. Courses were conducted in 9 cities around the US with attendance by more than 360 people. Two new courses on "*The Wild, Wild WET: Responses to Common Questions Regarding Data Analysis and Interpretation of Toxicity Tests*" and "*Toxicity Identification/Toxicity Evaluation*" will be previewed at the Charlotte Annual Meeting. The plan is to take one or both of these on

the road in 1999 along with the *2-d WET Training Course*.

On the publications front, the WET panels are busy producing materials addressing frequently asked questions and special topics. A group met this year and wrote a document "*Application of TIEs/TREs to Whole Effluent Toxicity: Principles and Guidance*" which is available and shortly to be on the SETAC WEB site. The WET Steering Committee has been working on finalizing the "*The Role of Inorganic Ionic Imbalance in Aquatic Toxicity Testing*" which it expects to go to ET&C consideration in a Special Issue on WET. The *WET EAP on Performance Evaluation & Interpretation of WET Data* has produced three documents which are in a Question and Answer format. Each document addresses specific areas encountered in Whole Effluent Toxicity: 1) Frequently Asked Questions Concerning WET Test Variability; 2) Anomalous Patterns of Survival in Short-Term Chronic WET Tests Using Fathead Minnows; 3) FAQ's on Statistical versus Biological Significance in Toxicity Tests. These are in review and will be available in early 1999. The Panel also sent out 3500 letters soliciting questions which may arise when working in the area of whole effluent toxicity. The WET SC has responded to approximately a dozen letters from the solicitation and from SETAC NEWS article. The responses from the WET SC will be posted on the SETAC WEB and were sent to the individuals requesting information.

Regional EPA and state staff not presently SETAC members have been receiving reprints of ET&C articles dealing with WET after a request for our technical information to assist in NPDES related reviews.

A Special Issue of *ET&C* Devoted to WET has been commissioned and the WET SC will be assisting in production of this issue and the editorial. Some of the products of the panels or parts thereof will be included for consideration to the peer review process.

Other outreach has included a poster session at the 1997 SETAC Annual Meeting and an open forum on activities of the SETAC WET SC. Another open forum will be conducted in Charlotte.

On the agenda for the next year are continued training at the regional chapter level using the three courses. The development of a CD ROM containing current EPA WET testing manuals, supplemental memos, policy memoranda, OECD & Canadian documents, manuals for permit writers, *ET&C* literature on WET, the US EPA TIE/TRE Manuals (Phase I, II, and III), and extensive TIE/TRE literature review, WET EAP FAQs, is planned for 1999. Also on the WET SC platter is the development of a SETAC TIP and a TRE Workshop.

PBD/TJNK November 1998

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Questions, comments, and requests should be e-mailed to:
[Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry \(SETAC\)](#)
1010 North 12th Avenue
Pensacola, FL 32501-3367 U.S.A.

T 850-469-1500
F 850-469-9778
e-mail setac@setac.org

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