

**Effect of Wrinkles on Geomembrane Performance**



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**Geomembranes leakage**

Depends on

- Number and size of holes – in service (i.e., after GMB is loaded!)
- Head on liner
- Interaction with the climatic conditions and surrounding media (above and below) before and after it is covered

and has been often calculated assuming hole in a GMB in direct contact with a clay liner (e.g., Giroud 1997)

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**Objectives and Limitations**

- Introduce concepts to those new to the field
- Present some latest developments
- The material presented is not complete in and of itself; it is intended only to provide direction. Examine published sources for more complete information
- Not all topics are covered

**GMB in Direct Contact with GCL**



GMB with no wrinkles

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**Geomembranes (GMB)**

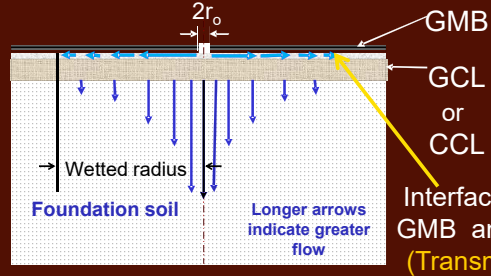
- Are essentially impermeable to flow of aqueous solutions – except for holes.

Giroud (2016):

- “All liners leak”
- With fulltime CQA but no electrical leak location survey expect 5-6 holes per hectare
- With only spot checks and no electrical leak location survey expect 25 holes per hectare

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**Leakage through GMB in Direct Contact with Clay Liner**



$2r_w$   
 GMB  
 GCL or CCL  
 Foundation soil  
 Wetted radius  
 Longer arrows indicate greater flow  
 Interface between GMB and clay liner (Transmissivity,  $\theta$ )

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### Interface contact GMB/CCL

Giroud (1997) defined:

- good contact - GMB with as few "wrinkles" as possible, on low-permeability soil, adequately compacted and a smooth surface
- poor contact - GMB with a certain number of "wrinkles", and/or on low-permeability soil, not well compacted and does not appear smooth

\*wrinkles as discussed in this presentation can not be modeled as an interface transmissivity (very small and local "wrinkles" < 1cm high may be included in the Giroud definition)

Rowe (1998) inferred transmissivities of:

- good contact  $\theta = 1.6 \times 10^{-8} \text{ m}^2/\text{s}$
- poor contact  $\theta = 1 \times 10^{-7} \text{ m}^2/\text{s}$

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### Calculated Leakage for Direct contact

	GMB/GCL	GMB/CCL	GMB
$h_w$ (m)	0.3	0.2	2
Q (lphd)	0.2	2	10,000

GMB: 5 holes/ha 1.4-3.2 mm diameter (also for below)

GCL:  $H_L = 0.01 \text{ m}$ ,  $k_L = 1 \times 10^{-11} \text{ m/s}$ ,  $\theta = 2 \times 10^{-8} \text{ m}^2/\text{s}$

CCL:  $H_L = 0.6 \text{ m}$ ,  $k_L = 1 \times 10^{-9} \text{ m/s}$ ,  $\theta = 2 \times 10^{-8} \text{ m}^2/\text{s}$

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Rowe (2012)

### Interface contact GMB/GCL

- greater potential for obtaining good contact with GCL than with CCL since
  - GCL can be placed flat on a well compacted, smooth and firm foundation
  - bentonite swelling upon hydration may reduce small gaps at the GMB/GCL interface
- typical transmissivity:  $2 \times 10^{-11} \leq \theta \leq 4 \times 10^{-11} \text{ m}^2/\text{s}$  for water or MSW leachate  $\sigma_v' \geq 50 \text{ kPa}$  (i.e., 3 to 4 orders of magnitude lower than for a CCL)

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Rowe (2012)

### Findings from field monitoring

- Leakage with composite liners much less than with a single geomembrane
- Composite liners with a GCL perform **much** better than a composite with a CCL

**BUT**

- Observed leakages 10 to 10,000 times larger than calculated using traditional equations assuming direct contact and a reasonable number of holes/ha – **why?**

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### Calculated Leakage for GMB alone



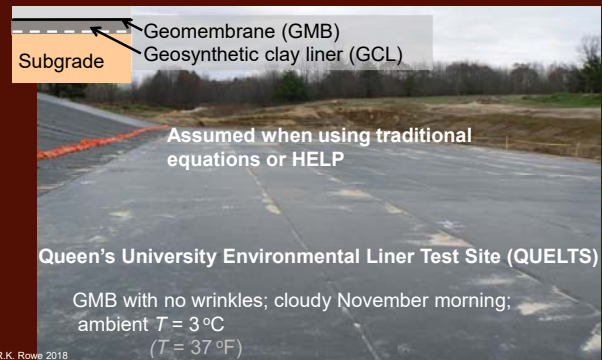
Hole Area* (mm <sup>2</sup> )	Hole diameter (mm)	Number per ha (ha <sup>-1</sup> )	Q (lphd)
1.5	1.4	1	750
2.5	1.8	1	1250
4	2.3	2	4000
8	3.2	1	4000
<b>Total</b>			<b>10,000</b>

