

Irrigated Ag Working Group (IAWG)

Charge from Groundwater Management Area Advisory Committee

Working Group Members

Jim Trull (GWAC-Roza-Sunnyside Joint Board of Control), Bob Stevens (interested party) Bud Rogers (GWAC-Citizen), Chelsea Durfey (GWAC), Dan McCarty (interested party), Dave Cowan (interested party), Dave Fraser (Interested Party - Simplot Agronomist), Donald Jameson (interested party), Doug Simpson (GWAC-Farmer), Frank Lyall (GWAC-Farm Bureau), Ginny Prest (GWAC-Dept. of Ag), Jean Mendoza (GWAC-Friends of Toppenish Creek), Jim Newhouse (GWAC), Kevin Lindsey (interested party), Kirk Cook (GWAC-WSDA), Laurie Crowe (GWAC-South Yakima Conservation District), Melanie Redding (Ecology), Mike Shuttleworth (interested party), Ralph Fisher (EPA), Ron Cowin (GWAC-SVID), Scott Stephen (interested party), Stuart Turner (GWAC-Turner & Co.), Tom Tebb (GWAC-Department of Ecology), Rosalio Brambila (interested party), Dr. Troy Peters (GWAC-WSU); Vern Redifer, Jim Davenport.

Meetings/Calls Dates

Meeting: Sunnyside Valley Irrigation District Office, 120 S. Eleventh Street, Sunnyside

When: June 8, 2015 from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm.

Call: (509) 574-2353 – Pin # 2353

Participants

Jim Trull (Chair), Ginny Prest*, Jean Mendoza, Laurie Crowe*, Ralph Fisher*, Scott Stephen, Stuart Turner, and Tom Tebb; Jim Davenport, Lisa Freund, and Greta Smith (Yakima County)

*via telephone

Key Discussion Points

1. Report on Round 2 of Deep Soil Sampling.

Laurie Crowe reported on the second round of Deep Soil Sampling (DSS). 48 fields have been sampled, with two not being completed due to time constraints around “Call Before Dig.” These two fields will be completed this fall. Laurie forwarded the results and the completed questionnaires to Vern on June 4. A member inquired about the adequacy of the budget to complete the sampling. Jim stated that the budget allows for 200 tests. So far only 33 (round 1) and 48 samples (round 2) have been taken, leaving sufficient funds for 119 additional field samples. A member asked when the data would be available and if it would be available before the June 18 GWAC meeting. Jim advised that the data will come to the IAWG first if it is available before the GWAC meeting. Jim Davenport stated that Vern would get it done before the GWAC

meeting. A member asked if Bob Stevens and Troy Peters would review the data. Jim said that he would ask if they would do so and Laurie replied that the data could also be reviewed by Landau Associates at no cost. The observation was made that the data set is still too small for meaningful analysis; however, it is sufficient to make general observations.

2. Review of Best Management Practices (BMPs)

Jim Trull reported that the BMP list has been updated to include only those practices which will directly contribute to achieving the goal of reducing nitrogen contamination in the ground water. The four categories will be 1) practices which improve management of irrigation water, 2) practices which improve uniformity of application of irrigation water, *3) practices which improve handling, storage and management of agricultural and animal byproducts, 4) practices which improve planning and application of all forms of nitrogen, including agricultural and animal by productions. *It was suggested that “food processing waste” be added to number three.

The group reviewed the BMPs specifically identified as positively impacting the reduction of nitrates reaching the groundwater. The Group concluded that each of these BMPs listed will need to have a brief summary to further define and clarify the practice in 100 words or less.

ACTION: Each referenced standard will be clarified by writing a 100-word (or less) summary.

3. Irrigation Water Management

There was a general discussion about the need for data on the problem of over irrigation and the resultant leeching on nitrates below the root zone. It was agreed that there are several different tools to collect the data, but it is hard to get farmers to implement the action. The challenge of educating farmers and purveyors to implement new standards was discussed. General discussion also took place regarding data collection, education and public outreach. Jim Trull observed that an ongoing program for irrigation use will be essential. While the GWAC viewed the IAWG’s mobile irrigation lab proposal to be an implementation element, the IAWG disagreed. It is essential to immediately begin to assess the efficiency of irrigation practices whether through a singular mobile lab or in component parts.

4. Nutrient Management

It was suggested that a “brainstorming” take place to get opinions on what needs to improve and possibly use incentives to get participation. Jim Davenport suggested inviting purveyors to address this group to discuss what they do, what they need, and how the IAWG can partner with them to help accomplish their goals. Jim Trull observed that that would not be a happy discussion. Tom Tebb suggested developing an incentive program for both purveyors and farmers.

5. Other Business

Jim Trull provided a draft Report to the Groundwater Advisory Committee dated June 18, 2015. The group concluded that it will need more work and is not ready for presentation at the June GWAC meeting.

Jim Trull concluded the meeting, observing that the group is still at the conceptual stage (data collection).

Meeting was adjourned at 3:32 pm.

Resources Requested

- N/A

Recommendations for GWAC

- N/A

Deliverables/Products Status

Proposed Next Steps

- The definitions of each BMP will be summarized in 100 words or less. The IAWG will then review, respond and provide suggestions in light of today's discussion.
- Jim Trull will provide a general report on IAWG's direction at the June GWAC meeting.
- A report will be presented to the GWAC at its August meeting.