

1 **YAKIMA VALLEY GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT AREA ADVISORY COMMITTEE**
 2 **(GWAC)**

3 **MEETING SUMMARY**

4 **Thursday, February 18, 2016 – 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.**

5 *Denny Blaine Boardroom*
 6 *810 East Custer Ave., Sunnyside, WA*

7
 8 *Note: This document is only a summary of issues and actions of this meeting. It is not intended to be*
 9 *a transcription of the meeting, but an overview of points raised and responses from Yakima County*
 10 *and Groundwater Advisory Committee members. It may not fully represent the ideas discussed or*
 11 *opinions given. Examination of this document cannot equal or replace attendance.*

12 **I. Call to Order**

13 **Roll Call:** This meeting was called to order at 5:02 p.m. by Jim Davenport, Facilitator.

Member	Seat	Present	Absent
Stuart Turner	Agronomist, Turner and Co.,		✓
Chelsea Durfey			✓
Bud Rogers	Lower Valley Community Representative Position 1	✓	
Kathleen Rogers	Lower Valley Community Representative Position 1 (alternate)	✓	
Patricia Newhouse	Lower Valley Community Representative Position 2	✓	
Sue Wedam	Lower Valley Community Representative Position 2 (alternate)	✓	
Doug Simpson	Irrigated Crop Producer	✓	
Jean Mendoza	Friends of Toppenish Creek	✓	
Eric Anderson	Friends of Toppenish Creek (alternate)		✓
Jan Whitefoot	Concerned Citizens of the Yakama Reservation		✓
Jim Dyjak	Concerned Citizens of the Yakama Reservation (alternate)	✓	
Steve George	Yakima County Farm Bureau		✓
Frank Lyall	Yakima County Farm Bureau (alternate)	✓	
Jason Sheehan	Yakima Dairy Federation	✓	
Dan DeGroot	Yakima Dairy Federation (alternate)	✓	
Ron Cowin	Roza-Sunnyside Joint Board of Control		✓

	Roza-Sunnyside Joint Board of Control (alternate)		
Laurie Crowe	South Yakima Conservation District		✓
Jim Newhouse	South Yakima Conservation District (alternate)		✓
Robert Farrell	Port of Sunnyside	✓	
John Van Wingerden	Port of Sunnyside (alternate)		✓
Rand Elliott	Yakima County Board of Commissioners	✓	
Vern Redifer	Yakima County Board of Commissioners (alternate)	✓	
Ryan Ibach	Yakima Health District	✓	
Dr. Troy Peters	WSU Irrigated Agriculture Research and Extension Center	✓	
Lucy Edmondson	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	✓	
Marie Jennings	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (alternate)		✓
Elizabeth Sanchez	Yakama Nation		✓
Tom Ring	Yakama Nation (alternate)		✓
Virginia "Ginny" Prest	WA Department of Agriculture	✓	
Jaclyn Hancock	WA Department of Agriculture (alternate)		✓
Andy Cervantes	WA Department of Health	✓	
Ginny Stern	WA Department of Health (alternate)	✓	
Charlie McKinney	WA Department of Ecology	✓	
Sage Park	WA Department of Ecology		✓
Lino Guerra	Hispanic Community Representative	✓	
Rick Perez	Hispanic Community Representative (alternate)		✓
Jessica Black	Heritage University	✓	

*via phone

14 **II. Welcome & Meeting Overview**

15 Facilitator Jim Davenport asked the group to spend a moment thinking quietly about having
 16 a positive, courteous, affirmative attitude in the discussion.

17
 18 Jim then introduced Gary Bahr from the Washington State Department of Agriculture – Kirk
 19 Cook's replacement. General introductions followed.

20
 21 Jim Davenport informed the group that at the recent Irrigated Ag Working Group meeting
 22 the group had recommended to the GWAC that they draft a letter of condolence (in light of
 23 Jim Trull's) passing to Jim's widow and family to be signed by the members of the GWAC.
 24 At this recommendation, a letter had been written and was presented. Jim asked Troy
 25 Peters (as the new chair of the Irrigated Ag Working Group) to read the letter aloud to the
 26 group. It was the consensus of the group to sign and send the letter as presented. Jim
 27 reminded the members that they were not under compulsion to sign. Members were also

28 invited to vocalize remembrances of Jim. They stated that Jim had a very “even keel”
29 personality, a respectful manner towards all viewpoints and he would be missed.
30

31 **III. Chairman’s Report – Rand Elliott**

32 Chairman Rand Elliott reported that Jean Mendoza, Jim Dyjak and Larry Fendell had recently
33 requested to meet with him and Jim Davenport to discuss another GWAC member’s recent
34 testimony to a State legislative committee in Olympia. Rand said that after listening to the
35 group it was determined that the comments that were made were personal in nature and
36 not on behalf of the GWAC. Rand reminded the group that they were free to express their
37 personal opinions; however, the group needs to make sure they are stating them as such
38 and that they are not representing the GWAC. Rand went on to say that he had sent a
39 letter to the Chairman of the Legislative Committee (where the testimony was received)
40 indicating that the GWAC had come to no conclusions or recommendations thus far.
41

