



November 14, 2008

Office of Water Quality Water-Quality Information Note 2009.01

Subject: Field Methods--Availability and Use of Capsule Filters

The purpose of this Water-Quality Information Note (WaQI Note) is to update information about (1) the status of the backordered Whatman capsule filters (Polycap GW; One-Stop item number Q398FLD) and (2) the potential use of these capsule filters for dissolved organic carbon (DOC) sampling.

Back-ordered Whatman capsule filters

During the past 9 months the National Water Quality Laboratory (NWQL) National Field Supply Service (NFSS) rejected two lots of the Whatman capsule filters due to nitrogen contamination. This contamination was found during routine quality assurance of deionized water (DIW) that was passed through the filters and analyzed for a suite of nutrients and other inorganic constituents. The rejected lots of filters were not sold by NFSS and have been removed from distribution. As a result, the NFSS stock of approved Whatman filters was exhausted by October 2008. Project personnel in Water Science Centers, including those in the National Water Quality Assessment and California Groundwater Ambient Monitoring Assessment programs, have been working generously with the Office of Water Quality and NFSS in loaning their existing surplus of capsule filters to those with an urgent need for sampling in the first quarter of this fiscal year.

The NWQL has been working with Whatman to test the components of a new lot of filters and have found these capsule filters to be of satisfactory quality with respect to nitrogen and other inorganic constituents. This new lot of filters is expected to be available by mid-December and back orders will be filled at that time.

Use of Whatman Capsule filters for DOC

Field personnel were directed to discontinue the use of capsule filters for processing dissolved organic carbon (DOC) samples because of continued and systematic carbon contamination being detected in DIW filtrate during NFSS QA tests (WaQI Note 2008-13 of August 6, 2008). Testing for the new lot of capsule filters will include a criterion for maximum carbon concentration in the DIW filtrate. If the test results show that collection of DOC samples from capsule filters can be resumed, a WaQI Note will be issued to that effect.

Signed

The Office of Water Quality and the Quality Assurance Section of the NWQL.

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