

## Irrigated Ag Working Group (IAWG)

### Charge from Groundwater Management Area Advisory Committee

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#### Working Group Members

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Dr. Troy Peters (GWAC-WSU); 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., Rosario Brambila (interested party), Vern Redifer, Jim Davenport.

#### Meetings/Calls Dates

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

When: February 10, 2016, from 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm.

Call: (509) 574-2353 – Pin # 2353

#### Participants

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Jim Davenport (Meeting Chair), Vern Redifer, Troy Peters, Scott Stephen\*, Kathleen Rogers, Doug Simpson, Frank Lyall, Jean Mendoza\*, Larry Fendell, Jim Dyjak, Laurie Crowe\*, Ralph Fisher\*, Stu Turner, Ron Cowin, Dan McCarty, Anthony Dorsett, Jason Shab, Perry Beale, Gary Bahr, Bobbie Brady (Yakima County support staff)

\*via telephone

#### Key Discussion Points

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The meeting began at 1:37 PM. Jim Davenport informed the group that he would chair the meeting until the working group elected someone new per the agenda. However, first Jim introduced Gary Bahr from the Washington State Department of Agriculture (Kirk Cook's replacement) and asked the participants to introduce themselves to Gary and explain their connection and involvement in the GWMA.

Jim then asked the group to review the agenda and suggest any 1) additions and/or 2) revisions to the order. A member of the group suggested first that the group take a moment to honor Jim Trull. The group concurred and agreed Jim had been a gracious individual, caring above and beyond what was necessary, helpful and a people person. They acknowledged his influence on their lives and that he had done a great job guiding the Committee. The group expressed a desire

to publicly acknowledge Jim, his influence on each committee member personally and his influence on the GWMA. The group felt that a written or oral acknowledgement would be appropriate – perhaps a letter of condolence to the family for everyone to sign. It was then suggested that a letter of condolence and acknowledgment of Jim’s accomplishments be drafted and presented to Jim’s family. After additional consideration it was suggested that this be put on the GWAC agenda so that everyone could participate in this tribute. The committee was also interested in having a plaque prepared to present to Jim’s family. Jim Davenport asked Bobbie Brady (Yakima County Support Services) to explore this further and ensure they were considered for the February GWAC meeting.

The group returned to Jim Davenport’s initial question and reviewed the agenda and its order. A suggestion was made that No. 4 (Filling Vacancy of Chairmanship of Work Group) take place first. No additional agenda items were added.

### **Vacancy of Chairmanship**

As meeting chair, Jim Davenport explained that the vacancy of the chairmanship would be filled from this Irrigated Ag working group committee. A vote would be taken in a “hold hands up” process. People from the group could volunteer or be nominated.

Stu Turner volunteered to take on the position. Jim Davenport asked Troy Peters and Jim Dyjak if either of them were interested in assuming the position. Troy Peters said he would accept the nomination if it were made, Jim Dyjak did not desire to be nominated. Jean Mendoza nominated Troy Peters. Jim Davenport and Vern Redifer declined to vote. A “hold hands up” (which included those conferencing in by phone) was then held. Troy Peters was elected by consensus. Troy asked Jim to chair the remainder of the meeting.

### **Review of the Third Round of Deep Soil Sampling**

The next order of business was a review of the results of the third round of deep soil samples taken in the fall of 2015. It was agreed that Laurie Crowe would review with the group the revised handout Vern had distributed electronically that morning (a printed copy was also provided to the members in attendance). 60 fields – approximately 2,174 acres had been sampled. Many different kinds of irrigation systems were represented with varying crops and crop rotations. Most of the fields were new to the sampling. Where there were duplicates the fall samples were taken in differing parts of the field than they were in the spring. In three of the fields where test results were high in the spring, two of the samples were low this fall and one remained high. One member reminded the group that the goal of this testing was to get an overview – scale and scope examination not to learn the effect of current practices or the effect if you change practices.

Laurie told the group that the goal was to have 60 fields again in the spring for the fourth round of sampling. She believed that most of those fields would be new to the sampling process. She also let the group know that after the fall campaign there was \$209,906 left in the budget and assuming the cost for the spring sample would be similar to that of the fall sampling there would be approximately \$125,000 left after the spring soil sampling if the group chose to do a 5<sup>th</sup> sampling in the fall of 2016. Jim Davenport spoke up and let the group know that the RCIM Working Group would like to use some of the funds to sample more municipal locations but suggested that the group put this question on the back burner until the fourth sample survey was

completed this spring. Laurie responded and said that even if the group decided to do a fifth round of sampling there would still be approximately \$45,000 in funding remaining to accomplish the work the RCIM desired to do. Jim noted that that Ryan Ibach of the Yakima Health District was the new chair of RCIM as Bob Farrell had resigned from leading RCIM but would remain in the GWAC.

