

Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Municipal (RCIM) Working Group

Charge from Groundwater Management Area Advisory Committee

Budget for upcoming or proposed tasks as well as a justification on how proposed tasks or activities promote progress of the GWMA process.

Working Group Members

Robert Farrell – Chair (Port of Sunnyside), Dr. Kefy Desta (WSU), Elizabeth Sanchez (Yakama Nation), Gordon Kelly (Yakima Health District), Jan Whitefoot (Concerned Citizens of Yakama Reservation), John Van Wingerden (Port of Sunnyside), Stuart Turner (Turner & Co), Tom Ring (Yakama Nation), Kathleen Rogers (Citizen), Sanjay Barik (Ecology), Dan DeGroot (Yakima Dairy Federation), Donald Gatchalian (Yakima County)

Meetings/Calls Dates

Where: KDNA Granger Conference Room – 121 Sunnyside Avenue, Granger, Washington

When: 10:00am – 11:40am Thursday, June 26, 2014

Call: (509) 574-2353 - PIN# 2353

Participants

Robert Farrell (Chair), Gordon Kelly, Dan DeGroot, Jim Davenport, Carolyn DeGroot, Danica DeGroot, Lisa Freund (by telephone), and Troy Ross-Havens (Yakima County staff support)

Key Discussion Points

Welcome and Meeting Overview

The Chair of the working group welcomed the members and provided a brief overview of the agenda. He introduced Jim Davenport, who explained that he has been hired by Yakima County to help coordinate the GWMA program development. He is a retired attorney with extensive experience with water law.

Agenda:

1. Abandoned/Improperly Decommissioned Wells Identification Program: Justification and Budget

The group discussed the proposed effort for a system to locate and identify abandoned and improperly decommissioned wells within the LYV GWMA area. The goal of this program

would be to allow residents within the GWMA boundary to submit information of potentially abandoned or improperly decommissioned wells that they might know about, without the fear of being held legally or financially responsible. The data collected would inform both the Area Characterization and Problems and Causes by identifying how many abandoned wells there are and where they are located. It is a big unknown at this time. The group discussed how they would reach out to the public to engage them in reporting these wells, and what data they would try to collect. Jim observed that the program should be developed first, followed by the outreach effort. He noted that a rough budget should be drafted to include identification/characterization of reported wells. Once the extent of the issue has been identified, the GWAC could apply for grant funds to properly decommission the wells.

It was mentioned that information and education on private wells, septic systems and nitrates in groundwater already exist on the GWMA website; however, concern was raised that not everyone has convenient access to the internet. The conversation turned to a telephone resource hotline as another means to assist and educate the public. The group reached consensus that they will need to work on outlining an approach to the program in addition to the budget to present to the GWAC during the August meeting, and that the need for a funding source does exist.

In addition to the RCIM's proposed budget, the Chair of the EPO asked the group to identify the desired outcomes of their programs (well decommissioning and telephone referral line): who they want to reach, what the messages are, and what criteria or questions they want to ask of the public so the EPO can develop its budget estimate accordingly. Under the proposal, the EPO Working Group would design the outreach campaign to support the RCIM goals and objectives.

ACTION: Gordon K. to research current cost of properly decommissioning an abandoned or improperly decommissioned well.

2. Nitrate Source Pollution Referral Line

Discussion was held on furthering the idea of a nitrate referral line that would be available to citizens who might have questions regarding nitrate sources. The scope of the hotline was discussed, and how it might look like as an end result. The group thought it might be more like a GWMA resource directory. For example, one could call the hotline with a question about septic systems, and the directory could refer them to the Department of Health. The EPO Chair observed that sometimes the caller might not know exactly what they would like to know or how to ask the question to get the answer they are looking for. Accordingly, the hotline representative would need to know what questions to ask in order to elicit the caller's actual need, as opposed to their perceived need. The representative should have some technical knowledge of the nature of nitrate sources to accurately dispatch them to the correct entity to help them further answer their technical concern while avoiding connecting to several entities. Along with the support of the EPO Working Group, the RCIM reached

consensus that they will need to make a list of potential sources and contacts to incorporate into the phone tree. As the proposal stands now, EPO's involvement would include the creation and implementation of the phone tree, while RCIM would supply all of the technical inputs needed.

3. Ecology Progress on Identified Nitrate Source Spills and Plumes

The RCIM member from Ecology was not present at today's meeting, therefor no update was provided.

ACTION: Bob F. to follow up with Sanjay on Ecology progress.

4. Education and Public Outreach

Education and public outreach was discussed concurrent with agenda items 1 and 2. Lisa Freund (EPO Chair) joined the meeting to provide comment on suggested items. At this point, EPO has been notified of RCIM's outreach needs related to the abandoned wells and the telephone resource hotline programs. At this point EPO is waiting on further program scope development for abandoned/improperly decommissioned wells program and the nitrate source referral line.

Resources Requested

None at this time

Recommendations for GWAC

None at this time

Deliverables/Products Status

- Developing budget and justification for next GWAC meeting.
- No progress report from Ecology regarding known nitrate plumes/releases and departmental actions.

Proposed Next Steps

- Develop budget and justification for abandoned/improperly decommissioned wells program during the next RCIM meeting for proposal to the GWAC during the next meeting in August
- Develop budget and justification for referral line during the next RCIM meeting for proposal to the GWAC during the next meeting in August

- Provide EPO with sufficient content for the abandoned wells and telephone outreach programs for it to develop outreach strategies and budget.
- Bob F. to follow up with Sanjay Barik (Ecology) regarding progress on known nitrate releases or plumes within the LYV GWMA.