\* Based on Giroud (2016); 5 holes/ha; head  $h_w = 0.3 \text{ m}$

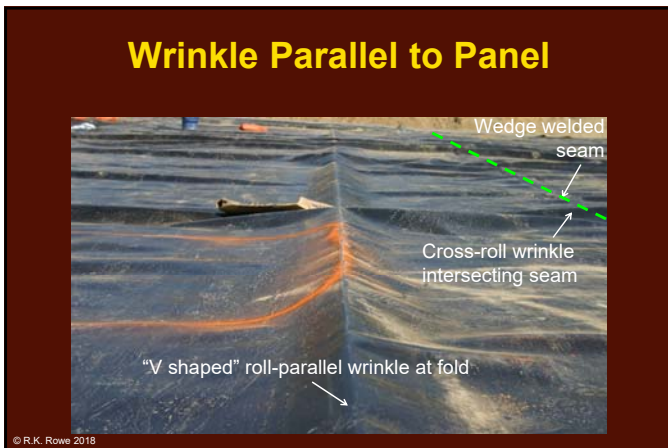
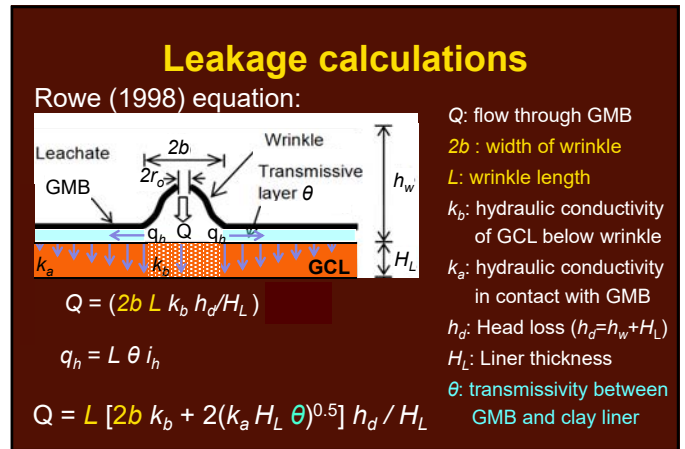
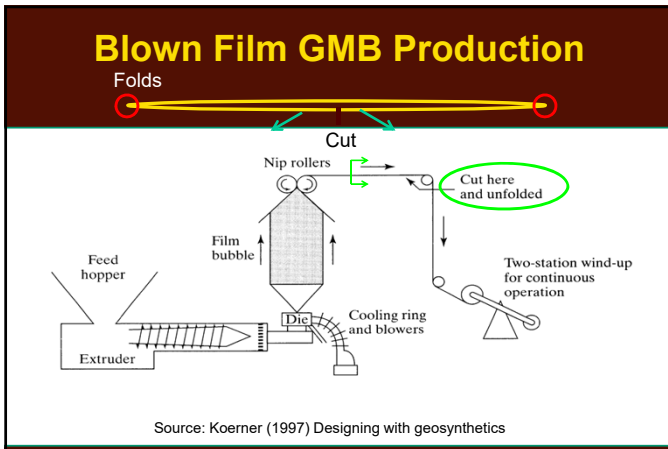
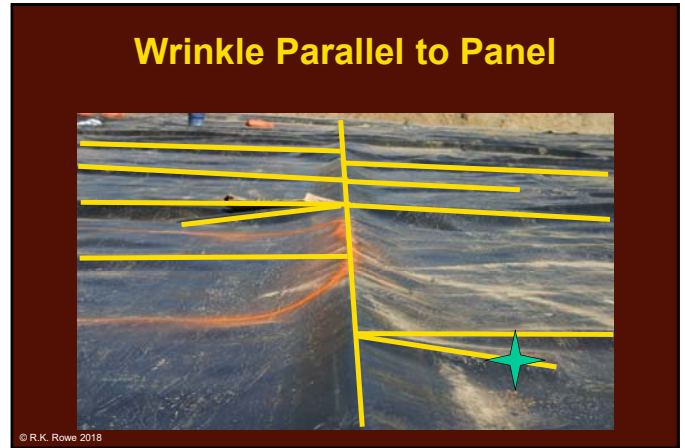
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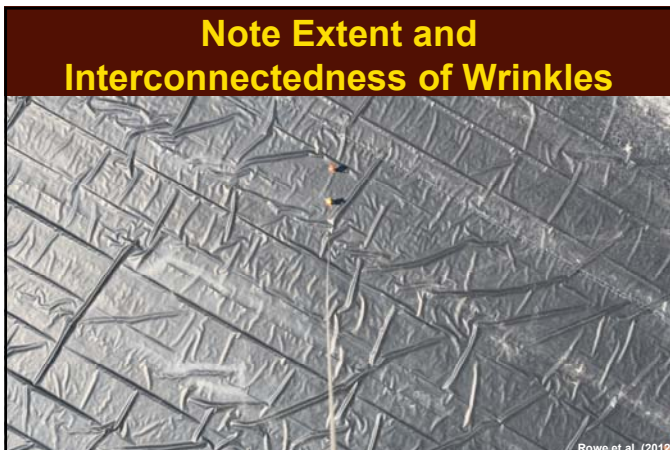
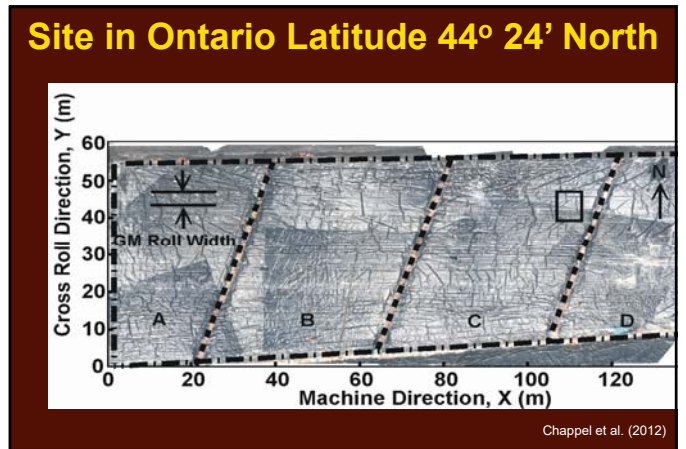
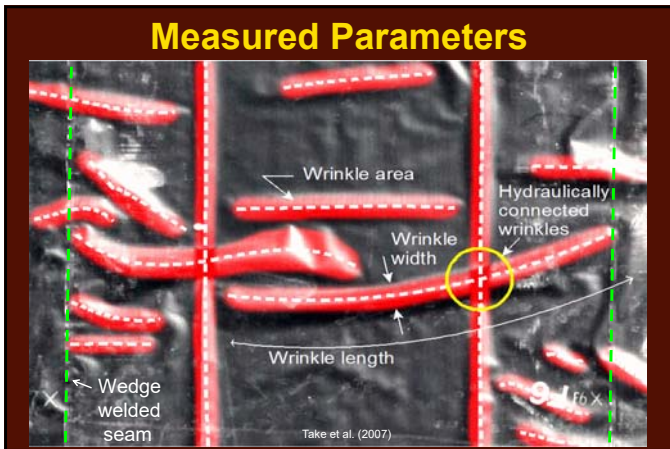
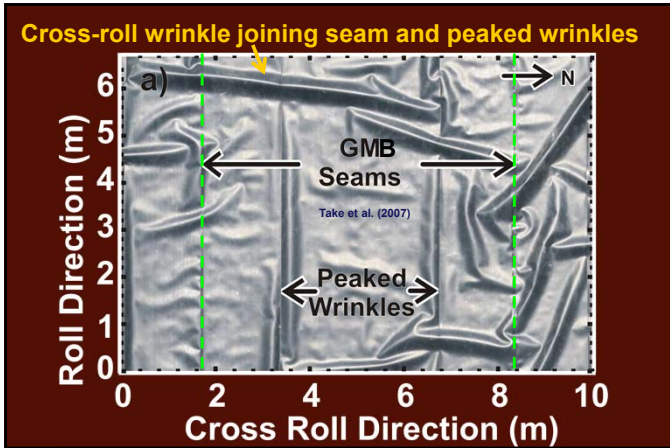
Rowe (2018)

### GMB in direct contact with GCL

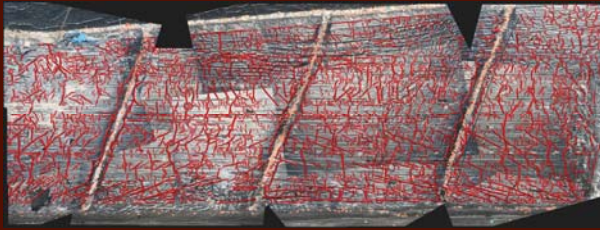


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**Site in Ontario Latitude 44° 24' North**



