

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

3 **MEETING SUMMARY**

4 **Thursday, June 16, 2016 – 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.**

5 **Radio KDNE Conference Rooms 1 & 2**
 6 **121 Sunnyside Avenue, Granger, 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: This meeting was called to order at 5:05 PM 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)	✓	
David Bowen	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		✓
Matt Bachmann	USGS	✓	

*via phone

13 **II. Welcome & Meeting Overview**

14 Facilitator Jim Davenport invited the group to set aside the day and think about a positive outcome
 15 as the group worked through its agenda. General introductions followed. Jim observed that the
 16 group had gained a great deal of knowledge through this process and although he sensed some
 17 people's frustration he felt that the group was further ahead at this point than most. Jim asked Pat
 18 Newhouse to share about her recent experience as a participant in the EPO outreach at the May 19
 19 Sunnyside Health Fair. Pat explained that she and two others had interacted with and provided
 20 written brochures to approximately 120 people about the nitrate issues in the GWMA. Some
 21 people filled out informational questionnaires. She recommended that the group have something
 22 for children at the next event and at least one Spanish speaking volunteer. She encouraged
 23 everyone to volunteer. Jim added that he had also been encouraged because he received a letter
 24 from Yakima County stating that they would be through in the next few months to clean out 130
 25 County-owned septic systems in the Buena area.

28 **III. Working Group Reports:**

29 **Data Working Group – Report prepared by Melanie Redding and given by David Bowen**

30 Nitrogen Loading Assessment (NLA): Melanie reviewed the purpose and goals of this
31 assessment. Gary Bahr of WSDA hoped to have the final assessment to the GWAC in
32 October. Four WSDA staff are working on information and data layer updates and verifying
33 the accuracy of the calculations. Ambient Groundwater Monitoring Network: PGG
34 completed a review draft of its report which includes methodology, preliminary drill sites,
35 drain monitoring, estimated costs, and installation process and schedule and it is being
36 reviewed by the group and will be presented to the GWAC at its August meeting. Drilling
37 could begin in the spring of 2017 and monitoring in July. Cost estimates are \$250,000 plus
38 sampling personnel and hydrogeologist. Groundwater Primer: Melanie will talk with EPO
39 about providing a tabletop sand tank model prior to the August GWAC meeting to visually
40 illustrate groundwater, how it moves, and how it can be impacted by what we do on the
41 land surface. Long-Term Initiatives: The Data group was concerned about long-term
42 funding/support for on-going programs and monitoring. Questions: Jean asked if the NLA
43 could be to the GWAC in August as she felt the report was holding everything else up. Gary
44 Bahr said an October presentation was more likely. Jim agreed the delay was unfortunate
45 but noted that the groups were progressing and working on solutions. He added that when
46 the ranges were available the groups could then determine the priority of the solutions.

47

48 **Livestock/CAFO – David Bowen**

49 David informed the group that Livestock/CAFO held its first meeting this year on June 2.
50 The group spent time discussing the progress they had made and David now believed he
51 could review the plan and prepare a list of next steps. David also reported on the Ecology
52 Washington Nitrate Prioritization Project (Link to site):

53 <http://ecologywa.blogspot.com/2016/05/new-report-compiles-information-about.html> and
54 the Ecology CAFO General Permit update which was released June 15. A comment period
55 and meetings will be held. More information can be obtained at:

56 (<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/permits/cafo/publicinvolvement.html>). The group
57 agreed to proceed with identifying solutions and didn't feel that the delay would keep the
58 group from moving forward. The group will also begin to answer the questions: "who do
59 we need to educate" and "what do we want them to know" so that it might pass this
60 information on to EPO. When questioned, David noted that he expected the
61 Livestock/CAFO work group to be briefed on and discuss the new CAFO permit. A member
62 clarified that individuals were invited to comment and not the GWAC as a whole. David
63 added that there was also another literature review done by Melanie Redding which had

64 been released on the impact of manure on the groundwater. David would provide this link
65 to Yakima County support staff to get out to the group.

