Joint Data, Livestock, Irrigated Ag, RCIM, EPO Workgroup Chairs Conference Call

Charge from Groundwater Management Area Advisory Committee

None at this time

Working Group Members

Jim Trull (Chair, Irrigated Ag), Kirk Cook (Chair, Data), Charlie McKinney (Chair, Livestock/CAFO), Lisa Freund (Chair, Education and Public Outreach), Bob Farrell (Chair, Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Municipal)

Meetings/Calls Dates

Date/Time: Wednesday, February 12, 2014 / 10:00am - 11:30am

Phone Line: (509) 574-2353 – PIN 2353#

Participants

Jim Trull (Chair, Irrigated Ag), Kirk Cook (Chair, Data), Charlie McKinney (Chair, Livestock/CAFO), Lisa Freund (Chair, Education and Public Outreach), Bob Farrell (Chair, Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Municipal), Vern Redifer (Director, Yakima County Public Services), Don Gatchalian (Yakima County Staff Support), and Troy Ross-Havens (Yakima County Staff Support)

Key Discussion Points

Welcome & Meeting Overview

Jim Trull welcomed the group and presented an overview of the agenda, as Jim convened the meeting to discuss the status and work products of Irrigated Ag Working Group and how it might relate to the other working groups, as well as to coordinate with the Chairs of the working groups.

Grower Participation Confidentiality

Jim began by referencing the 3-4 page paragraph document and attachment distributed to the Chairs prior to the meeting regarding grower participation confidentiality. He summarized the documents content detailing the grower participation summary, and how the confidentiality would be established. This would be implemented by an attachment the grower would receive that includes a random barcode distribution to the
grower, and the number associated with that barcode to be known only to the grower for confidentiality purposes. It is the intent that growers would fill out the grower questionnaire and place their barcode on a designated location on the questionnaire. When it came time for soil sampling, these same barcodes would be placed on soil samples and analyzed at the lab. After analysis, a summary of findings would be available to the growers with their unique barcode numbers on the County website. Each assigned barcode or set of numbers would be only recognizable by the grower, and no one else. After this has occurred, growers could consult with the South Yakima Conservation District (SYCD) to procure strategies to manage nutrients more efficiently, or approach the SYCD for generic information on better nutrient management practices if they discounted the soil analysis. Jim noted that the questionnaire has been modeled after the Columbia Basin GWMA, and is a conceptual document yet to be refined by the Irrigated Ag Working Group (IAWG) members, so it might look a little different in its final state than it does now in its conceptual state. The meeting participants agreed that this would be an approach worthy of securing grower confidentiality.

A few questions regarding specificity of the crop arose, and it was proposed that the intent in the final document is to provide enough identification of farming practices and soil types to allow the GWAC to focus future efforts on particular parameters that show, through sampling, potential nitrate leaching to groundwater. The intent is to determine effectiveness of farm practices and to what extent nitrate in the ground is being utilized by the crop.

**Deep Soil Sampling Strategy**

Under HDR’s contract with the LYV GWMA through Yakima County, PGG developed the draft Deep Soil Sampling Plan and implementation strategy, which led to the IAWG along with the SYCD, refining this strategy to best fit the needs and practicalities present within their capabilities. Just before the SYCD and the IAWG thought they had a good product to turn over to PGG, the issue of confidentiality arose and stalled the finalization of the Deep Soil Sampling Plan. Now that the confidentiality has been resolved, the IAWG desires to complete the Deep Soil Sampling Plan and turn it over to the consultants for finalization of the Plan, at which point it would be then presented to the GWAC for review and funding approval. Then, the County would draft an agreement with the SYCD to carry out the scope of the Deep Soil Sampling Plan.

**Growers Survey**
The Roza and Sunnyside Valley Irrigation Districts, and possibly the SYCD intend to include an announcement to contact growers to participate in the program in their next newsletter distribution. Some support from the Education and Public Outreach Working Group (EPO) with the content of the announcement would be appreciated, including any supporting background information procured through the LYV GWMA program. The County and EPO would consider any other ways to contact growers such as billboards, mailer packets, etc.

Jim solicited the participants’ opinion on presenting this information to the GWAC during the next meeting. The participants believed that this would be acceptable, as long as it is presented as a conceptual draft, so that the GWAC members do not feel obligated to comment on the content as if it were a final draft.

Charlie mentioned that the Livestock/CAFO Working Group planned to utilize the deep soil sampling project to obtain samples from corrals, pens, solid manure and compost storage areas. They would expect the procedures to be tweaked or added to as necessary by the Livestock/CAFO members to accommodate those sampling needs. Charlie mentioned that he would urge Livestock/CAFO members to assist in developing participant contact/cooperation similar to the IAWG’s approach.

**Other Topics**

*RCIM Scope of Work to be Completed by HDR/PGG*

The RCIM Chair presented to the group the proposed scope of work that RCIM requested from the consultant. This includes a spatial database of septic tank systems, NPDES point sources, and other potential RCIM sources. The RCIM Chair requested specifically the other Chairs to review Task 1 - Develop Nitrate Source Database Structure, and its applicability to Livestock/CAFO and Irrigated Ag. The proposal includes a database of RCIM sources that could be expanded to include Livestock/CAFO sources as well as Irrigated Ag. Bob requested input from the Chairs if next GWAC meeting would be a good opportunity to present this Scope of Work. Conversations ensued leading to the decision that it would be a good idea to present the Scope of Work, and that it might spark further conversation/verification within the GWAC regarding data needs and the Nutrient Loading Budget. RCIM will present the Scope of Work to the GWAC, so that the RCIM sources can begin to be developed, if approved, which will allow time for Irrigated Ag and Livestock/CAFO to collect data for the database through the Deep Soil Sampling Plan, as data collection associated with these sources has not yet begun. The Chairs
discussed that instead of just developing a spatial database for RCIM, they may want to expand that to include Irrigated Ag and Livestock/CAFO.

**GWAC/Working Group Monthly Meetings**

One participant requested the Chairs’ opinion on reducing the frequency of the GWAC meetings, which currently occur during the third Thursday of each month. The advantage of this proposal would be to allocate more time for the working groups to work on their task lists; all Chairs agreed that this would be beneficial to the efforts of their individual working groups, as well as the LYV GWMA. Reducing the frequency of GWAC meetings to some degree will be brought up during the February 20 GWAC meeting.

The Data Chair mentioned that the need for an expansive Data working group meeting every month isn’t productive. The Chair suggested that the working group exist continually with core membership, while other members participate ad-hoc, meaning bigger data collection and monitoring issues would draw out more participants as needed. The Data working group does not have ongoing issues as the other working groups.

**Keeping GWAC on Track**

One participant brought up a conversation that occurred yesterday involving distractions occurring recently during the GWAC meetings. The discussion involved strategies to help keep the GWAC on track, and how the facilitator might help in moving the GWMA forward in an efficient manner.

**Resources Requested**

None at this time

**Recommendations for GWAC**

None at this time

**Deliverables/Products Status**

None at this time

**Proposed Next Steps**

- Next Joint Chairs meeting scheduled for March 6th at Radio KDNA in Granger from 5:00pm-7:00pm