Midday

Chappel et al. (2012)

**Significance of holes and wrinkles**

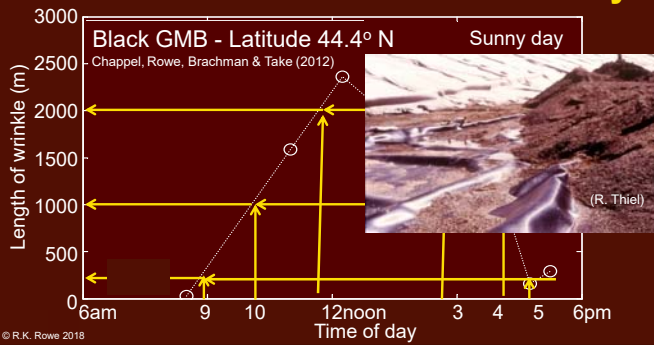
If there are 5 holes / ha and

- 20% of the entire area is occupied by wrinkles, there is a 67% probability that
- 5% of the entire area is occupied by wrinkles there is a 23% probability that at least one of those holes is coincident with a wrinkle.

Thus, wrinkles will dominate leakage unless covered with essentially no wrinkles

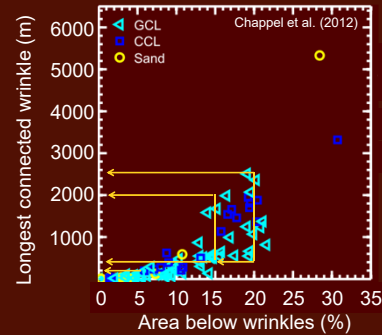
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**Change in length of longest connected wrinkle with time of day**



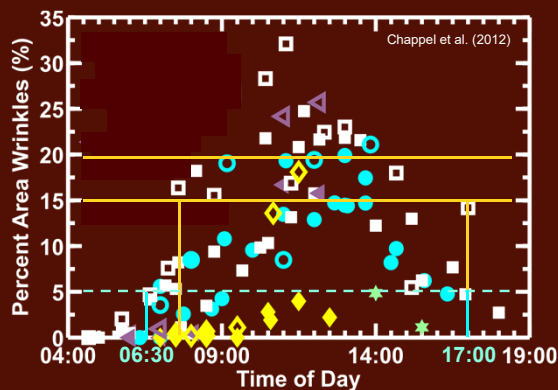
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**Longest Length vs Area of Wrinkles**



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**Wrinkled Area**

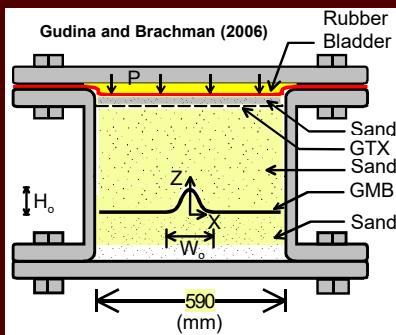


**HDPE Wrinkle Summary**

- Wrinkling related to solar radiation and GMB temperature (may be 20-40°C > ambient)
- Typical wrinkle width about 0.2 - 0.3 m
- Typical wrinkle height about 0.06m (up to 0.2m)
- Wrinkles could range from a few % to more than 30% depending on time GMB is covered
- Even on a "small" area (0.15-0.17 ha), wrinkle length exceeded 200m once more than about 5% of area was wrinkles

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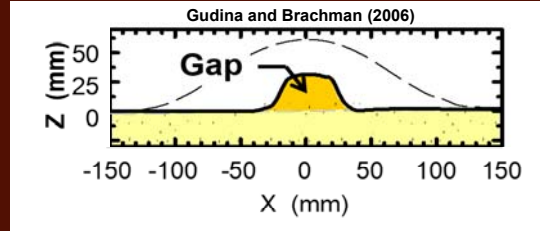
**Burial beneath waste  
SP / GMB / SP**



**HDPE Wrinkle on Loading**

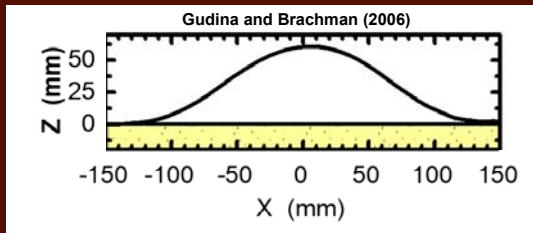
**SP / GMB / SP  
1100 kPa**

80 m waste  
 $\gamma = 13 \text{ kN/m}^3$



**HDPE Wrinkle on Loading**

**SP / GMB / SP  
Initial**



**Summary: wrinkles**

- as many as 5000 wrinkles / ha
- max length over 5400 m long
- NEED to limit time of day place cover
- may get smaller but do not go away
  - after cover soil
  - after buried beneath waste

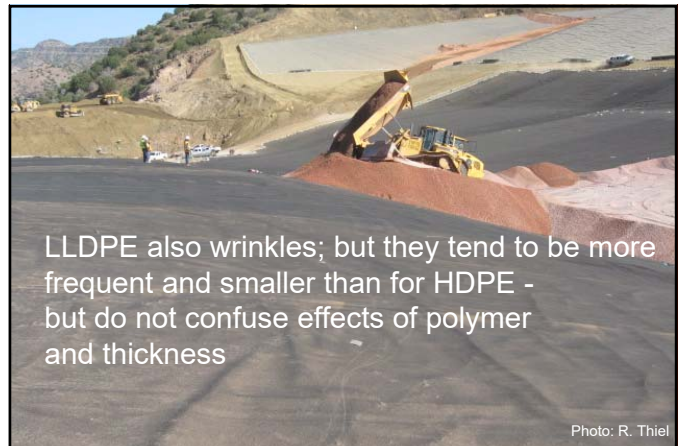
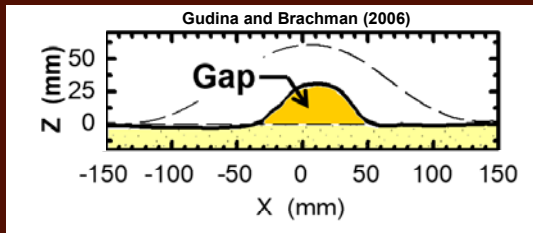
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26:00