66 **Irrigated Ag Working Group (IAWG)**

67 Troy Peters was absent but Jim reported that the May meeting summary was in the group's
68 packet. He indicated that the group had been discussing solutions and ideas and he
69 anticipated one to two more meetings on this.

70

71 **RCIM Working Group – Ryan Ibach**

72 Ryan reported that the group had met this past Monday (June 13) and began working on
73 solutions. They also discussed the status of the RCIM loading assessment and focused
74 mainly on the contribution by septic systems but also discussed hobby farms, biosolids,
75 lawns and fertilizers. Ryan also announced that he had accepted a new position with the
76 Yakima Health District and that the participants had agreed that Dan DeGroot would
77 become the new chairperson.

78

79 **Regulatory Framework Working Group – Jean Mendoza**

80 The group met and discussed priority questions and how to interact with the other groups
81 when presenting the laws and policies applicable to each of the three working groups. The
82 rough presentation plan is to identify the problems from the other group's perspective,
83 identify voluntary and least costly interventions, prioritize and discuss, ask whether there
84 should be "hand slapping" and ask how that might be codified. Jean anticipated two
85 meetings with the Livestock/CAFO group.

86

87 **Education and Public Outreach (EPO) Working Group – Lisa Freund**

88 Lisa displayed the new GWMA banner, tablecloth and a variety of handouts being used at
89 various outreach events. The handouts included brochures, a groundwater color page for
90 kids, a public survey and private well testing kits. The kits are being tracked and provide the
91 group with the person's name and telephone number. Outreach photos are being posted on
92 the GWMA website. Lisa encouraged members to consider signing up to help in the health
93 fair booths which would allow the group to have one-on-one contact with 1000+ people in
94 the Lower Valley. Looking to the future Lisa indicated that the group is considering and
95 acquiring costs for a billboard campaign. This information would be presented at the August
96 meeting for the group to consider. EPO has also asked the working groups to identify their
97 target audiences (who) and the messages they want delivered (what) so that EPO can develop
98 proposed campaigns for the working groups' consideration.

99

100 Jim gave Jean Mendoza a chance to voice her concerns. Jean was concerned that because of
101 the delays the GWAC will be stuck with the nitrogen loading assessment and would be unable
102 to look at alternate studies. Jean desired to propose that the GWAC accept the 2012 EPA
103 study which she felt was a reasonable option as it was similar and the science was based on
104 local data. She encouraged the group to abandon its assessment. Members agreed there
105 were a variety of other possible studies and options, but were happy to see this GWMA doing
106 one of their own. And, while they understood the delay was frustrating, they felt it was good
107 the group had done its own. They believed the delay had allowed time for good discussions.
108 The members disagreed that the delay of the assessment had stopped the process as many
109 working groups had already reported they were working on solutions. The group had no
110 objection to Jean's request to distribute the EPA Lower Yakima Valley Project Nitrogen
111 Loading Screening Analysis at this meeting. Jean was also concerned that the group hadn't
112 done a mid-term review. A member didn't recall a mid-term review in the the group's master
113 plan and is therefore not frustrated that one hadn't been done.
114

115 **IV. Don Stuart Presentation**

116 David Bowen advised the group that Melanie Redding was recommending that the group
117 invite Don Stuart to speak at the next GWAC meeting. Don Stuart authored a book entitled
118 "Barnyard and Birkenstocks: Why Farmers and Environmentalists Need Each Other." Don
119 made a presentation at the DOE which Melanie attended and she felt the GWAC could benefit
120 from inviting him as a guest speaker/collaborator. A link had been provided with a 5 minute
121 clip for the group's consideration. Several members indicated that they had not been able to
122 view the presentation as the link failed. David said he would look into this. The group agreed
123 to postpone this item until the next meeting to give everyone a chance to first review the
124 link. Jean Mendoza asked how to get an item on the GWAC Agenda. Vern said that it
125 depended on the agenda item. If it was something for discussion it was very easy to get on
126 the agenda but there was a protocol established early on if someone desired a guest speaker
127 to make a presentation. Instead of inviting a speaker it is put on the agenda for the group to
128 decide. Jim Dyjak asked who approves the agenda. Vern said that he did with the help of Jim
129 and David. Any agenda requests should be made in writing.
130