42 A member asked whether the group was going to discuss the facilitator’s work and whether
43 he should continue in that role. Jim Davenport thought this was a good idea. A discussion
44 followed about his compensation for his facilitator services. Jim explained that he had a
45 prior personal services contract with Yakima County to assist in their performance as lead
46 agency of GWMA. When the previous facilitator’s contract was not renewed, Vern asked
47 him if he would also fill that role. Vern asked Jim to estimate the additional cost to the
48 County of this work. Jim responded that he would provide this additional service to the
49 County at no additional cost, that he would volunteer his services for facilitation. The
50 County is not invoiced for this additional work. The member then voiced a desire to have a
51 GWAC meeting where the budget was disclosed. Vern Redifer reminded the group that the
52 grant is between Yakima County and the Department of Ecology. Vern went on to say that
53 the GWAC’s role is to help the County prioritize how the money is spent and that he does
54 not have an issue with accounting to the GWAC how the money was spent. Another
55 member reminded the group that the previous facilitator had charged \$4,000 to \$5,000 per
56 meeting to moderate and that Jim’s volunteer services allow the County to save this
57 amount.
58

59 One member asked that another GWAC member be censured for his comments to a State
60 legislative committee. Jim Davenport advised that the other member should be present so
61 that he might respond to and defend the allegations.
62

63 **IV. Guidance from WAC 173-100-100 Re: GWAC Program – Charlie McKinney**

64 Charlie encouraged the group to keep their eye on the prize – the GWMA program. He
65 reminded the group to follow WAC 173-100 and provided an overview. Charlie addressed

66 specifically several of the items from his overview - No. 4 is silent on the type of alternatives
67 to deal with the problems. There is no discussion of regulatory, education or other types of
68 other alternatives. The group must ask itself "what do we need to do to solve the
69 problem." Additionally, Charlie noted under No. 5 that this is when the group will really
70 zero in on the final product. At this point the group will take a look at the laundry list of
71 problems, then make recommendations to solve the problems with a rationale why this is
72 selected. The group will also want to include who they are making recommendations for,
73 identify who should be leads at implementing each recommendation, i.e., agencies
74 implementing regulations/recommendations (this is the group's first audience). Under No.
75 Charlie felt some of this will be difficult without the help of the agency implementing the
76 recommendations working on the plan. He also pointed out that the group must work with
77 the agency to determine what it will cost to implement the plan and what the feasibility to
78 implement the plan will be.

79
80 When the plan is done it must then go through 173-100-110 SEPA Review and 173-100-120
81 Hearings and Implementation in order to give the public input into this process. When all of
82 this is complete the plan can then be implemented.

83
84 A member asked when the committee should start the SEPA review process in light of the
85 December 2017 deadline. Vern responded that the SEPA timeline varies, but the entire
86 process takes at least a couple of months. Vern felt the group would be in compliance if
87 they had a draft done by December 2017. Ginny Stern pointed out that other GWMA didn't
88 make their deadlines but had things in place so that they could finish.

89
90 **V. Report on Evaluation of USGS Particle Tracking Analysis Model – Ginny Stern**

91 Ginny explained that the USGS took existing EPA data, and used a time-step application to
92 estimate nitrate travel times based on flow data from 1959 to September, 2001. The model
93 is designed to tell us how water moves in this County. Ginny explained that the particle
94 tracking model is a useful tool and presents itself well. With this model it is possible to test
95 the assumptions the GWAC is working with and answer questions like: "is this a near-term
96 problem or something that comes before?" A member asked Ginny if the report could
97 analyze legacy nitrates. Matt Bachmann (the author of the report from the USGS) stated
98 that this report does not contain any measurements of nitrate concentrations, it is just
99 about water and how old it is and where it came from. Jim Davenport added that this
100 report will be discussed further in the Data Group.