**HDPE Wrinkle on Loading**

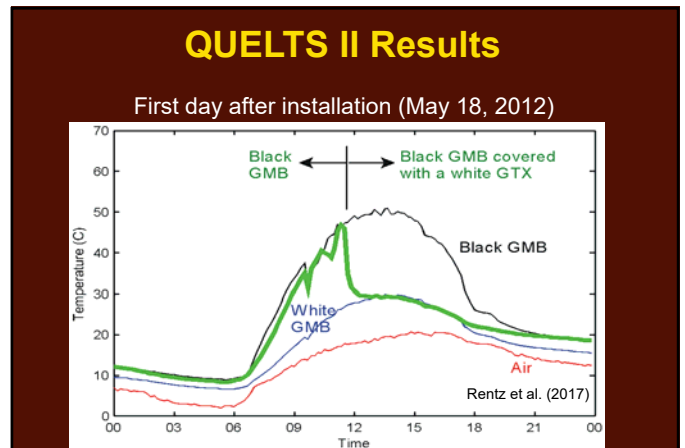
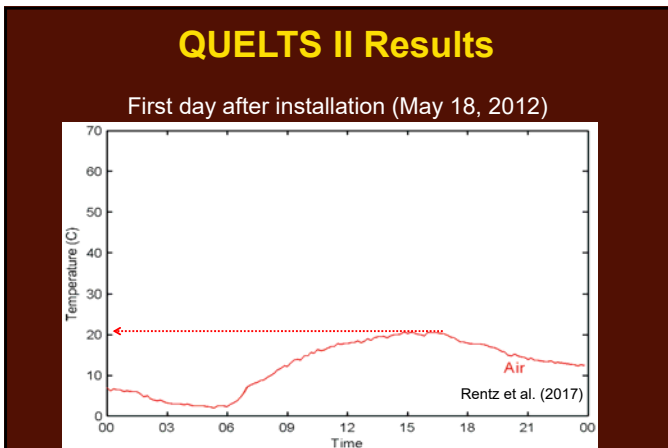
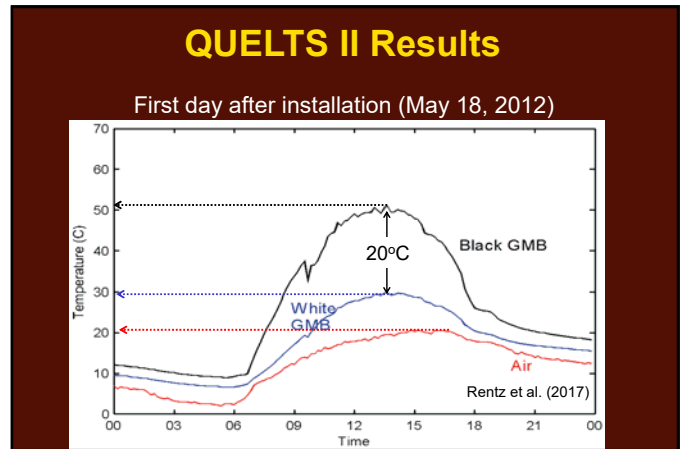
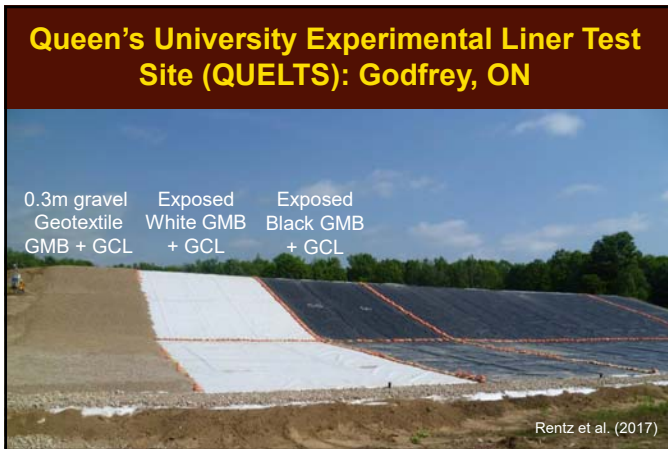
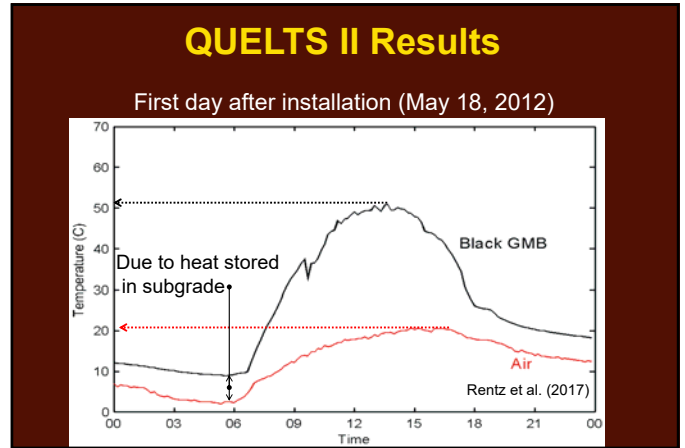
**SP / GMB / SP  
250 kPa**

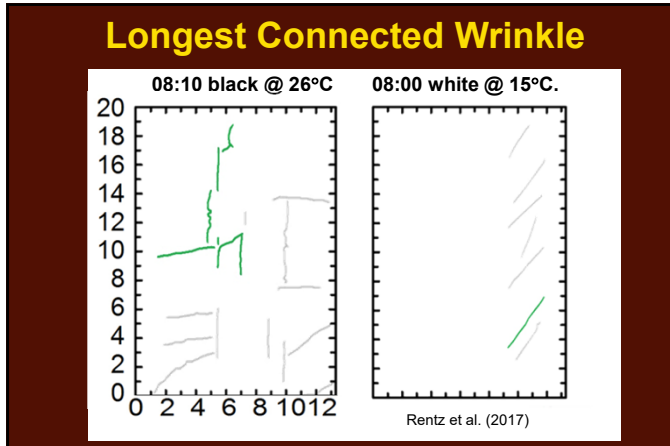
18 m waste  
 $\gamma = 13 \text{ kN/m}^3$



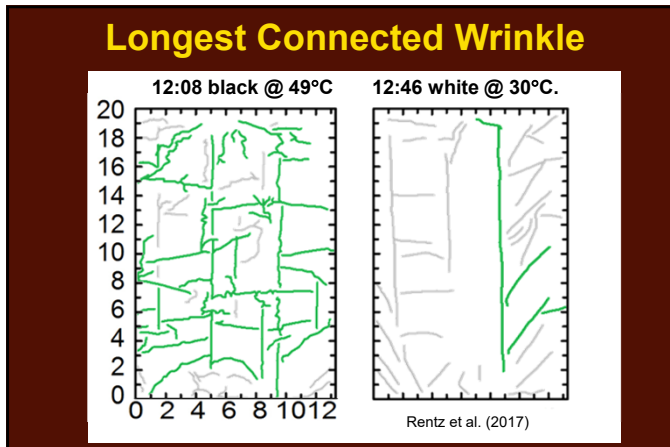
LLDPE also wrinkles; but they tend to be more frequent and smaller than for HDPE - but do not confuse effects of polymer and thickness

