

Education and Public Outreach

Charge from Groundwater Management Area Advisory Committee

Review and Report back to the GWAC on Phase 1 High Risk Well Assessment Survey results

Review the GWMA Plan Timeline 1-29-15 and return comments to the GWAC

Working Group Members

Andres Cervantes (GWAC-DOH), Jean Mendoza (GWAC-Friends of Toppenish Creek), Tom Tebb (GWAC-Ecology), Elizabeth Torres (Citizen), Gretchen Stewart (EPA), Nieves Negrete (Citizen), Patricia Newhouse (GWAC-Citizen Rep Position #2), Tom Eaton (GWAC-EPA), Dean Effler (Citizen), Joye Redfield Wilder (Ecology), Stuart Turner (GWAC-Turner & Company), Ignacio Marquez (AGR)

Meetings/Calls Dates

Meeting: Wednesday, March 4, 2015 from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Participants

Lisa Freund (Chair-Yakima County), Andres Cervantes, *Gretchen Stewart, Lee Murdock (Yakima County), and *Jean Mendoza (*joined call at 2:10 pm*)

*via phone

Key Discussion Points

- **GWMA Web Update**

Lee reported that she recently met with the County's Tech Services Systems Manager and learned that the County will be migrating to a new web program called Civic Plus in four months. This new program changes our initial thoughts about how we will proceed with the website, and what outside resources we will need. For example, with Civic Plus the cost of web development will be covered by the County, rather than coming out of the EPO budget. The County's new program will be based on Windows 365, which will allow document check-in/check-out, a dynamic calendar, and other features the group has been considering. Lee offered to review the specs and bring a list of content decisions to the April EPO meeting.

- **Phase I-High Risk Well Assessment Preliminary Data**

Lisa reviewed the key reasons for this project, noting that the EPO had developed the survey to identify outreach messaging related to health risks and well sampling. The survey was conducted in 2014 by the Yakima Health District; 171 households participated. Lee has reviewed the data results and captured them in the preliminary data document.

Lee observed that the sample size – 171 – was too small to draw meaningful results; however, it did represent the GWMA geographically. She noted the key items we've learned from the surveying were: 1) residents need to test their wells; 2) well owners should become more familiar with their wells (e.g., location of their well log, depth of well, condition of well); 3) the need to explore the possible connection between *not* testing a well and its likelihood of testing high for nitrate.

A member asked if we knew whether the participating properties were owner or tenant occupied. Lee responded that less than 5% were tenant occupied.

The group discussed well testing messaging and developing partnerships with private and public agencies to assist with distributing outreach materials. Gretchen suggested using messaging from a study that took place in Virginia for a well-based community. Could we use their messaging resources to educate our own population? Others suggested exploring Well owner.org and the Ohio Watershed Network/Interpretation Tool for messaging tools.

The group brainstormed ideas for public and private partners to assist with message distribution. The initial list included: the Central Washington Home Builders, Northwest Justice Project, Housing and Health, USDA Rural Home Program, Memorial Hospital's Safe Kids Program and the Memorial Foundation; North Lodge, WIC, CSO, and Aging and Long Term Care. Lee observed that social service agencies are a ready source to distribute educational information.

Lisa reminded the group that the EPO had been tasked with responding to the GWAC regarding what we think the survey results mean. The group agreed that the message back to the GWAC is evidence of the lack of understanding about responsible well ownership; a great need for well education, and related to that education, EPO will be reviewing national resources to identify what messages will work here.

The second message to the GWAC (and EPO assignment) is to report back to the well survey participants about their nitrate sampling results. The group agreed that the primary messages to participants are the meaning of their nitrate testing results:

- <5 mg/L = your water is fine; test your well more frequently
- 5-10 mg/L = test your well more often
- 10+ milligrams per liter = consider a treatment system and test your well more often

The group agreed to draft a letter for the GWAC's review and approval at its April meeting.

- **GWMA Plan Timeline 1-29-15**

Line 133-Phase II-High Risk Well Assessment: EPO requests the deadline be moved back to November 2015.

Line 139-predict the likelihood of future problems and conflicts if no action is taken. EPO requests clarification on this item: does it apply to all parts of the work conducted under 2-Problem Identification? Or just domestic well evaluation?

Line 162: EPO requests clarification on where the responsibility lies for Public Outreach Alternatives: is it the EPO's responsibility to provide public messaging?

- **Evaluation of EPO Goals and Objectives Document-December 2012**

Jean presented a preliminary evaluation of the EPO's 2012 goals and objectives document. Lee noted that the GWMA plan was supposed to be completed by 2014: do we need to update our timeline, either as part of the GWMA plan timeline update, or as a stand-alone document? Regarding the proposed evaluation list: we have no means of evaluating or measuring success because the document did not identify outcomes, how we would identify success, or what the purpose of the measures would be. In addition, the outreach plan is the GWAC's document, too: information would need to be collected from the committees for a report out.

While we have no means to evaluate success based on this document, Lee noted we can use it as a report out on accomplishments to date.

Due to lack of time, further discussion was tabled until the April EPO meeting.

Resources Requested

- None

Recommendations for GWAC

- **GWMA Plan Timeline 1-29-15-report back to GWAC:** see requested clarifications
- **Well testing results-report back to GWAC:** the data show a great need for well owners to be familiar with their wells and to test their wells more frequently. EPO is reviewing national resources to identify what will work for our local population.
 - Review and approve a response to survey participants (target date: April)

Deliverables/Products Status

- N/A

Proposed Next Steps

- **Website:** Lee will review the Civic Plus specs and bring a list of content questions back to the EPO at the April meeting.
- **Well testing messaging:** Gretchen will provide a link to the Virginia community study.
 - Lisa will draft a letter to participants for EPO review.

- Education/outreach campaign: Gretchen will solicit volunteers to develop a marketing/targeted outreach campaign (April)
- **GWMA timeline-report back to GWAC:** EPO members are tasked with reviewing the timeline and returning suggestions/additions to Lisa Freund by March 31
- **Outreach Plan Review and Update**-tabled to April 1 meeting

Next meeting: Wednesday, April 1, 2015, from 1:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m., Yakima County Courthouse Rm 419