101

102 **VI. Working Group Reports:**

103 **Data Working Group – Ginny Stern:** Ginny Stern presented the report provided by Chair,
104 Melanie Redding. As to the Ambient Monitoring Network: PGG has a contract with Yakima
105 County for its design. PGG has consolidated data in GIS and they are developing maps.
106 They will use this information to recommend early development of sample site locations. A
107 preliminary report is anticipated at the March Data workgroup meeting for review and
108 comment. The Nitrogen Loading Assessment is being written in three pieces:
109 dairy/livestock sources, irrigated agriculture sources and RCIM sources. Three designated
110 peer reviewers will provide a neutral technical review to determine that the study meets
111 quality and professional standards. The dairy/livestock source component draft is currently
112 undergoing peer review. The written irrigated agriculture and the RCIM pieces will be
113 finished soon and available for peer review. Once peer review is complete, drafts of the
114 reports will be shared with the workgroups for their review and comment. After revisions
115 have been made, the full nitrogen loading assessment will be presented to the GWAC.
116 Ginny shared Melanie's mantra for the workgroup noting that ultimately the group's goal is
117 to ensure credible data that can be used by the GWAC to make decisions. A member voiced
118 concerns about several issues. Ginny responded and said that the concerns were issues to
119 deal with after the scientific proof, quality control and quality assurance is met.

120

121 **Livestock/CAFO Working Group – Charlie McKinney:** No report – the group did not meet.

122

123 **Irrigated Ag Working Group – Troy Peters:** Troy Peters reported the group had taken time
124 to remember Jim Trull at its last meeting. They also reviewed the 2015 Deep Soil Sample
125 results that were taken from 60 different sites. When the work is complete they will have
126 four sets of samples from spring and fall 2015 and 2016. In addition, the group had a
127 presentation and discussion about the preliminary work performed by the Washington
128 State Department of Agriculture on the Nitrogen Loading Assessment and found some very
129 useful conclusions could be drawn and that the variability of sources could be significant.

130

131 **RCIM Working Group – Ryan Ibach:** Jim Davenport reported this group also has a new
132 chair, Ryan Ibach. He thanked Bob Farrell for his service as chair and reminded the group
133 that Bob will remain a GWAC member. Ryan informed the group that in their latest
134 meeting they had learned the breakdown of the number of parcels in Yakima County with
135 an area of 10 acres or less not otherwise included in the irrigated agriculture mapping done
136 by the Department of Agriculture – these were categorized as hobby farms. This
137 information was provided by Yakima County's GIS Department. Hobby farms thus

138 determined total 2,757 acres. There are three categories: 0 to 2.5 Acres = 2,323 acres; 2.6
139 to 5 Acres = 314 acres; and 5.1 to 10 Acres = 120 acres. He went on to explain that the
140 GWMA contains 175,161.2 acres of land, leaving hobby farms as 1.6 percent of the total. At
141 the group's next meeting they will be discussing septic systems and biosolids. A member
142 asked how the group had defined a hobby farm. Vern indicated that they utilized what the
143 GIS system knew about properties by looking at smaller parcels, not single residential
144 parcels, 10 acres or less, agricultural crop land or animals on it and then proofed their
145 conclusions with aerial photos.

146

147 **Regulatory Framework Working Group – Jean Mendoza:** The group has heard
148 presentations from many agencies over the past year and would hear next from the
149 irrigation districts, Yakama Nation and WSDA Fertilizer application. The group would then
150 begin work toward meeting the goals and objectives put into place in the 2012 Work plan
151 (Sections 3.0-3.9). They will also consider authority, feasibility, cost, time, monitoring,
152 effectiveness and enforcement. The group has the task of developing alternative
153 management plans and for presenting these potential solutions to the GWAC. Jean also
154 reported that Jim Davenport has begun describing Regulatory Framework in a written
155 document. He has created a table that looks at the major regulations which are cross-
156 referenced by source and topic – Laws and Regulations, Sources of Nitrogen, Atmospheric
157 Deposition, Compliance and Enforcement. Jean was pleased to announce that Vern had
158 affirmed his agreement to create a Regulatory Framework web page. The content will be
159 vetted by the working group.

160

161 **Education and Public Outreach (EPO) Working Group – Lisa Freund:** Lisa was pleased to
162 report the success of the Web Assessment Survey Phase II and gave kudos to the EPO
163 Working Group as they have worked very hard on outreach for the survey. She reported
164 that the EPO had continued its outreach (flyers, radio ads) to reach its goal of 200
165 completed surveys. As of December 31, 2015, 115 sampling surveys were completed. In
166 January 2016, to reach the goal of 200 surveys, a second direct mail piece was sent to 350
167 households in the GWMA inviting them to participate. This resulted in a jump in requests to
168 participate in the survey. As of February 11, 240 had requested the survey (a 100 percent
169 increase from December). Accordingly, Yakima County extended the well assessment
170 contract with the Health District from \$50,000 to \$70,000 (80 additional surveys). The term
171 was also extended from February 29 to March 31. The community survey (English and
172 Spanish) will go live next week on the GWMA website in order to measure the public's
173 awareness. In addition, Notify Me, which was introduced to the GWAC at the October 2015

174 meeting has experienced some glitches which has delayed Yakima County from working
175 with it exclusively. Feedback indicates email notification is working better than text
176 messages on mobile phones. With the 2015 website redesign, the resources page was
177 streamlined. In October the EPO recommended to this group that resources (links to other
178 sites and documents) should only be added back to the site if there is agreement by this
179 group. Lisa then deferred to a group member who was requesting that the GWAC put the
180 VanderSlice research done in 2004/2005 in the Columbia Basin surveying children under six
181 months and the effects of nitrates in the water in their systems back on the website. It was
182 the consensus of the group to put this research back on the website.