Photo: R. Thiel





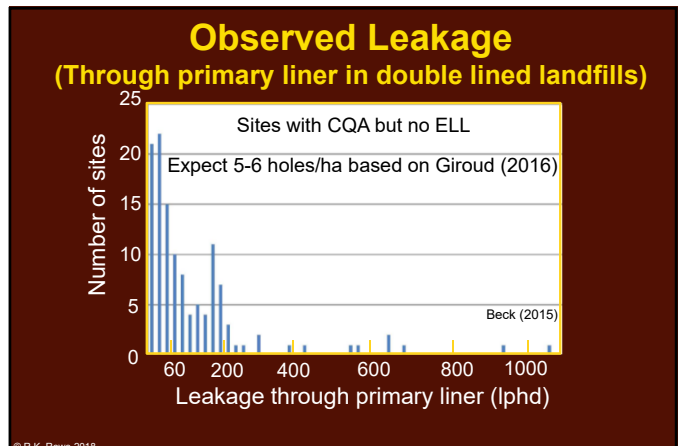
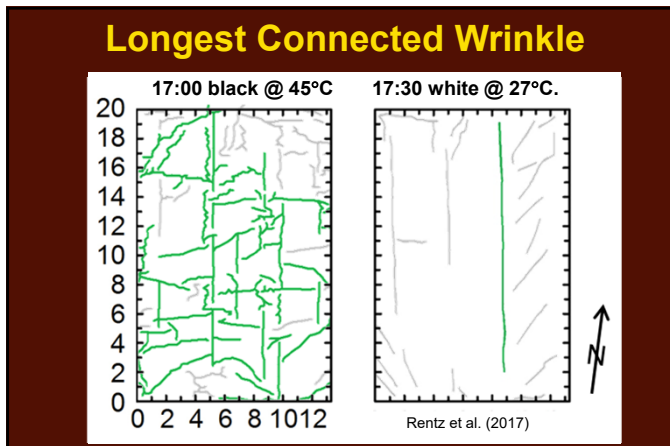
- ### Black vs White GMB Wrinkles
- Significant wrinkles for both black and white GMBs
  - Significant wrinkles appeared sooner and remain longer in black GMB than in white GMB
  - More wrinkles in black GMB than in white GMB at any time
  - Longer connected wrinkles in black GMB than in white GMB
- Rentz et al. (unp)



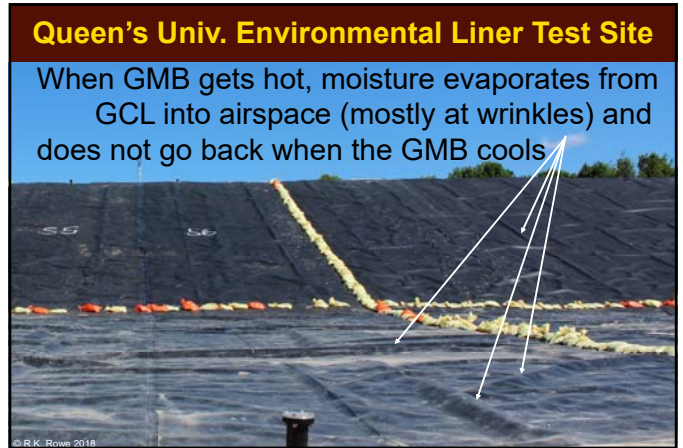
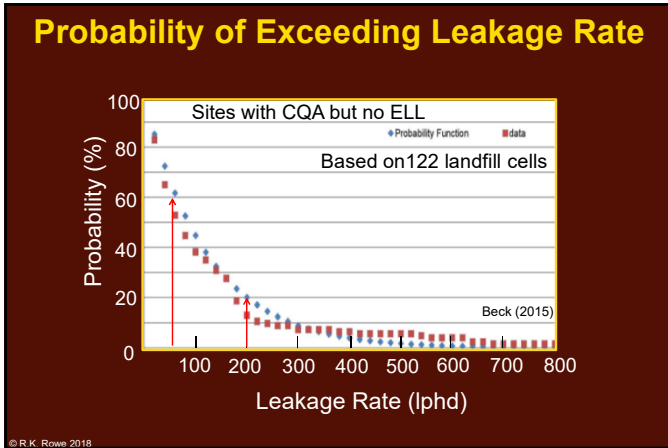
### Significance of holes and wrinkles

Number of holes per ha	% of area with wrinkles	Probability of a hole in a wrinkle
5	5	23%
	10	41%
	15	56%
	20	67%
6	10	47%
	15	62%
10	5	40%
	10	65%
	15	80%
	20	89%

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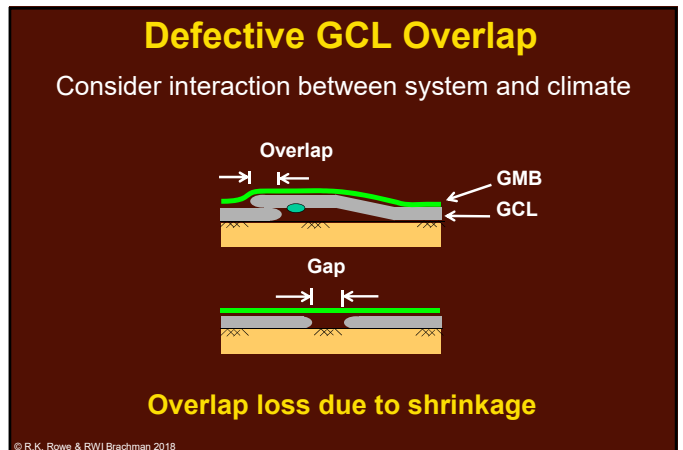
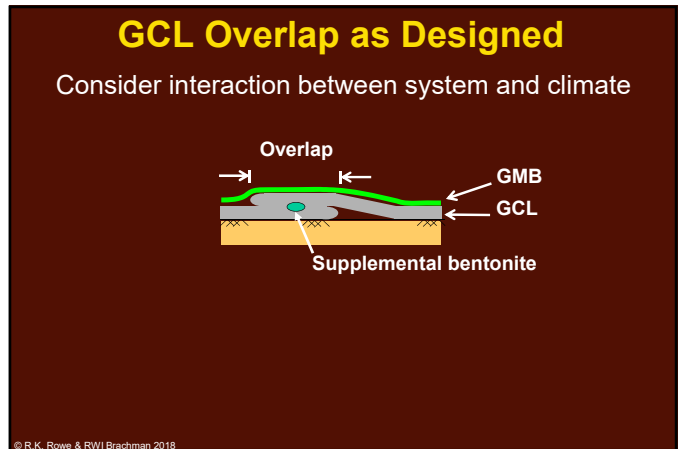