131 **V. Potential Requests to the Legislature**

132 Vern and Jim explained to the group that funding requests could be made through the
133 legislature or through different agencies' budgets. They believed it was important for the
134 group to begin to consider what requests should be made and which agency would govern
135 each project. Agency budget requests must be made as soon as possible and Legislative
136 requests need to be in before the session begins in January. Funding from these requests
137 would be available in July 2017. If the legislative ask wasn't made until January 2018, the
138 funding wouldn't be available until July 2018.
139

140 Vern believed the group should consider a request for long-term funding for the monitoring
141 program under design now. He stated that the current budget would cover the installation
142 and the first year's worth of data collection if the network was in the ground by spring 2017.
143 However, the funding ends December 2017, and the success of the system is long-term
144 sampling. In addition the group needed to decide who should be responsible for the
145 monitoring – Yakima County, Yakima Health District, Ecology, EPA, or the Department of
146 Health. Steve George agreed that the established well monitoring needs to be ongoing and
147 believed that the County should be the lead entity as he felt they were central to everyone
148 and the project needed a local presence not a State agency. Ginny Stern said that in other
149 GWMA's the local county handled this. The County is prepared to have lead entity status.
150 Rand added that an ongoing program like well monitoring would need to be funded through
151 a State agency's budget. This request would need to be made immediately so it could be
152 included in the the Department of Ecology budget. He added that if the request was for a
153 one-time effort the request could be made legislatively and would need to be in by the end
154 of the year. Jean was concerned as the Data group was not in agreement yet about the
155 monitoring plan. Vern explained that while there may be differences of opinion, in general
156 those differences won't substantially change the ongoing costs. David said that he would talk
157 to his Program Manager about putting a placeholder in the budget but noted that they would
158 need concrete information by September/October. Rand suggested that Vern talk to David
159 to come up with a number and then refine the plan over the next several months. Ginny
160 Stern encouraged the group not to assume all the funding would come from one source but
161 to seek funding from every angle.
162

163 Members suggested other items for funding consideration: expanding the monitoring
164 network, options for community outreach, education on the importance of pumping private
165 septic systems, funding to identify and decommission abandoned wells, identifying high
166 priority wells to see if they were properly constructed, drilling new wells for people, soil
167 sampling before planting and education on water management. A member suggested that
168 the work groups put together lists of their top three priorities in the next month and get them
169 to the GWAC. Proposals should include the benefits of the proposal and what the likely costs
170 would be. Another member was concerned that a cost benefit analysis should be done before
171 requests for money were made. Jim responded and said that's why he encouraged the work
172 groups to put together their ideas and bring them to the GWAC. Rand asked if the group was
173 willing to allow the County to discuss with its lobbyist an effort to fund the ongoing testing of
174 the Ambient Monitoring Network. The group agreed with no objections.
175

176 **VI. Committee Business**

177 After confirmation that a quorum was present the committee approved the April 21, 2016,
178 meeting summary as presented.
179

180 **VII. Public Comment**

Groundwater Management Area (GWMA):

The purpose of the GWMA is to reduce nitrate contamination concentrations in groundwater below state drinking water standards

181 None.

182

183 VIII. Next Meeting

184 Thursday, August 18, 2016, 5:00 PM, Location: *Denny Blaine Board Room, Sunnyside School*
185 *District No. 201, 810 East Custer Avenue, Sunnyside, WA 98944*

186

187 IX. Next Steps

188 The meeting was adjourned at 6:53PM.

189 Meeting summary approved by the GWAC on August 18, 2016.