183

184 VII. Report on High Risk Well Assessment Survey Results

185 A chart and map was provided of the sampling survey test results through February 15,
186 2016, in the meeting packet. Vern believed it would be wise not to state trends or
187 conclusions until all the surveys are done at the end of March. He did note however that
188 the highest percentage of wells that have bacteria in them have less nitrates. Matt
189 Bachmann noted that bacteria doesn't flow as easily as nitrates do.

190

**191 VIII. Groundwater Monitoring Program Update/Inter-Agency Agreement: Yakima County and
192 Ecology – Vern Redifer**

193 Vern observed that Ginny had already addressed the progress of the Ground Water
194 Monitoring Program in her Data Working Group report. He advised the group that the
195 contract between the Department of Ecology and the County of Yakima had been signed – a
196 copy was enclosed for the members. A member asked if there was much chance of
197 receiving money beyond the terms of this contract. Vern pointed out that the first
198 paragraph stated the expectation “whereas this is expected to be the final appropriation . . .
199 .” A member inquired as to whether the group should start advocating for more money.
200 Other members indicated that in their experience in working with GWMA in other regions if
201 the majority of the work is done there could be a host of opportunities for funding at that
202 time. Vern pointed out that the answer to a request for funding is never a solid no – as the
203 group writes the program and develops implementation there are ways to keep meeting
204 goals.

205

206 IX. Committee Business

207 The committee approved the October 15, 2015, meeting summary as presented. It also
208 approved the 2016 GWAC Meeting Schedule as presented on the meeting agenda.
209 Instructions for signing up for automatic calendar and agenda notifications for GWAC and
210 working group meetings can be found in the meeting packet.

211

212 Jim Davenport stated that the agenda provided for an opportunity to thank Charlie
213 McKinney as this was his last meeting. He noted that for the past year and a half he had

214 observed Charlie's objectivity and ability to settle arguments – he has been a valuable asset
215 and provided a great deal of knowledgeable information. Charlie responded that it had
216 been good to work on something so worth while and to get to know the entire group. He
217 noted that Yakima County's responsibility for being the lead agency was not a small task.
218 He felt the County had done an excellent job. Jim then invited the group to express their
219 thanks to Charlie, and to give their opinion about the progress of the GWAC. Many
220 members thanked Charlie for his effort and participation. He will be missed. One member
221 noted that Charlie had a way of explaining things in laymen's terms which had been
222 appreciated.

223
224 Members expressed optimism for meeting the December 2017 deadline (although the
225 process seemed quite slow), expressed appreciation for the members' efforts and common
226 goals and are looking forward to evaluating proposals, suggestions, work plans and
227 decisions. A member was concerned that sometimes the group was too negative about
228 what hadn't yet been accomplished and missed the small successes – more had been done
229 in a year than the group realized. Another member shared concern as well about the
230 transition when the deadline is met and how the political climate may impact the
231 application of GWMA. Several people involved with GWMA in other areas offered that have
232 not seen this kind of work product done in this short amount of time. They felt this was a
233 hard working group of people and were encouraged by people working together.

234
235 Members expressed a concern about what is being written via email to carry on squabbles
236 with other members of the group. It was their perception that a compromise will be the
237 end result – no one is going to get exactly what they want. The group was encouraged to
238 keep their eye on the big picture – focus and set aside differences – Charlie had provided a
239 good example of this attitude. Most of the people sitting in the room lived in the GWMA
240 and had a vested interest in its outcome. Some members were encouraged by the
241 education effort. They felt it was exceptional and working quickly and effectively. It has
242 people talking about nitrates and they are interested in a profitable outcome as well.
243 People are paying attention and that makes a difference. Some members expressed that
244 they had been concerned over the number of chairs lost in the past few months, but were
245 encouraged with their replacements and their fresh momentum.

246
247 Ginny Prest announced the "Sustainable Groundwater in Agriculture Conference Linking
248 Science and Policy 2016" to be held June 28-30, 2016, in San Francisco, California. She
249 strongly encouraged the GWAC to send representatives.

250 **X. Public Comments**

252 Public Comments are included in the round table discussion notes found above.

253

254

255 **XI. Next Meeting:**

256 Thursday, April 21, 2016, 5:00 PM

257 Location: Radio KDNA, 121 Sunnyside Ave., Granger, WA 98932

258

259 **XII. Next Steps**

260 The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 PM

261 Meeting summary approved by the GWAC on April 21, 2016.