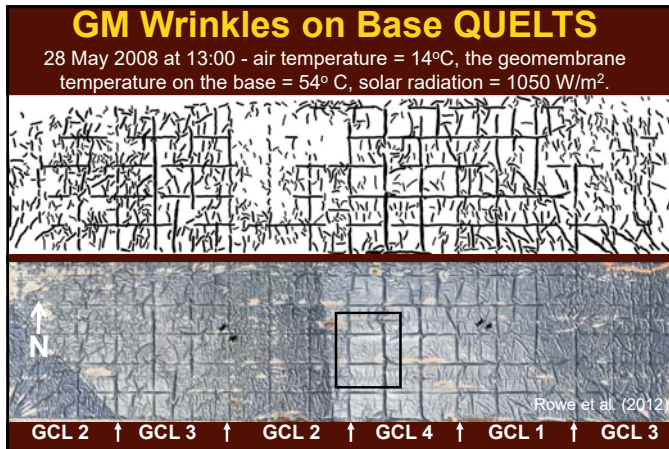
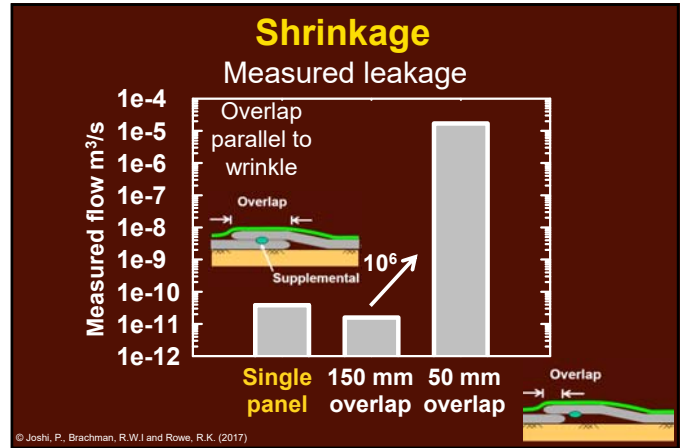
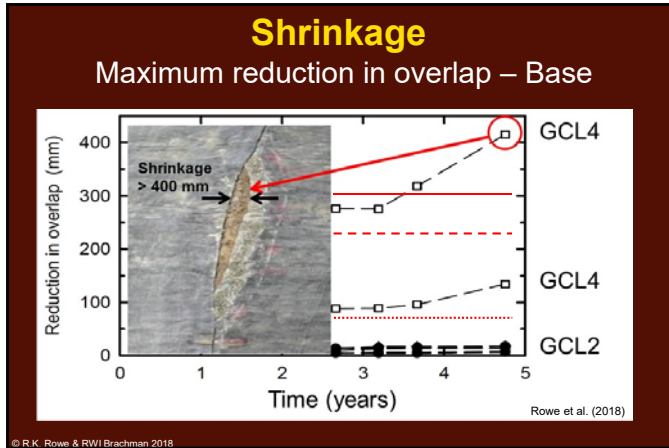
### Calculated leakage through a primary liner

Liner	L (m/ha)	Leakage (lphd)	Probability leakage is higher with no ELLS
GMB/CCL	1000	830	< 3
GMB/CCL	230	190	20 gpad, 20
GMB/CCL	60	50	5 gpad, 60
GMB/GCL	1000	130	35
GMB/GCL	400	50	5 gpad, 60
GMB/GCL	60	8	> 85

One wrinkle with hole: length,  $L$ ; width,  $2b = 0.2$  m  
 $GCL k_b = 5 \times 10^{-11}$  m/s,  $GCL k_s = 2 \times 10^{-10}$  m/s,  $H_L = 0.01$  m,  $\theta = 3 \times 10^{-11}$  m<sup>2</sup>/s;  
 $CCL k_L = 1 \times 10^{-9}$  m/s,  $H_L = 0.6$  m,  $\theta = 1.6 \times 10^{-9}$  m<sup>2</sup>/s;

© R.K. Rowe 2018 Rowe (2012)





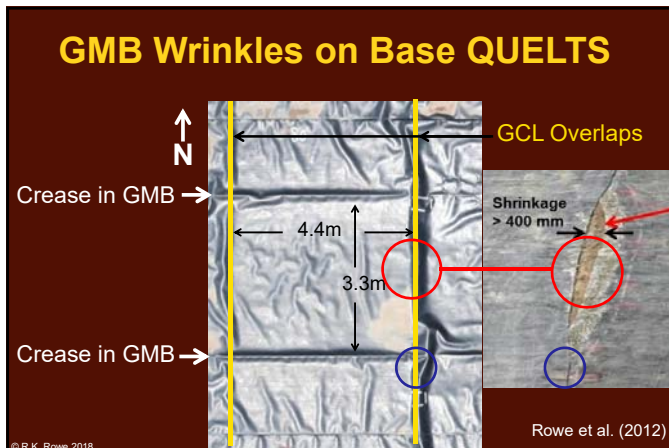
### Shrinkage

Consider interaction between system and climate

#### Observations

- Shrinkage appears to depend on:
  - method of GCL manufacture
  - local site conditions
- Effects can be minimized by:
  - covering as quickly as possible**; if not possible, by
  - selecting a GCL with the best performance, and
  - ensuring 300mm overlap at seams, and
  - heat tacking seam where practical, and
  - using a white geomembrane, but still
  - cover as quickly as possible**

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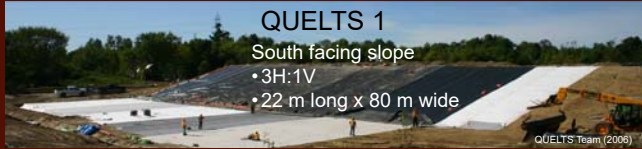
### Queen's University Environmental Liner Test Sit QUELTS

QUELTS Team (2006)

- What we are examining:
  - Geosynthetic Clay Liner (GCL) Hydration
  - Geomembrane (GMB) Wrinkles
  - Geosynthetic Clay Liner (GCL) Shrinkage
  - Down-slope erosion**

[44:30]

**Queen's U. Environmental Liner Test Site**

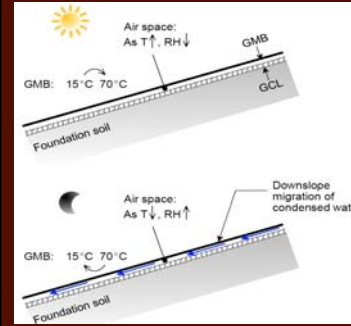


Base: 3% grade to south; 20 m long x 80 m wide; 6 sections  
 QUELTS I constructed September 2006 and left exposed for 5 years

- Four commonly used GCLs (GCL1-4) experienced down-slope bentonite erosion
- Erosion developed within 1 year

Take, Brachman & Rowe (2015)

**Moisture cycle from thermal cycle when exposed**



- GCL hydrates with moisture from subsoil
- on heating:
  - GCL loses moisture to GMB/GCL interface
  - vapour migrates towards wrinkles
- on cooling:
  - vapour condenses on underside of GMB
  - condensed moisture trickles downslope

