Lower Yakima Valley Groundwater Survey Results Released
Stage Set For In-Depth Well Surveys

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Yakima – Heritage University students recently completed 136 door-to-door surveys in the Lower Yakima Valley. They asked residents served by private wells about their drinking water, their opinion of its safety, and what they know about nitrate. Survey results also revealed what residents know about the Lower Yakima Valley Groundwater Management Area Advisory Committee (GWAC) and its work.

Results indicated that 69 percent (94 households) surveyed are aware of the potential health risks associated with drinking water with high levels of nitrate. Over half of those surveyed have had their private well tested for nitrate. Four percent (six households) believe someone in their home had become ill from drinking their well water. None, however, indicated that high levels of nitrate were the source of the illness. Less than half (42 percent) had heard of the Lower Yakima Valley Groundwater Management Area, while 33 percent indicated an interest in participating in a more in-depth high risk well assessment survey. All of those surveyed live within the GWMA boundaries.

The 19-question opinion survey was conducted on behalf of the Lower Yakima Valley Groundwater Management Area Advisory Committee (GWAC), a multi-agency and citizens-based group coordinating the effort to reduce nitrate contamination in Lower Yakima Valley groundwater. The survey was intended to both inform and educate citizens while gaining data in its efforts to address nitrate contamination in the Lower Yakima Valley.

Results of the opinion survey will help launch a more in-depth study of up to 320 private wells in the Lower Yakima Valley that will begin next month. The study, to be conducted by the Yakima Health District, will start with the 45 households who indicated interest in participating in that survey.

To review survey results, please go to:
http://www.yakimacounty.us/gwma/education_public_outreach.php

For more information about the Lower Yakima Valley Groundwater Management Area and the Groundwater Advisory Committee (GWAC), please visit:
http://www.yakimacounty.us/gwma/.

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