Discussion returned to the deep soil sampling report. Members looked at pastures tested, growers represented, consistency in production, variability in tonages, types of seed utilized, organic matter left in the field after harvest or pruning and their impact on the nitrate levels in the soil, legacy issues as they pertain to the history of the soil and its use, the effects of different cover crops, the effects of nitrogen uptake, level of water management proficiency today as opposed to years gone by, and organic matter benefits increasing the function of the soil and preventing runoff/leaching.

#### **Discussion about Work Performed by Washington State Department of Agriculture on Nitrogen Loading Assessment and Review of IAWG Spreadsheet and Purpose Statement**

Vern Redifer drew the group's attention to several overlay maps he had the Yakima County GIS group produce. GIS used calculations of the amount of nitrogen produced from various sources and transferred them into a density maps. Vern stressed that these were just examples for the IAWG to see and not meant to be conclusive. These maps could be prepared for differing sources and then superimposed over the top of each other through the GIS process and display the density from all sources. One member desired a map of this kind to be made for the permitted lands in the GWMA that receive biosolids. Vern stressed that the maps produced already were merely for illustrative purposes.

Perry Beale passed out several handouts to the group that were the work products of tasks assigned to the Department of Agriculture in their contract with Yakima County. The handouts summarized the spread sheets Perry had stored electronically which he would make available to the group. They included a Nitrogen Use Rate Collection Survey for Yakima GWMA. This was an anonymous phone survey. Their goal had been a 30 percent representation of each crop in the survey. Jim Davenport produced a copy of an IAWG spreadsheet that the group had been working on for a number of months which he distributed. This had been worked on mainly by Jim Trull with Scott Stephen's and Stu Turner's assistance. Jim believed this spreadsheet could provide supplemental information to Perry and should be integrated into Perry's work.

Perry explained that much of the data was derived from the day-to-day work already completed by the Department of Agriculture – they just added in the components the GWMA required. He drew the groups attention to the handouts he provided and gave a thorough explanation of the data contained on each chart together with a thorough explanation of each chart's corresponding legend so that the group was equipped with a good working knowledge of the work he had done. The group asked questions and discussion ensued. The group felt that Perry's work was a good first step and a good way to start. As a result it was concluded that Perry would refine and modify his work as follows: 1) include information gained from the third round of deep soil samplings, 2) look at published values that might provide better estimates of nitrogen release from organic matter; 3) integrate the information from Jim Trull's document – "Estimate of Nitrogen Usage for Agricultural Production in the GWMA" (including notations found in red made by Scott

Stephens), 4) conference with Scott Stephens and Stu Turner to review and refine the work and include a greater amount of data sourcing so the documentation clearly states the source of the numbers, methods and materials used; and, 5) take into account ranges by including in low/high calculations. Perry will complete this work and finalize the IAWG piece so that it was turned into the peer review committee by the end of the month. Vern explained that the Livestock/CAFO data and loading assessment is already to the peer reviewers (Melanie Redding, Ginny Stern and Nancy Darling) and the RCIM piece (done by Yakima County GIS) should be done and to the peer review committee by the end of February as well. He went on to explain that the purpose of the peer review committee was to aid in stream lining the process and to better establish the merits of each report. A member wanted to know if the reports would then proceed straight to the GWAC or if they would be presented to each committee first. Vern explained that it had been decided that each group would have a chance to review the reports generated by their committee before they were presented to the full GWAC which would again better establish the merits of each report.

Jim Davenport then asked the group if they had any further items to discuss also noting that Agenda Item No. 3 had become a subset of Item No. 2 in the discussion and, therefore, since there was no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 3:45 PM.

### **Resources Requested**

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- Jim Davenport to send to Perry Beale an electronic copy of Jim Trull's document, "Estimate of Nitrogen Usage for Agricultural Production in the GWMA."
- Ralph Fisher to speak with researchers at the University of Idaho to obtain published values from a four year study done on the Magic Valley to help estimate the ability of organic material to produce nitrates in a field and to better account for the ability for organic material to produce nitrates.

### **Recommendations for GWAC**

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- Prepare a letter and plaque acknowledging Jim Trull's accomplishments and contribution to the GWMA.

### **Deliverables/Products Status**

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### **Proposed Next Steps**

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