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**Differential exposure**



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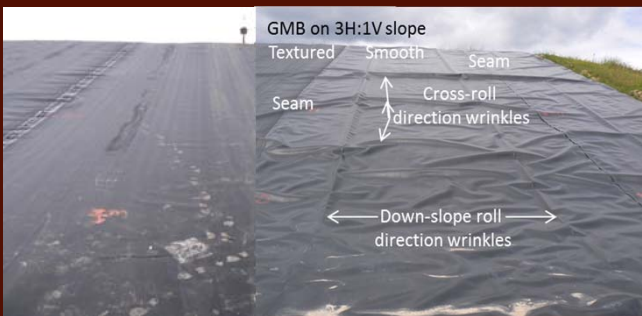
**The first hint of a problem QUELTS I**



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**Wrinkles**

Early morning – no thermally induced wrinkles  
 Later in partially cloudy day Many thermally induced wrinkles



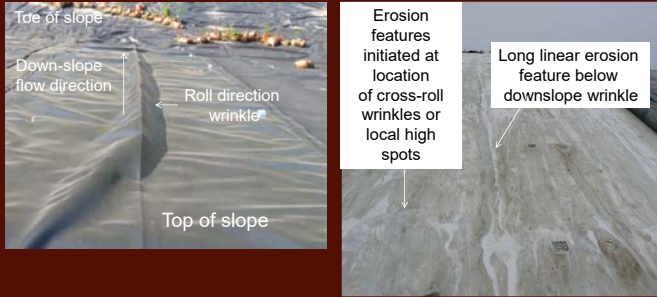
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**A bigger clue**



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### Factors concentrating flow



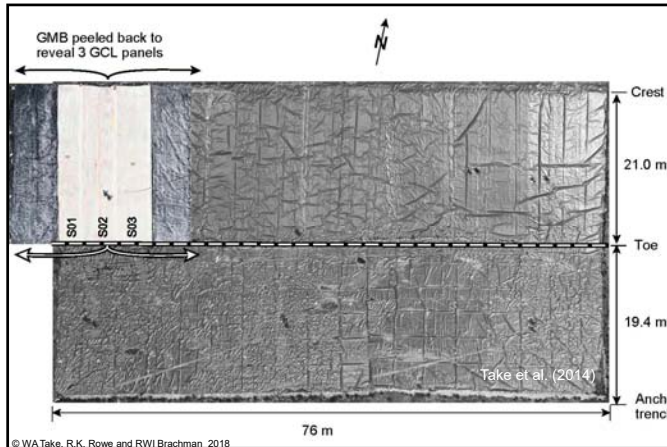
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### Bentonite: underside of slope GMB

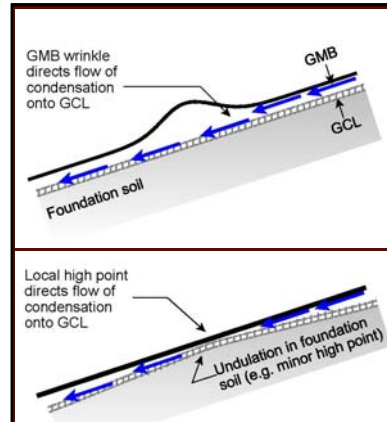
Dried bentonite trail on underside of GMB



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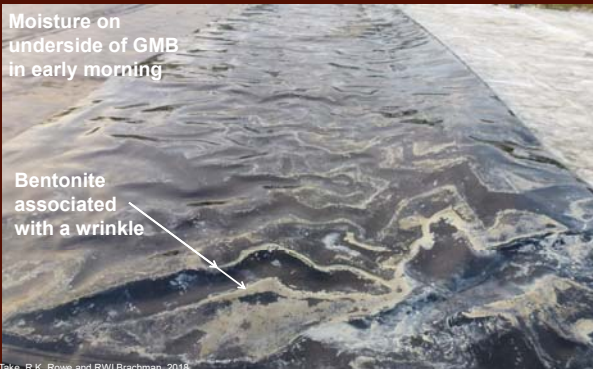


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### The mechanism

Down-slope erosion is not random but its location is related to local irregularities

### Underside of base GMB at opening

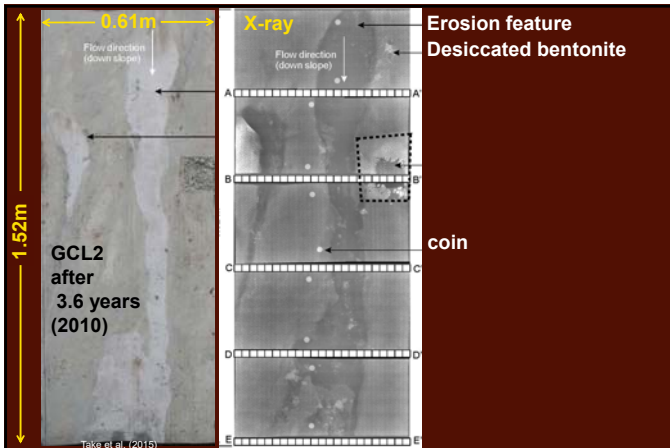
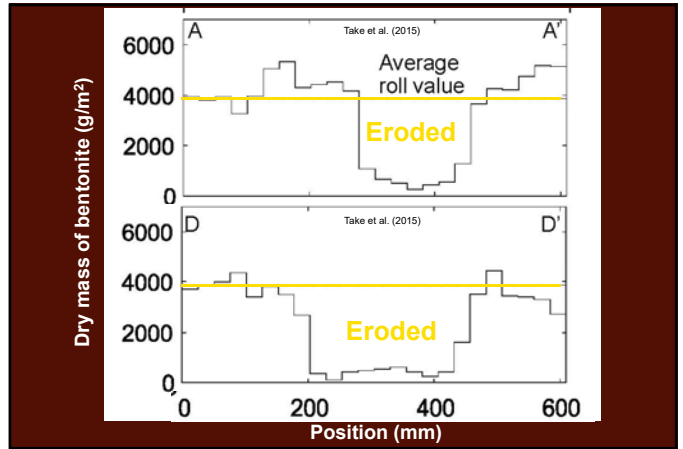
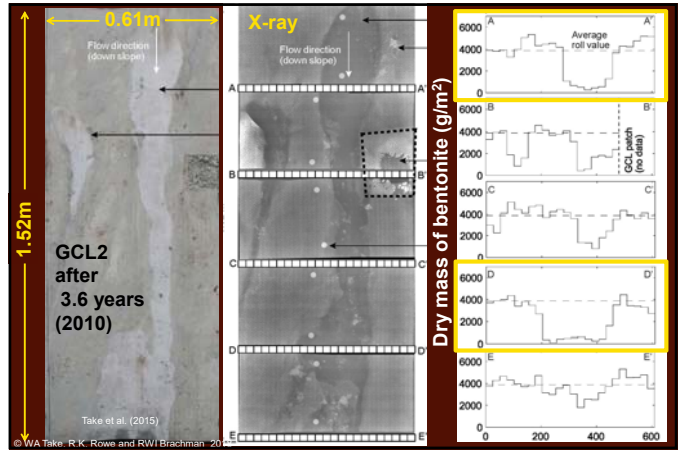


