

## Education and Public Outreach Working Group

### Charge from Groundwater Management Area Advisory Committee

#### 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 & Co), Ignacio Marquez (AGR)

#### Meetings/Calls Dates

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Meeting: Wednesday, February 4, 2015 1:30 PM – 3:30 PM

#### Participants

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Lisa Freund (EPO Chair -Yakima County), Jean Mendoza (GWAC-FOTC), Andres Cervantes (GWAC-DOH), Dean Effler (Citizen-FOTC), Lee Murdock (Yakima County), Joye Redfield-Wilder (Ecology), Patricia Newhouse (GWAC-Citizen Rep Position #2), Karri Espinoza (Yakima County Staff), \*Kathleen Rogers (GWAC)

\*via phone

#### Key Discussion Points

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**Welcome & Meeting Overview:** Lisa Freund welcomed the group and reviewed the meeting agenda.

#### GWMA Web Update

Lisa and Lee Murdock provided an update on the GWMA website project. Lisa reported that she, Andy Cervantes, Lee Murdock and Gretchen Stewart (via phone) had met with Ryan Messer (Idea Marketing) and Danielle Sorkatty (the County's website designer) to begin exploring the functional components of the website. Lisa explained that the functional, or "backend" components of the website will be addressed before the content. A components work sheet identifying the Needs, Wants and Wishes for the website was distributed and discussed.

Items discussed included interactive maps, archives of older documents, social media links, video campaigns, and an events and meeting calendar that would provide users with automatic updates.

A member noted that the component spreadsheet was a lot to digest in one meeting, and asked that the group be given time to review the components and provide feedback. The group agreed to this suggestion.

Lisa also asked the group to brainstorm “search words” that people might enter into a search engine to access information online about groundwater, the GWMA, or who’s at risk from nitrate (e.g., words and phrases such as “nitrate,” “newborns and nitrates,” “nitrate contamination”).

**ACTION:** Members will review the component sheet and send feedback along with “search word” ideas to Lisa via e-mail by Friday, February 6, 2015.

### Abandoned Well Campaign

**Identifying Abandoned Wells:** The group discussed the EPO’s role in the identification of abandoned wells. They observed that EPO’s role is to provide education and outreach based on clear data—not to conduct research on behalf of the technical working groups.

They reviewed Ecology’s efforts and challenges it has faced to identify and decommission abandoned wells. A member summarized Ecology’s position stating, “If abandoned wells were identifiable, [Ecology] would already have done it.” The member further noted that the state health department regulates community domestic water supplies (municipal etc.) but doesn’t track water quality at private exempt wells and has no authority to go on people’s private property. The landowner is responsible for assuring clean water and proper decommissioning of wells.

**Decision:** Based on its research, the group agreed that the proposal to identify abandoned wells should be remanded back to the RCIM. They further agreed that the RCIM or Data group needs to provide substantive data to the EPO regarding abandoned wells for EPO to create an effective and targeted outreach campaign.

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**ACTION:** Lisa will contact RCIM Chair Robert Farrell to advise him that EPO is remanding the identification of abandoned wells back to RCIM. She will suggest that the RCIM invite Avery Richardson, Department of Ecology hydrogeologist, to address the RCIM regarding abandoned wells.

She will further advise him that EPO will need substantive data on the location of abandoned wells before moving forward on the educational campaign.

**NOTE:** Lisa observed that this action may require a GWAC budget revision. The group agreed that \$20,000 of the original \$76,000 budget allocation for the Abandoned Well Campaign should remain with the EPO for outreach. The remaining \$56,000 may be reallocated to the RCIM for identification costs, subject to approval by RCIM and the GWAC.

### **EPO Goals and Objectives Review**

An EPO Short List of Accomplishments for 2013 and 2014 was reviewed. Members identified additional outreach and highlights (e.g., outreach conducted—direct mail pieces, letters to the editor and letters to physicians regarding nitrates).

**ACTION:** Lisa will add the suggestions to the Accomplishment list.

The group reviewed the December 2012 EPO Communication Strategy adopted by the GWAC. A discussion took place regarding the need to review and update the strategy.

**ACTION:** Lisa will e-mail the EPO Communication Strategy document to the group for review, and the members will bring comments to the March meeting.

### **New Mom Campaign-Outreach Status**

Dean Effler listed the hospitals where he has distributed (or attempted to distribute) New Mom flyers: Yakima Valley Memorial-Yakima, Sunnyside, Toppenish, Prosser. He noted that Memorial has refused to distribute the flyer because of its reading level ("too difficult"). It was observed that Gretchen Stewart (EPA) is working with PEHSU to develop a simpler "graphic" flyer. Dean also noted he will need additional flyers for distribution.

### **Proposed Next Steps – March Meeting Topics**

- Continue work on the GWAC website update – components and design.
- Notify RCIM of recommendations regarding the Abandoned Well Campaign.
- Submit ideas for the revision of the EPO Communication Strategy document.
- [April] Status of a simpler, "graphic" New Mom flyer (EPA/PEHSU)

Next meeting: Wednesday, March 4, 2015 at 1:30 PM, Yakima County Courthouse Room 419 (phone: 509-574-2353 [PIN# 2353#])