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### Bentonite at bottom of slope

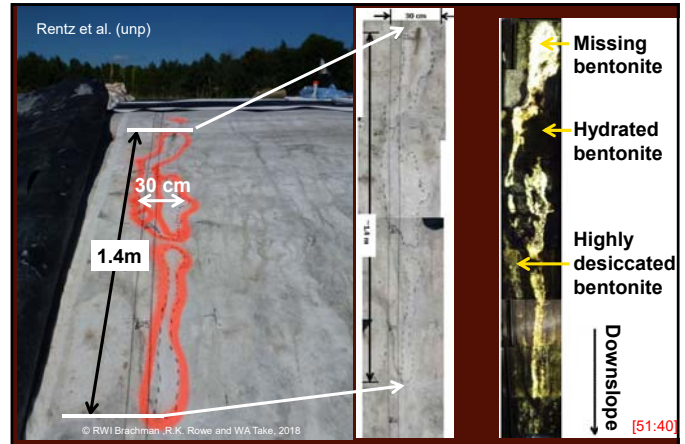


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### The Problem

- GCLs covered only by a black GMB was intentionally left exposed for long periods of time at Queen's test site
- observed of features where there was little/no bentonite remaining in the GCL
- arises from cumulative effects of bentonite migration with small amounts of condensed water trickling on the GCL



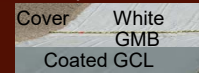
### Features on slope and base

- more features detected on slope than base
- after 4.7 years, most significant feature on base was:
  - maximum 50 mm wide, nearly 20 m long
- features big enough such that they will not heal from swelling or stress effects once covered

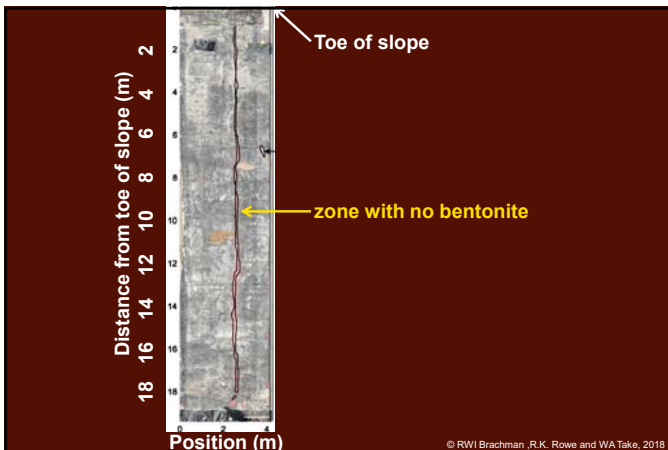


### QUELTS 1 & 2 summary

- White GMB prolonged time to erosion
- Bentonite in some GCLs was more resistant to down-slope erosion than others
- Multi-component GCL, no erosion after 28 months
  - coating prevented loss of moisture to GMB/GCL interface
- 0.3 m gravel cover, no erosion after 28 months
  - cover prevented thermal cycles that cause down-slope erosion and shrinkage



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### Buried wrinkles with shrinkage or downslope erosion

- If a hole in the GMB aligns with a
  - seam that shrinks to disengage supplemental bentonite
  - seam gap
  - location of down-slope erosion
 leakage becomes very large (controlled by Bernoulli's equation)
- Probability of this becomes much higher as the number of buried wrinkles increases since wrinkles may be
  - both perpendicular and parallel & directly over overlaps
  - aligned with location of downslope erosion

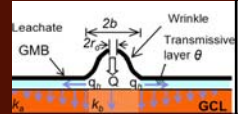
### Avoiding excessive leakage

- Cover the composite liner in a timely manner. Important
  - for most common GCLs; and
  - for compacted clay which can desiccate (increasing interface transmissivity)
- If composite must be left exposed, use a GCL with proven good resistance to shrinkage and downslope erosion (there are some but they cost more than the cheaper commonly used GCLs)
- Minimize the number of buried wrinkle (less that 5%)
- Use a leak location survey to minimize number of holes after the cover soil is placed.

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### Conclusions

- Composite liner leakage less with GCL than CCL, BUT advantage reduced as wrinkle % increases because of low stress on GCL below wrinkle (higher  $k$ )
- Mid-day temperature below wrinkle  $\sim 15^\circ\text{C}$  above elsewhere
- White GMB gives longer period when one can cover but does not eliminate the issue
- Cover soil and loading reduced wrinkle width but they remain



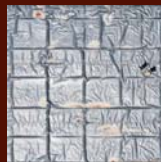
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### Conclusions

- Nature of required liner depends on level of acceptable leakage
- Leakage can be substantially reduced by a composite liner
- Wrinkles/waves will increase leakage for composite liners and should be minimized



(K. Embree)



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### Conclusions

- Cover composite liners in a timely manner (or wrinkles contribute to problems with CCL or GCL)
  - desiccation of CCLs
  - shrinkage for some GCL
  - downslope erosion of some GCLs
- All or which become critical if intersected by a buried wrinkle with a hole

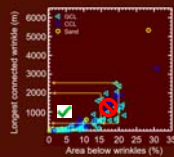


(R. Thiel)

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### Conclusions

- As % area with wrinkles increases above 5%, probability that
  - a hole will intersect a wrinkle
  - the wrinkle will be long
  - leakage will exceed ALR increases significantly



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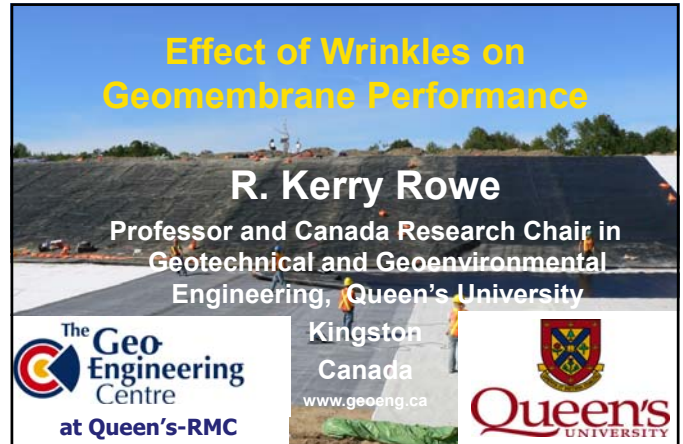
### Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada

Terrafix Geosynthetics      Solmax/GSE International  
 Naue GmbH                      Rick Thiel

All comments in this lecture are those of the speaker and are not necessarily shared by any of those listed above

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**Effect of Wrinkles on Geomembrane Performance**

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